

A home is a human right:
Call for action to secure quality
housing for all

As Socialists and Democrats, we believe that every European deserves a decent, affordable, and quality home. The current housing crisis, driven by rampant speculation, insufficient public and private investment, an inconsistent patchwork of tax breaks and discrimination, is an affront to our shared values of dignity, equality, inclusion, wellbeing, and security.

We declare our unwavering commitment to a Europe where a home is a certainty for all, not a privilege for the few. Housing needs to become a central pillar of the EU single market. Mobile workers must be able to move easily abroad, while those wanting to remain at home must have a right to stay with access to decent and affordable housing. We therefore call for:

1. Homes for people and an end to speculation

Homes are for people, not for profit. We must end the predatory practices of land hoarding and housing speculation that inflate prices and deny access to homes. The EU must propose and enforce laws to:

- **regulate short-term rentals** – A legislative proposal from the Commission by 2026 regulating short-term rentals to prioritise the fundamental right of residents to affordable, long-term housing, especially to increase decision-making powers of mayors and regional authorities.
- **stop speculation and financialisation** – Regulate financial investors and large capital funds in the real estate sector to prevent housing from being treated as a speculative asset detached from its social function to ensure it produces sufficient affordable housing and prevents homes from being left vacant.
- **protect residential property** – Promote policies that prioritize long-term community needs and social accessibility, ensuring homes remain affordable and genuinely serve people's right to shelter rather than generating short-term profits.
- **use tax policy** to actively promote the availability of housing on the rental market.

2. The protection of tenants' rights and better housing support for vulnerable groups

Systemic discrimination and exclusion in the housing sector, particularly affecting vulnerable groups, must be decisively addressed. We demand:

- **youth housing priority** – Prioritising investment in housing units for young people, especially for the construction of public and social housing units for those under 35 years of age.
- **tenant rights protection** – The EU should push member states to provide a legal framework for transparent contracts, intelligible language, and accessible legal dispute resolution mechanisms at no cost for tenants while ensuring tenants' right to organise and demand fair treatment.
- **accessible and affordable housing for all** – Any housing plan must focus on increasing the stock of housing that is accessible to persons with disabilities and older people, ensuring inclusivity and dignity for all.

3. Easy access to homeownership for low and middle-income earners

Public policy must actively support people on low and middle incomes to access housing property. We advocate for:

- **regulated mortgages to ensure** low interest rates and special conditions to enable homeownership for low and middle-income earners and first time homebuyers, including through support via public guarantee schemes.

- **protection against eviction** – the EU should ensure that member states have strong laws against unjust eviction and that social responses are activated in case of payment difficulties, recognising that the loss of a family home constitutes a severe breach of the right to a home and a profound threat to family wellbeing.

4. The eradication of homelessness: A home for everyone is possible

Homelessness is a scar on the conscience of Europe. We are committed to ending it through:

- **a Housing First principle** – Full implementation of the “Housing First” approach, prioritising immediate access to stable housing as a pathway to integration and support.
- **an increased Child Guarantee budget** – A substantial increase of at least €20 billion for the European Child Guarantee to address the growing housing challenges faced by families with children.
- **a common definition & EU-wide targets** – Developing a single, EU-wide definition of homelessness so institutions such as Eurostat can systematically compare, assess, and monitor homelessness rates. Bringing forward ambitious measures to reach the target for ending homelessness within the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- **the decriminalisation of homelessness** – Ending the criminalisation of homeless people, recognising that all public authorities have a solemn duty to protect and support them.

5. More public investment in decent, affordable and sustainable housing

The massive investment gap in affordable housing, estimated at hundreds of billions of euros annually, is a direct consequence of neoliberal policies and fiscal constraints. The steady decline in public, cooperative, and social housing, often due to the sell-off of state-funded assets, must be reversed. We need:

- **massive public investments** – A significant increase in public investments in social and affordable housing, including support for energy efficiency renovation for low and middle income earners, ensuring these assets remain firmly in public hands while encouraging cooperative models of ownership. Housing should be prioritized in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).
- **state aid reform** – Fundamental reform of state aid rules to ease and encourage more investments in public housing programs while ensuring they are affordable for low and middle-income earners.
- **flexibility in EU fiscal rules to boost investment in housing** – The housing crisis can justify the immediate activation of the escape clause within fiscal rules to permit crucial public investment in housing with strong social conditionality, prioritising the needs of our citizens over arbitrary budgetary targets. Housing should be a key priority of EU fiscal and economic policy.

We, Socialists and Democrats, commit to a just and fair Europe, where a decent home is a fundamental right for all, not a privilege for the few. We will fight tirelessly to make our vision a reality, notably within the European Parliament through the special committee on the housing crisis and working closely together with our mayors throughout Europe.