



Inclusive Housing Policies: Recommendations for socially sustainable housing provision for refugees in European Cities.

The JPI Urban Europe project *Inclusive Housing* is carried out by partners from Austria, Germany and Sweden and aims to make an innovative contribution to inclusive housing policies. In close cooperation with relevant stakeholders from municipalities and housing market actors we elaborate recommendations regarding future housing policies and practices in order to improve the housing situation for refugees but also for other disadvantaged groups in the context of urban migration. This policy brief is based on our 3rd transnational stakeholder workshop in Hamburg in September 2022.

Policy Brief III

Governance for Inclusive Housing

Inclusive neighbourhoods are supported by many actors

The guiding principle of the socially mixed city is widely shared, although segregation processes often characterise urban reality. There are also visible and invisible fault lines running through the housing markets of cities and their neighbourhoods. The obvious ones result from location, building age, technical equipment, furnishing and architectural design. The often less obvious ones are based on ownership structures in the private, public or non-profit sector and the resulting letting or occupancy practices. In addition, the existence of support structures such as neighbourhood meetings, social organisations or educational institutions can promote the inclusion of arriving refugees. The different constellations result in different integration tasks, but also differences in the respective performance of the neighbourhoods and actors. These can hardly be levelled out. However, in order to prevent the social islands of the urban archipelago from drifting further apart, the cooperation of the cities with the housing market actors and a balanced distribution of the challenges and tasks is indispensable.

Anchoring affordable housing in municipal concepts

The three cities of Hamburg, Vienna and Umeå have been experiencing significant demographic growth and are confronted with shortages on the housing market. However, the importance of affordable housing in the context of the existing municipal development strategies of the three cities differs, which reflects the self-image and the municipal tasks in housing provision.

In Vienna's Urban Development Plan (STEP) 2025 from 2014, the tradition of municipal and subsidised housing construction is described as the basis of social mixture, affordability and a high quality of life. With a view to the future, it is formulated that "social housing must be a supporting pillar of the creation of housing and in particular also offer attractive and affordable offers for lower-income households". In 2021, the preparation of the new STEP 2035 started. It aims to create the basis for the spatial transformation of Vienna towards a climate-friendly, social and robust city, in which affordable housing will once again play a key role.

In 2014, the goals of Hamburg's urban development were formulated under the title "green, just, growing city on the waterfront". In the area of housing supply, the goal is that people can find adequate and affordable living space in a neighbourhood with a high quality of life and at the same time have access to educational opportunities. The main element of the strategy is Hamburg's housing programme, which has been operationalised through the "Alliance for Housing in Hamburg" and intends to contribute to the social mix and the provision of housing for various target groups.

The municipal housing company SAGA plays a key role in the provision of housing – as a housing stock holder and neighbourhood developer as well as creator of new, mainly subsidised housing.

Umeå's vision is to grow to 200,000 inhabitants by 2050. To achieve this goal, a Comprehensive Plan for Umeå Municipality was adopted in 2018, which brings together all strategies that support and stimulate continuous, sustainable growth. With regard to housing, the Comprehensive Plan defines future residential areas and guidelines for redensification. The Umeå Municipality's Housing supply programme (2020) identifies combating segregation, improving the accessibility of the housing stock and increasing affordable housing as objectives for a functioning housing market. However, the focus of the implementation lies on new construction, for which the municipality is creating the planning conditions, but which is, due to currently rising building costs, also becoming gradually less affordable.

Recommendations:

- **Anchor urban development goals for housing supply strategically and conceptually**
- **Specify and qualify goals for the development of the housing market**
- **New construction alone is not enough - consider also housing supply in the existing stock and define the contribution of new construction to social justice**
- **Understand municipalities and municipal housing companies as pioneers for inclusive housing**

Building municipal alliances for housing

A major goal of housing policy in all three cities is to expand the housing stock through new construction. However, this alone is not enough to ensure affordable housing for disadvantaged target groups. Accessibility and affordability can be ensured on one hand by rules for building – also in combination with subsidies – and on the other hand by the allocation of land to (social, non-profit) developers.

The implementation of housing policy goals is a joint effort of many housing market actors everywhere – including Hamburg, Vienna and Umeå. However, these actors are addressed and involved in different ways. Vienna sees it as a municipal task to cover the basic need for housing. The city has the "largest municipal property management in Europe" in the form of Wiener Wohnen, the municipal housing company with over 220,000 housing units. In the last decades the municipality also focused on subsidising the construction of new housing, mainly realized by limited-profit housing associations. In Umeå, discussions were held with various property owners and developers in the course of preparing the housing supply programme. The aim was to jointly identify the crucial aspects for managing the housing supply in the municipality and to reach a shared understanding of the target vision.

Hamburg has been implementing a cooperative policy approach since 2011 by forging an alliance between the city, housing companies and large tenants' organisations. Advantages are seen in the continuous exchange, among other things, about requirements and expectations for housing construction and the provision of suitable housing for different resident groups. The companies of the housing industry and their associations speak "with one voice". In this way, conflicts of interest

can be resolved at an early stage. In the case of controversial projects, transparent and consensus-oriented decision-making takes place. In addition, calculable investment conditions have been created – with a view to housing construction goals. Joint steps and time schedules as well as mechanisms for (de)escalation have been agreed upon. The alliance is seen by all actors as a basis for mutual trust.

Recommendations:

- **Perceive, expand and address the landscape of actors (Housing +)**
- **Create a cooperative climate**
- **Public sector drives new alliances and involves private developers**
- **Establish new cultures for discussion and decision-making**



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Alliance for Housing

Cooperation between city, districts, housing market actors and tenants / Hamburg (GER)

Actors from the city administration, housing companies and tenants' organisations form a new alliance in order to foster decent and affordable housing, especially for vulnerable groups. Agreements on quantitative and qualitative targets lead to a high level of commitment.

Cooperating with the public and non-profit housing sector

Non-profit providers play a central role in providing housing for low-income households and others with access difficulties on the housing market. Limited-profit status in the narrower sense only (still) exists in Austria. Nevertheless, the beginnings of non-profit and cooperative housing companies in the mid-19th century can be traced back to the creation of housing alternatives to the existing until that moment mostly private housing market offers. Although a distinction is often made between non-profit and public / municipal enterprises, they share similar characteristics, including cost-based rents, social criteria for renting and the limitation of returns.

Municipalities can set the course for the activities of the public housing sector.

This includes price-reduced land allocation and other subsidy programmes.

Above all, however, it is federal and state regulations that extend or limit the scope of action. For example, public housing companies in Sweden have had to operate according to market principles since 2011, which means that they are not allowed to act in a way that "distorts competition". This changed the framework conditions – similar to the abolition of non-profit status in Germany in 1990.

The example of Austria can be used to see what value a long-term socially rented housing segment can have. The private companies and cooperatives organised in the Austrian Federation of Limited-profit Housing Associations are on the one hand active as a lobby and on the other hand work together with municipalities and other organisations to create affordable long-term housing on a project basis.

Recommendations:

- Institutionalise the orientation towards the common good in order to standardise the rules for renting and to strengthen the affordability of rents
- Define criteria for strategic cooperation between municipalities and public or non-profit housing companies
- Support innovative cooperation projects of public or non-profit housing companies
- Demonstrate political will and commitment for new cooperative ventures
- Encourage housing companies and social organisations to work together



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Arriving at home

Initiative of Homeless Aid and Limited-profit Housing Associations (AUT)

The project promotes "Housing First" and is aimed specifically at people at risk of poverty or exclusion who have lost their home or are threatened with losing their home as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. In 12 months, 300 apartments in the limited-profit housing sector have been brokered.

Creating impulses for innovative partnerships

A certain degree of intrinsic motivation is necessary for actors to cooperate. Based on this, external reasons can also promote the willingness to cooperate. Suitable framework conditions must be created to attract a broad and heterogeneous spectrum of actors, including the private housing sector. National, state and EU-wide funding programmes in the field of housing and integration can provide impetus by implementing guidelines on the range of actors, on the content of target groups and on cooperation relations.

In Hamburg and Vienna, there is a long-standing practice of awarding municipal properties according to concept quality. Hamburg evaluates the submissions according to the three perspectives "housing and social aspects", "urban development and climate adaptation" and "energy and building ecology". In the housing developers' competitions in Vienna, realisation concepts are expected according to the criteria of the 4-pillar model (architecture, ecology, economy and social sustainability). For selected building sites, joint competitions are mandatory if coordinated projects are to be evaluated together due to the site configuration or special tasks (e.g. intercultural housing).

In this way, the cities provide thematic impulses and create an occasion for new partnerships to come together. Experience shows that the willingness to cooperate increases on the basis of positive experiences. Nevertheless, it is advisable that any expansion of the spectrum of actors – housing associations, planners as well as social or socio-cultural actors – should be flanked by municipal initiatives. Formats and incentives must be created, especially to build bridges to private housing market actors. In addition, the range between public and private use,

between voluntariness and political pressure must be explored and the appropriate, commitment-oriented form of participation found.

Cooperation for social, affordable housing must be aware of and take into account the different needs of different disadvantaged groups, weigh them up and avoid competition and exclusion.

Recommendations:

- **Make municipalities fit for initiating and leading new forms of cooperation**
- **Winning over private housing market actors by influencing the design of goals and topics, e.g. in urban development areas**
- **Use targeted funding programmes and calls at national, state and municipal level to give impetus for private actors to engage in cooperative ventures**
- **Promote orientation on goals and the monitoring of cooperation**

Project Team Inclusive Housing

German Institute of Urban Affairs:

Bettina Reimann, Julia Diringer, Ricarda Pätzold

Neighbourhood Work / Caritas Vienna:

*Katharina Kirsch-Soriano da Silva,
Eva-Maria Kehrer, Florian Rautner*

Department of Sociology / University of

Vienna: Christoph Reinprecht, Jana Reininger

Department of Geography / Umeå University:

Madeleine Eriksson, Eva Wikstrom