

AS EPP LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEADERS, REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

We believe that housing is not merely a technical or regulatory concern - it is the foundation upon which stability, family and the future of our citizens are built. Europeans deserve a home that allows them to study, work, and care for themselves and their loved ones. It is a cornerstone of human dignity, social cohesion and economic competitiveness, and a key part of Europe's social contract. Secure, affordable and energy-efficient homes enable equality, decent living conditions and the preservation of family life, fostering stability and hope for the future. Investing in housing strengthens our communities and safeguards prosperity for our future generations, building a brighter and fairer Europe for all.

We stress that for too many Europeans, housing is no longer a place of security and belonging, but a source of concern, bringing debt, uncertainty and instability, triggering a profound social crisis that erodes Europe's social fabric, weakens cohesion, and threatens our competitiveness. EPP-led cities and regions are taking responsibility and showing determination in addressing this challenge, driving forward practical solutions to reduce construction burdens, ease living costs, and expand access to quality and affordable homes.

We believe housing policy must be anchored in proximity, solidarity and responsibility – the EPP family core values – and that housing must be treated as a pillar of social stability and economic opportunity. For the EPP Group in the European Committee of the Regions, this means putting local and regional authorities in a leading position to ensure fair access to European resources, reinforcing housing as a cornerstone of the European way of life, and respecting our fundamental values of private property.

We emphasise that the **European Affordable Housing Plan** must fully respect the principle of subsidiarity and ensure the active participation of local and regional authorities, in line with their competences.

We have proven that innovative projects do make a real difference to the quality of life of our citizens: by strengthening instruments such as InvestEU, we commit to leading the way in accelerating investment in affordable housing, in order to deliver better services and tangible results for our communities.

We demand that European and national funding priorities reflect local realities. Cities and regions know best the challenges that citizens face. From student housing to affordable family homes, resources must be flexible enough to meet the concrete needs of communities and respect transparency standards. We will make the most of cohesion funds and welcome its mid-term revision, which includes affordable housing as a new priority.

We underline the need to empower all engaged partners as effective housing policy requires cooperation between local authorities, social landlords, financing institutions and service providers. All these actors must be able to make effective and coordinated use of European funding and deliver projects that strengthen affordable and energy-efficient housing in their territories.

We stress the urgency of closing the housing investment gap. With a shortfall of hundreds of billions of euros every year, Europe must scale up its ambition. More resources must flow into building and renovating homes, accompanied by fair loan conditions and predictable timelines that give cities the certainty required to plan ahead.

We stress that closing the housing gap requires legal certainty, simpler procedures, fewer administrative burdens and a responsible liberalisation of land use, to attract private investment, stimulate construction, ensure a transparent and well-regulated housing market, and ultimately lower costs and improve access for citizens.

We stress that while the European Green Deal is essential for achieving climate goals and promoting energy- and water-efficient construction, **it is vital to strike a careful balance between environmental standards and the urgent need to build and renovate homes.** This includes encouraging the use of sustainable and cost-effective construction materials, while protecting households from financially unbearable burdens linked to renovation and energy retrofitting, ensuring that sustainability does not come at the expense of affordability and access to housing.

We affirm the strategic importance of urban regeneration and call for a holistic urban policy that integrates education, healthcare, innovation, and infrastructure, while preserving and revitalising historic city centres and buildings. This serves to safeguard Europe's unique architectural heritage, which reflects its cultural diversity and religious legacy, and upholds the social and cultural fabric of our communities.

We advocate for national and European initiatives to promote home ownership and private-public social housing. We support targeted measures to assist large, single-parent and vulnerable families, enabling them to invest in their futures, reduce reliance on public support, and reinforce the culture of responsible home ownership across Europe.

We demand that housing for young people becomes a European priority. Generations cannot build their future, settle and turn family projects into reality without access to a decent home. Young Europeans are particularly affected, facing growing difficulties in leaving their parents' home. We therefore urge EU institutions and national governments to set ambitious youth targets in housing policy, including affordable student accommodation, simplified rental procedures for high-demand areas as well as support for first-time buyers.

We insist on a major increase in investment for affordable and social housing, with part of EU funding for housing being reserved for projects that benefit young people, families, the middle class and low-income households. Investments should also prioritise rural, insular, and outermost regions, support renovation and reactivation of empty homes, and include multi-generational and elderly-friendly housing, ensuring that new and renovated homes reach those who need them most.

We promote community-based and innovative housing models. Cooperative schemes, intergenerational housing, and other locally-driven solutions should be expanded across Europe. These approaches reduce costs, strengthen neighbourhoods, and ensure young people have a real stake in their cities and regions, while also facilitating accessible housing for people with disabilities and vulnerable families.

We strongly condemn squatting as it goes against basic property rights, the stability of the housing market, and the feeling of safety of our citizens, especially in large cities. We call for severe measures to be applied by the authorities, the existence of effective and proportionate eviction mechanisms, and support the idea for a European register of illegal occupation to support cooperation, data collection and information-sharing between Member States and to identify patterns of criminally linked occupation, acknowledging the rights of individuals and families who invest in home ownership.

Finally, **we believe that better evidence is key to understanding the link between housing access, economic productivity and competitiveness, which is why the collection and use of comparable data and robust indicators at the European level must be improved.** Without reliable and granular data, sound policymaking will remain out of reach. For complex challenges, targeted solutions are needed, which should be evidence-based and respectful of local and regional competences, grounded in the principle of subsidiarity and the bottom-up approach.

All Europeans should have the possibility to access a place to call home, as it is the first step towards a future of dreams, justice, and, most of all, freedom. The future of Europe, including its economy, well-being and competitiveness, depends on creating the right conditions to make this possible.