

**European Housing Ministers meeting 2008**  
24th of November in Marseille, France.

**Housing Ministers meeting agree on an ambitious declaration and  
commit to participate actively to EU policies**

The 17th meeting of European Union ministers with responsibility for housing took place in Marseilles on Monday 24 November as part of the informal Regional Policy Council.

At this "useful and constructive" meeting, ministers agreed on the need for regular meetings to be able to exchange information and best practice in the area of housing. The next meeting of housing ministers will take place in the first quarter of 2010 and will be organised by Spain.

In their final conclusions, ministers say that, given what is at stake, **the impact of European Union policies on national housing policies must be a point on the agenda of all future meetings of EU housing ministers.** To improve follow-up and develop themes, they propose that working groups be set up on the initiative of a member state and in which the European Commission could take part.

These working groups would bring together representatives of member states wishing to participate to discuss access to housing, energy efficiency and the impact of Community policies on national housing policies.

On 24-25 June 2009, the Czech Presidency will host a meeting on the focal points, and Austria would like to host a similar meeting in the second half of 2009.

Ministers recommended that the European Commission (1) conduct a study on the cost of housing to household budgets, and a second study on the cost of poor housing and lack of housing, (2) promote the spread within the housing sector of new technologies and building materials which use less energy, (3) strengthen research programmes to increase energy efficiency, including in existing housing, (4) provide effective follow-up to pilot projects in the social housing sector as part of the SAVE programme in order to highlight and select those projects which lead the way in energy efficiency.

They also recommended that the Social Protection Committee develop indicators for homelessness and unfit housing, inter alia through transnational research and studies funded by the EU. This could include a series of quality indicators which define, for example, "adequate", "decent" and "accessible" housing bearing in mind national, regional and cultural differences.

(Source: Agence Europe)