EU must act now: Mayors of major cities unveil European Housing Action Plan

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Fifteen mayors from large European cities have launched a European Housing Action Plan, calling on the EU to take bold and immediate steps to address the continent's spiralling housing crisis.

The mayors call on the EU to:

- Establish an emergency financing stream to enable cities to tackle the lack of social and affordable housing supply

- Recognise cities as key partners in implementing EU housing-related initiatives

- Create fast-track EU funding for cities to accelerate the deployment of EU-funded programmes on the ground

- Reform State Aid rules to boost public investment in social and affordable housing

- Activate national escape clause to enable greater investment in sustainable social and affordable housing

- Designate stressed housing market areas as the cornerstone of the new Agenda for Cities

- Use EU tools, including the European Semester and National Building Renovation Plans to steer housing policy and increase investment capacity

- Establish effective data-sharing obligations on Short Term Rental Platforms

The mayors are also calling for a new Affordable Housing Fund, modelled on the Next Generation EU programme, mobilising €300

billion of which at least €100 billion in grants.

1. Download the European Housing Action Plan, presented by the Mayors4Housing Alliance on 15 May in Brussels to Raffaele Fitto, EU Executive Vice-President for Cohesion Policy, Regional Development and Cities, Dan Jørgensen, EU Commissioner for Energy and Housing, and Teresa Ribera, EU Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition.

2. The Mayors4Housing alliance is composed of representatives of the following cities: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Bologna, Budapest, Florence, Ghent, Leipzig, Lisbon, Grand Lyon, Milan, Paris, Rome, Zagreb and Warsaw.

3. In the cities represented, the mayors say average rents have surged by 60% and housing prices by 78% over the past decade, far above the EU average. Meanwhile, wages have stagnated, and rising energy and transport costs are pushing more residents into housing insecurity, particularly in areas where affordable housing is far from jobs and services.

4. Across Europe, 1 in 10 urban dwellers spend over 40% of their income on housing. Financial speculation, the spread of short-term rentals, and insecure tenure in the private rental sector are further shrinking the stock of affordable homes.

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