

Housing Partnership informs wider audience about its work

MEP Jongerius and CoR members Imane and Florianschütz at stakeholder event in Brussels on 22.3.2017

The members of the Housing Partnership regularly discuss their work with a wide range of interest groups, stakeholders, city and region associations, Member States and EU institutions. The 6th meeting of the partnership on 22-23 March in Brussels provided the opportunity to bring together its members and interested third parties with high level representatives from the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions at a stakeholder reception at Vienna House. Representatives from different cities and regions, like Berlin, Utrecht and the German-speaking Community of Belgium, attended the event as well colleagues from the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the International Union of Property Owners, the insurance sector and the head of the urban unit of DG Regio, Judit Torokne-Rozsa.

MEP Jongerius (S&D Group) in favour of broad access to affordable housing for European citizens and their families

„Adequate, affordable housing is the basis for vibrant cities, social cohesion and good quality of life for all in Europe. As a Service of General Economic Interest it needs to be defined by Member States. Local authorities have the competence to identify and address the housing needs and living conditions of various groups“, said Dutch MEP Agnes Jongerius, Vice-President of the Urban Intergroup at the meeting. She called for a broad access to affordable housing for Europe’s citizens: „Avoiding segregation and urban polarisation is far more cost effective than dealing with the negative consequences later on. European cities have to ensure a social mix of different groups of inhabitants. Therefore a wide access to affordable dwellings is essential. Cities should remain living spaces for all their citizens, no matter what their socio-economic background is“.

CoR Member Imane (PES/Belgium) to draft new own-initiative opinion on a European agenda for housing

CoR Member Hicham Imane was appointed to be rapporteur for a new own-initiative opinion on a “European Agenda for Housing” at the March Bureau meeting of the European

Committee of the Regions. "The exchange with the members of the Urban Partnership on Housing is very important for the CoR," said the Belgian representative from Charleroi, as the partnership gathers all the most important actors, cities, Member States, producers and consumers. "The European Committee of the Regions is particularly aware that the sub-national level is usually responsible for providing affordable housing. Local and regional housing markets must ensure this essential common good. Living is not a commodity which can be traded cross-border. EU legislation must better respect these principles. Housing is affected by EU legislation, it needs to be better recognized as an important policy field in its own right." The opinion will be adopted at the October 2017 CoR plenary session and will encompass the findings of the Housing Partnership.

CoR member Florianschütz: Housing systems need to follow clear not-for profit principle

Peter Florianschütz, CoR Member and chair of the Committee on European and International Affairs of the Vienna City Council underlined that the City of Vienna supports every initiative at European level to improve the situation of social, affordable housing in the cities of Europe. "Vienna is well known as city of social and affordable housing in Europe. The Viennese have been benefitting from the social housing policy for more than 100 years. 60 percent of the inhabitants of Vienna are living in publicly funded or municipal dwellings. A clear commitment to housing policies on the basis of not-for-profit or limited profit housing acts is key for being one of the cities considered to offer the highest quality of life in the world. It is a great pleasure for us to lead the Housing Partnership together with Slovakia and to exchange our experience and share our knowledge within the European family. Together we are on a good path towards achieving better regulation and funding for affordable housing in Europe."