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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Draft Council Conclusions on the future European Affordable Housing Plan

Delegations will find attached the draft Conclusions prepared by the Presidency ahead of the Social Questions Working Party on 17 July 2025.

The future European Affordable Housing Plan

Draft Council Conclusions

WELCOMING

1. The appointment of the first ever Commissioner with responsibilities for housing and the European Commission's intention to present a European Affordable Housing Plan (EAHP) as announced in the Political Guidelines for the European Commission 2024-2029 and included in the Mission Letter to the Commissioner on Energy and Housing.
2. The European Parliament's decision to form a Special committee on the Housing Crisis and the strong engagement from the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of Regions and other stakeholders.

RECOGNISING THAT

3. While housing policies and housing systems vary between Member States, there are both common housing challenges and EU legislation that covers housing, and therefore scope for also addressing this issue at the EU level.
4. This set of conclusions will help shape the upcoming EAHP, which should be considered as the first step towards a long-term European effort on addressing housing challenges. However, further steps are likely to be required, for example on coordination, governance, analysis, sharing of knowledge and dissemination of information.

UNDERLINING THAT

5. While the European Union could play a role in alleviating housing challenges, housing policy remains a Member State competence.
6. Regions, cities, as well as local governments and authorities play a key role in implementing measures under the national framework. In some Member States, they hold primary competence for housing issues, while in others, this competence is shared with the national government.

RECALLING

7. Principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on access to housing or providing housing assistance of good quality for those in need as well as providing adequate shelter and services to the homeless in order to promote their social inclusion.
8. That housing unaffordability is an issue across the EU and affects people in all tenures as well as young people and homeless people, as stated by Eurofound in the Unaffordable and inadequate housing in Europe¹ report.
9. That growing cities represent an incredible opportunity for the development of local economies, while affordable housing requires solutions that address both supply-side challenges and demand-side challenges, including financing, construction, land use, and social inclusion, as concluded by the World Economic Forum in the Making Affordable Housing a Reality in Cities² report.
10. The previous work and discussions aimed at addressing housing issues in various fora at EU level, including the Gijón Declaration and the Liège Declaration, as well as in the informal European Housing Policy Network in which some Member States participate.

¹ Unaffordable and inadequate housing in Europe (2023, p. 55)

² Making Affordable Housing a Reality in Cities (2019)

TAKING NOTE OF

11. [Paragraph on the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee.]
12. The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) own-initiative opinion on *The role of cities and regions in the EU Affordable Housing Plan* (May 2025), which highlights the territorial diversity of the housing crisis and the need for a place-based approach to enable local and regional authorities to develop tailored responses.
13. [Paragraph on the Danish Presidency's discussion from the high-level conference on Affordable and Sustainable Housing.]
14. [Paragraph on the thematic conclusion from the informal SPC on social housing.]

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, in its announced Affordable Housing Plan, while fully respecting Member States competences and with due regard to the principle of subsidiarity, to:

15. PRESENT an EAHP that is supportive of the efforts of Member States and coherent with other wider EU policy objectives, in line with EU competences.
16. BUILD on and, where relevant, INTEGRATE initiatives in existing processes, while avoiding unnecessary duplications and additional administrative burden for the Member States.
17. PRIORITISE the following four overall themes when preparing the EAHP, without prejudging Member States SUPPORT for individual initiatives and without excluding work and cooperation on other issues:

I. Financing: How we ensure national framework conditions.

18. CONSIDER using existing EU initiatives, with a view to supporting and strengthening Member States' efforts to provide, build and renovate social, affordable, accessible and sustainable housing, including by:
- a. PRESENTING to the Council a revision of the state aid regulation on housing services of general economic interest (SGEI) that widens the Members States' possibilities of compensating social and affordable housing providers, the variations in national housing systems and the need for promoting mixed neighbourhoods as a way to advance social inclusion.
 - b. COLLABORATING with the European Investment Bank, national promotional banks and other financial institutions to promote and facilitate knowledge-sharing and cooperation on national financing opportunities for affordable and sustainable housing, including the mobilisation of private capital.
 - c. CONSIDERING setting up a pan-European investment platform for affordable and sustainable housing. The platform could serve as a hub for knowledge exchange, the development of new financing models, and matchmaking between housing project developers, promoters, and investors, while also facilitating access to existing EU funds and instruments.
19. CONSIDER ways to support Member States' efforts, including at regional and local levels, particularly through knowledge-sharing, on increasing the supply of social, affordable and sustainable housing through solutions such as providing financing for approved housing bodies and setting up revolving funds.

II. Construction and sustainability: How we build.

20. FOCUS equally on affordability and sustainability in the efforts to increase housing supply while also ensuring sufficient quality for healthy, accessible and resilient places to live, well connected to local infrastructure and, to this end, ensure coherence between initiatives stemming from the upcoming European Strategy for Housing Construction and the upcoming European Affordable Housing Plan.
21. IDENTIFY and address shared issues across Member States, including low productivity in the construction and renovation sector, labour shortages and skills gaps, shortage of building materials, and the overall cost of construction.
22. DRAW on the existing knowledge and best practices from Member States, and the values and principles of the New European Bauhaus, to promote innovation in construction and renovation practices such as incorporating used construction products, utilising biogenic materials, offsite construction and digitalisation.
23. ACCELERATE the development of harmonised standards under the new Construction Products Regulation, including for used construction products and prefabricated elements.
24. CONSIDER proposing, as part of a forthcoming legislative proposal on the circular economy, to convert the current recovery targets for construction and demolition waste into recycling targets and to introduce end-of-waste criteria.
25. CONSIDER ways to support Member States' efforts, including at regional and local levels, particularly through knowledge-sharing, on:
 - a. Renovation, transformation and re-purposing of existing buildings, including incentives to climate proof residential buildings and avoid unnecessary demolition of existing buildings, where appropriate; and support for energy efficient and healthy buildings to ensure high-quality living conditions, low maintenance and energy cost and a long lifespan for housing.

- b. Measures to facilitate the transformation of existing residential buildings into zero-emission buildings, in line with National Building Renovation Plans under the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.
- c. Initiatives to accelerate permitting for new housing, extensions and renovations, without compromising on environmental standards and the democratic right to appeal.
- d. Accessibility for persons with disability in both new builds and renovations.

III. Planning: Where we build.

- 27. CONSIDER how EU legislation that has an impact on land use can better facilitate the provision of housing in a sustainable way.
- 28. CONSIDER ways to support Member States' efforts, including at regional and local levels, particularly through knowledge-sharing, on improvements of planning, zoning, and permitting frameworks in order to:
 - a. MAKE AVAILABLE appropriate land for housing construction while taking into consideration the need to mainstream climate mitigation and adaptation, risk and resilience into spatial planning aspects.
 - b. PRIORITISE densification and brownfield development, PROMOTE greening of cities, and PRESERVE agricultural land and biodiversity.
 - c. FACILITATE zoning and permitting for social, affordable and sustainable housing.
 - d. CONSIDER how streamlined administrative procedures and digitalisation may improve the efficiency of building permit processes, environmental assessments and sustainable construction practices.

IV. Social inclusion: How we obtain mixed cities and promote access to housing.

29. Promote stronger cooperation at EU level on homelessness, possibly through the proposal of a new Council recommendation on ending homelessness in Europe, building on the work of the European Platform on Combating Homelessness and the Housing First Principle.
30. TAKE INTO ACCOUNT the important contribution of local democratic organisations such as housing associations, and their role in fostering social inclusion and community building, in the Commission's promotion of strong civil societies in Europe, for example the [upcoming] European Civil Society Strategy [expected Autumn 2025].
31. CONSIDER ways to support Member States' efforts, including at regional and local levels, particularly through knowledge-sharing, on:
 - a. STRENGTHENING the correlation between social and housing policies, including through support for non-profit approved housing bodies.
 - b. SECURING the rights of persons with disabilities, who are often even more socially excluded when impacted by unaffordable housing.
 - c. PROMOTING a social mix and preventing social segregation in both new and existing neighbourhoods and housing estates, including through better integration with local infrastructures.
 - d. IMPROVING the use and distribution of the existing housing stock for those in particular need, such as vulnerable groups, young people or people with disabilities.
 - e. IMPROVING the national legal framework on long-term rentals and continuing to focus on the legal framework on short-term rentals, with a view to ensuring affordable housing for all.

CALLS ON THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES, in accordance with their respective competences and with due regard to the principle of subsidiarity, TO:

32. EXPLORE ways the EU can support and strengthen knowledge-sharing between Member States at national, regional and local levels, and the dissemination of best practices.
33. CONTINUE the efforts on improving the availability of data; aiming at providing detailed and comparable national data on available housing, housing needs, the beneficial owners of property, the proportion of owners and tenants, housing prices, housing affordability (including better indicators of housing cost overburden); while avoiding undue administrative burden on Member States.

CALLS ON THE MEMBER STATES TO:

34. CONTINUE deliberations on a more established governance structure for housing policies across the EU; such a structure could potentially include a regular stock-taking point on the Council's agenda.

CALLS ON THE SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE TO:

35. CONTINUE to include housing issues in its political, knowledge-sharing and analytical work, within the European Semester and in line with its mandate, and thereby strengthen the analytical and political understanding of the fundamental overlap and mutual interdependence of social and housing policies.

References

1. EU Legislation

Regulation (EU) 2024/3110 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 laying down harmonised rules for the marketing of construction products and repealing Regulation (EU) No 305/2011

2. European Commission

[Europe's Choice - Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2024-2029](#)

[Mission Letter to Commissioner on Energy and Housing](#)

[Upcoming EU Civil Society Strategy](#)

3. European Parliament

[European Parliament decision of 18 December 2024 on setting up a special committee on the Housing Crisis in the European Union, and defining its responsibilities, numerical strength and term of office \(2024/3000\(RSO\)\)](#)

4. European Economic and Social Committee

[Reference from Para 13]

5. Committee of the Regions

Opinion on [The role of cities and regions in the EU Affordable Housing Plan](#), 13 May 2025.

6. Eurostat/Eurofound

[Unaffordable and inadequate housing in Europe | European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions](#)

7. Other

‘Housing for all in sustainable, healthy, and inclusive built environments’

Declaration - Ministerial meeting on housing and urban development Under the Spanish Presidency, Gijón, 13 -14 November 2023

‘Affordable, decent and sustainable housing for all’

Declaration - European Conference of Housing Ministers Under the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council, 5 March 2024, Liège

WEF: Making Affordable Housing a Reality in Cities (2019)

[Reference from Para 15 on High-level conference on Affordable and Sustainable Housing]

[Reference from Para 16 on the Thematic discussion from the informal SPC on social housing]

[European Housing Policy Network](#)