



# International Union of Tenants

## Association Internationale des Locataires

### Written Declaration

**Concerning the Decision of the European Commission dated December 15, 2009, relating to State Aid for housing corporations (woningcorporaties) in the Netherlands.**

**This Declaration was adopted by the XIII:th Congress of the International Union of Tenants Prague October 1-3, 2010.**

With great concern the IUT has learned about the final decision of the European Commission (COM) on the 'Dutch Case'. In this decision, dated December 15, 2009, it is ordained that 90% of all vacant houses of woningcorporaties have to be allocated to households with a gross income below € 33.000. This is the outcome of the fact that the COM wanted the Netherlands to define the target group eligible for social housing built using state assistance on the basis of income limits. For the COM the criteria is, as the Decision states, that social housing needs to be limited to a clearly defined target group of disadvantaged citizens or socially less advantaged groups.

The IUT is of the opinion that this criteria wrongly does not take into account national, socio-economic and geographical differences. This requirement is also contradictory with the wide discretionary power Member States have in defining the criteria and conditions for social housing and other SGEI. This margin is confirmed in Article 86.2 of the Lisbon Treaty and the annexed Protocol on Services of General Interest.

As a result of the COM's decision the scope of social housing in the Netherlands will change in a drastic way, with particularly far reaching negative consequences for the accessibility of good quality and affordable housing, especially for middle income households with an annual income above € 33.000. Independent research has proven that in the Netherlands this applies to approximately **650.000 households**. As a result of the decision, these households have hardly any possibilities left to obtain good quality and affordable housing. Commercial rental housing is not affordable, of questionable quality and in very limited supply. Private owned housing is hardly accessible because of the insufficient capacity of middle income households to get a mortgage. If they are forced to find housing at the free market, they are seriously running at risk for poverty. These groups are therefore very dependent on the supply of woningcorporaties.

**The IUT believes that implementing the COM's decision will seriously compromise the Right to Housing for many Dutch citizens in an unacceptable way.**


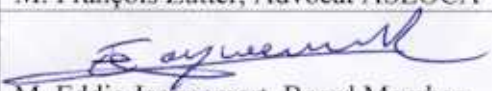

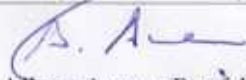
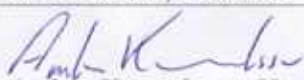
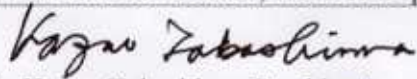
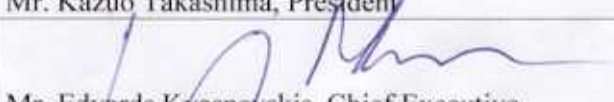


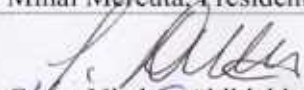
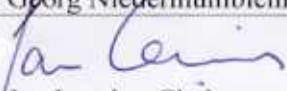

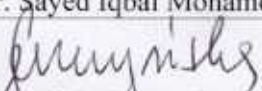

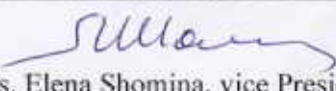

**Therefore the IUT calls upon the COM:**

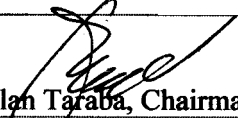

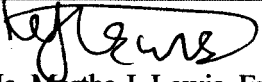

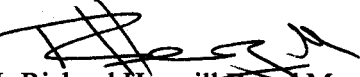
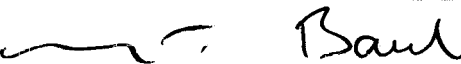





- to drop the criteria that access of social housing needs to be limited to a clearly defined target group of disadvantaged citizens or socially less advantaged groups;
- to respect the wide discretionary power Member States as well as regional and local authorities have in defining the criteria and conditions for social housing and other SGEI;
- to guarantee access to social / public / not-for-profit housing for all European citizens who have insufficient access to good quality and affordable housing on the free market;
- to accept proposals from the Dutch government to set a higher income limit for the access to social housing in The Netherlands.

**The IUT furthermore calls upon the Dutch government:**

- To guarantee access to housing of woningcorporaties for all Dutch citizens who are experiencing difficulties in obtaining good quality and affordable housing on the free housing market, being commercial rental housing as well as private owned housing;
- to set the income limit for the target group of social housing in The Netherlands at a substantially higher level.

Prague, October 2, 2010

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