



International Union of Tenants

Association Internationale des Locataires

- Consultative status with UN Economic and Social Council
- Participatory Status with Council of Europe

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Press Release

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International Union of Tenants (IUT) Calls for Socially Conditioned Investment and Strong Tenant Protections at EU Informal Ministerial Meeting for Housing

NICOSIA, CYPRUS – As EU Ministers gathered in Nicosia on 11-12 May 2026 for an informal meeting to discuss a “common European approach” to the housing crisis, the International Union of Tenants (IUT) issued a firm call for structural reforms that prioritize people over profit.

Representing tenants across the continent, IUT Board Member and Director of the Dutch Union of Tenants (*Woonbond*), Mr. **Zeno Winkels**, addressed the ministers and invited stakeholders, including EU Energy and Housing Commissioner Dan Jørgensen, stressing that the challenges of the current housing crisis are already well-known — the priority now is how Europe responds. IUT proposes a clear and socially grounded direction for action.

As Mr. Winkels stated:

“If Europe is serious about housing as a fundamental right, then investment, regulation, and simplification must work together guided by clear social conditions and strong tenant protections.”

The IUT called on European leaders to adopt the following framework to restore stability and affordability to the housing market:

- **Socially Conditioned Investment:** All public and EU-supported funding must be used exclusively to deliver long-term affordability. Priority should be given to not-for-profit, public, and cooperative housing providers.
- **Housing Cost Neutrality in Renovation:** To avoid “renovictions”, IUT demands that rent increases following energy-efficiency improvements be fully offset by energy savings — ensuring climate policy aligns with social justice.

- **Permanent Affordability Safeguards:** A 20-year affordability period is not sufficient. IUT calls for publicly supported housing to remain affordable for at least 50 years, and ultimately permanently.
- **Stabilization of Rental Markets:** IUT calls for the implementation of rent regulations, long-term rental contracts as the norm, and strict limits on short-term rentals to counter speculation and the financialization of housing. Greater transparency in rental platforms further strengthens tenants' rights.
- **Social and Affordable Housing:** Member states should target a minimum 30% share of social and affordable housing in every municipality to ensure social cohesion and a stable rental sector.

As Mr. Winkels concluded:

“These solutions are not radical; they are pragmatic, fair, and necessary to restore affordability, stability, and trust in housing systems that today fail so many.”

The Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU has reaffirmed the urgency for affordable, adequate, and quality housing — IUT's proposals directly address the Presidency's own priorities of boosting supply, unlocking investment, and cutting administrative barriers, while ensuring that ambition always comes with social safeguards for tenants.

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About the International Union of Tenants (IUT)

Founded in 1926, the International Union of Tenants (IUT) is the global umbrella organization for tenant unions and associations, representing 80 organizations across 52 countries. IUT advocates for housing as a human right, security of tenure, and long-term affordability for all. For more information check: www.iut.nu

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