



◆◆◆ Hearing of Commissioner-designate Dan Jørgensen ◆◆◆

During the hearing of Commissioner-designate for Energy and Housing, **Dan Jørgensen**, held in a joint session of the Employment and Social Affairs (**EMPL**) and Industry, Research and Energy (**ITRE**) Committees, numerous MEPs questioned the former Danish Minister for Energy on the new European affordable housing plan and his proposed solutions for tackling Europe’s ongoing housing crisis.



In its opening remarks Jørgensen proposed three principles that will shape his tenure: **Need for Structural Change; People’s Needs First; Inclusivity in Policymaking**. Moreover, Jørgensen recognized housing as a core concern, applauding Parliament for prioritizing this issue. He highlighted the severe impact of rising rents and housing scarcity on ordinary citizens, describing it as a “right” for everyone to access affordable, decent housing. Key components of his housing strategy include: Partnering with stakeholders to create a comprehensive European Affordable Housing Plan, aiming to address construction strategies and enhance funding through the European Investment Bank (EIB) and cohesion funds; by boosting renewable energy sources and

improving energy efficiency, Jørgensen aims to reduce household energy bills.

During the three rounds of questions, **Gabriele Bischoff (S&D - DE)** pressed on the need to increase investments to bridge the housing gap and meet the needs of low- and middle-income groups and asked how the new commissioner intends to fight against speculation in the housing market. Jørgensen responded, stressing that affordable housing is critical as nearly 9% of EU citizens currently spend over 40% of their income on housing. He committed to exploring expanded funding through EIB, doubling the funding for housing within the cohesion fund and revising state-aid rules to support broader public investment beyond social housing. Jørgensen stated his intention to collaborate with Commissioner-designate Teresa Ribera to address housing market speculation, though he stressed that regulatory actions are often better managed at the national level. **Michel Bloss (G/EFA - DE)** then highlighted the urgency of combating climate change and reducing energy bills, questioning Jørgensen on supporting community-based renewable energy and binding EU efficiency targets. Jørgensen expressed strong support for energy communities, noting that over 2 million people are involved in such initiatives. He aims to enable “prosumers,” citizens who produce and consume their own energy, which he believes fosters energy autonomy. **Leila Chaibi (The Left - FR)** raised what she called the “taboo” of state-aid restrictions on affordable housing investments. She questioned whether Jørgensen would enable more direct investment without regulatory interference.

Chaibi also stressed the importance of further action on Short-Term Rentals (STR) and asked for a concrete legislative initiative. Jørgensen acknowledged the need to reconsider state-aid rules, a process he would pursue in partnership with Spanish Minister Teresa Ribera. He also emphasized a need to tackle energy poverty, noting that over 10% of EU citizens couldn't afford heating last winter—a figure he deemed unacceptable. On STR, the commissioner-designate emphasized the need for stronger regulations, which drive up rents and lead to overtourism, making housing unaffordable for local workers. While new STR regulations will increase transparency by 2026, he stressed that further action is required in collaboration with the EP, mayors, and regional bodies. **Birgitte Van den Berg (RE - NL)** called for urgent reform of state-aid rules by 2025. Jørgensen expressed commitment to a timely revision, stressing collaboration with Ribera to address these concerns but cautioned that while EU actions are essential, much of the responsibility rests with Member States. **Goran Bosanac (G/EFA – HR)** raised concerns about short-term rental platforms inflating local rent prices. Jørgensen noted that STRs can exacerbate housing shortages and lead to overtourism. He pledged to introduce transparency measures and collaborate with cities on more comprehensive regulatory approaches by 2026. **Aodhán Ó Ríordáin (S&D – IE)** queried Jørgensen's commitment to addressing homelessness, suggesting "Housing First" models as a viable solution. Jørgensen affirmed that homelessness is a priority, advocating for a coordinated EU strategy that includes best practices sharing and expanded funding. **L'ubika Karvasova (RE – SK, REGIO Committee)** raised concerns about limited Cohesion Fund impact on housing and asked how doubling these funds would avoid detracting from regional goals. Jørgensen acknowledged funding limitations and highlighted the

upcoming mid-term Cohesion Fund review. Partnering with the EIB and revising State-aid rules will help mobilize private investment, as EU funds alone are insufficient. **Anna Cavazzini (G/EFA – DE, IMCO Committee)** asked for specifics on the housing strategy timeline and addressing the impact of short-term rentals (STR) on affordability. The Commissioner-designate noted the varied local views on STR but confirmed that rising rent prices are a serious concern. He plans to prioritize data collection and transparency to support Member States in implementing rental regulations. **Aurore Lalucq (S&D – FR, ECON Committee)** asked about attracting private investment through the EU's housing platform. Dan Jørgensen pointed to the EIB's experience in social housing projects and emphasized collaboration with stakeholders. EU funds alone won't cover the full cost, but the EU can de-risk investments to draw private capital. **João Oliveira (Left – PT)** urged action against real estate speculation and called for additional EU and Member State funding and regulation in housing and energy markets. The answer agreed that speculation likely distorts the housing market, with potential remedies at the national level, such as mandating social housing in new projects, alongside the EU's broader funding strategy. Finally, **Thomas Tobe (EPP – SE)** inquired about balancing EU oversight with Member State autonomy in the affordable housing plan. Jørgensen stressed the importance of subsidiarity, noting the EU's role in sharing best practices, offering technical support, and monitoring through the European Semester, while Member States retain primary responsibility.

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