

Dear Housing Ministers,

We write as Greens/EFA Members of the European Parliament concerned about the housing crisis in Europe, to share with you the attached EU Housing Crisis Response Plan

Across Europe, people are finding it increasingly difficult to secure and afford a decent home. Approximately 900,000 people are homeless, and an estimated 125 million people are living in energy poverty. The annual investment gap in social and affordable housing is estimated at EUR 57 billion. Simultaneously, speculative investment is driving up housing prices. Problems associated with the affordability, supply, and quality of homes are present in every Member State. This is not an isolated issue: Europe has a housing problem, and it is time to provide European solutions.

Europe's housing problem has been made worse in recent years by successive crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy crisis. Rising inflation, declining purchasing power and reduced access to energy supply mean many people are now in a worse position when trying to access decent and affordable housing.

The COVID-19 and energy crises are also noted for the swift and unified action taken at the EU level to support citizens in need. Bold and innovative measures such as the emergency RePowerEU legislation and joint EU vaccine procurement are two examples. The scale and the pervasiveness of the housing crisis demands a similar response, before the problem deteriorates further.

These past months have also shown that Europeans are no longer willing to accept rising rent and energy costs as an inevitable reality: from Italian students who are forced to live in tents because of the lack of affordable accommodation to the regular actions of tenants' unions; people are taking to the streets to demand action.

We know that you are aware of the urgency of this situation, and we welcome your prioritisation of affordable, inclusive, and high quality housing for all within the agenda of the upcoming housing ministers meeting on March 5th in Liège, Belgium. We urge you, however, to use this moment to acknowledge the European housing crisis and, together with the Commission, decide collectively on a dedicated European agenda of targeted actions to tackle it.

We have already started to address this issue together by working on a Target to Eradicate Homelessness by 2030 and with the European Parliament's report on Access to Decent and Affordable Housing for All in 2021. In the housing manifesto attached, we outline five key areas in which we can continue this work: increasing affordability, ending homelessness, tackling short-term rentals, addressing financialisation, and promoting renovations with EU investment. Opportunities for changes in EU climate policy, monetary policy, state aid rules, the Capital Markets Union and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), will form the building blocks of this response.

Your support for these measures will be pivotal to their success, so we count on your quick and decisive action to initiate these crucial changes and support more EU level action. If successful, we may safeguard the fundamental right to housing for all, and ensure that everyone can have access to decent and affordable housing. Europe has the tools and the resources to make this happen, and the time to act is now.

We welcome your comments on the suggested measures and we look forward to close cooperation into the future to finally end the housing crisis in Europe and ensure the right to housing for everyone living in Europe for decades to come.

Yours sincerely,

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