

MANIFESTE

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2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS



AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

#EUHousingCrisis

FOR ALL EUROPEAN CITIZENS





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Chair, USH

The European elections are due to take place on 9 June. This ballot is an opportunity for all of us to express our vision of Europe and of its priorities.

Among the most salient priorities, access to decent housing is a major cause of concern throughout the European Union. 83% of people in France consider that the country is experiencing a housing crisis, and this attitude is reflected across the European Union. The rise in housing costs, the shortage of available and suitable affordable or social housing, the growing number of homeless and the energy crisis are also Europe-wide concerns. The Union sociale pour l'habitat, which represents 600 social housing bodies which together account for 5 million social housing units and cater to 11 million social housing tenants, tirelessly campaigns and takes action to defend and enhance the public interest mission entrusted to us: to house our fellow citizens with low incomes.

We unreservedly stand by our tenants, those seeking to accede to ownership of their dwellings and all inhabitants of low-income neighbourhoods. We are committed to the energy and climate as part of the refurbishment of our buildings, the rewilding of our estates, the construction of carbon-neutral housing and the protection of the most vulnerable members of our communities, who are also those worst affected by the vagaries of climate change, both in mainland France and in the French overseas territories and dominions.

We expect the political echelons of the European Union to take pragmatic and far-reaching steps. To that end, our movement has introduced a 2024-2029 Housing Pact into the EU-wide public discourse, to promote and flesh out the overarching concept of affordable and sustainable housing. On 9 June, each citizen of the EU will have the opportunity to influence the future of social housing in Europe!

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS IS A CRISIS THAT AFFECTS THE WHOLE OF EUROPE

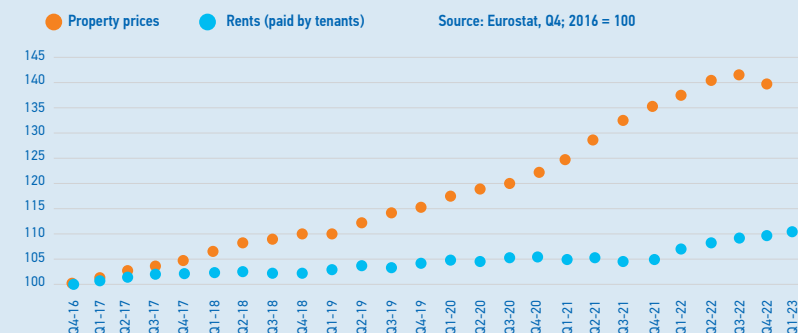
The implementation of the right to housing is a growing concern for citizens of the European Union. Most of the Member States are experiencing a severe housing crisis, with rising rents, rising energy prices, rising interest rates, a shortage of suitable housing, in particular for young people, and rising homelessness. Across Europe, rents have risen by 10% and property prices by 40% since 2016. Nowadays, more than

8 million households in Europe are facing serious deprivation linked to housing.

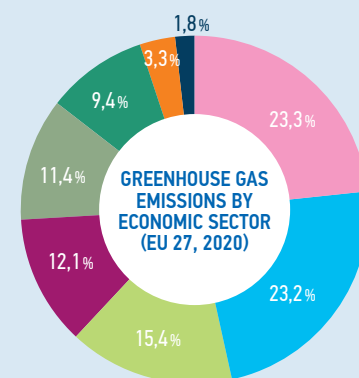
In addition to these extreme cases, in a context of inflation and falling buying power, the difficulties experienced by people active in the labour force to find affordable housing near their workplace are serious impediments to the struggle against unemployment.

Part-time workers, seasonal workers, job seekers, full-time employees in the public and private sectors are all experiencing problems both in the main employment centres and in developing centres where rentals are hard to find.

The European Union has set ambitious targets for reducing CO2 emissions and refurbishing the stock of housing across the whole of Europe.



PROPERTY PRICES AND RENTS, 2016-2023 QUARTERLY



- Energy industries
- Transportation (including aviation)
- Agriculture
- Industrial processes and use of inputs
- Manufacturing and construction industries
- Waste management
- Fuel and fugitive emissions
- Households, retail, institutions

The idea is to significantly reduce the level of CO2 emissions linked to housing. However, by refraining from addressing the issue of the costs linked to attaining these aims, the European Union is creating uncertainty around the implementation of the Green Deal, at a time when housing lies at the heart of ever-increasing rifts within the European Union. According to a report from the World Bank, it is a leading factor

of the gradual erosion of the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Data: Eurostat. This classification is based on the nomenclature of sectors defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

« Housing is one of the fundamental new challenges to which Europe must find concrete solutions that are clearly legible to the EU's citizens, from the climate emergency, to the democratic and migratory crises and growing territorial disparities. »

BOLSTERING

LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS IN SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING SOCIAL HOUSING

The extent of the housing crisis in Europe is a clear indicator that European housing markets are dysfunctional and that **sustained public intervention through regulation is now more needed than ever before.**

Although Housing forms part of the sovereign prerogatives of the Member States, **the European Union has a duty to guarantee the effective implementation of its European Pillar of Social Rights**, including the right of access to housing.

Its very credibility among its citizens and across its territories is at stake.

That is why Mouvement Hlm is calling on candidates to highlight the issue of housing during the **European elections in June**. We urge them to turn social and affordable housing into central issues of the campaign. Housing is one of the main issues facing the European Union, which cannot fail to take action to deal with this significant challenge.

We have seven concrete proposals to feed the debate.



1 CLIMATE

A EUROPEAN MARSHALL PLAN FOR MASSIVE INVESTMENT IN THERMAL INSULATION REFURBISHMENTS OF THE SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCKS OF THE EU MEMBER STATES

THE FACTS:

The path to carbon neutrality of housing set for France by the "fit for 55" European plan comprises a target that involves reducing direct emissions of greenhouse gases by 61% by 2030. This is a considerable challenge. It is estimated that the investment involved for social housing alone will amount to **between 280 and 300 billion euros, which must be committed by 2050.**

THE AIM:

In order to enable the wave of refurbishments of housing units and optimise the use of European resources, it is necessary to amplify and simplify the existing mechanisms for backing long-term investment in order to avoid a proliferation of standalone, un-coordinated mechanisms each with their own idiosyncratic and complex rules creating disparate systems of assistance and scopes of eligibility.

THE PROPOSAL:

Create a single, easily understood and coherent mechanism. This mechanism must be capable of handling the subsidies arising from the multiple European programmes, the free EU budgetary guarantee and the long-term loans (40 years) from the Climate Bank (European Investment Bank).

7 PROPOSALS

TO FACE UP TO AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE

FOR EUROPE AND ITS CITIZENS

EUROPE MUST HELP ITS MEMBER STATES TO INVEST MASSIVELY IN ORDER TO COUNTER THEIR AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS WHILE REDUCING THE EU'S OVERALL CARBON FOOTPRINT. THIS IS A HUGE CHALLENGE FOR EUROPE AND ITS CITIZENS.

AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE, A CHALLENGE THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CANNOT FAIL TO ADDRESS DURING ITS NEXT INTAKE.

WE THEREFORE CALL UPON THE CANDIDATES AND FUTURE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO COMMIT TO THIS AIM AND TO FULLY LEVERAGE THE POWERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN MATTERS OF HOUSING.

2 SOCIAL JUSTICE

HOUSING AND HELP FOR THE HOMELESS

THE FACTS:

Principle 19 of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** adopted in 2017 introduces the concept of a **right to access to social housing or to a decent level of housing benefits** for households whose needs cannot be met directly by the housing markets.

THE AIM:

In view of the situation of growing exclusion linked to housing, the long-term implementation of Europe's three-pronged programme for combating homelessness will have to be combined with **support for long-term investment in social infrastructure** by forming a European platform for discussion about investment in social and affordable housing. The Member

States must be able to discuss their respective investment strategies and policies on affordable housing. This platform should also lead to optimal use of the European funds that can be mobilised.

THE PROPOSAL:

A European platform for investment in social and affordable housing We also propose to strengthen our support to the Member States in their implementation of the "**Housing first**" principle, a key aim in the struggle against homelessness.



3 BUYING POWER

SOCIAL PRICE FOR ENERGY: TOWARDS A SOCIAL PRICE FOR ENERGY, A KEY STAPLE PRODUCT

THE FACTS:

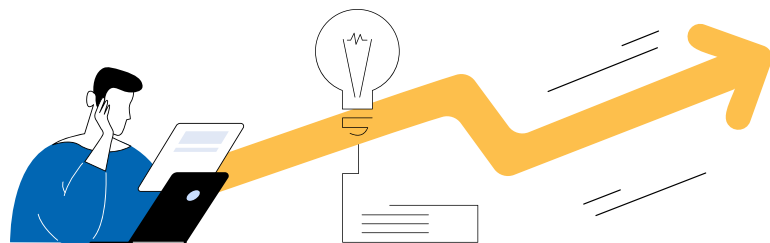
Since the complete deregulation of the energy markets, low-income households have been exposed to the volatility of market rules which are exacerbating energy poverty.

THE AIM:

To take the necessary actions to soften the blow for European citizens who are unable to afford their rising energy costs.

THE PROPOSAL:

Introduce a **social price for energy** that would involve discounts off standing charges and a proportion of consumption considered vital for households' basic needs.



4 COHESION

INVESTMENTS IN SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE EU'S REGIONS

THE FACTS:

The incorporation of a housing aspect into the ERDF regulation has enabled funds to be set aside for housing-related projects. But the requirements remain vast. In 2018, the 'Boosting Investment in Social Infrastructure in Europe' report estimated that there was a need for additional investment of € 142 billion per year in social infrastructure, including €15 billion in Education, €70 billion in Health and €57 billion in affordable housing.

THE AIM:

To back investment in social infrastructure, including social housing, and urban renewal in low-income neighbourhoods, including through mechanisms specific to the EU's outlying regions (overseas territories).

THE PROPOSAL:

To ensure synergy and leveraging:

- Of the **2021-2027 cohesion policy** (mid-term revision of the 2021-27 ERDF Regulation, the future 2028-35 cohesion policy).
- Of the **InvestEU investment plan** for bolstering investment in social infrastructure,
- Of the **EIB's** involvement in financing social housing, such as the "European Alliance for sustainable and inclusive social housing".



5 HOUSING

AS A KEY ASPECT OF THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

THE FACTS:

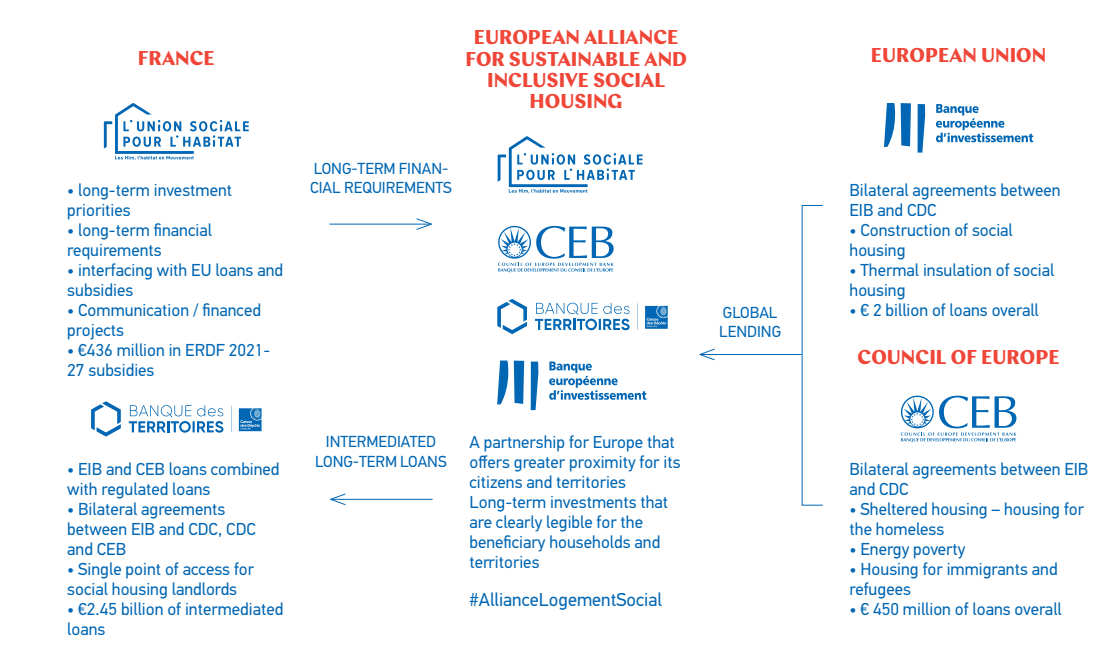
In 2019, Europe's economic governance policy acknowledged a shortfall of affordable and social housing and the need for investment in order to combine the release of new stocks of social housing with attainment of Europe's environmental targets. The Covid health emergency and Ukrainian crises have intensified the urgency of public investment in these fields and have tended to cast a shadow over the worsening housing crisis that European citizens are experiencing.

THE AIM:

The implementation of a joint monitoring of local housing markets and country-specific recommendations.

THE PROPOSAL:

The reform of the European economic governance must acknowledge investment in social housing as a strategic mid- to long-term aim, by appropriately weighting increased long-term investment in social infrastructure as part of the calculation of the budget deficit of the Member States. It is also urgent to begin **monitoring the risk of financialization of the sector which would further alienate European citizens from their right to housing.**





6

A STABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

INTERNAL MARKET – STATE SUBSIDIES

THE FACTS:

European competition law and the EU's internal market framework have adapted to take into consideration the requirements of SGEI (Services of General Economic Interest) and the need for social housing bodies to perform the general interest missions entrusted to them. The framework of the subsidies and assistance available to social housing landlords in the form of compensation for public services provided takes into consideration these specific requirements.

THE AIM:

To provide the players with the legal security needed to commit to long-term waves of refurbishment and investment.

THE PROPOSAL:

An undertaking of stability spanning three key aspects is vital to ensure the legal security of the players in social housing:

- The rules governing the Member States' public subsidies and assistance for social housing,
- The rules governing the lower VAT rate that is applicable to social housing,
- The rules governing the authorisation of social housing bodies and the cooperation between public sector players in accomplishing their general interest missions.

Finally, it is becoming crucial to ensure that the European Union should confirm the jurisdiction of European cities over **regulating short-term and tourist rentals**.



7

A

EUROPEAN SUMMIT

ON AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

European policies inevitably have an influence on national housing policies.

European citizens are experiencing a serious housing crisis.

The right to housing has become a major challenge and a threat to European cohesion.

Mouvement Hlm proposes that the European Parliament convene a **European summit of sustainable and affordable housing** and publish a yearly report on the **"State of the Housing Market in the European Union"** as part of a summit on social and affordable housing in the European Union to be organised each year at the European Parliament, which would bring together members of the European Commission (Climate – Cohesion – Social Rights – European Semester), the housing ministers of the Member States, the mayors and council leaders of the major metropolitan areas that have signed up to the "Housing for all" initiative, the competent international organisations (OECD, UN-Habitat, etc.), and the national stakeholders.

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