

THE MAYOR AND GOVERNOR  
OF VIENNA

Vienna, 8 November 2013

Dear President Barroso,

With the strong belief that Europe should provide its citizens with the opportunity to realise their potentials and develop their talents, I would like to draw your attention as President of the European Commission to an important topic: social housing.

As mayors we have the responsibility to supply all citizens with good-quality housing. Housing is a basic social right, and affordable and safe housing is the main requirement for social cohesion in our society and a fulfilled, happy life. Public housing in our cities and regions is diverse and heterogeneous, and it is an integral part of the European social model. In several of their reports, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions have all emphasised the importance of social housing for the society, economy and environment.

A specific aspect of the European system of rules is the exemption of social housing from the obligation of prior notification, adopted in the so-called “Almunia package”. This exemption, which we as mayors have always welcomed, is clearly in line with the principle of subsidiarity. As mayors of European cities, we have, however, for a while observed with increasing concern the tendency to restrict social housing to disadvantaged citizens and socially less advantaged groups in the state aid package for services of general economic interest.

We do no longer see this in consistence with the principle of subsidiarity.

The definition of social housing and the decisions regarding the type of provision must remain with the member states and their regional and local authorities.

The Mayors of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Bratislava, Brussels, Budapest, Bucharest, Dublin, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Krakow, Leipzig, Ljubljana, Milan, Munich, Nantes, Paris, Prague, Riga, Tallinn, The Hague, Turin, Vilnius, Warsaw, Zagreb and Vienna have expressed these concerns in a joint resolution, which I have enclosed and would like to bring to your attention.

With best regards from Vienna,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Häupl', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Häupl

Mr José Manuel Barroso  
President of the European Commission  
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