

# HOUSING



**IS NOT A PRIVILEGE**



**IT'S A RIGHT!**



**EuropeanLEFT**

**HOUSING  
CAMPAIGN**

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# INTRODUCTION

Across Europe, millions of people face skyrocketing rents, evictions, and inadequate housing conditions: because housing is treated as a commodity rather than a fundamental human right. This crisis has deep structural roots in the economic and social transformations of recent decades fuelled by neoliberal policies. The decline of the welfare state, along with privatizations and cuts to public spending on housing since the 1980s, has led to the commodification of housing and urban spaces. Financialization and the rise of real estate speculation - as well as overtourism driven by the uncontrolled growth of short-term rentals (such as Airbnb) and the use of AI which tends to lead to unjustified increases in house prices and rents, are key factors in this crisis. They have contributed to the shortage of housing for permanent residents and to housing insecurity across the Eurozone.

## **JOIN US IN THE FIGHT FOR AFFORDABLE, FAIR, AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING!**

Rising rents and real estate speculation are pricing out working-class people. Short-term rentals (such as Airbnb) contribute to the scarcity of affordable housing. Public social housing investment remains insufficient, and homelessness is rising.

Between 2010 and 2023, the average rent in the EU increased by 22% and house prices by 48%. Wages have not followed a corresponding upward trend, with their purchasing power decreasing due to the high inflation of recent years. During the same period, 10.6% of people in EU cities lived in households that spent more than 40% of their disposable income on housing, a phenomenon enhanced by the rising energy costs in part as a result of the Ukraine war. This rate was highest in Greek cities (31%), while the lowest was recorded in Cyprus (3.4%) and Croatia (3.5%). The shortage of decent, affordable housing has worsened, while the number of homeless people has reached unprecedented levels: approximately 1.3 million Europeans sleep without shelter every night.

The data highlight systematic violations of international and European human rights law, despite the legal obligations of states and the EU to implement housing policies to strengthen social cohesion.

The crisis disproportionately affects the working class, the increasingly pressured middle class, and young people, while women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and migrants face additional discrimination.

# Country-specific snapshots:

**ITALY:** 983,000 rental households are living in absolute poverty, that's 17.6% of the total resident population. Around 150,000 families are facing eviction, while approximately 160,000 are affected by housing auctions and bank foreclosures. Public social housing has declined due to privatization, reaching 769,000 units in 2024, of which about 100,000 remain vacant. Meanwhile, approximately 650,000 families are on the waiting list for public social housing (ERP). Currently there is no more state budget allocated for public social housing or rental subsidies.

**GREECE:** The EU's most severe housing crisis is driven by financialization, overtourism, a lack of social housing, and government policies that favour investors and short-term rentals over residents. Currently, 74.6% of renters spend more than 40% of their income on housing, while homeownership has declined sharply due to rising interest rates and foreclosures. A stark mismatch between disposable income and housing costs further worsens the situation.

**AUSTRIA:** Housing costs have surged dramatically, exacerbated by rising real estate prices, stagnant wages, and weak tenant protections. Public housing programmes, once strong, have diminished since the 1990s. Rent increases are tied to inflation, leading to steep price hikes. Limited rental contracts and speculative construction practices contribute to high housing costs, while short-term rentals further strain the market.

**FINLAND:** The right-wing government is implementing austerity policies, cutting all social benefits, including housing support. These cuts have forced many to move, disproportionately impacting low-income families, single parents, and young people. Evictions in major cities have risen by 25%, and hidden homelessness is increasing. Meanwhile, reduced housing subsidies have made affordable housing even less accessible, working against efforts to lower rents. Despite Finland's progress in tackling homelessness, challenges remain - even for families with young children.

**FRANCE:** A systemic housing crisis affects students, workers, and vulnerable populations. Short-term rentals have shrunk the private rental market, while social housing demand far exceeds supply. Over 330,000 people are homeless, and energy poverty is rising, with 26% of households struggling to heat their homes in 2023. Despite 3.2 million vacant homes, construction rates are declining, deepening the crisis.

**HUNGARY:** The share of privately owned property is over 90%, with 7.6% of households renting. Young people are increasingly turning to renting since the price of houses has increased at a far greater rate than average salaries. Out of 9.6 million Hungarians, 2.5 million spend 40% of their income on housing costs, with inadequate infrastructure, lack of heating and overcrowding. Almost 15% of the total housing stock consists of vacant properties. New housing construction has dropped from 100,000 units in 1975 to 12,000 in 2023, while prices have risen 10–20% annually since 2020.

**PORTUGAL:** 70% of primary homes are owned, of which 40% are burdened by mortgage loans. 22% are primary rented homes. House prices, between 2015 and 2023, have increased by 106%, both house-loans, instalments and rents take up a considerable share of people's incomes. Despite the recent housing Basic Law, the stock of public social housing remains at 2%, and municipalities are facing an unprecedented housing crisis.

**GERMANY:** In 2023, 13.0% of Germany's population lived in households overburdened by housing costs - that is, they spent more than 40% of their total disposable household income on housing. The EU average was 8.8%. There is a shortage of at least five million social housing units. Meanwhile, too many luxury apartments are being built, and housing is often the subject of speculation. Rents remain excessively high, making them barely affordable. As a result, many students continue living at home instead of gaining independence.

**SPAIN:** The country is witnessing its second major housing crisis of the 21st century. The first was the mortgage crisis, triggered by the bursting of the real estate and credit bubble—marked by speculation and abusive lending practices. The current crisis is a rental crisis, characterized by unaffordable rent increases. Even with employment and rising wages, more and more people, including families, are being affected and are at risk of social exclusion.

**CYPRUS:** A growing housing crisis is unfolding as government policy fails to meet needs or support low-income groups. The 2013 bail-in, foreclosures, a property bubble, and rising land prices have left many families unable to secure decent housing, particularly amongst young couples, students, and the elderly. Adding to the pressure, 200,000 people displaced by the 1974 Turkish invasion still cannot access their properties.

**CZECH REPUBLIC:** Housing has become extremely expensive, consistently ranking among the least affordable in Europe. In 2024, it was the second least affordable country to buy a home. Rent prices have surged by 100% over the past 15 years and are expected to rise even further. Meanwhile, Czechia and its cities lack regulations to curb speculation, exacerbating the crisis.

# Party of the European Left's housing demands

Mobilizations and actions for the right to housing are growing across many EU countries, leading to significant achievements such as the suspension of evictions and foreclosures, appeals to the UN Human Rights Committee against governments violating human rights, involvement of trade union organizations, and legislative measures or reforms at local and national levels.

In 2021, the European Parliament passed a key resolution endorsing the main demands of social movements, and for the first time in 2024, the EU Commission appointed a European Commissioner for Energy and Housing. These can only be considered as first steps.

From the local to the national and European levels, the Party of the European Left strongly supports and reinforces these mobilizations.

## 1. STOP HOUSING BEING A COMMODITY – END SHORT-TERM RENTALS

**THE PROBLEM:** Financialization, speculation and overtourism drive up prices.

**WE DEMAND:** rent caps, rent controls, and regulation on short term rentals and AI platforms. Stop speculative funds in housing.

## 2. HOUSING FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFIT – WE NEED IT TO BE PUBLIC AND COOPERATIVE

**THE PROBLEM:** The private market has failed to provide affordable housing.

**WE DEMAND:** Expand housing as a social service of general interest (SSGI) and boost the public, cooperative and non-profit sector in all Member States.

## 3. STOP EVICTIONS!

**THE PROBLEM:** Increases in evictions and foreclosures.

**WE DEMAND:** A European moratorium on evictions and foreclosure of primary residences when no adequate alternative housing is available.

#### 4. MORE HOMES, LESS WARS

**THE PROBLEM:** Military spending takes priority over social investment.

**WE DEMAND:** Redirect funds away from weapons and activate the EU budget 'safeguard clause' for public and social housing.

#### 5. HOUSING IS A FEMINIST ISSUE

**THE PROBLEM:** Housing insecurity disproportionately affects women.

**WE DEMAND:** Secure housing for single-parent families and survivors of violence.

#### 6. HOUSING IS A RIGHT FOR ALL!

**THE PROBLEM:** Gender and nationality prejudices are barriers to accessing housing, leading to discrimination, such as against individuals from migrant communities.

**WE DEMAND:** No more discrimination based on gender or nationality.

#### 7. GREEN HOMES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

**THE PROBLEM:** Housing and climate crises are interconnected.

**WE DEMAND:** Invest in energy-efficient, sustainable housing.



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# Our actions in 2025

- **FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>** : Event in Madrid: presentation of the good practices in Spanish municipalities under left leadership, highlighting rent controls and public housing expansion.
- **APRIL 5-6<sup>TH</sup>** : Support the Housing Day in Europe.
- **APRIL 25-28<sup>TH</sup>** : Support the international mobilisation against vulture funds.
- **MAY 3<sup>RD</sup>** : Event in Marseille, with actions and discussion on anti-Airbnb measures, bad housing, uberization in France and Europe.
- **MAY 23<sup>RD</sup>**: Event in Athens, emphasizing the role of trade unions in fighting for housing rights, shedding light on Greece's severe housing crisis and the urgent need for stronger renter protections.
- **JUNE**: Participation in the Italian Social Forum on Housing with grassroots movements fighting for housing justice across Europe.
- **JUNE 4-6<sup>TH</sup>** : Joining the International Social Housing Festival in Dublin.
- **JULY 11-13<sup>TH</sup>**: Summer University in Paris, with a plenary session and a workshop tackling the housing crisis.
- **OCTOBER**: Support the World Zero Evictions Days.
- **NOVEMBER**: Session on the housing crisis at the European Forum of Left, Green and Progressive forces.

**FOLLOW US FOR MORE INFO ABOUT  
THESE EVENTS AND TO HEAR ABOUT  
OTHER EVENTS COMING UP:**

**STAY UPDATED!**

# Be part of the Action: Ways to engage!

## OPEN CALL

Are you struggling with high rent and energy prices? Are you threatened by eviction? Are you a victim of discrimination? Are you a housing rights activist under threat? Do you have proposals to address the housing problem?

Your voice matters! Share your story and photos to expose the housing crisis across Europe. Let's show the reality behind the statistics and demand change! Send submissions by scanning this QR code:



### GET INVOLVED LOCALLY

- JOIN LOCAL HOUSING RIGHTS GROUPS.
- SUPPORT RENT CONTROL POLICIES IN YOUR CITY.
- PRESSURE MEPS, NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR HOUSING REFORMS.
- SHARE CAMPAIGN MATERIALS AND RAISE AWARENESS.

#ELHousingCampaign  
#HousingForAllEU  
#StopHousingCrisis  
#Homesnotprofit

### WANT TO LEARN MORE?



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Together, we can reclaim housing as a human right. The fight for fair housing is the fight for a just Europe! We must pressure both the EU and national governments! Mobilize, organize, and demand action! Public funds for public housing not for private profit! Let's build a movement for decent housing for all! Let's fight together for the right to housing! Let's fight for another Europe!