HOUSING RIGHTS WATCH

FEANTSA

Draft workshop programme

Finding real solutions to the housing crisis

Medialab-Prado, Plaza de las Letras. C/ Alameda, 15 · 28014
Madrid, Spain - 13 June 2014

Introduction

This event is designed to bring together experts working in housing, including housing economics, law, housing rights, homeless services, social housing, financing and foundations, local governments, academics and other groups and individuals.

The goal is to start conversations that can lead to solutions. Solutions to the housing crisis which persists in Europe and that can help to address the growing need for affordable housing.

The economic crisis and resultant austerity measures have made it difficult for local authorities to respect, let alone promote, housing rights across Europe. Furthermore, the crisis and austerity measures have led to an increase in the number of families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of losing their home due to rent arrears, mortgage arrears, job losses, etc.

The housing crisis – which clearly plays a role in the economic crisis – features a paradox: houses and apartments stand empty in cities across Europe while thousands of people wait for years on waiting lists for social housing or simply cannot find and afford adequate accommodation.

Unfortunately, it is not simply a question of allocating empty apartments to families who need them, because location and geography are also crucial features of this crisis. People have lost their housing near to their jobs, or near to where there is hope of getting a job. Much of the surplus housing, particularly in Spain, is located in tourist-driven coastal areas which hold little prospect in terms of employment.

So, what can be done? How can we even talk about housing rights when local authorities and national governments are forced to cut benefits and are not building new affordable housing?

The time is right to talk about new solutions to the housing crisis. The time is right to share ideas and practices so that we can work together to test new ideas. We need housing solutions that respect and promote housing rights, and promote innovative ideas. This means bringing together people who tend to work in isolation – NGOs, civil society, financial institutions, house builders, landlords, governments and foundations. These kinds of solutions are only possible if we all work together.

Format

This event is will be an expert workshop to create links, ideas and plans for a much larger event in 2015. Experts invited to this event will be asked to share their experience; to discuss with others ideas for real solutions that will make more housing available to those who need it: people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or facing eviction.

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In cooperation with

¡MADRID! MEDIALAB PRADO

Registration and contact: Samara.Jones@feantsa.org

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Key experts have been asked to give introductory presentations to stimulate discussions, but the groups will be kept deliberately small to allow participants to discuss examples and ideas for new ways of working together towards real solutions.

Languages: simultaneous interpretation into **Spanish, English and French**

9:30	Registration
10:00	Welcome **– Sonia Olea Ferreras, Caritas Spain, FePsh and Freek Spinnewijn, FEANTSA/HRW**
10:15	**Keynote speech – Christophe Robert, Fondation Abbe Pierre (confirmed)** While some say that the economic crisis is over, there is still an economic and a housing crisis whose affects are felt by millions across Europe. Increasing numbers of people are finding themselves homeless, living in tenuous and dangerous conditions, or at risk of eviction. In order to address this crisis in the housing system, we need to come together to discuss new solutions, new approaches, new partners. **Christophe Robert** will open the event and set out key questions for the day.
10:45	**Understanding the challenge: changing housing systems - Christophe Andre, Senior Economist, OECD (confirmed)** Across Europe there have been momentous developments in housing finance in the past decade, including he securitisation of mortgages, reduced State spending, changing and enabling roles for States and other developments. Financing housing today is a complex and international activity. This presentation by Christophe Andre of the OECD will provide the background context for possible innovative approaches to housing. Response by **Sergio Nasarre** – University of Rovira i Virgili
11:30	Discussion
11:45	Coffee break
12:15	Spotlight on Spain One of the countries that has suffered most acutely from the economic crisis and the housing crisis, Spain has staggering levels of unemployment and increasing homelessness – even amongst homeowners. Spanish organizations, especially FEANTSA members in the fePsh are working to address the needs of people and ensure human rights are not eclipsed. ▸ Monitoring legal reforms and human rights in Spain following the housing crisis – **Maria Segurado**, Caritas Spain ▸ Social movements in response to the crisis - PAH – Platform of People affected by mortgages and foreclosures

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12:50	**Working groups**	
	Objective: group discussions on two broad themes for finding new ways of working together	
	1. Changing public policies and regulations to make more housing possible Key Experts **Nicolas Bernard**, Université St Louis, Brussels, Belgium (confirmed) **Jose León Paniagua**, architect, Madrid, (confirmed)	**2. New partners for funding?** Key experts **Sorcha Edwards**, Secretary General – Cecodhas (confirmed) **Frank Lee**, European Investment Bank (invited) **David Ireland**, BSHF (to be invited)
14:15	Lunch	
15:45	**Working groups**	
	Objective: group discussions on 4 different approaches to making more housing available – either by building new stock or releasing stock that is held by banks, local authorities, etc.	
	1. Community Land Trusts Key Experts Thomas Dawance, Community Land Trust Brussels (confirmed)	**2. Social Rental Agencies** Key Experts Boróka Fehér – Hungary - (confirmed) Pascal De Dekker – Faculty of Architecture, St Lucas University (KUL), Belgium
	3. Alternative tenancies/alternative housing Key Experts **Sergio Nasarre** – University of Rovira i Virgili – expert on new legal tenancies in Spain (confirmed) **Nicolas Bernard**, Université St Louis, Brussels, Belgium (confirmed)	**4. Empty buildings = future homes?** Key Experts Helen Williams - Empty Houses (to be invited) **PAH** – Spanish platform for people affected by the mortgages and foreclosures (confirmed)
17:30	Coffee break	
18:00	**Public roundtable** Proposals for alternative formulas and community housing tenure. - **Guillem Fernández** - Coop 57 Barcelona - Cooperative Housing (to be confirmed)	
18:30-19:00	**Closing session** – towards 2015 **Freek Spinnewijn**, Director – FEANTSA	
21:00	Conference dinner	

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