

European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) Online Seminars (12-26 February 2021)



HOUSING RELATED IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC

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International Union of Tenants
Association Internationale des Locataires

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European Network for housing research (ENHR) seminars "Housing related impacts of the pandemic" - Opening Session

On the 12th of February 2021, ENHR held the opening seminar of a series of webinar under the title "Housing related impacts of the pandemic", which took place online from the 12th until the 26th of February.

The seminar was divided into two roundtables, one between ENHR housing experts — moderated by **Iván Tosics** (Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest, ENHR vice-chair) — and the other one between ENHR-related networks, moderated by **Montserrat Pareja-Eastaway** (University of Barcelona, ENHR vice-chair).



Peter Boelhouwer, Delft University of Technology and chair of ENHR

Covid-19 as a game changer for national housing systems?

Prof. Peter Boelhouwer, Technical university of Delft (NL) and chair of ENHR, opened the roundtable with presentation about the possible effects of the pandemic on the housing

market. Some of the short-term consequences of Covid-19 are already visible: increase in domestic violence, health issues (including psychic problems), conflicts in public space, drop in school performances, growing unemployment rates, lower incomes and

decrease in investments in multiple properties. Indeed, there has been more awareness over the need of adequate accommodation, and the demand for social and affordable housing has significantly risen.

In the long run, the consequences may include additional difficulties in obtaining a mortgage lending, more willingness of people to spend a larger part of their income on housing, attempts to create better working conditions at home (since houses may be used as offices even after the pandemic), arrears in education affecting unprivileged children, further economic difficulties for vulnerable categories. Thus, a higher need of social and affordable housing supply is expected.

A related question is whether cities are becoming more or less popular because of the pandemic, and the patterns indicate that it is still unclear. On the one hand, figures show that people are looking for housing with more outdoor spaces and, since they no longer need to live close to the office, they may prefer moving outside of the city. On the other hand, the need for contact, amenities and services will grow, boosting the popularity of cities.

Professor Boelhouwer finally showed that in the Netherlands, people in cities are less satisfied since the spread of Covid-19 and the trend of less citizens moving to the biggest cities, preferring other parts of the Country, outside of the Randstad area.

¹ https://enhr.net/online-seminars/



Kim van Sparrentak, Member of the European Parliament

The importance of the European Parliament resolution on decent and affordable housing for all

The roundtable continued with the speech of MEP **Kim van Sparrentak**, who highlighted the relevance of the EP resolution "Access of decent and affordable housing"2,

approved on the 21st of January 2021. In fact, there is an increasing number of people who are struggling for the rising costs of housing and it has been estimated that one in ten Europeans spends 40% of their income on housing. The level of homelessness has doubled in the last decade and this crisis is affecting every category. Even if housing is not a European competence, the EU has unconsciously approved many regulations which negatively affect the housing market and its affordability. The report gave signal that EU needs to develop a social and affordable housing strategy, to tackle homlessness, to have equal access to housing markets and to have climate-friendly houses. Indeed, the European Parliament expects the Commission to implement soon an integrated strategy on this.

The report underlines the need of tenant protection by security of tenure and by long term rental contracts as default option instead of gentrification and displacement as well as rent price stabilization where required and clear national rental regulations instead of skyrocketing rent hikes and rack-rents by further market liberalisation.³

It calls to end homelessness by 2030, which is becoming a crucial social problem. It will be addressed in the Commission's Action Plan on the European Pillar on Social Rights and in the Social summit taking place in Porto on the 7th of May 2021.⁴

Furthermore, the report calls for increasing investment in affordable housing - both from Member States and the EU — and for more housing renovation towards a green transition. In this regard, energy plans should be implemented immediately, in order to ameliorate the living conditions, reduce the energy bills and tackle both the climate and housing crisis.

The report also raises the issue of illegal short-term rental and the consequent lack of housing availability for citizens in touristic areas. Finally, it states that housing should be treated as a fundamental right, while it is mostly seen as a commodity. It is important to research more on EU rules on transparency in real estate transactions to avoid tax evasion and money laundering and to have more clarity on who actually owns the properties- the beneficial owner.

A journalist's perspective: can we collaborate on housing from the transnational perspective?

The first roundtable was closed with the presentation of the journalist **José Calatayud**, who explained that the pandemic



José Miguel Calatayud, journalist and Housing Project director

has increased the media coverage on housing, highlighting problems such as the lack of internet, water, space, etc. He urged a tighter collaboration on housing issues from the transnational and interdisciplinary perspective, which is possible thanks to the

housing-wins-the-day/

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/docume nt/TA-9-2021-0020_EN.html

2

⁴ https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/porto-socialsummit/

³ https://www.iut.nu/eu/ep-vote-on-affordable-

increasing availability of data. In fact, data are crucial because they allow to cooperate across borders and to compare the same situation in different Countries.

José Calatayud is the director of Housing Project at Arena for Journalism in Europe which is an open network for journalists and researchers working on housing issues. It offers a newsletter and covers different topics through policy papers, data, reports, etc. It is collecting data and mapping them accordingly, showing the potential and the challenges of cooperating on these issues.



Ed Goetz, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota and chair of Urban Affairs Association

The pandemic and housing precarity in the U.S.

The second roundtable of this opening webinar wanted to give a perspective from outside Europe, notably from the US, Asia, and Latin America. **Ed Goetz** was the first to take the floor in this second part of the

seminar, explaining that US was facing a housing crisis and precarity even before the pandemic, which, of course, is worsening the situation. Poverty is indeed increasing, and more people are forced to move in with others, using spare rooms or couches, thus affecting the quality of life.

In the US, housing precarity is largely defined by race, ethnicity, and gender. Black and Hispanic people in particular suffer from higher eviction rates, risk of displacement, discrimination, instability, and poverty. The pandemic has widened these gaps, and, in fact, it has been demonstrated that especially vulnerable groups are facing higher risks of infection and mortality, job loss, instability and eviction. Inequalities and discriminations are strongly growing, while the US real estate market is booming.

The policy responses have been uneven and include:

- eviction/foreclosure moratoria: temporary attempts to keep people in their homes enacted by the federal and local governments, which just postpones evictions, since it does not provide financial support to people unable to pay their rents.
- emergency rental assistance: subsidies to people in difficulties, but really limited in its implementation.
- transitional/emergency housing: different US governments have purchased old hotels in order to convert them into transitional accommodation or social houses.
- utility payment assistance/shut off moratoria.

Usually these policies are local-based, rather than state-driven.

The community question in post-pandemic cities

The second speech was held by **professor He**, who explained that the four major challenges to face in the replanning and governing of the postpandemic cities will be: mobility, livability, security and sociability. All of these aspects



Shenjing He, University of Hong Kong, and vicechairman of APNHR

are connected with socio-spatial relations and processes at multiple scales. She asserted that comprehensive more planning governance considerations going beyond the modernist approaches are needed. Thus it is important to take action on the four key challenges stated above. Mobility tends to be a privilaged asset, which, when poorly developed, leads to the retreat to the neighbourhood and home space. Mobility should be accessible for all and should be further advanced in post-pandemic cities. Moreover, since home and neighbourhood are now central nodes of the urban life, planning should create 15-minute cities, where all the

daily needs can be reached by the citizens within a short walk or bicycle ride from home – thus increasing livability. From the security point of view, instead, it would be optimal to have "pandemic-proof" key infrastructure and communities, using smart technology for surveillance purposes. This, however, rises privacy issues that cannot be ignored. Thus, in the post-pandemic cities, a new and better balance should be found. Finally, sociability will be a crucial aspect in the cities, which will have to find a way to compromise between social proximity and social distancing, providing social support to families, workplaces and communities.

The residential community will thus regain its centrality in the post-pandemic city, being crucial for providing mobility, livability, security and sociability. Covid-19 is causing complex outcomes at the community level, often leading to a trade-off between security and sociability, livability or mobility. For these reasons, we need long-term recovery plans to reduce inequality and segregation at the community level. An increase in investment in community-based organizations and facilities necessary, especially for providing affordable housing and socio-economic opportunities for the unprivilaged categories.



Anacláudia Rossbach, Cities Alliance – Latin America and Caribbean

Housing policies and informal settlements in Latin America and the Caribbean

The second roundtable was finalized by **Anaclaudia Rossbach**, who opened her speech explaining that Latin

America is the most unequal and violent region in the world, where Covid-19 affected millions of people and where the migration scenario is very dynamic. In fact, many migrants are

moving within the region, increasing the pressure for housing. Moreover, the GDP decrease – which started before the pandemic – is accelerating and now more than 20% of the population lives in precariousness.

In terms of housing, homelessness and poverty visibly increased during the pandemic and informal settings expanded. Empty buildings are now informally occupied by thousands of people no longer able to pay their rent. The Forum for housing in Latin America tried to facilitate a political dialogue in Colombia in this regard, obtaining a moratorium in evictions also for informal settlements – and some cash transfer programs. In Chile, instead, rental voucher programs were reviewed, and subsidies were expanded. In Mexico, a new land policy was launched, stating the right to not be evicted and increasing the budget for the upgrade of informal settlements and for the construction of social houses. In Central America, instead, the focus has been on the furniture of water and basic services.

In a final exchange of views between the participants, it emerged that all around the globe the main actions in the housing sector have been taken by the communities and the cities, rather than by States. But since the local governments face several budget constraints, States should be more present in providing fiscal resources, subsidies, and good legislation.

It seems like Covid-19 has not really created a new crisis, but it has exacerbated the existing ones, creating higher urgency to tackle them. New policies are now being implemented and need monitoring. It is thus important to continue fighting for equality and dignity of communities and for an open, accessible and affordable housing sector.

♦♦♦ Effects of Covid-19 on metropolitan housing and land markets **♦♦♦** Research ideas and reflections from the attendees **♦♦♦** Is there a new urban model needed? **♦♦♦**

Effects of Covid-19 on metropolitan housing and land markets



On the 15th of February 2021, two ENHR Working Groups (WG Metropolitan Dynamics: Urban Change, Markets and Governance5; and WG Land Markets and Housing Policy6) held a joint online workshop as part of the ongoing ENHR seminar series, with the following aims:

- to explore the spatial effects of the COVID-19 crisis regarding land and housing markets, connected to changes in mobility forms, workplace locations and home office tendencies.
- to analyse the potential tools for the public sector to steer the future development of metropolitan areas.

The WG Metropolitan Dynamics: Urban Change, Markets and Governance was established in 2005 on the belief that the spatial dimension of housing never stops at the city borders but affects all the urban and metropolitan areas. Here, housing can be considered as a means to develop solutions to urban (densification, suburbanization, urban sprawl), social (affordability, homelessness, segregation) and environmental (energy provision, green areas) problems. This WG is

thus interested in the operation of local housing markets in the functional urban area, notably in the territories around the core city. The objective of this WG is strengthening the metropolitan aspect, whose relevance has increased during the current pandemic.

The WG Land Markets and Housing Policy, instead, is almost 10 years-old and it has widened its scope during the years. It now focuses on the consequences of planning and policymaking on the supply of land for different types of housing.

Covid-19 is certainly affecting the metropolitan housing and land market, among many other sectors of human life. Many urban residents are looking for bigger houses with some open/green areas (balcony, terrace or garden). A trend to a new suburban wave is expected in many cities and, since people may permanently work from home, they may prefer to live outside of the city centre and travel longer distances the few times they need to reach the office.

It is also possible that people will prefer to move by car, rather than by public transports, changing the urban landscape.

Finally, the pandemic is increasing the social awareness on the value of urban greens, agriculture, bicycle lines and other measures for safe and inclusive urban outdoor spaces.

The participants of the seminar had the possibility to present their research ideas,

⁵ <u>https://enhr.net/metropolitan-dynamics-urban-change-markets-and-governance/</u>

⁶ https://enhr.net/land-markets-and-housing-policy/

aiming to discuss potential topics in view of a possible joint Workshop in the next ENHR Conference in Nicosia⁷, taking place from the 30th of August until the 2nd of September 2021.



Effects of Covid-19 in the Metropolitan Area of Tirana-Durres

Artan Kacani and Valerio
Perna (both from Polis

University, Tirana) were the first ones to present their research ideas, which focused on the Metropolitan area of Tirana-Durres. Here, during the last 30 years, the urban system has expanded from 3% of the Regional surface, to 9%, but 2/3 of the urban land has no land tenure.

The municipality of Tirana has adopted a Master Plan for the city, which, since the lockdown, has led to mass evictions and police brutality, aiming at eliminating all forms of informal dwellings from the development sites. Moreover, building permission has been centralized in the hands of the government with a "e-permission" platform, against the European Charter of Local Self-Government⁸.

In Albania, Covid-19 has led to a decrease in employment, GDP, investments, and net exports. The housing market is dominated by foreigners, since many people (especially from Italy, Spain, and US) come to Albania to enjoy their pension, forcing native people to move to the suburban areas, where there is a lack of basic services. Covid-19 has worsened the situation and the process of gentrification. Furthermore, during the lockdown, mobility was reduced, and many workplaces were inaccessible and now that urban transports fully work, there are no anti-Covid rules applied, causing increases in infection rates.

The challenge now is avoiding urban sprawl while maintaining less densely populated

areas. Planners should focus on the inhabitants' needs and on the peripheric areas as resources for the city rather than a hindering factor.

All these issues will be addressed during the Tirana Design Week9, taking place from the 27th of September until the 10th of October 2021.

Covid-19 impact on housing construction activity: the case of Łódź (Poland)



Magdalena Zaleczna (University of Łódź) researched whether a shift in construction from inside to outside of the city or a shift in the city border is already visible or not.

The macro situation in Poland is not too bad and the trends suggest that housing prices are rising, while rent prices are decreasing. Housing construction is increasing, suggesting that people are optimistic about the future. In Poland there are two main groups in housing construction: individuals and developers. The latter are more active now and create new supplies in big cities, where, however, the permissions to build are decreasing.

Magdalena Zaleczna showed that there is not a shift from big cities to small cities when comparing permissions to build and that there are no big differences in construction actions before and after the pandemic.

Her research concluded that:

- the activity of individuals preparing for housing construction in Łódź increased in 2020
- the activity of developers reduced in Łódź;
- there was no significant change in the new housing projects issued by individuals in Łódź;
- developers significantly reduced the number of started investments in Łódź;
- in all the above-mentioned trends, the data

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⁷ https://cyprusconferences.org/enhr2021/

⁸ https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-

[/]conventions/treaty/122

⁹ https://tiranadesignweek.com/

collected in the neighbouring counties show both increases and decreases.

Probably people in Poland have started buying land instead of dwellings, but this trend still needs to be confirmed.



Post pandemic planning for UK housing market

Glen Bramley (professor of Urban Studies at

Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh) explained that Covid-19 caused a deep economic and sanitary impact on UK. Government incompetence and corruption have worsened the situation, although some issues — such as vaccines — were handled well. Moreover, Brexit is likely to exacerbate the economic problems. However, the pandemic also showed that governments spend far more than they usually admit to.

The increase in homeworking and the concerns about crowded environments and public transports may lead to a collapse of the strategies based on city centre intensification and a consequent boom in counterurbanization strategies, pressuring rural markets and promoting more car-dependence. The shifts towards the online retail may cause a conversion of the shops into houses or opportunities for local and small businesses. Moreover, many buildings are still made of unsafe materials and the legacy of Grenfell Tower fire is still unsolved.

The UK government is trying to reform its planning system towards a zoning strategy, increasing housing supply through the imposition of housing number targets. However, there are no commitments for new social housing.

Strategic planning in London city region – the impacts of Covid-19

The research idea of **Duncan Bowie** (professor at Westminster University) was focused on the impacts of the pandemic on the London city Region and the Wider South East.

London's Strategic Planning started five years ago, and the New London Plan is about to be published, after major disputes between the mayor and the central government. However, there is no strategic planning for the wider London Region. The planning network tends to argue for a polycentric approach, suburbs intensification, more residential and employment growth in the cities around London, but insufficient family houses have been built.

The three new factors to keep in mind are Brexit, Covid-19, and the cladding scandal that followed the Grenfell Tower fire. All these aspects have worsened the situation of the regional housing market and economy. In particular, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of internal and external spaces and, because of homeworking, many offices could be converted into residential houses. Covid-19 has also caused a decline of central London cultural facilities, making it a less attractive place to live in. There may also be a change in high streets, replaced by online shopping, and public transports will need to be subsidized more.

Duncan Bowie concluded that it is necessary to rethink the approach to spatial planning and focus more on family-sized homes and open spaces. The case for suburban intensification and a more polycentric approach to planning and development is now evident. Moreover, the assumptions about population and employment growth should be revisited according to the less certain future. Finally, there is the need for a more effective governance and strategic planning for the

London City Region, also focusing on the wider South East.

Post-Covid housing supply

Constance Uyttebrouck (from University of Liège) presented her research idea on the housing supply after the pandemic, studying changes in residential preferences, new forms of live-work housing and adapted built environments in Brussels.

The relationship with houses has indeed changed during the last months, since people are willing to adapt their houses for homeworking. Her research will be based on four hypotheses:

- 1. forced telework will lead to changes in working conditions, residential preferences and cities 'attractiveness;
- 2. changes in preferences and needs will cause a reconfiguration of housing;
- 3. the new sanitary context will lead to an adaptation of working amenities;
- 4. Covid-19 crisis will cause a faster response from the market than the one from the governments, especially in liberal housing regimes like in Brussels.

Her research goals are: understanding changes in residential preferences and housing needs, exploring possible responses from the supply side, elaborating explorative scenarios and providing policy recommendations.

The research will be implemented in three phases and should last three to four years, depending on the available financing, and the expected outcome is the delivery of policy recommendations.

The Pandemic Wild Card in Planning – the case of Iceland

Sigríður Kristjánsdóttir (from Agricultural University of Iceland) presented her research on the housing



market in Iceland, which has not been too much affected by the pandemic. The interest rates for housing have been lowered, which convinced many people to buy apartments. Most of the dwellings are available downtown in old buildings, where the demand is low, and the price is lower in the city centre than in the suburban areas. Many apartments previously rented through Airbnb are for sale and most of the new buildings are thought for hotels.

Many people are buying houses outside of Reykjavik because with the same price they get a bigger and fancier house.

Iceland needs to rethink its planning and its mobility strategies. A new rapid transport system in Reykjavik has just been launched, but it is a bad timing, since people are moving outside of the city and travel more by car.

The post-Covid 19 city: Reawakening urban communities?

Berit Irene Nordahl (from Norwegian University of Life Sciences) did not present a research, but some reflections on the ongoing situation in Norway. The final outcome of the pandemic is still to experience, but so far Oslo was poorly affected by it. Here, the real estate market prices are growing. There has been an elaborated and widely shared policy of compact growth both in metropolitan cities and in regional centres. Even with homeworking, there is still strong support for urban living, also in regional towns.

With the lockdown, from one day to another, the city became empty: no cars, tourists, or spending. People could enjoy urban outdoors as if they were in their own gardens. Citizens refused to let commercial interests take over their spaces and insisted on urban outdoors. Moreover, since it was not possible to travel abroad, people started to enjoy more their city and to take better care of their urban community. Urban planning should thus focus on delivering good everyday life environment to citizens.

She is optimistic about the future and does not expect people to move away from the city centre after the pandemic. Possible research questions might be how to bring new experience onboard in urban maintenance, upgrading and care, urban transformation and cities 'attractiveness.

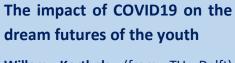


The case of Budapest metropolitan area

Janos Balazs Kocsis (from Corvinus University of Budapest) shortly presented the situation in the Budapest

metropolitan area, which was changing also before the pandemic. According to him it is too premature to state something solid on the consequences of the pandemic and he is sceptical about possible general changes. Surely there will be some sort of changes, especially related to white collar jobs that could be carried out at home. However, many other activities require special proximity to the offices.

He expected more shifts in terms of activities towards the periphery of the city of Budapest.



willem Korthals (from TU Delft)
presented the RURALIZATION¹⁰
theory, according to which, facilitating
rural newcomers and providing access
to land can create more opportunities for new

10 https://ruralization.eu/

generations. More young people would move in and less would move out of the Country, creating a relative younger and renewed population, thus allowing more economic activities.

RURALIZATION held different workshops with young people in different European Countries, asking them about their livelihood recipe, accommodation and lifestyle recipe and the obstacles they face. Then they asked them about their dream place of residence and data show that the majority of participants would like to live in rural areas close to the city (30%), in an area outside of the city centre (21%) or in a rural village (17%). Only 10% would like to live in the city centre, 13% in a suburb in a city area and 9% in a remote rural area.

30% of the respondents reported that the pandemic changed their future dreams, and this was especially true for young people wishing to live in urban areas. However, obstacles in realizing a specific dream were more common than changes in the contents of the dream itself.

The theory shows that the pandemic has led to a re-evaluation of personal values and preferences towards a rural-based perspective.

The next step of this project led by RURALIZATION will be a discussion with stakeholders in 20 regions.

At the end of Korthals' speech, however, **Ivan Tosics** (ENHR vice chair) argued that there are always less rural areas close to the cities and that the closer the area to a city, the less it is rural.

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Instant shifts in the metropolitan area in the pandemic centre vs periphery – the case of Thessaloniki

The last presentation was held by **Charikleia Christodoulou** (from the Research Unit for South European cities). There was a research program on social housing in Thessaloniki, but the pandemic obstructed it.

In this area there is a lack of metropolitan planning and deregulation after the successive "Economic Adjustment Programs" of the European Commission, The European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund and impositions by the Greek governments since 2010.

The housing market demand was characterized by high rents and with a shift of the residential market from rented housing to short-term tourist accommodation and gentrification of central areas. Thus, there has been an intersection of policies that came from top-down governmental directives in the sector of tourism, housing, and small-medium enterprises retail & services. During the pandemic they assisted to waves of change and to sudden shifts in small-scale property management in relation to these three sectors. In fact, there has been an immediate and spontaneous shift from short-term/Airbnb solutions to rental housing.

Moreover, during the second wave of Covid 19 many students were sent back home, leaving many dwellings empty.

Now the issue of long-term planning in Greek cities arises again because new urban routines and public regulations emerged, changing the structure of the metropolitan area function.

Is there a new urban model needed?

Ivan Tosics (ENHR vice chair) closed the seminar with a final remark, quoting the OECD, which stated that "It is not density alone that makes cities vulnerable to COVID-19, but the structural economic and social conditions that make it possible or difficult for cities to take suitable measures against the spread of the virus. Cities that are characterized by inequality, poor living conditions and the spatial concentration of poor sections of the population are far more vulnerable than the wealthy".

In a potential paper for the ENHR Nicosia Conference, he would like to find out what local governments can do in this situation and how the public sector in general can react. Urban areas should not be already written off and it would also be good to research the effect of outmoving, since rural areas are likely to become urban areas.

15th of February 2021

♦♦♦ Multiple-property investment in times of Covid-19♦♦♦ The total return and risk to residential real estate ♦♦♦ Housing crisis and the future of Residential real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) ♦♦♦ Inside the world of middle-class Hong Kong transnational property investors ♦♦♦ Resurgent Landlordism in a Student City ♦♦♦ Airbnb in Berlin and Amsterdam, before and during the Covid-19 pandemic

♦♦♦ Short-term Rentals, Housing markets and Covid-19♦♦♦

Multiple-property investment in times of Covid-19



On the 15th of February, Christian Lennartz (PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency), Justin Kadi (Assistant professor, Faculty of Spatial Planning, Vienna University of Technology) and Cody Hochstenbach (Postdoctoral researcher, Urban Geography, Universiteit Amsterdam) van moderated the workshop "Multiple-property investment in times of Covid-19", which was part of the ENHR seminars on the housing related impacts of the pandemic. However, it has not been organized by a specific ENHR working group.

The workshop included six presentations and counted 20 participants.

The focus of this seminar was on landlordism¹¹ in the private rental and housing sector, investments into tourist accommodation and second homes and how they were (or will be) affected by the pandemic.

There is a lot of evidence that Covid-19 has a negative impact on landlordism and returns of investment in landlordism. In fact, rents' prices are going down in San Francisco, London, New York, Amsterdam, Munich, and other big European cities, since demand went down during the pandemic.

The total return and risk to Residential Real estate – Matthijs Korevaar





Total Return and Risk to Residential Real Estate", analysing how much return landlords make out of their investments in the rental market.

In his presentation, he also made a connection to Covid-19, looking at pandemics in the past and how landlords behaved. He found out that throughout the history of the private rental sector, pandemics did not have strong impacts on rents, but had short impacts on house prices. Right now, he sees a reverse trend: rents are going down while houses' prices are stable.

¹¹ the practice under which privately owned property is leased or rented to others for occupancy or cultivation.

¹²https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstractid=3549278



In Real estate we trust? Covid-19, Housing crisis and the future of Residential Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) – Zac Taylor

In his presentation, **Zac Taylor** (KU Leuven) focused on how Residential Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) became a bigger player in the European and American rental market context and how they behaved during the pandemic.

After a short period of hesitation, it may be expected that investors will pick up the assets they had before the pandemic because they have long term investments horizons, so they would not like to change their investment plans. However, now there is a shifting away from prime urban housing market of investors focusing on suburban housing markets. The trends seem to shift from multifamily apartment buildings in the city centre, to single family apartments in suburban environments.



Inside the world of middleclass Hong Kong transnational property investors – Hang Kei Ho

Hang Kei Ho (University of Helsinki) focused on international investments' behaviour in Hong Kong, in particular towards the London housing market. He presented his paper *Inside the world of middle-class Hong Kong transnational property investors: '5980 miles to my second home'* ¹³ and also stressed the importance of not concentrating only on the

pandemic. In fact, there also other turbulent events happening, especially in Hong Kong, where the Chinese authority is increasing. This is leading many citizens in Hong Kong to increase their international investments since they perceive their assets to be more unsafe due to the political context.

Resurgent Landlordism in a Student City – Cody Hochstenbach



Cody Hochstenbach (University of Amsterdam) presented his paper *Resurgent*

landlordism in a student city: urban dynamics of private rental growth¹⁴. In his research, he studied different types of landlords and how they invested in Groningen (The Netherlands), which is a medium-sized university city. Small-scale private landlords still dominate the market, but there is a trend shifting towards property concentration. It is also important to understand the different categories of landlords, since they show different investment strategies.

¹³<u>https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19</u> 491247.2019.1611364

¹⁴https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02 723638.2020.1741974



Airbnb in Berlin and Amsterdam, before and during the Covid-19 pandemic – Jelke Bosma

Jelke Bosma (University of Amsterdam) shortly presented

his PhD research on Airbnb investments in Berlin and Amsterdam and how behaviours are changing due to Covid-19. In fact, the pandemic has severely affected the tourism sector and Airbnb Rentals have sharply decreased in the last years. Hosts are thus looking for other ways to rent out their properties, especially those who rely and depend on this income.

He also published an article on this topic¹⁵.

Short-term Rentals, Housing markets and Covid-19 – Justin Kadi

Justin Kadi (Vienna University of Technology) had a short presentation on the Short-Term



Rental Market and Covid-19, witnessing the case of Vienna (Austria). Here, many Airbnb properties were taken out for the Short-Term Rental Market (since there was almost no demand in 2020) and were offered in the Common Rental market, without affecting rental prices yet. However, since the timeframe of his research might be not long enough, this trend still has to be confirmed.

19-capturing-the-value-of-the-crisis

¹⁵ https://platformlabor.net/blog/airbnb-and-covid-

17th of February 2021

♦♦♦ Changing spatial preferences through Covid-19, **♦♦♦** Covid-19 effects in the Netherlands **♦♦♦** The UK context **♦♦♦** Changes in housing preferences and group communication practices **♦♦♦** Danish survey on housing **♦♦♦** Sharing a home during lockdown **♦♦♦**

Changing spatial preferences through Covid-19

Covid-19 is deeply affecting our lives and our economies. People are changing preferences very rapidly and the housing market seems to adapt to them. This seminar was organized with the aim of researching the change in people's spatial preferences. Will working from home remain the standard? Will the already migration flows towards the sub-urban areas continue? Or will the city centre regain its attractivity? Participants tried to answer these questions showing facts and figures about their national housing market.



Covid-19 effects in the Netherlands

Prof. **Peter Boelhouwer** (ENHR chair) presented the situation in the Dutch housing market, explaining that the impact on trust indicators after the 2008

financial crisis was much higher than today's. However, the housing market is clearly unbalanced now. Prices in the rental market, after constantly increasing since 2012, slightly decreased in the last quarter, possibly because of the pandemic that forced many expats to return to their home Countries. Building permits started decreasing sharply two years ago, leading to an important shortage of dwellings. Even before Covid-19, people

showed preferences for living in sub-urban areas and every year more people are moving away from the four biggest cities (The Hague, Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam), probably because of the lack of social and affordable houses there. Nowadays, this trend seems increasing, since people living in cities are less satisfied with their home than people living outside of the cities. 10% of home seekers stipulate that the pandemic changed their housing demand. In fact, the demand for houses with gardens increased by 19% and with outdoor spaces by 18%. There is now more demand for houses (8%), and less for apartments (-12%).

It is still early to state if cities are becoming less or more popular. On the one hand, people are now showing their strong preferences for houses with outdoor spaces and gardens in sub-urban areas and would like to have separate zones for working and living at home. On the other hand, the need for social contact, amenities and services will grow, perhaps making cities more popular again.

The UK context

Ed Ferrari (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research16) explained that the place policy 'landscape' in the



UK before Covid-19 was defined by Brexit, the climate emergency (need to find a more

¹⁶ https://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/

sustainable urban model), the Productivity Puzzle (need to close big regional productivity gaps) and widening social and health inequalities.

The problems of stimulating housing supply and dealing with market failures in the private rental sectors are now broadly accepted and understood after the pandemic. In particular, Covid-19 caused profound economic changes and unemployment, brought new risk factors, and led to the reconfiguration of social relations and capital. All of these aspects have explicit housing market impacts.

The number of people asking for social support has increased, especially in Birmingham and London, less significantly in smaller cities. In fact, Covid-19 has turned the map of "city centre vitality" inside-out: larger cities are now the ones with the lowest footfall (number of people entering a shop) and spending rates, compared to smaller towns. This might be a portent of the model of spatial structure to come.

On the social relations and capital side, through the pandemic digital divide, neighbourliness, and the use of local facilities increased significantly, making clear that the "15-minute city" can be enjoyed only by people that can really afford it.

In conclusion, after the pandemic, the location will matter more than ever. The incipient trend of "north shoring" could be accelerated. Finally, the post-Covid recovery will accentuate differences between neighbourhoods, leading to a widening of intra-urban inequalities.

Urban housing markets in UK after the pandemic



Nick Bailey (from the Urban Big Data Centre¹⁸) presented an initial assessment of the short-term impacts of Covid-19 on the private rental sector, focusing on three city-regions: Birmingham, Bristol, and Manchester.

The UK context is characterized by high inequalities, a deregulated labour market and a dualist rental system divided into a substantial decommodified social rented sector and a deregulated private rental sector. He focused on the latter, which rapidly grew in the last 30 years and houses a greater proportion of younger and poorer households. The rental market is dominated by the cities and there is no evidence of downward shifts in the urban hierarchy. As for the rent levels, the upward trend has not stopped with the pandemic. There is an increased demand for more spacious houses and a higher willingness to pay more than before the lockdown to achieve it. However, this is observed only in Birmingham and Bristol and not in Manchester. Another interesting trend in these three cities, is an increased willingness to pay more for central living, meaning that people are not willing to move outside of the city.

Even in the short term, the picture is really complex and uneven between and within cities. Further analysis is thus needed, notably to explore local variations across city-regions, changes in density, greenspace, etc. and to

¹⁷ the process of business and entrepreneurs moving to northern cities in the UK in order to save

money.

¹⁸ https://www.ubdc.ac.uk/

compare these trends with the house sales and rental markets.



Changes in housing preferences and group communication practices

Pablo Garcia de Paredes (PhD at Laval University, Quebec) is researching on how the pandemic is affecting our relationships to

digital tools, our home preferences, and our group communication practices.

He is going to study two different types of population: those with digital adaptation and anthropological relation with digital tools, and those who do not have access to digitalisation. His study will include communication and spatial variables and the home concept will be treated both as a dependent and independent variable. The study will also be based on two categories: workers working from home and workers who kept going to their workplaces, focusing on changes in work environments before and after Covid-19.

In his preliminary survey it emerged that almost half of the people managed to adapt their houses as their offices with medium investment, trying to assign different areas of the house to each person. More than half of the participants stated that their home stress level has gone up, but that they have maintained their lifestyle despite the Pandemic.

He concluded his presentation explaining that, according to him, many ongoing changes will not last, but different skillsets were born out of the pandemic and they will remain.

Danish survey on housing during the pandemic

Michael Harboe (Senior Analyst at The Knowledge Centre for Housing Economics) shortly presented a survey conducted in association with Statistics Denmark, submitted to



approximately 1.000 Danish people during the pandemic. The survey highlights the expectations for house prices, considerations around moving, the share of potential first-time buyers, the share of young homeowners considering an upgrade and considerations on Covid-19.

The results show that spatial preferences are shifting in Denmark in response to Covid-19. Suburbs and towns seem to be more sought after the pandemic. Many people are interested in moving within five years, especially apartment dwellers looking for larger houses.

In Copenhagen there are little developments and the percentage of people moving away from the city is small. This is probably because, according to the survey, the pandemic is expected to be temporary, so people are not taking purchasing decisions based on Covid-19. Finally, the results show that real estate capital gains are still expected to be larger in and around Copenhagen.

Sharing a home during lockdown

Kath Scanlon (from London School of Economics) explained that sharing with others or living with parents is the norm for young Londoners and that the number of single-person



households in younger age groups has fallen for decades. These trends are driven by the cost of market housing and the shortage of social/affordable housing. Her research focused on how shared homes perform physically and as social spaces under lockdown and the effect on housing aspirations of this age cohort. The project was led in collaboration with Pocket Living¹⁹, which is a specialist provider of affordable homes for London workers. They first submitted to individuals on the Pocket homes registration list an online survey in May-June 2020, following the first strict lockdown. The eligibility criteria for the survey were: live or work in London, be non-homeowners and have a household income lower than £90,000/year. 44% of the respondents shared their home with unrelated people, 31% with partners, 17% with parents and 62% rented from private landlords. 70% were working full-time when they completed the survey, 83% were working from home and 69% said that some/all others in the household were also working from home.

Participants working from home rated the shortage of suitable work surfaces as the biggest challenge to overcome (46%), followed by shortage of space (42%), inadequate Wi-Fi (26%) and challenges presenting professionally to colleagues or clients (21%). Moreover, participants working at home while sharing, stated that the biggest difficulties: noise (44%), lack of privacy (43%), needing to use the same room for work (37%), or the same work surface (26%), incompatible daily routines/working hours (24%) or interpersonal conflicts (18%). In fact, tensions between frontline workers and housemates working from home emerged because of the fear of getting infected or because of different working shifts.

The survey shows that lockdown has changed housing aspiration. Participants stated to be more motivated to save for home ownership (22%), to be willing to prioritise outdoors space in their next home (22%), to leave shared

accommodation (20%), to leave London as soon as possible (8%) and to prioritise living in house rather in in a flat (8%). Participants also showed their fear of having to share an accommodation for longer (13%), of not becoming homeowner (10%) and to not be able to leave a shared accommodation (8%).

Recent projections say that the pandemic may cause population to fall by 300,000 in London and actual trends show that rents are falling sharply for flats without garden in inner London and are rising for houses with green space.

Scanlon stated it would be interesting to see how the questions and responses would differ now, after one year of pandemic.

Final remarks

Christian Lennartz (PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency) wrapped-up the session, clarifying that the trust in housing market is not shaking



as expected and that data point in different directions across and within cities. Future research will also have to focus on the Covid-19 effects on specific economic sectors and its consequences on the housing market.

The seminar was closed by a Q&A session, during which Barbara Steenbergen (Head of IUT Brussels office) raised awareness over the conversion of offices into residential flats and the importance of research on that topic. Speakers from the UK explained that the conversion of offices to residential dwellings has been very problematic so far because of difficult compliance with planning law and space standards. Pablo Garcia de Paredes instead, witnessed that many empty offices in Panama, especially from the American

¹⁹ https://www.pocketliving.com/

managed land, were given to people in economic difficulties during the pandemic.

Finally, another participant brought the Finnish perspective, describing that in terms of general migration patterns the situation is similar to Denmark and the Netherlands. Purchasing prices are still increasing in both in cities (flats) and mid-sized cities (single family-housing). Yet, the decreasing price trend of summer houses (second homes) reversed, see the article "Housing and the corona crises in Finland. Diverging or converging city-countryside relationship?"²⁰

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²⁰ http://oes.tuwien.ac.at/article/id/578/

18th of February 2021

♦♦♦ The Covid-19 effects on housing and policy & research responses**♦♦♦** The impact of Covid-19 on the Housing Markets of Germany, the Netherlands and Ireland **♦♦♦** English housing policy responses to Covid-19♦♦♦ The context of developing Countries

The Covid-19 pandemic effects on housing and policy & research responses



On the 18th of February 2021, the ENHR WG "Policy and Research" held a workshop on the current Covid-19 situation and its effects on housing. Now it is even more clear how housing is vital for our wellbeing. The pandemic has reshaped our housing needs and expectations, leading many to look for wider spaces, private gardens, or nearby green spaces. In many cities the Covid-19 situation has increased demand for larger dwellings, and this has led to increasing prices, which, combined with higher unemployment rates and Covid-19 -related financial problems, has made home ownership an even further-away dream for many. In some countries social security and housing allowance systems have offered a buffer against rent arrears caused by financial problems or unemployment and possible housing evictions, but we also can assume large numbers of evictions will happen in the near future, when eviction bans and allowances will end. At the same time there have been many households without the

possibility to have a larger dwelling and had to live without the necessary social distances.

It seems clear that the pandemic is (re)shaping the future of housing in many ways. Even in big cities housing cannot be seen as 'human storage' anymore but must offer space for work life and different related activities. This changing situation clearly underlines the need for and the necessity of affordable, adequate, and accessible housing. It also emphasizes the importance of sustainable and long-term policy responses to existing housing challenges and the need for an evidence-based policy, as well as research and policy collaboration.

The impact of Covid on the German Housing Market

Prof. Michael
Voigtländer (German
Economic Institute²¹)



opened the first session of this seminar stating that, in a nutshell, nothing really happened yet in the German Housing market. By the end of 2021 GDP should go back to pre-pandemic levels. Only in Munich prices decreased a little bit, but it is the most expensive city in Germany, so prices were not sustainable even before Covid-19. In fact, rents and house prices increased between 1 and 3% in all the other cities. In Berlin house prices increased by 3.4% and rents decreased by 1.5% as result of the rent freeze.

The reasons behind the stability of the housing

IUT BRUSSELS;ENHR SEMINARS "HOUSING RELATED IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC"

²¹ https://www.iwkoeln.de/en.html

market are that incomes have been stabilised by state aid (short time working allowances, stopgap assistance), and in fact large housing companies currently report a loss of rent of only 1-2%. There is a housing shortage in most of the metropolitan areas, while the appreciation for spacious housing and the willingness to pay more on the house are increasing.

Although Germany experienced surging prices, according to Voigländer there is no speculative bubble and there is still excess in demand. The mortgage dropped and compensated the rise in prices.

Finally, regarding the migration flows, even before the pandemic people were moving from big cities to neighbouring municipalities, but the trend is not clear yet and data is still lacking.

In conclusion, the German housing market seems to be relatively resilient, as during the financial crisis. Finally, new preferences for terraced housing in addition to more remote working might shift housing demand to the urban hinterland.

Covid-19 impacts on Dutch housing market trends



Dr. Marietta Haffner (TU Delft) showed that the Dutch situation is similar to the German one, where the rental sector is declining but it is very relevant. In the Netherlands, during the last years, the average rent increase and the inflation rate fluctuated. The highest housing prices were reached in November 2020, but now they are decreasing. The urban affordability crisis instead, is still going on.

The economic impacts of Covid-19 have been mitigated by the government, like in Germany,

and the housing market still dominates over the economic crisis. However, there are not enough new constructions according to forecasted need, thus the housing shortage is expected to become more relevant.

During the pandemic, the housing policies were aimed at countering this shortage. Municipalities aim to increase the affordable housing stock and to help younger first-time buyer through the coverage of some transactions' costs, thanks to a revolving fund financed by many layers.

Standard safety net instruments are still present, like a monthly rent allowance (almost 50% of tenants receive it). There is also the possibility to ask for a lower rent if the income reduced in the aftermath of 2019.

All the previously mentioned actions started before the pandemic. New measures were also taken, such as an extension of the temporary rental contract of 3 months until 1 November 2020, and a rent increase freeze was proposed by the Dutch parliament. Moreover, an eviction ban was introduced.

There are divergent trends for the future: new construction in cities will temper price rises. However, a slower population growth is expected in big cities (because of lower immigration); the rent increase of already extremely high rents in Amsterdam is smaller than rent increase in Rotterdam and The Hague and the unregulated rents have, according to Haffner, decreased in Amsterdam.

Will changes be structural? Will economic and health concerns change spatial preferences in the housing market? Will this lead to a decrease in urban demand or a decrease in housing investment?

Dr. Haffner concluded that it is too early to answer these questions and that the future of housing market remains uncertain.

The impacts of COVID-19 on the Irish property market



Dr. **Conor M. O'Toole** (Trinity College Dublin), witnessed the Irish situation, given that Ireland has a different economic structure compared to the other EU States. In fact, it has a dichotomous economy: the international sector, dominated by digital economy and pharmaceutical companies (not affected by Covid) and the domestic sector (deeply affected by the pandemic). In this context, the housing market is extremely volatile.

There was a sharp moderation of house prices before the pandemic, but recently house prices increased again. That is surprising because the economic shock has been severe due to the strict lockdown. At the same time, there has been a sharp increase in rents and a drop in the rental price inflation. A rent freeze was introduced in March 2020 and has been kept through summer, together with direct support to tenants.

Many Airbnb houses went back to the private rental sector, which seemed to have a stabilizing effect on the market. In the long run an impact on the structural demand for housing is expected due to changing migration patterns. An impact on housing type preferences and location choice is expected as well, since working from home and internal migration will increase. On the supply side, instead, the uncertainty will possibly decrease the investment in housing, reducing the supply in the future. It remains to be seen how unemployment will affect the house supply, what is the appropriate policy mix to implement and what will be the permanent effects of the pandemic.

English housing policy responses to the Covid pandemic

Kath Scanlon (London School of Economics)



explained that there are different housing policies across the UK, where usually local authorities and mayors have few policy levers but control some budget. Since the pandemic, a Furlough scheme was established, through which government pays 80% of wages for hours not worked due to Covid-19 and, together with self-employment income support scheme (government pays 80% of average monthly trading profits for self-employed), many people suffering from the pandemic have been helped.

The government implemented policies to help homeless people as well, offering them accommodation or shelters, but now there is a steady flow of new rough sleepers that must be tackled.

Many restrictions on evictions were also implemented, together with the extension of eviction notice period from one or three months to six. However, except from Scotland, no public loans were given to tenants.

The Local Housing Allowance has been increased and tenants and landlords were invited to come to an agreement over the reduction or deferral of rent payments, but without any obligation to do so. Recent research shows that only 3% of private tenants and 2% of social tenants reported successful discussions.

For what concerns policies targeting owner occupiers, a ban on repossessions was implemented and will be in place until April and mortgage holidays can now be requested. However, taking a holiday may affect the ability to secure a new loan in the future and may increase debts' risks when it ends. As for owner-occupiers, lenders must offer mortgage payment holidays for up to 3 months and only

in Scotland grants were given to landlords.

There is thus a clear gap in protection for private tenants, which led to predict a surge in court cases, evictions, and homelessness.

Instead, a recent reduction in the use of mortgage holidays may suggest that mortgagors are generally coping well.

These policies were quickly introduced in response to the evolving pandemic situation and involved different levels of government, arising the coordination challenge. Major differences can be seen between England and Scotland. The big question according to Scanlon now is how, when, and even whether to unwind these measures.



The context of developing Countries

for Humanity
International,) closed this
session bringing the point

of view of Habitat for Humanity International, whose key initiatives are: building houses, housing microfinance, market development, rebuilding after natural disasters, residential energy efficiency, awareness raising and advocacy. In Europe it is mainly based in Bulgaria, Hungary, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania and it has fundraising offices in Western Europe.

He showed some figures before and after Covd-19. Before the pandemic 1.6 billion people lived without adequate shelter, 50% of the urban population lived in informal settlements and 2 billion people lived without safe water supply. The pandemic has of course increased the systemic weaknesses of the informal settlements, which already had health issues and inadequate living conditions. The health and economic crisis brought by

Covid-19 thus exacerbated the difficulties of the most vulnerable categories.

"Housing has become the front line defense against the Coronavirus. Home has rarely been more of a life-or-death situation".

(cit. Leilani Farha, former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing).

Habitat for Humanity published a Policy Brief²² in May 2020 with some recommendations and how to achieve them:

- 1. protect the adequacy, affordability, accessibility, and stability of housing.
- 2. address the immediate financial needs of individuals and ensure the sustainability of housing construction markets.
- 3. address the specific housing needs of informal settlements.
- 4. Ensure inclusion and representation of communities in Covid-19 responses and plans.
- 5. Recovering from crisis: building a more secure future through housing.

COVID-19-and-beyond.pdf

²²https://www.habitat.org/sites/default/files/docume nts/Policy-brief_housing-in-the-time-of-

22nd of February 2021

♦♦♦ The consequences of Covid-19 for sustainable communities and housing, ENHR seminars♦♦♦ Post-Covid cities ♦♦♦ Morphological periods and territorial cycles ♦♦♦ The use of second homes and hot tap water ♦♦♦ Habitability conditions in vulnerable communities ♦♦♦ The role of NGOs ♦♦♦ Food accessibility♦♦♦



The consequences of Covid-19 for sustainable communities and housing

On the 22nd of February 2021, the WG "Towards Sustainable Communities and Housing: actors, interventions and solutions"²³ and the WG "Energy Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability of Housing"²⁴, held a joint workshop on the consequences of the pandemic on the sustainable communities and housing.²⁵.

Sustainable communities and Covid-19

Nessa Winston (University College Dublin, Ireland) opened the seminar with a presentation on sustainable communities, defined as "places which meet the basic human needs of the present so they can participate in society, while also protecting Earth's lifesupport system, on which the welfare of current and future generations depends". These communities are safe and inclusive, well planned, built, and managed. Their core aim is providing high quality of life with equality of access to services for all. They touch upon

different dimensions, but in her presentation, Nessa Winston focused especially on the environmental and social aspects.

The pandemic is certainly affecting people's preferences over the housing location and built form. The first question is thus what the positive and negative environmental and social impacts of these changes are, in terms of affordability, integration, quality of life, etc.

The second question is whether the pressure for public green and blue infrastructure will increase and how to collect community resources for all. Finally, the third question regards transports: will transport poverty increase? Will public transport use decline and private transport increase?

For each of the issues Covid arises, social inequalities will probably be exacerbated, and the possible outcomes might be higher criminalization, social disorder, and climate change deniers.

In her paper "Sustainable communities? A comparative perspective on urban housing in the EU"²⁶, these issues are further analysed.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/ 09654313.2013.788612

^{23 &}lt;u>https://enhr.net/towards-sustainable-communities-and-housing-actors-interventions-and-solutions/</u>

^{24 &}lt;u>https://enhr.net/energy-efficiency-and-environmental-sustainability-of-housing/</u>

²⁵ https://enhr.net/online-seminars/

Post-Covid cities: an international survey

Piero Perulli (University of Eastern Piedmont and FEEM, Italy) presented a qualitative survey made last year in the framework of FEEM foundation²⁷, addressing 20 big cities in the world through an elaborated questionnaire. In the second phase they looked for convergence of the scholars on a number of common topics. They found five kinds of convergence:

- 1. importance of local perspective for cities, which will be more local in nature: more localized production functions, supply chains. On the other side, globality will remain in terms of global online interactions, office works, education.
- 2. non-motorized individual transport: mobility will change in a striking way according to their survey.
- 3. local governance and decentralized governance will become more important.
- 4. trend of decentralization of urbanization processes will take place.
- 5. fear that tourism will not go back to prepandemic levels.

In conclusion, according to their survey, we are going to a new historical age of *gloacality* and *glocal* cities (local + global).

Covid-19 and Sustainability

Annagret Haase (UFZ Helmholtz, Germany) presented to the audience her research experiences and reflections over the pandemic and sustainability.

According to her, Covid-19 showed what is not functioning from the social and justice point of view. It reinforces inequalities, exacerbates gaps and has the potential to amplify persistent social differences, leading to more inequality in the long run.

The problem is that both the pandemic itself and the political response to it were

inequitable, making vulnerable categories even more vulnerable. In fact, the interdependence between factors makes the situation even more dramatic for people with low income or in a marginalized position. Therefore, the question is how to build urban resilience also from a social point of view: we have to create more inclusive and sustainable policies.

Morphological periods and territorial cycles

Alessandro Camiz (Özyeğin University, Turkey) made a comparison between the end of the Roman Empire and Covid-19 in terms of the effects on the morphological periods or territorial cycles.

The Italian school of Urban morphology, based in the School of Architecture, is looking at the transformation of the territorial structure, while the Geographical School is looking at changing patterns of urban areas, which are different sides of the same phenomenon.

A territorial cycle is characterized by specific architectural composition and building typology.

As in the case of the end of the Roman Empire, Covid-19 can end the actual morphological period and territorial cycle. In fact, when the Roman Empire collapsed, big cities and main roads were abandoned, retail patterns changed and new buildings types emerged, leading to a new territorial cycle and morphological period. Covid-19 is expected to cause similar patterns and the one already visible is the change in the retail sector. There is also an existing trend of people moving away from big cities to close-by rural areas or suburbs.

Finally, he promoted the International conference on Pandemics and urban form

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²⁷ https://www.feem.it/en/

which they are organizing for the fall 2021²⁸ in Istanbul, for which they are looking for partners and co-organizers.



Use of second homes in Turkey

Ebru Ergoz (Özyeğin University, Turkey), briefly explained the

use of second homes during the pandemic in Turkey and its impact on household energy use.

In Turkey, second homes are located in rural, coastal or mountain areas. They are usually smaller than the main house, but with bigger open areas, which is why many people moved there during the pandemic. Since usually there is no proper heating or thermal insulation in second homes, people started to buy stoves and need to use energy sources to heat the house or install solar panels.

These issues should be further explored through empirical evidence in the months ahead. Potential research questions could be:

- how the household's energy behaviour and use changed in the second homes?
- if society is likely to experience other pandemics, what would be the impacts of adaptation of the second homes to primary homes?
- what are the impacts on different household groups?
- what will be the impact of migration from big cities to small cities in terms of sustainability and energy use?



Second homes in Denmark

Jesper Ole Jensen (BUILD, Aalborg University), presented the development

of the Danish market of second homes during Covid-19 lockdown. In Denmark, 4,5% of the population owns a second home and the sales of second homes exploded during the lockdown, registering a 90% increase in sales, while sales-prices have increased by 12%. The first housing market, instead, has not yet been too much affected.

Those 4,5% of the Danish population tend to have second homes on the coast and already own a big first house, so this is a trend which applies only for privileged people.

His research team is looking at different hypothesis:

- Have the increased sales changed the pattern of ownership? Before the pandemic, the owners of second homes were mainly 60+ or families, while now there are more buyers in the 30+ segment.
- Has second homes access or ownership provided a free-space during the lockdown? Usually, second homes are used during holidays or weekends, but with the pandemic their use seems increasing.
- Does the pandemic emphasize existing social and housing inequalities? The answer is affirmative, but long-term data are still lacking.
- Are there regional consequences of this new pattern? Many peripherical regions, where most second homes are located, might benefit from more visitors, but the sustainability implications remain to be seen.

Finally, regarding the research methods, they are making register-based analysis, surveys amongst second homeowners and studies in geographical locations.

Improving habitability conditions in vulnerable communities

Sara Vima Grau (Universitat Politècnica de

Catalunya, Spain) underlined

the urgency of improving the habitability conditions in vulnerable communities.

She started this research before the Covid

²⁸ https://www.ozyegin.edu.tr/en/events/13176

pandemic, but now the pressure on this issue has significantly increased. Before the pandemic, her research team was doing some field working in the centre of Barcelona, where there is high pressure on the urban space, also due to tourism and the densification in the streets. This has changed drastically with Covid-19.

They are now focused on housing conditions and opinions in the community, and they found out that the importance of common spaces increased (entry ways to the dwelling, rooftops, etc.). Possible overcrowding is another crucial issue, together with the different use of balconies, which varies according to the urban environment (noise, pedestrians, etc.).

The last issue they are researching is the type of dwellings. For example, ground floor dwellings are often poor in light or come with humidity and ventilation problems, but they are highly appreciated by people with low mobility or disabilities.

Covid-19 effects on the role of NGOs

Hanna Szemzo (Metropolitan Research Institute, Hungary) is researching the changing role of public funding and NGOs after the Covid-19 pandemic. Her project is named "Open Heritage"²⁹, focuses on the re-use of marginalized areas and works closely with NGOs.

NGOs are very important for this project because they are locally based, have a strong relationship with the communities of these marginalizes and small-scale areas, have a heritage value and allow an effective bottomup approach in the project.

NGOs tend to be very fragile, so they have to diversify as much as possible and to have various income sources (crowdfunding, volunteering, etc.), but Covid-19 made clear

that public funding is essential for NGOs. In fact, alternative funding is only able to cover a fraction of the costs and it is scarce in Covid and post-Covid times. NGOs could now adopt different strategies: adapt their activities (downscale, focus on only one core activity), diversify their activities (but this needs long-term planning) and create wider networks (which is also a long-term strategy).

Cluster housing in Zurich

Maryam Khatibi (Politecnico di Milano) is studying whether the cluster housing in Zurich could be a sustainable approach to blend living space with working space. It is a new typology of housing, first created in Zurich in 2011 and it is based on smaller houses with more common areas and outdoor common spaces (kitchen, dining rooms, etc.). With the pandemic, the access to these housing is restricted in Zurich, but it is important that they keep up their resilience.

She created a "Building Occupants User Survey" using descriptive words game, providing participants with images of different spaces of the house and descriptive adjectives that they have to match. Her survey will be published soon.

Food access of vulnerable groups in London, Sydney and Wuhan



Catalina Turcu (University

College London) studied the local/community responses to Covid-19 in terms of food accessibility (both physically and economically) for vulnerable categories in three big cities: London, Sydney and Wuhan. Her paper will soon be published in Urban Studies³⁰ and the research was conducted together with UCL, the North South Wales University and the

²⁹ https://openheritage.eu/

³⁰ https://www.urbanstudiesonline.com/journal/

Huazhong University of Science and Technology, using desktop reviews, policy analysis, community works and 30 interviews with stakeholders in the three cities.

In all cities food insecurity at the community level was experienced, despite good food availability at the national level; existing vulnerabilities are now worse off and new vulnerabilities emerged. With regard to the local solutions and the governance implemented, in Wuhan, an interventionist approach was chosen (state-led communitybased quarantining facilities were created and food was delivered door to door). In London, a laissez-faire approach was predominant: civil society was the one leading food initiatives and state-led initiatives came only in later stages. Finally, in Sydney, a partnership approach was established, and responses were led by the state, businesses, and civil society.

The role of the urban form and housing was found as relevant in the food accessibility. In fact, food drop- off was easier in Wuhan, where many gated residential areas exist. On the contrary, it was more difficult in London or Sydney where there is compared to Wuhan medium-low density living.

Finally, the role of technology is also important, notably in the contact tracing systems, which raise privacy and ethical issues, and online platforms providing food (available in all the three cities). These platforms, however, offer food at a higher price, raise issues around health and hygiene standards and need to be regulated.

♦♦♦ How Covid-19 has affected older adults and their housing conditions**♦♦♦ ♦♦♦** The case of: New Zealand, Japan, Finland, Sweden, and Spain **♦♦♦**

How Covid-19 has affected older adults and their housing conditions



On the 23rd of February 2021, the ENHR working group "Housing and living conditions of ageing populations"³¹, held a three-hourseminar under the title "How Covid-19 has affected older adults and their housing conditions". **Marianne Abramsson** and **Bianca Deusdad**, the coordinators of this working group, opened the seminar providing an overview of the topic, the speakers, and the presentations.

The case of New Zealand

Bev James (Public Policy and Research Ltd, Wellington, New Zealand) witnessed the situation in New Zealand, where the peak of Covid-19 cases was reached between March and April 2020, four levels of restrictions were put in place and a contract tracing app is still used by the population.

Many housing and income-related support measures were introduced starting from March 2020, such as: rent increase freeze (until September 2020), no tenancy terminations (until June 2020), mortgage repayment deferral (until March 2021), relocation of

homeless people in temporary housing, double winter energy payment for seniors and beneficiaries (from May to October 2020), income relief for those who lost their jobs because of the pandemic, benefit increases and business support measures.

He presented a research paper³² about older people's lived experiences of their housing during the pandemic and what we can learn about the protective role of housing and the support to seniors. His research is based on interviews completed with 15 community organizations and housing providers supporting older people in 8 locations. He is currently conducting more interviews with people aged 60+ living independently.

The themes that emerged from the interviews are:

- food security: little food in reserve, seniors unable to buy food online, rely on shopping done or food prepared by carers or relatives.
- accessing home-based care: few carers available during the pandemic, some care services were suspended in the course of restrictions, some seniors chose not to have carers due to fear of infection.
- accessing information in the digital world: seniors are less digitalized than younger people, they lack digital access to information and rely on community newspapers, which were suspended.
- seniors' diverse lockdown living environments: some stayed at home, others moved to stay with family, in other cases the family moved in, others became homeless. The

_spaces/James 2020 housing as a base for care_and_support_covid19.pdf

³¹ https://enhr.net/housing-and-living-conditionsof-ageing-populations/

³²https://www.buildingbetter.nz/publications/homes

main issues were crowding, stress, loneliness, disconnection, and boredom.

Organizations were kev contacts and information sources for seniors. They improved the communication and coordination and addressed newly identified seniors' needs, re-designing existing practices and introducing new practices to cope with the pandemic.

Some preliminary conclusions of his research show that: longstanding problems in the housing systems are worse in the pandemic; staying in familiar surroundings is important for independence and for coping with uncertainty; tenure security is crucial and house size, design, location, and performance can be barriers or enablers to resilience (closeness to essential services, adequate space, energy efficiency, access to outdoor spaces).



The case of Japan

Yoko Matsuoko (Tokyo Kasei University, Japan) presented the Japanese situation. Japan

experienced three waves of Covid-19 and its national infection control measures have been quite loose.

Her research team focuses on a social housing development, Toyama Heights, with 57% ageing rate in Shinjuku Ward: one of the most convenient and exciting areas in Tokyo. The target of the research is older people who are participating in the community activity "Café AUNET" and volunteers who are helping these activities in the social housing development. "AUNET" means "meeting and network" in Japanese and "Café AUNET" is held every Saturday, offering exercises, quizzes, singing, chattering and leisure activities. Café AUNET started in May 2018, commissioned by Shinkuku Ward as a program under the long-term care insurance scheme, but activities

were suspended with the pandemic. AUNET then started to develop community-based activities under the motto "Stay connected even when we are apart". For example, they are writing and distributing the Group's newsletter and medical face masks and they are planning a phone-call program.

In June 2020, her research team conducted semi-structured interviews with participants and volunteers of the program during the suspension, trying to understand how social housing residents coped with the situation, to compare how responses differed between participants and volunteers and to examine relationships between their responses and the characteristics of social housing.

Results show that participants before Covid-19 had an active life, but then no activities, interaction or excursions were longer possible. They started watching more TV, gain weight, got ill, but eventually were able to learn from Covid and build resilience. Volunteers, instead, reported that their life completely changed with the pandemic. They developed new ways of enjoying life (exercises, cooking activities, etc.) and built stronger connections with the community members via internet.

"The restrictions have reminded me how precious the ordinary life is".

The research showed some common responses by both users and volunteers regarding resilience and the realization of experiencing the pandemic (importance of the community and value of life). Instead, participants reported fear of death and physical deterioration, while only volunteers reported that they started using more Zoom or other apps to strengthen relationships.

In conclusion, while older adults have been severely affected by the pandemic, the study showed their resilience in their community and their ability to maintain their well-being. Since many social housing complexes in Japan are

extremely old, they are mostly occupied by long-term residents, which seems to facilitate the development of strong community ties in the social housing, such as AUNET's activities.

The social housing estate, with spacious premises and nature surroundings, provided the environment for the residents to maintain their well-being through walking and other outdoor activities in a later stage of the pandemic. Finally, the use of ICT benefited only younger groups (up to 70 years-old).

However, the study refers to the first wave of Covid-19 and was conducted only with participants in one apartment complex, so results cannot be too generalized.

How the lives of the elderly have changed



Hiroko Mizumura (Tokyo University, Japan) concluded the Japanese picture presenting her research on the change in elderly lives amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Her research team interviewed some staff of elderly housing, day service centres and home visit care facilities in Tokyo.

In the Elderly housing, residents changed their behaviours: spent more time watching TV, stayed longer in their room, had fewer baths or clothes' changes, tried to avoid touching the things in the housing, etc. The interpersonal situation changed as well: conversations between residents have increased and communication with family members happened through remote devices.

In day service centres some avoided conversations, became more violent, critical, and pessimistic. Many complained the stress of

not being able to meet their families and experienced loneliness.

In home visit care facilities, many suspected caregiver infections and avoided conversations with them.

In all the three facilities changes in physical and mental conditions were experienced: bad sleep, weight loss, frustration, stress, anger, depression, etc.

In conclusion, it is important to keep strong interpersonal and health status checks and to reconsider care plans towards elderly people.

The case of Finland

The Finnish situation was presented by **Outi Jolanki** (CoEAgeCare, Tampere University & Jyväskylä University, Finland).



There were many regional spikes, contained quickly also in care homes. In spring people 70+ were recommended to avoid meetings, public spaces, shops, etc. and care homes residents were not allowed to receive visitors until autumn. This caused suffering and decline in mental and physical health and it was deemed illegal after family members' complaints.

In Finland most older people (93%) live in ordinary, private (usually old) dwellings, mostly in rural or semi-rural areas. Residential care services (with shared facilities, support staff but individual premises) and care homes (with 24/7 care staff) are also offered.

Her research team conducted several interviews with elderly people and found out that few of them were hospitalized or infected with the virus and that the most important consequences of the pandemic are linked to social and mental aspects, while the overall quality of life has not declined. For some of them there was little or no change in daily life, while others experienced profound declines in social contacts, mental and physical health. Finally, the perception of sheltered housing was different among participants, who

described them both as "safe heaven", "social void" and "social hub".

The lessons to be learnt for future crises are:

- importance of personalities, lifestyles, and resources: some cope better than others with isolation, notably the wealthier ones that could enjoy living in detached homes or summer cottages.
- places matter: accessible houses, access to green spaces, parks, nature, etc. provide support to physical and mental well-being of the elderly.
- technology offered partial solutions to social needs.
- diversity of older people's lifestyles and resources, as well as their social needs, have to be taken seriously in preparing for future crises.



The case of Sweden

Maria Brendén (Linköping and Stockholm University) presented her paper³³ on the residential context and

Covid-19 mortality among adults 70+ in Stockholm.

Older individuals are overrepresented among deaths due to Covid-19 and both researchers and media emphasize the importance of living arrangements or household composition in this trend.

Her research team studied individual-level population data to examine how living arrangements and neighbourhood characteristics are independently associated with Covid-19 mortality among the elderly. This allowed them to test the importance of crowded housing, multigenerational households, and neighbourhood population density on Covid-19 mortality.

They took a sample of 70+ individuals living in Stockholm and made separate Cox regression³⁴ analysis for dying from Covid-19 and from all other causes between March 12 and May 8.

They found out that individuals living in spacious houses risk less to be infected, while individuals living with people below 66 have higher risks of getting the virus, while there is no increase of dying from other causes. Living in a single household, or in care homes, instead, brings a higher risk of dying of Covid-19 or of other causes. Surprisingly, no difference between multifamily houses and single-family housing was found.

Regarding neighbourhoods: the denser, the higher the risk of dying of Covid-19, which increases in neighbourhoods with high spread of the virus.

In conclusion, strategies to protect individuals in care homes, in densely populated areas and in families with multigenerational living arrangements may increase survival among the older population.

The case of SällBo collaborative housing, Sweden

Ivette Aroyo (Lund University, Sweden), referring to a recently published paper³⁵, witnessed the SällBo collaborative housing experience, which links together companionship and living. It is a new way to address the housing needs of older adults, but also refugees and young locals. Residents live in private small apartments and share large common spaces (lobby, dining and living room). At the moment all the apartments are occupied, mostly by older people.

³³

https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhl/article/PII S2666-7568(20)30016-7/fulltext

³⁴ statistical method for investigating the effect of several variables upon the time a specified event happens

³⁵https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/publications/social -integration-through-social-connection-in-everydaylife-residents-experiences-during-the-covid19pandemic-in-sallbo-collaborative-housingsweden(757ac0b7-0270-4c7e-97a4de85a054564e).html

The aim of the research she presented was exploring the housing integration nexus in SällBo before and during the pandemic.

They found out that SällBo combines safe housing for older adults and municipal public housing, making affordable housing more accessible. During the pandemic, all organized activities were stopped, and social distancing was recommended. Residents continued to look for alternative ways to continue social interaction, sharing and helping each other in a safe way.

SällBo thus keeps offering opportunities to interact, socialize, integrate, and bring about social change. Social integration happens through encounters in everyday life in common spaces and enhances the well-being of residents. Finally, no relevant Covid-19 infections were found in these housings because residents were able to contain and isolate infected people.

In conclusion, studying coping responses with the Covid-19 pandemic in everyday life in different types of housing will contribute to rethinking post-pandemic housing and to fostering a more integrated community.

The case of Spain

Bianca Deusdad (Rovira i Virgili University, Tarragona, Spain), presented the Covid-19 and Nursing Homes' crisis in Spain.



The causes of the high mortality and contagious in Spanish nursing homes are the scarcity of resources, the housing conditions, the age and health condition of the residents and the lack of protection equipment for professionals, who thus easily spread the virus in these facilities.

The system was precarious even before the pandemic, also because of the insufficient development of Integrated Care Electronic Health records. Spanish Nursing homes are now run by the Health Department and Primary Care and there is an urgent need for more coordination between Health and social services. The digitalization of this sector should increase and the housing conditions in nursing homes should be improved, allowing for less institutionalized patterns (e.g., more single rooms, no segregation by floors, etc.).

The Covid-19 crisis should be taken as an opportunity to reform this sector and implement specific laws for protecting older adults 'rights and wellbeing.

♦♦♦ COVID-19 and Housing in Southern Europe♦♦♦ The Rental housing and policy responses in Barcelona Metropolitan area ♦♦♦ Covid-19 and short-term rentals in Portugal ♦♦♦ Pandemic-induced transformations in the landscape of digitally mediated rentals in Greece ♦♦♦ Southern European housing in pandemic and post-pandemic times

COVID-19 and Housing in Southern Europe

On the 26th of February, the ENHR working group "Southern European Housing"³⁶ organized and hosted a workshop on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the housing markets in Southern Europe and its consequences in the long term.

The Rental housing in Barcelona Metropolitan area and policy responses



City of Barcelona, Spain

Jordi Bosch and Carles Donat (Metropolitan Housing Observatory of Barcelona³⁷) witnessed the effects of Covid-19 on the rental housing market in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona and the consequent housing policy measures adopted to support vulnerable tenants.

In this area, the housing bubble evolved until 2007 and the economy started recovering from the financial crisis only in 2014. From 2015 there has been an increase in housing prices

much more rapid than the increase in households' income. The imbalance between demand and supply is the cause of these high prices.

Spain is one of the countries where households spend a larger share of their income on housing, so the pandemic deeply affected their lives. Through the Royal Decree-law 11/2020 of 31st of March, the government adopted additional urgent measures in the social and economic areas to deal with the pandemic. Some of these measures were meant to support tenants and include: the suspension of the eviction proceedings, the extension of residential rental agreements, a moratorium on rental debt and financial support for vulnerable tenants (micro-credit schemes or housing benefits).

The extraordinary extension of residential rental agreements can last for 6 months and must be accepted by the landlord. The moratorium on rental debt, instead, is applied automatically in the case of large companies or public housing entities.

Between May and July 2020, the Metropolitan Housing Observatory of Barcelona carried out a survey on the negotiations between landlords and tenants during the pandemic³⁸. 26% of households negotiated their rental status. 34% requested an extension of residential rental agreements; 23% a

³⁶ https://enhr.net/southern-european-housing/

³⁷ https://www.ohb.cat/?lang=en#page-top

³⁸ https://www.ohb.cat/wpcontent/uploads/2021/01/LAB-Enquesta-OHB-Covid-19_Demandahabitatge.pdf

moratorium; 39% a rental reduction and 25% received a rental reduction/moratorium proposal from the owners.

Even if the extension of residential rental agreement must be always accepted, it was denied in 32% of cases, breaking the law.

68% reached an agreement on the rental extension, while 55,2% successfully obtained a payment postponement or rent reduction.

Results indicate that the success of the negotiations is not inked to which part took the lead, whether tenants or households.

At the beginning of the pandemic the rental housing market of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona saw a sharp decrease in supply and demand. Then, the supply side increased while the demand remained stable. Right now, the demand is decreasing, waiting for a price adjustment. The demand average price has been kept constant, while the supply average price is declining slowly.

They finally drew six conclusions:

- 1- The Catalan and Spanish housing policies are structurally weaker than most European Countries.
- 2- there are increasing barriers to accessing and maintaining housing stability, especially among tenants.
- 3- need to adopt extraordinary measures in the pandemic crisis.
- 4- the housing policy for tenants are based on a short-term approach, limited, and focussed on large landlords and extremely vulnerable tenants.
- 5- Only a limited number of renegotiations of rental agreement conditions were successful.
- 6- The evolution of the rental housing market in Barcelona Metropolitan Area shows adjustments between demand and supply. However, affordability issues are increasing among tenants.

Covid-19 and short-term rentals in Portugal



City of Lisbon, Portugal

Sandra Marques Pereira (DINÂMIA'CET-ISCTE³⁹, University Institute of Lisbon) explained that the pandemic is such a transforming event that can "emotionalize" research. They held an online survey between July and October in Portugal, which was sent by emails to short term rental title holders and managers. It was a phase of emotional relaxation (in summer measures were eased, cases decreased, etc.). They chose a high qualified sample, with high economic and occupational dependence.

A territorial diversification of data depending on the housing market, the tourism profile, the economic structure, etc, emerged from the survey. There is also an uneven geography of loss: cities like Lisbon or Porto experience extremely high losses in short term rental market, while rural areas experienced a much smaller loss.

Results show a short-term rental predominance also in the future and a higher relevance of mid-term renting. However, in the cities, midterm and long-term private renting are preferred.

People that reject long term rental do so mainly because of their income reduction, fear of tax disadvantages, loss confidence in the state, unsuitability of the property for long term use (e.g., too small). Instead, some reasons to prefer long term rental are the compensation of losses of short-term rental, less unpredictability, less expenditure, and more stability. Finally, the survey highlighted good expectations of return to normal before the end of 2021. This optimism is more evident

³⁹ https://www.dinamiacet.iscte-iul.pt/

in Lisbon and Porto.

In conclusion, Perreira stated it is wiser to identify the factors and risks that may condition the different directions and the most solid trends in the short-term rental market, rather than trying to anticipate prospective views.

Pandemic-induced transformations in the landscape of digitally mediated rentals in Greece



City of Athens, Greece

Dimitris Pettas (Marie Curie Postdoctoral Researcher of Technical University Berlin) explained that before the pandemic, the short-term rental increased a lot in Greece, especially in Athens and in touristic areas. In fact, Airbnb listings in Greek regions almost doubled every year constantly from 2013. In 2019, the growth rate of Airbnb listing was reversed due to increasing professionalization (amateur renters could no longer compete with the prices of professionals), economies of scale, stabilization of high rent prices in conventional rent market and stabilization of demand.

The pandemic severely hit the short-term rental (STR) market. Restrictive measures concerning international travels were introduced, leading to an 80% reduction in Airbnb Bookings in Europe during the first week of March 2020. When travel restrictions were relaxed, bookings started to increase again, especially in new popular destinations, such as Larissa, South Kynouria or Parga, while country-wide there was a decrease of bookings by 45,61%.

3000 dwellings were withdrawn from the STR market in Athens, but not in affordable prices.

The STR market proved to be resilient and seems to have the capacity and flexibility to accommodate newly-emerged demands and preferences on the tourists'end. Some qualitative shifts will probably endure, such as the decentralization from urban to rural areas, the increased demand for domestic destinations and limited demand for traditional touristic and overcrowded ones.

Greece is now trying to attract digital workers providing digital visa, investing in digital infrastructures, and offering low taxes and costs of life. The target is to attract 100.000 "digital tourists" (high income remote workers) that could contribute 1.6 billion euros to the Greek economy. Mid-term rentals addressed to high-earning remote workers can become an appealing alternative for former or current STR hosts, especially in Athens. The infrastructure is already in place: fullyequipped dwellings, hosts 'skills and experience. Dwellings can be easily reallocated from short-term to mid-term rentals.

Finally, some open research questions for the future could be:

- could these trends pave the way for the unfolding of processes of transnational gentrification?
- How the high levels of mobility among skilful workers will affect income inequalities?
- How cities can respond to these new challenges, while dealing with the multileveled consequences of the pandemic?
- what will happen with former office spaces?

Southern European housing in pandemic and post-pandemic times



In the second part of the webinar Jesús Leal (Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the Complutense University of Madrid) and Thomas Maloutas (Emeritus professor of Social Geography at the Harokopion University of Athens) reacted on the issues of the discussion.

They both stated that after the pandemic, the society will change in many aspects. Inequalities are likely to increase, and people will probably look more for peripherical cities, in order to spend less. Moreover, the increase of online retail and teleworking have been enormous, causing deep societal changes. Also, during the pandemic the demand for rent decreased because of students and workers that went back home, no longer needing to live close to their Universities or offices.

The long-term impact of the pandemic will depend on its duration and on the size and quality of policies to regulate its consequences.

In southern Europe housing systems are similar, for example in homeownership, which is protecting the tenure of low-income groups but at the same time it is marginalizing those who depend on rents. Access to housing has been increasingly class-divided and the consistent immigration flows have aggravated the situation.

After the pandemic, policies enabling the boosting of economy will prevail on policies guaranteeing affordability of housing and support of vulnerable groups, deteriorating

the conditions of the most in need. In fact, targeted emergency measures were taken during the pandemic, but they are expensive, and they will be withdrawn as soon as the situation normalizes: they are not structural measures and do not tackle social issues in the long run. Addressing the housing affordability issue at EU level is important and it will especially help countries with limited welfare provisions, like the Southern European ones.

Thomas Maloutas finally commented the EP "Report on access to decent and affordable housing for all⁴⁰", on the one hand it addresses housing issues as emergency issues, focusing especially on deep poverty and homelessness and how they were increased by the pandemic. On the other hand, it addresses long lasting issues politically accepted by wider audiences, such as energy sustainable housing, and it mentions core issues on Housing affordability. All these items coexist in this report and need to be implemented, which is a political challenge for the states.

In the afternoon, ENHR held the closing session of this series of seminars, in which the main points of each workshop were summarized and discussed. Ivan Tosics (ENHR vice chair) drew conclusions explaining that there are currently more questions than answers. At the moment we can just raise hypothesis and research further on their developments. The seminars were a great starting point for further discussions on post-pandemic housing issues. The ENHR Conference in Nicosia⁴¹ (30 August-2 September 2021) will be the perfect occasion to address some of these questions and to follow-up on all the research and research ideas that were presented in the different webinars.

^{40&}lt;u>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/</u> A-9-2020-0247_EN.html

⁴¹ https://cyprusconferences.org/enhr2021/





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International Union of Tenants Association Internationale des Locataires