



IUT Priorities for the European Parliament (2024-2029)

Eradicate the Housing Crisis Across Europe by 2030

The forthcoming European Parliament elections offer a crucial choice for the people of Europe. They can opt for a united, open, and peaceful Europe characterized by progress for all and rooted in the spirit of solidarity. All over Europe, tenants and home seekers are impacted by the housing crisis. One third of the European citizens which corresponds to 150 million people, live in rental housing. Rents are unaffordable, and the costs of energy in poorly insulated homes have soared. Many individuals live with crippling uncertainty due to the lack of tenant rights, while others struggle to find a place they can call home.

1) Ensuring Housing as a Fundamental Right

Housing is a fundamental right, as recognized by Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The housing crisis is not a force of nature; it is a consequence of inadequate policies at both the regional, national and EU levels.¹

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0020_EN.html

2) Set a 25% Maximum of Housing Costs by 2030

Housing costs (including energy and utilities) should be a maximum of 25% ² of the disposable income of households³, which can be reached by an effective rent regulation including rent decreases and housing allowances. Housing is for the common good and not a financial asset. Housing is for people and not for profit!

3) Setting a 30% Quota for Social and Affordable Housing by 2030

To combat the housing crisis and establish a stable, price-controlled rental housing segment, the European Parliament should consider setting minimum quota for social and affordable housing in every Member State and in every single municipality in EU of at least 30% by 2030. An EU fund for public social and affordable housing, complemented by national and regional laws and regulations, direct investments, cost subsidies and substantial tax reliefs can support this initiative.

4) Counteract Financialization

Financialization has spread into all housing markets. As a consequence, housing policy has transferred from governments to profit oriented corporate finance. We demand de-financialization in the housing sector.

Access of corporate finance to European markets has to be regulated. The EU should act, preventing monopoly and stopping the sale of the public and affordable housing stock.

An EU transparency register on real estate transactions is the first step for de-financialization.

5) Regulating Short-Term Rentals

Short term rental housing is extracting existing housing from the regular housing market, at the expense of residents. The misuse of international short-term rental platforms for profit maximizing can jeopardize tenant rights and disrupt

² EU Urban Agenda Action Plan for Affordable Housing
https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/final_action_plan_euua_housing_partnership_december_2018_1.pdf

³ In accordance with what has been nationally and internationally defined as affordable housing and rental

local communities, causing problems like displacement, touristification and gentrification. Urban planning, legislation and respective national tax regimes should address these concerns and prioritize the rights of residents and their access to affordable housing.

6) Revise EU State Aid Rules: Housing Policy as a National Competence

EU state aid rules on Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI) force Member States to limit access to social and affordable housing to socially disadvantaged groups. It is important that large parts of the population get access to it. To increase the provision of affordable housing, the SGEI decision has to be revised⁴

The housing sector operates at the crossroads of numerous policies, including energy, environment, climate, urban development, and social justice. While coordination and public funding for these policies is essential, housing policy and the mission of social housing remains a national competence, with actions taking place at the local and regional levels.

7) Promoting Tenure Neutrality - Housing for All

A tenure-neutral approach emphasizes providing a wide availability of suitable housing alternatives regardless of income, age, or gender. Rather than focusing solely on homeownership, housing policy should prioritize housing for all.

8) Respect Tenants' Rights and Guarantee Transparency in Rental Agreements

Tenants have rights that deserve protection, and the European Parliament should ensure transparent agreements, intelligible language, and the ability to challenge unfair terms. Tenants should have access to legal dispute resolution instances at no costs. Tenants also have the right to organize and demand fair treatment.

⁴ Revise recital 11 in the state aid decision

https://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/197757/197757_1155868_173_2.pdf

9) Promoting Housing Cost Neutrality in Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency in housing is essential to reduce living costs and combat climate change. The European Union aims to lead the global clean energy transition, and this includes energy-efficient housing. Consequently, the EU has to offer funding to reach this goal. It is critical to ensure that the burden of renovation costs is distributed equitably to counteract disparities between social groups. Housing cost neutrality after renovation (meaning that rent increases are at least balanced by energy savings at the same amount) and social safeguards for tenants must be the minimum requirement of all energy legislation.

10) Fair Energy Transition: Equal Access to Energy-Efficient Housing

Equal access to energy-efficient housing should be a priority for all, regardless of income. While the EU promotes a fair transition and energy efficiency measures, it must account for variations in housing conditions and energy systems between Member States. EU funding should be available where needed to support this goal, although respect for subsidiarity remains vital.

In summary, the International Union of Tenants (IUT) advocates for a comprehensive approach to housing policy in Europe that emphasizes affordability, accessibility, and tenant rights. By eradicating the housing crisis by 2030, promoting public, social, and affordable housing, and protecting tenants, the European Parliament, together with the EU Member States and the responsible housing authorities, can work towards ensuring affordable and secure housing for all citizens, fostering social cohesion and well-being across the continent.
