



October 2018

- ◆◆◆ EU Partnership for affordable housing in Ljubljana ◆◆◆ Tenants Festival in Amersfoort ◆◆◆
- ◆ IUT at European Youth Parliament ◆◆◆ Wiener Wohnen and Est Metropole Habitat sign ERHIN Code of Conduct ◆◆◆
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## Slovenian Government invites EU-Partnership for affordable Housing to Ljubljana

**Ales Prijon**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, welcomed the Housing Partnership members and supported focus of addressing the shortage of affordable housing. He highlighted the vital role of the partnership in helping to promote good practice approaches in the specific context of Member states, regions and cities. Before the official meetings, participants had the opportunity to visit the affordable housing site Novo Brdo, a mix of rental units and condominiums financed by the housing fund of the Republic of Slovenia. The site visit was organized by **Crtomir Remec**, **Vesna Dragan** and **Saso Rink**, funds managers and state officials responsible for affordable housing development in Slovenia. The housing fund is the leading provider focusing on people with low and moderately low incomes. Also the mayor of Ljubljana, **Zoran Jankovic**, joined in the evening and explained his program to increase the affordable housing supply for the growing capital of Slovenia.



Site visit in Novo Brdo, with housing managers **Vesna Dragan** and **Saso Rink** (left and center), IUT President **Sven Bergensträhle** and **Michaela Kauer**

The Focus of the 12th meeting of the Partnership 27th-28th September was the finalization of the Draft Action Plan. **Michaela Kauer** (coordinator Vienna) reported that the feedback after the public consultation during summer time and the meeting of the Member States' urban development group (UDG) was generally very positive. Focus of the UDG was the sustainability of the partnership and the support for their implementation of their actions in the future.

**Elena Szolgayova** (coordinator, Slovakia) underlined the future role of the Member States' "Housing Focal Points" dealing with housing issues at a higher policy level and

preparing future ministerial meetings at EU level.

**Merja Haapakka** (DG REGIO) reported that discussions in the EC are currently ongoing on the future of cohesion policy post 2020. These cover the future of the Urban Development network and URBACT as two capacity building mechanisms that could be potentially used as groups for exchange of affordable housing policies and practices as a follow up of the partnership

In the negotiations of chapter III of the Draft Action Plan 2018, recommendations on security of tenure and rent control have been widely taken into account, based on the IUT position paper drafted by the IUT general housing policy working group.<sup>1</sup>

IUT president **Sven Bergensträhle** explained his definition of "affordable housing", which the partnership wants to use as additional tool for the revision of the "housing overburden rate" by EUROSTAT. Partnership wants to lower this rate from currently 40% to a reference threshold of 25% of disposable income. The rate is interlinked with the social scoreboard of the European Semester, introduced by the EU pillar of social rights. It may be a reference for future EU structural funding for housing and energy efficiency. The partnership also recommends to include the eviction rate in the EUROSTAT sources. **Barbara Steenbergen** (head of IUT EU liaison office) argued for the parts on tenant participation, rent control and energy efficiency in the action plan, which are covered by recommendations on tenants participation in the housing associations management plans, prevention of capitalization of subsidies by rent and cost

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/housing/annexes-housing-partnership-action-plan>

caps and gross-rent neutrality after energy renovations.

The final action plan will be presented at the last meeting of the housing partnership in Vienna, December 3 and shared with international housing experts at the "housing-for-all" conference in Vienna, December 4-5.<sup>2</sup>

## Dutch Tenants Festival in Amersfoort- hello Paulus Jansen and good bye Ronald Paping

A festival of tenants- this is the new interactive format of the Dutch tenants union "Nederlandse Woonbond", with several stands, a tiny house, live music, cabaret, workshops, lectures, practical advice and a lot of room for personal exchanges between the participants. The new director of Woonbond and IUT board member **Paulus Jansen** opened the festival in Amersfoort, September 29, with facts and figures about the Dutch housing market.



### Guity Mohebbi and Paulus Jansen

Affordability, availability and sustainability- these are the three pillars of the fair housing markets of the future. Paulus Jansen pointed out that the Netherlands actually are far from fair and tenure neutral policies: A social housing unit is taxed with 1.400 Euro, a unit in

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<sup>2</sup> [www.housing-for-all.eu](http://www.housing-for-all.eu)

the private sector with 400 Euro, whereas a condominium receives 1.000 Euro subsidies from the state. Instead of blaming “crooked living”, people living in social housing with an alleged too high income, the Dutch state should revise its crooked housing policy, **Paulus Jansen** said.



Stands, live music and good talks in the historical carriage shed in Amersfoort

**Ronald Paping**, former director of the Woonbond, delivered his farewell speech to the members by highlighting some milestones for the Woonbond. 11,5 years ago, the Woonbond was trapped by the “Calimero-effect”, meaning “we can’t win as we are too small”. This changed considerably - e.g. with the social rent agreement with the corporations (rent increases capped by inflation rate + 1%), the new Dutch housing law with strong institutional tenant’s participation and the enquiry commission in the Dutch parliament dealing with fraud and scandals in the housing corporations. Nevertheless the work of tenants unions will go on: “we will need to concentrate on more regulation in the private sector and solidarity in the society- the gap between housing rich and housing poor is increasing.” Instead of gifts, Paping asked for a donation to support the work of the Latvian Tenants Association.



**Ronald Paping** receiving the donation for the Latvian Tenants Association from **Barbara Steenbergen** (IUT Brussels) on behalf of the IUT board

## A great day for responsible housing in Brussels

October 17<sup>th</sup>, the largest public not-for-profit housing provider in the world, Wiener Wohnen, and the French housing association Est Métropole Habitat Lyon, signed the Code of Conduct for the European Responsible Housing initiative. The signing ceremony was hosted by **Elisabeth Kornfeind**, Austrian Ambassador in Brussels, who herself grew up in the “Gemeindebau”, the social and public housing of Vienna.

**Karin Ramser**, the director of Wiener Wohnen, and **Cédric van Styvendael**, director of Est Métropole Habitat Lyon and president of Housing Europe, signed the ERHIN Code of Conduct. **Georg Niedermühlbichler**, President of the Austrian Union of Tenants, the new

housing councillor of Vienna, **Kathrin Gaál** and the Austrian ambassador **Elisabeth Kornfeind** delivered speeches at the ceremony which took place at the Austrian embassy in Brussels.<sup>3</sup>



**Georg Niedermühlbichler**, President of the Austrian Union of Tenants, with housing councillor **Karin Gaál**

The signing ceremony was followed by a seminar and book presentation in Vienna House in Brussels on the Viennese social housing model and its crucial role in integration and empowerment of tenants. Editor of the book is the former CEO of Sozialbau AG, Prof. **Herbert Ludl**.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.wien.gv.at/presse/2018/10/18/wac-hsende-staedte-eine-europaeische-herausforderung>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.sozialbau.at/fileadmin/pdf/aktuelle-meldungen/eBook\\_IntegrationInHousing.pdf](https://www.sozialbau.at/fileadmin/pdf/aktuelle-meldungen/eBook_IntegrationInHousing.pdf)



**Karin Ramser** (left), director of Wiener Wohnen

The IUT has always maintained that housing is not only about providing people with “a roof over their head”, but that it should encompass a set of responsible practices in order to effectively achieve the social inclusion of residents. This means several things to tenants: involvement in decisions, proximity to services and jobs, provision of relevant information and training opportunities, and long term affordability and security of tenure. Following this vision, the IUT, together with Housing Europe and DELPHIS, are running the European Responsible Housing Initiative (ERHIN).<sup>5</sup> The next **European Responsible Housing Awards** will take place in Lyon, at the International Social Housing Festival. Please save the date: **June 6, 2019**.

## Alternative rent summit and demonstration in Berlin

More than 300 activists from several grassroots organisations, tenant’s unions, housing experts and housing politicians met September 20 for an alternative rent summit. One day before the official rent summit invited by the German chancellor **Angela**

<sup>5</sup> [www.responsiblehousing.eu](http://www.responsiblehousing.eu)

**Merkel**, participants negotiated 55 claims for a new housing policy in Germany.



### Housing is a fundamental human right

The alternative rent summit formulated sharp criticism towards the German government. Although the housing costs are rising dramatically with gentrification and displacement of vulnerable households, government is not reacting. Winners are the real estate industry, finance and construction industry, who are therefore supported by the state to continue with speculation on housing and building ground.



**Lukas Siebenkotten**, director of DMB, speaking at the tenants demonstration in Berlin

“Giving tax incentives to investors and landlords in order to increase the affordable housing supply is useless without rent and price caps”, DMB-director **Lukas Siebenkotten** pointed out. The 55 claims concentrate on stronger tenants’ protection and new anti-speculative laws for urban development and land use. Violations of the rent price stop

must be fined, rent increases capped by 2% and the rent increase by energy modernisation must be abolished, or at least capped by 4%.

The alternative rent summit was concluded by a demonstration, organised by **Deutscher Mieterbund**, **Berliner Mieterverein** and supported by several social unions and grassroots organisations.



**Heidrun Clausen**, board member of DMB, delivering a solidarity note to our CNL-colleagues in France



**Jutta Hartmann** and **Heike Zuhse** from DMB

## European Youth Parliament meets in Rotterdam

The 88th International Session of the European Youth Parliament (EYP) was held in Rotterdam, October 13. The EYP is an organisation reaching over 30,000 young people every year, at over 600 events. Three times a year they organise flagship International Sessions, such as in Rotterdam.

At the Session, 300 youth from all over Europe gathered to discuss and produce a written resolution. The work is split up in 15 committees, mirroring the European Parliament committees in Brussels. Youth parliament members have been prepared by academics in their colleges and universities. EU commissioners and high level EU officials welcomed the participants to their 9 days gathering before they split up into the committee work. **Barbara Steenbergen**, head of IUT liaison office to the EU, was nominated as external expert for the committee for regional development (REGI) to supplement the academics behind the resolutions, and to guide the delegates on how best to tackle the issue at hand.

The question the REGI committee debated in Rotterdam:

„Attitudes toward private housing are diverse across all of Europe, with home ownership rates, average age of first time buyers, average house size and a variety of other metrics showing large disparities. With these differences come contrasts in landlord and tenants’ rights, state provided incentives to downsize, and market interventions of various shapes. With home ownership therefore having environmental, economic and social impacts, what should governments do to balance fair treatment of the individual with fair treatment of wider society?“

In the session the delegates from 17 countries, chaired by **Mariam Kunchuliya** from Ukraine, debated practical solutions for balanced housing markets in their home countries, showing an in depth knowledge of instruments and legal provisions. Steenbergen was interrogated how to lift up national best practices to a supranational, European level in order to create a manual for good housing policies. The recommendations of the EU partnership for affordable housing were checked against, and youth MEPs claimed for the need of revising existing EU policies in the Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI), the housing overburden rate, and new rules for the European Semester and the Maastricht criteria for social infrastructure investment.



The committee for regional development (REGI), with chair **Mariam Kunchuliya** from Ukraine (right) and Barbara Steenbergen.

## Barcelona introduces new 30% quota for affordable housing

The Barcelona City Council approved the modification of the “General Metropolitan Plan”, reserving 30% of all new buildings and major renovation projects for affordable, and so called “protected” housing. The initiative was promoted by organisations claiming for the fundamental right to affordable housing, including the **Federation of Barcelona Residents’ Associations (FAVICB)**, the **Mortgage Victims Platform (PAH)**, the **Observatory of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (DESC)**, the Assembly of Neighbourhoods for Sustainable Tourism (**ABTS**) and the **Barcelona Tenants’ Union**.

The new quota, which involves the private sector, will affect new buildings and major renovation projects of more than 600 m<sup>2</sup> and is expected to add 330 new affordable flats to the existing stock yearly. Key goal are quarters in the Barcelona city center which are heavily affected by speculation and gentrification. The city council will have the right of first refusal in sales of all land and buildings.<sup>6 7</sup>

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[http://habitatge.barcelona/en/noticia/organisations-and-political-groups-reach-an-agreement-to-allocate-30-of-all-new-homes-as-protected-housing-2\\_711671](http://habitatge.barcelona/en/noticia/organisations-and-political-groups-reach-an-agreement-to-allocate-30-of-all-new-homes-as-protected-housing-2_711671)

<sup>7</sup> [http://habitatge.barcelona/en/noticia/barcelona-housing-consortium-to-invest-an-extra-64-million-euros-in-affordable-housing\\_710005](http://habitatge.barcelona/en/noticia/barcelona-housing-consortium-to-invest-an-extra-64-million-euros-in-affordable-housing_710005)