



THE INTERNATIONAL TENANTS' DAY 2018

This year the International Tenants' Day, celebrated on the first Monday of October each year, coincides with the United Nations' "International Day of Older Persons".

The International Union of Tenants (IUT) has therefore chosen the theme: "Sound, safe and suitable housing for elderly people" as this year's theme for the International Tenants' Day 2018.

There are currently an estimated 962 million people aged 60 or over in the world, comprising 13 per cent of the global population. The population aged 60 or above is growing at a rate of about 3 per cent per year. Currently, Europe has the greatest percentage of the population aged 60 or over (25 per cent). Rapid ageing will occur in other parts of the world as well so that by 2050 all regions of the world except Africa will have nearly a quarter or more of their populations at aged 60 and above. The number of older persons in the world is projected to be 1.4 billion in 2030 and 2.1 billion in 2050 and could rise to 3.1 billion in 2100.

These figures have prompted much attention and are likely to create many challenges, not least in housing the growing number of older people.

The IUT supports its members in making their own choice at a national or regional level as to which sub-themes they may want to promote. These may include:

- An adequate supply of suitable, safe and sound housing for the elderly at affordable rents.
- The right to social and housing assistance to ensure a decent existence for elderly people who lack sufficient resources.
- A tenure neutral stance expressed through public policy could achieve wide availability of suitable rental housing alternatives for elderly people.
- Adaption of housing to suit the elderly. Many elderly people suffer from health and/or mobility problems. Therefore, many older people may have to leave their accommodation. Policies should support home adaptation for safe living without increasing the rents to a level where they become unaffordable.

- Urban environments should be designed as an inclusive urban environment by providing accessible services for the elderly. Public meeting places, shopping facilities and elderly care should be available locally.
- Understanding of the new developments in society and providing solutions for the growing number of single households. People may value privacy but not necessarily loneliness. Housing should be suitable also for the many people who live on their own.
- Prevention of accidents that happen in the everyday lives of elderly people (the majority represented by falls).
- The rate of financial effort related to housing increases from retirement age onwards. Many pensioners' income is very low and/or has decreased whilst housing costs have risen and therefore housing policy must consider support structures for those tenants, including elderly people that may otherwise live in housing poverty or become homeless.
- Suitable facilities. Identifying the needs of people growing old at home and technical adaptations that may be carried out and new technologies that may be used. Tenants are particularly vulnerable as they may have no equity which they can release to finance adaptation of their homes.
- Ensuring that housing is sound and free of hazards and that they are suitably heated or cooled and maintained.
- Preventing vulnerability, in particular energy poverty and protection from crime and abuse.
- Including elderly people in decision making processes through the creation of participatory structures at national and at local levels. The planning of new housing developments and the adaptation of existing housing should be supported by consultation processes with stakeholder groups.

About IUT: The International Union of Tenants (IUT) was founded in 1926 and is a non-governmental and not-for-profit umbrella membership organisation with the purpose of safeguarding tenants' interests and promoting affordable and decent rental housing across the world. Its members consist of 69 national and local tenants' associations in 46 countries. IUT offices are located in Stockholm and in Brussels.

IUT considers housing as one of the fundamental rights, which needs to be addressed locally, nationally and internationally. Adequate housing is also one of the safeguards for peace and security.

Stockholm

10 September, 2018

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