

# Delivering the European Affordable Housing Plan

Housing Ireland Conference 2026

5 March 2026

Siobhán Nic Thighearnáin  
Housing Task Force  
European Commission



# Presentation

1. Background – why the EU is acting on affordable housing
2. The European Affordable Housing Plan
3. Looking ahead – implementation & next steps



# Why we act on housing: Cost-of-living concerns in the 2024 European elections

## What made citizens vote

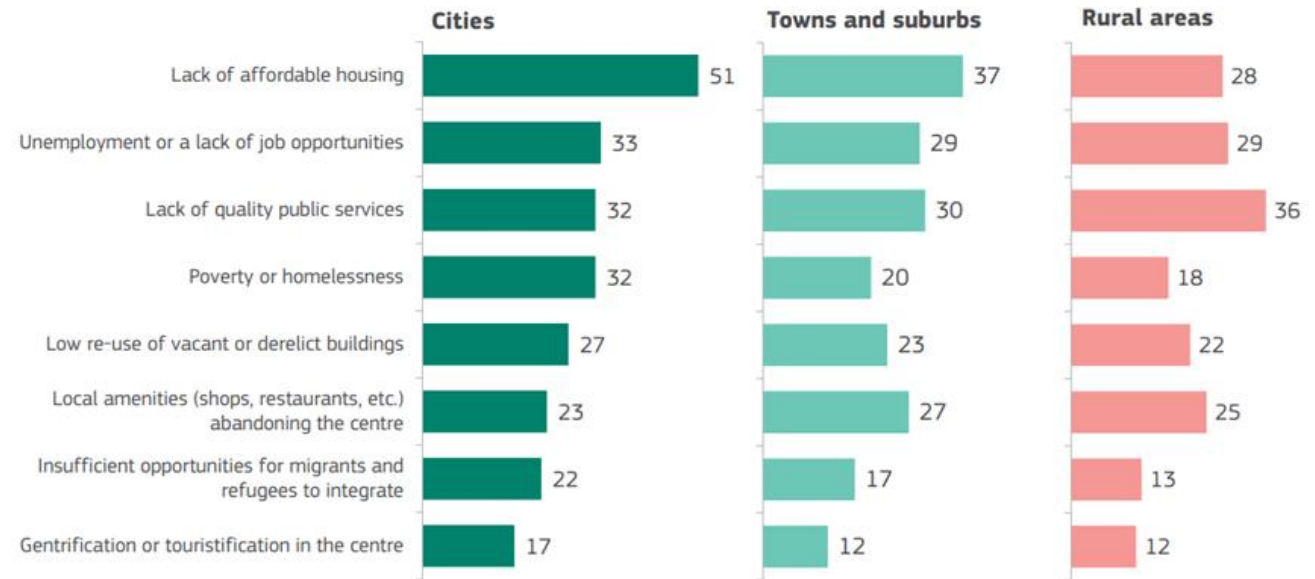
Top 7 most mentioned topics that encouraged them to vote



# Lack of affordable housing most pressing issue for citizens in cities, towns and suburbs

Source: European Commission, 2025

Q2 In the place where you live, how much of a problem, if at all, do you think each of the following issues are? % 'An immediate and urgent problem'



# Widespread calls for EU action

**Political party manifestos (EPP, S&D, Greens, The Left)**

**Liège Declaration:  
Conference of housing ministers under Belgian Presidency 2024**

**Letta Report:  
“Set up an EU Task Force on Housing”**

**Calls to action by cities & regions, industry, social partners, civil society, etc.**



*“ [...] for the first time, I will appoint a Commissioner with direct responsibility for housing. We will develop a **European Affordable Housing Plan**, to look at all the drivers of the crisis and to help unlock the private and public investment needed. [...] If it matters to Europeans, it matters to Europe. ”*

**President von der Leyen,  
18 July 2024**



# Wide-ranging partnerships and consultations

- Close cooperation across over 20 departments (DGs) in European Commission
- Working together with other Institutions
  - The **European Parliament's HOUS Committee**
  - **Council**: Danish Presidency conclusions on the Affordable Housing Plan in December, continued cooperation with Cyprus and Irish Presidencies
  - **Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions**
- Wide consultation process with **Member States, regional and local governments, stakeholders, experts and citizens**
  - **Open public consultation** with over 13,000 replies
  - Dedicated meetings at political and technical levels
  - **Housing Advisory Board** recommendations in November



# Analytical background document

- **Evidence base** for the European Affordable Housing Plan
- Examines **drivers** for and **consequences** of housing affordability crisis across EU
- **Coordinated effort by experts**, based on various forms of consultation
- Covers **local and regional differences** and **multiple dimensions** of affordability and the housing market

# Housing indicators – but averages may hide strong regional and local differences

Between 2013 and 2024

↑ 60%

**House prices** in nominal terms have increased by more than 60% across the EU, growing faster than household income.

↑ 20%

**Average rents** have grown by around 20%, with new rents having grown significantly more.

↓ 22%

**Residential building permits** are down by 22% since 2021.

 20%

Existing **housing stock is not used** to its full potential, with around 20% of dwellings unoccupied.

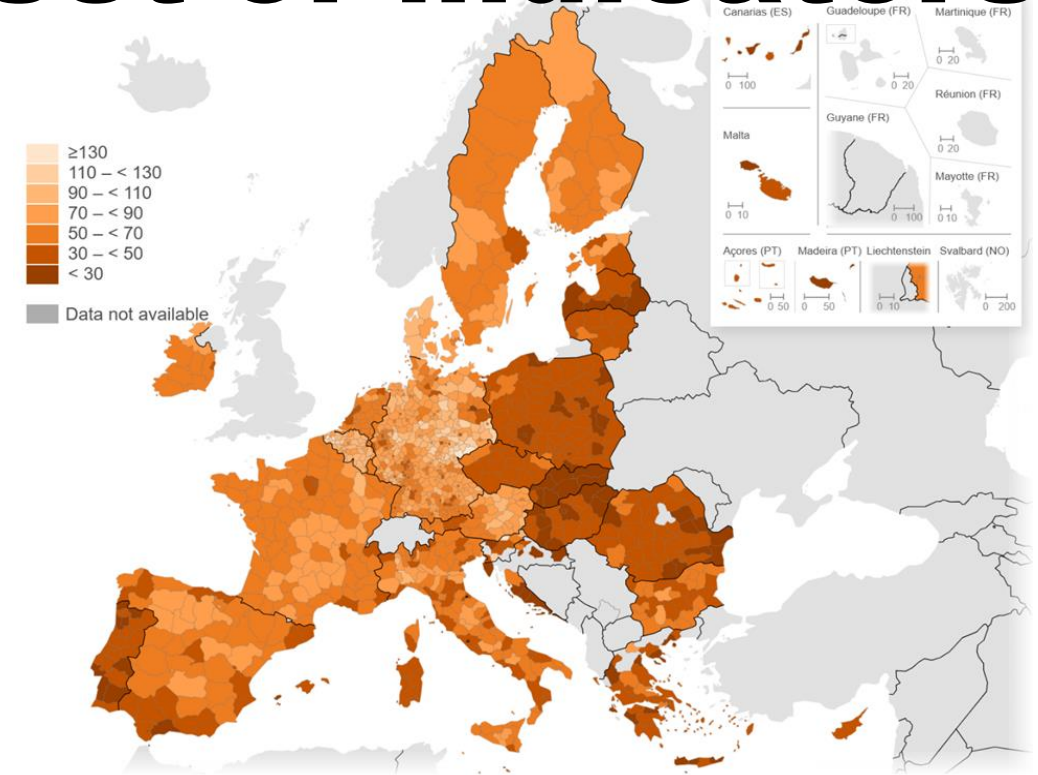
**1 million**

According to the latest national statistics, we have more than **one million homeless** people, including **400,000 children**.



# Measuring the impact of housing affordability - need set of indicators

- Set of indicators needed for comprehensive affordability assessment
- Variation of tenure structure across countries
- Data gaps e.g. on new rents
- Challenges are masked by averages
  - Urban areas and growth poles
  - Low-income households
  - Those looking for a new home to rent or buy



Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat  
Cartography: Eurostat - IMAGE, 10/2025

**Rental Affordability for new contracts (m2 that can be rented using 1/3 of disposable income)**

Source: European Commission: Joint Research Center, 2025b, based on ESPON HOUSE4ALL data.



**European Affordable Housing**



# **Social, economic and environmental consequences**

- Social disruption and isolation
- Economic growth and mobility constraints
- Effect on inter-generational fairness
- Impact on demographics
- Health and well-being implications
- Sustainability and environmental concerns



# Shifts in housing demand

- **Economic drivers**
  - Household income, wealth, mortgage rates, credit conditions, etc.
- **Demographic changes**
  - Urbanisation, migration, rise of single-person households, ageing population, etc.
- **Impact of capital flow mechanisms**
  - Financialisation, speculation (data scarcity), golden visas, residence schemes
- **Rental market dynamics**
  - Short-term rentals, touristic areas
- **Policy influence on housing transactions**
  - Property taxation, transaction taxes, targeted subsidies



# Supply side constraints

## Housing gap



Today we build  
**1.6 million**  
new units/year

About  
**650,000**  
additional units are  
needed per year in the  
next 10 years

Delivering the extra  
units will cost  
**€150 bn/year**  
(public and private  
investment)



# Supply side constraints

- Financial and investment challenges
  - Investment in housing construction and renovation has declined (2022-2024)
  - Residential building permits are down by 22% since 2021
- Construction sector challenges
  - Declining productivity and innovation capacity in construction sector
  - Increase in price of construction products
  - Labour and skills shortages
- Role of planning, zoning, land management and permitting
  - Fragmented regulations hinders permit obtaining
  - Financial impact on construction projects
  - Land remains scarce and a costly resource for housing
- Better use of the existing building stock
  - Around 20% of dwellings unoccupied
  - 9.7% vacant offices



# The Housing Package

European  
Affordable  
Housing  
Plan



Revised  
State-aid  
rules on  
housing

New  
European  
Bauhaus

European  
Strategy for  
Housing  
Construction



# The 4 pillars of the European Affordable Housing Plan



**Boosting  
housing supply**



**Mobilising  
investment**



**Enabling immediate  
support while  
driving reforms**



**Protecting the  
most affected**



# Boosting housing supply



**Strengthening  
the productivity  
and innovation in  
construction**

**Cutting red tape  
to accelerate  
housing supply**

**Combining  
affordability,  
sustainability,  
and quality in  
housing**



# Mobilising investment



**Mobilising  
additional public  
and private  
investment**

**Revising State  
aid rules to  
facilitate funding  
of social and  
affordable  
housing**

**Pan-European Investment  
Platform**



# Enabling immediate support while driving reforms



**Addressing  
short-term  
rentals in areas  
under housing  
stress**

**Speculation in  
the housing  
market**

**Driving forward  
Member States'  
structural  
reforms**



# Protecting the most affected



**Housing for  
young people**

**Addressing  
homelessness  
and supporting  
households and  
tenants in  
vulnerable  
situations**

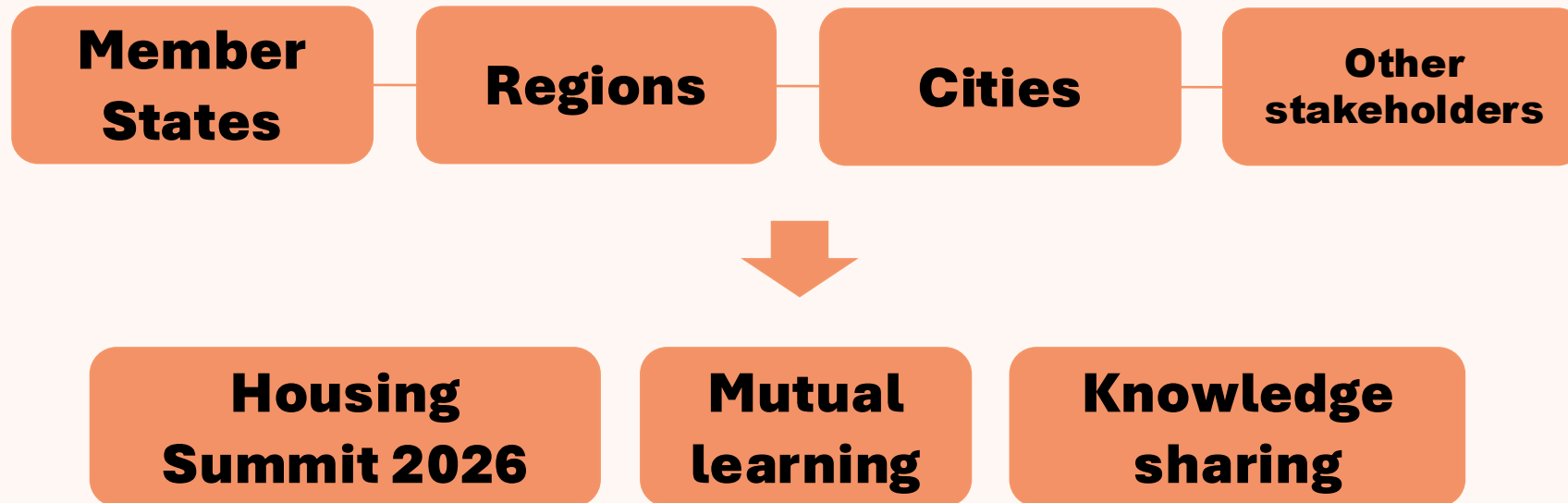


# Housing Alliance

## New ways of working together



### European Housing Alliance



# Housing Alliance

## New ways of working together



- ➔ Structured cooperation at EU level to implement the Plan and reflecting the decentralised nature of housing policy.
- ➔ Structure:
  - Political level (ad hoc Summit, regular Informal Ministerial)
  - Expert level (Mutual learning programme)
  - Broader outreach tools (website, events, dissemination of best practices)
- ➔ Practical roll-out through substantive exchanges with MS and other stakeholder on concrete files.
- ➔ Formal launch at the 2026 Housing Summit, formalisation of the mutual learning programme.



# Visit [Housing.ec.europa.eu](https://housing.ec.europa.eu) for more

© Adobe Stock



Europe's response to the  
housing crisis

## Page contents

The European Affordable  
Housing Plan

Boosting housing supply

Mobilising investment

Enabling immediate support  
while driving reforms

Protecting the most affected

Coming in 2026

Learn more

The Affordable Housing  
Dialogue

## The European Affordable Housing Plan

Our houses, our homes, are the building blocks of our communities, the foundation of our society and democracy. Housing is not just a commodity, but a fundamental right and a cornerstone of human dignity. But across Europe, there is a palpable feeling of injustice at the sheer unaffordability and unavailability of housing.

The European Affordable Housing plan sets out to support all levels of national authorities and bring stakeholders together, to bring affordable housing to all Europeans.

It's based on 4 pillars.



**European Affordable Housing**

