



**UEPC PRESS RELEASE – 11.12.2013**  
**UEPC Reactions to 19th Informal Meeting of European Housing Ministers**

**UEPC recalls the importance of EU legislation regarding housing and the role EU should play, in reaction to the conclusions of the 19th informal meeting of European Housing Ministers, which took place on 9 and 10 December in Brussels. Through its Roadmap toward affordable housing, UEPC draws the attention on the importance of the provision of affordable housing as necessary component of EU sustainable housing policies.**

Filiep Loosveldt, managing director of UEPC, underlines the importance of the meetings of the Housing ministers. *"Although "housing policy" as such is not a formal competence of the EU, it can not be denied that European legislation has a huge impact on national, regional and local housing policies",* says Loosveldt. *"That's why UEPC recently adopted a roadmap towards affordable housing policies in the EU".* UEPC believes that the provision of affordable houses is a necessary component of sustainable housing policies.

*"Our roadmap is based on the three pillars of sustainability",* explains Loosveldt:

Social:

UEPC underlines the central role of sustainable neighbourhoods and the efficient connection between them. UEPC believes in a natural social mix, rather than a forced social mix. Scientific research points out that social mix policies are largely ineffective in enhancing the welfare of the poorest urban residents, and in some cases detrimental to the welfare of the urban poor. Any form of planned or policy-led social mix is not self-sustaining. Social mix policies have almost never led to greater social mobility for the urban poor nor to urban social justice. Therefore, UEPC believes that the policy focus needs to move towards welfare adjustments, not population adjustments.

Environmental:

UEPC recognizes the importance of sustainable environments, but warn that inefficient and not-cost effective one-size-fits-all environmental measures can seriously endanger the mere concept of sustainability. *"We therefore believe that every new policy proposition should be presented together with a socio-economic impact assessment report"* says Loosveldt. *"We believe that different local planning and permit systems and the administrative charges on land development have a major negative effect on the necessary supply of new dwellings in those regional markets where the needs are much higher than the existing offer on the market. Planning and permit systems should serve to facilitate and not to frustrate appropriate new development; We believe that Europe has a role to play in facilitating the benchmarking of different regional planning systems"* stresses Loosveldt.

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Economic:

"There is a need for re-assessing existing local housing policy measures and financial systems that were implemented decades ago and that nowadays fail to give an effective and efficient answer to the post-industrialized and globalized world with its new demographic and environmental changes and challenges" says Loosveldt. "We believe in open markets based on a level playing field between public and private developers." Any policy intervention seeking to attract greater investment into the private rented sector needs also to ensure that the overall housing supply is increased offering the double benefit of relieving pressure on the overall housing market and meeting the need for rented housing.

We believe that lowering of taxes, such as VAT on new dwellings (demolition and reconstruction included) would be a very efficient policy measure to stimulate the supply of new dwellings in those regional markets where the needs are much higher than the actual offer. Also financial regulation should favour access to credit for long-term investment in affordable housing.

Finally, Loosveldt stresses the need for effective and efficient policy measures, that are in essence not fiscal or financial, and that can contribute towards achieving a sustainable housing policy: "We believe that lowering the administrative burden on the new built environment would have a very positive effect on the provision of affordable houses." "Europe has a role to play in facilitating the benchmarking of different regional simplification programs related to housing." concludes Loosveldt

Enclosures:

- UEPC roadmap towards affordable housing policies in the EU
- Contribution of the European Housing Forum (EHF) – whose UEPC is a member – to the 19th informal housing ministers meeting in Brussels on December 9th and 10th 2013.

**About the UEPC:**

The European Union of Developers and House Builders (UEPC) is the umbrella organisation for national federations of Developers and House Builders. It was established in 1958 and is representing more than 30,000 developers and house builders affiliated to the federations of 9 states: United Kingdom, France, Spain, Poland, Netherlands, Belgium, Romania, Malta and Norway (observer member).

The main aim of UEPC is to support and defend the interests of developers and house builders in Europe throughout lobbying an appropriate EU regulatory framework for developers and house builders. UEPC is the recognised and authoritative voice for developers and house builders at European level.

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