

# Documentation

Online-Event

## **A European task: Integrating refugees in the housing market**

Perspectives from Austria, Germany and Sweden

*Tuesday, 27th of September 2022, 4-6 pm*

## Content

- Programme
- Presentations:
  1. **Policies and trends for housing and integration in Austria, Germany and Sweden. Challenges for housing for refugees.**  
**PhD Eva Wikström**, Umeå University, Department of Social Work  
  
**What makes housing inclusive?**  
Approaches and experiences from practice in Hamburg, Vienna and Umea.
  2. Vienna/Austria:  
**Dr. Katharina Kirsch-Soriano da Silva**, Caritas and **Dr. Julia Girardi-Hoog**, Wiener Wohnen, City of Vienna
  3. Hamburg/Germany:  
**Dr. Katharina Wiethoff**, Office for housing, urban renewal, and land use, Hamburg
  4. Umeå /Sweden:  
**Daniel Levisson**, City of Umeå
  5. **Comment: Precarious Housing in Europe**  
**Prof. Dr. Sybille Münch**, Hildesheim University

### Online-Event

## A European task: Integrating refugees in the housing market

Perspectives from Austria, Germany and Sweden

*Tuesday, 27th of September 2022, 4-6 pm*

With the so-called refugee crisis in Europe from 2015 onwards, the immigration of refugees to several European countries has massively increased. This has resulted in enormous pressure for adequate short-term accommodation for these people and their long-term access to the housing market. With the influx of refugees from Ukraine since February 2022, access to the housing market as well as the provision of affordable housing are once again extremely pressing issues. In addition, the question of affordable housing does not only arise for refugees, but also includes other disadvantaged groups on the housing market in different European cities.

Experiences and approaches from Austria, Germany and Sweden provide indications of the prevailing barriers at the housing markets and strategies to overcome them. During the Online-Event, representatives from academia and practice will highlight existing approaches and strategies in the housing market.

## Programme

### Welcome, introduction and procedure

*Dr. Bettina Reimann, German Institute of Urban Affairs*

### Policies and trends for housing and integration in Austria, Germany and Sweden. Challenges for housing for refugees.

*PhD Eva Wikström, Umeå University, Department of Social Work*

### What makes housing inclusive?

Approaches and experiences from practice in Hamburg, Vienna and Umea.

- Vienna/Austria: *Dr. Katharina Kirsch-Soriano da Silva, Caritas and Dr. Julia Girardi-Hoog, Wiener Wohnen, City of Vienna*
- Hamburg/Germany: *Dr. Katharina Wiethoff, Office for housing, urban renewal, and land use, Hamburg*
- Umeå /Sweden: *Daniel Levisson, City of Umeå*

### Comment: Precarious Housing in Europe

*Prof. Dr. Sybille Münch, Hildesheim University*

### Conclusion

*Dr. Bettina Reimann, German Institute of Urban Affairs*

## Project information

The project “Inclusive Housing” is part of the call [Urban Migration](#) of the [Joint Programming Initiative \(JPI\) Urban Europe](#). The project aims to contribute to the development of strategic and practical solutions at the housing market. In this context, “inclusive housing” does mainly refer to the integration of refugees, but also includes other disadvantaged groups on the housing market.

Based on existing findings, experiences and strategies in the field of housing and integration of refugees the project partners from Austria, Germany and Sweden focused on three main topics: “housing market and access to housing”, “housing governance” and “special types of housing”. The project consortium aimed to present in detail the challenges for refugees with regard to housing (access to housing segments, housing biographies and living situations) and to contribute to urban housing policies and strategies (involvement of relevant stakeholders, development of innovative approaches).

### Project consortium

- German Institute of Urban Affairs (Difu), <https://difu.de/en>
- Caritas der Erzdiözese Wien – Hilfe in Not, <https://www.caritas-wien.at/>
- University of Vienna, Department of Sociology, <https://www.soz.univie.ac.at/>
- Umeå University, Department of Geography, <https://www.umu.se/en/>

# Policies and trends for housing and integration in Austria, Germany and Sweden

## Challenges for housing for refugees

Based on the joint factsheet: *Policies and trends for inclusive housing*

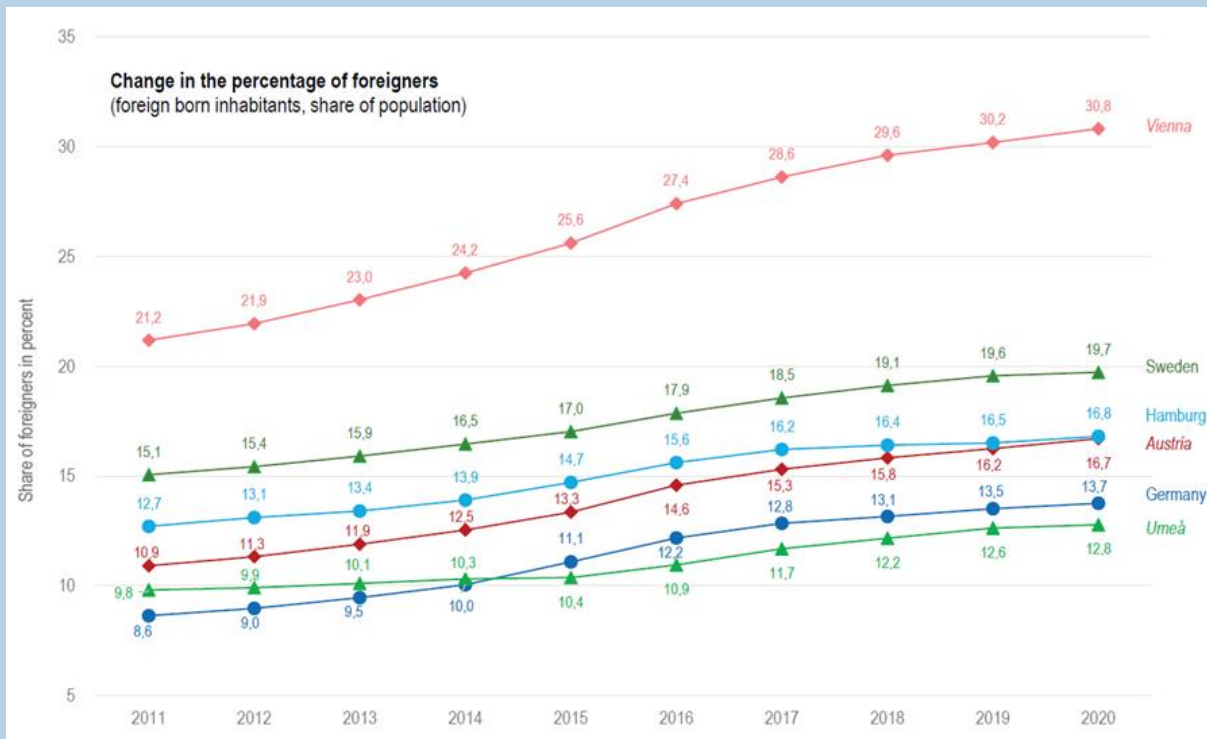
**Eva Wikström**, Dep of social work, Umeå University, Sweden

**Richarda Pätzold**, Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik, Germany

**Jana Reiniger**, Institut für Soziologie, Universität Wien, Austria

## SE, AT, DE – nations of immigration

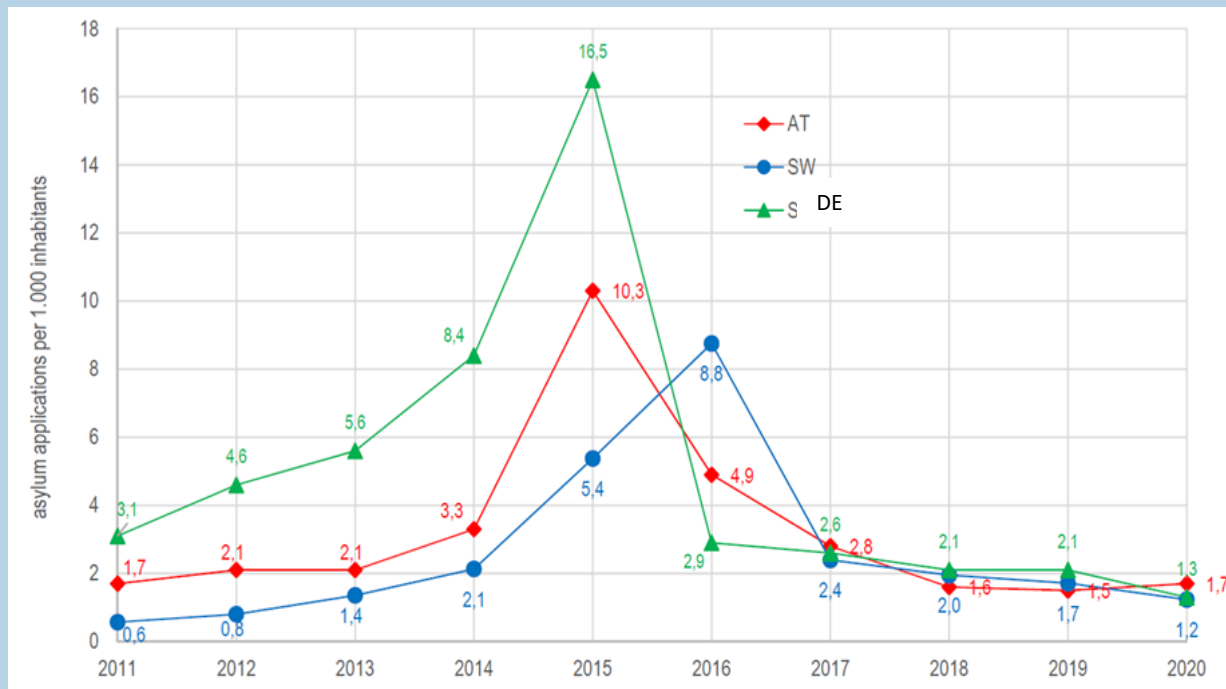
Figure 1: Proportion of foreigners in the population (DE/AT/SE)



Source: Own illustration based on data from the statistical offices of the three countries

## The 2015 'summer of migration'

Figure 2: Asylum applications per 1.000 inhabitants



Source: own illustration based on data from the statistical offices of the three countries

## **Post-2015 integration measures: emphasis on labour and dispersal**

- Initiatives to manage labour market integration and housing provision through municipal dispersal (f.ex. Swe)
- Integration policies which emphasizes performances in labour and economy

### **‘A conflation of rules on integration and immigration’**

- Progress in integration is used as a precondition for prolongation of residency or to reunite with family members

## Housing markets and policies - Common development in AU, GE and SWE

- Marketization of housing –
  - shrinking of public/social housing stock, retrenchment of state-subsidizes
  - Rise of building costs, rise in rent-levels and financial thresholds to housing-inclusion
  - Regeneration campaigns, building for high-income groups
- Shortage of affordable housing
- Housing inequalities (increased polarisation in housing costs and living standard)
- Urban/rural imbalances in housing availability



## Housing inclusion for refugees - Common development in AU, GE and SWE

Integration to the regular housing market for refugees is the overarching challenge

Refugees inclusion are often hampered by:

- The demand for eligibility to social/public housing (the residency or category required)
- They lack resources to compete for vacancies (time in housing-queue, income)
- They often lack social network and knowledge about housing market and housing rights

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**Inclusive Housing**

## Refugees are therefor often in a marginal or insecure housing position

- Shared apartments – (f.ex in Austria 2018 one fifth of the refugees lived in shared accommodation of temporary nature (Baier/Siegert 2018))
  - Crowded living (in 2018 in Austria the average square metres per person was 28)
  - Continue to live in official accommodation which hamper integration
  - Limitation of regional mobility or by law restricted (in Germany & Sweden)
  - Short-term contracts - Time-limitation of state/municipal housing support
- 
- Municipal organisation of ‘housing school’ is sometimes used as means to enhance refugees know-how as housing-applicant
  - Voluntary organisations, NGO’s in all nations to some extent “fill the gap” of network absence and provision of alternative housing-solutions

## Challenges for housing for refugees

General housing situation in Europe:

- The current situation: war in Europe and economic recession – what will it imply for households' economy and housing situation?
- Increase of 'housing flight' and exclusion?
- Increase quest for housing in the 'marginal' housing market?
- A new wave of refugee-migrants?

For refugees housing inclusion:

A major challenge is housing solutions which enables integration -

- Avoidance of 'Integration paradoxes' as a result of rural/urban imbalances
- Avoidance of prolonged 'temporariness'

→ There is need for an acknowledgement of refugees unequal position on housing market

→ There is need for an acknowledgment of housing adequacy as a prerequisite for refugees integration in economy (Ager & Strang 2008)

# What makes housing inclusive?

Approaches and experiences from practice in Vienna

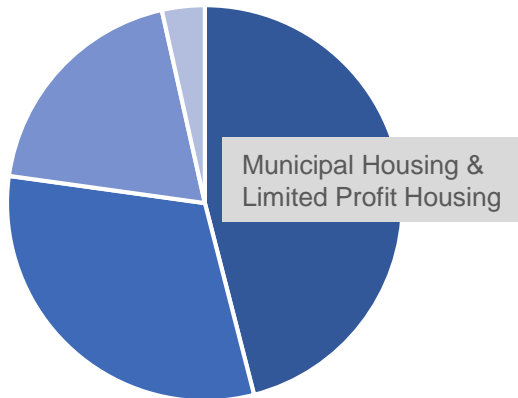
Katharina Kirsch-Soriano da Silva, Caritas Vienna

Julia Girardi-Hoog, Wiener Wohnen / City of Vienna

# Affordable housing

## Provision of public housing

Municipal Housing  
(more than 220.000 units)



- Rental social housing
- Rental private housing
- Owner occupied
- Other / unknown

## Rent regulation for other segments

Tenancy law with rent regulations

Rent regulations for **historic housing stock** built before 1945 & for **Municipal Housing**

Limited Profit Housing with cost covering rent

## Urban development policies

Active land procurement + housing developer competitions

Zoning law with category "subsidized housing"

Urban development contracts with developers

# Accessible housing

## Access criteria for housing

Access criteria for social housing

Formal / informal rules in private housing

## Special support for vulnerable groups

Allocation of vulnerable groups

Cooperation with NGOs

Prevention from homelessness

Financial support

## Knowledge about options and rights

Counselling in tenancy law & anti-discrimination law

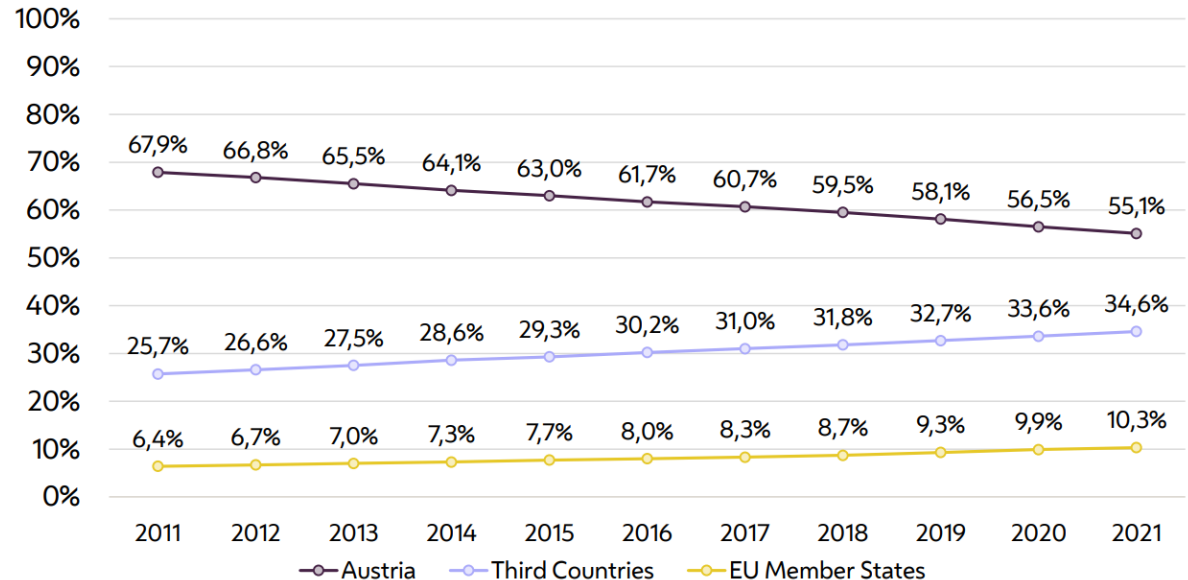
Buddies

Peer-to-peer support

# Access to Municipal Housing

In the past ten years, the proportion of residents from other EU countries and from third countries in municipal housing has increased.

You can apply for a Viennese housing ticket with justified housing needs, that entitles you to search for a municipal flat on the real estate platform of the City of Vienna



Development of the population according to origin in municipal housing (2011-2021), MA 23, 1.1.2021

# Special Social Allocation Programme

## Providing housing for vulnerable groups (Wiener Wohnen)

This programme aims to provide vulnerable people who don't have any chance on the private housing market to find an accommodation. The city supports the social inclusion of very vulnerable groups such as:

- Former prisoners
- People in drug rehabilitation programmes
- People with mental health issues
- Recognized refugees.



# Pool Housing

## Special cooperation with NGOs (Wiener Wohnen)

Several NGOs like Caritas, Diakonie, Neunerhaus rent apartments from Wiener Wohnen and subrent them to their clients (refugees, young people in care, homeless etc.).

The clients have to pay the rent themselves and get a limited rental contract for one year.

After this first year, an evaluation is done. When the payments were regularly made and no complaints about the clients were registered, the client gets an unlimited rental contract directly with Wiener Wohnen.

The NGO receives another „pool apartment“ from Wiener Wohnen and can start another one-year-contract with a new client.

# Healthy Housing

## Secure housing conditions

Stable rental contracts  
(often fixed term or subletting)

## Adequate housing space

Maintenance obligations of landlords

## Adequate housing environment

Quality of public space  
& infrastructure

# Housing & Social Inclusion

## Housing projects focused on inclusion

Special projects:  
- Housing and other aspects of integration,  
- Living together of different groups, ...

## Social inclusion in the neighbourhood

Community and neighbourhood work & civil society initiatives / engagement

## Social networks and encounters

# Neighbourhood Parents

## Peer-to-peer support in everyday life (Caritas Vienna)

Multipliers from different communities help other new-arriving residents with information and orientation. Based on their own experiences in the context of migration they are able to give practical knowledge, build bridges to existing offers and services in the city and support on the way to know more about formal and informal rules, about rights and possibilities.



Visit of Volunteers © Caritas Stadtteilarbeit / Arash Salem

<https://www.caritas-stadtteilarbeit.at/projekte/alle-projekte/graetzeeltern>

# House HAWI

## Integrative Housing Project (Caritas Vienna)

The integrative housing project in the tenth district of Vienna gathered between 2016 and 2018 over a hundred young asylum seekers, students and apprentices who live together under one roof and share a room with three or four people. It was the first of its kind and was intended for young people between the ages of 15 and 25. Students from TU Vienna planned the wooden elements for the shared rooms as part of the project “Home not Shelter” and built them together with the refugees.



DIY built shared rooms © House HAWI

<https://www.hanssauerstiftung.de/projekt/home-not-shelter-wien-hawi-traudi/>

# Refugees Welcome

## Conveying housing options in shared flats (civil society association)

Refugees Welcome Austria finds a new home for refugees in private accommodations, e.g. in shared flats or with families who provide a free room. This stimulates contact between refugees and the Austrian population, breaks down prejudices, builds social networks and promotes learning the German language.



Conveying in shared flats © Flüchtlinge Willkommen

<https://www.fluechtlinge-willkommen.at/>

# Challenges

There are many instruments to shape the housing market, but empirical evidence shows that refugees often suffer exclusion and live in precarious housing conditions.

## Barriers are

- language barriers
- lacking knowledge
- discriminatory practices
- selective or exclusive access conditions for housing segments
- ...

# Challenges

**The challenges for the future are**

to turn instruments more efficient and adequate to include the most vulnerable groups such as refugees, e.g.

- improving access criteria for social housing
- fostering inclusion in different aspects of everyday life (also in the labour market)
- empowering refugees in language skills and knowledge
- reducing prejudices of landlords and in society in general
- organizing new alliances on the housing sector
- ...

> It is also a question of political will!

## Contact:

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[julia.girardi-hoog@wien.gv.at](mailto:julia.girardi-hoog@wien.gv.at)



# INTEGRATING REFUGEES IN THE HOUSING MARKET

INSIGHTS FROM HAMBURG,  
GERMANY

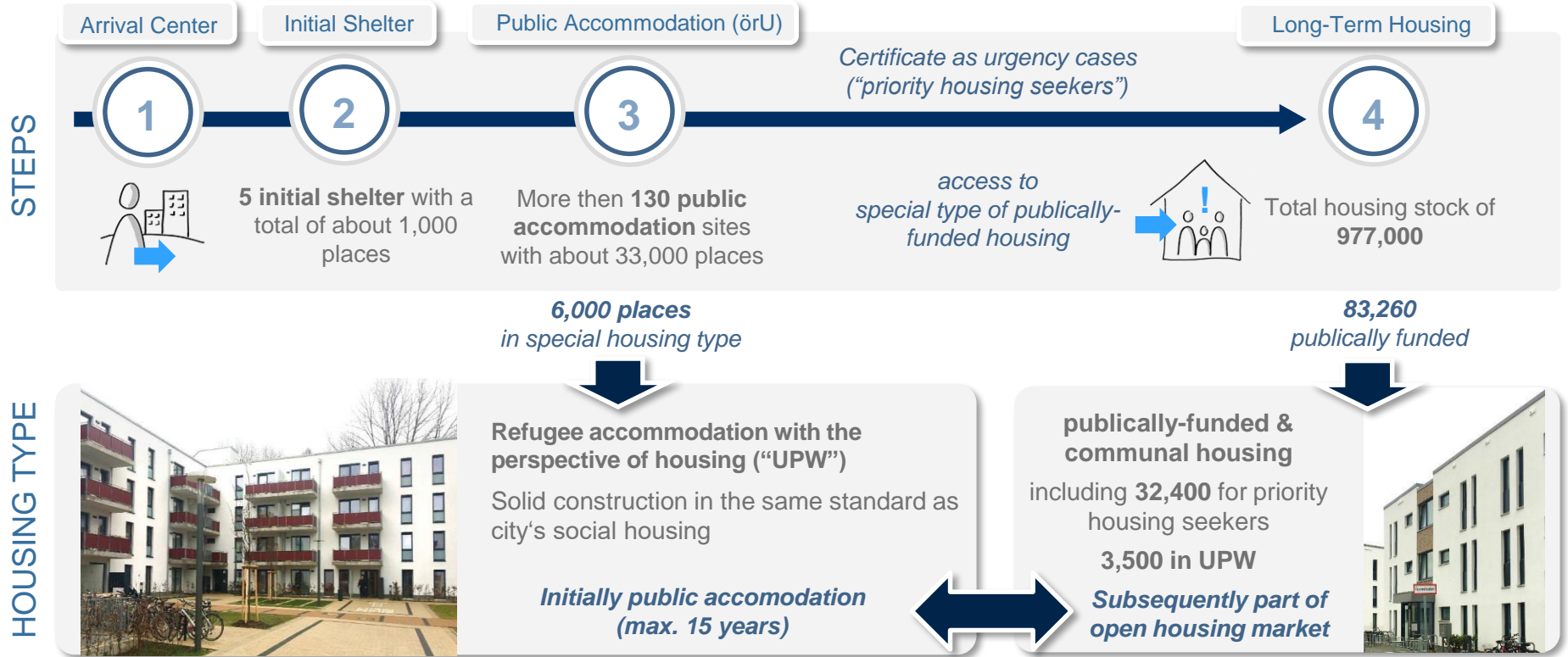
Dr. Katharina Wiethoff,  
Ministry of Urban Development and Housing

Online-Event difu  
27th of September 2022, 4-6 pm

# AGENDA

- 01 Migrants' paths in Hamburg**  
From arrival to „real“ home
- 02 Sustainable Solution in the Housing Sector**  
Combining shelter & social housing building – The „UPW“- approach
- 03 Lessons learned**  
Better integration through high-quality, long-term public housing

# 01 MIGRANTS' PATHS FROM ARRIVAL TO „REAL HOME“



## 02 „UPW“ APPROACH: SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION IN THE HOUSING SECTOR

### → Approach:

- Ensuring long term (social) housing instead of cost-intensive container-housing

### → Goal: “multilevel” urban Integration (spatial & social)

- **City-Level:** 12 UPW (mixed use public accommodation & housing with approx. 3,500 apartments in 7 districts)
- **Neighbourhood Level:** balanced residential mix, no „ghettoisation“

### → Requirement: „need for speed“

### → Solution: Shorten Planning Process

§ 246 Construction Bill (“Baugesetzbuch”):

- allows investors to start construction without referring to adopted land use plan
- Exception only for refugees’ housing





## 02 „UPW“ APPROACH: TEAMWORK F&W + SAGA

### → Fördern und Wohnen F&W – state-owned company

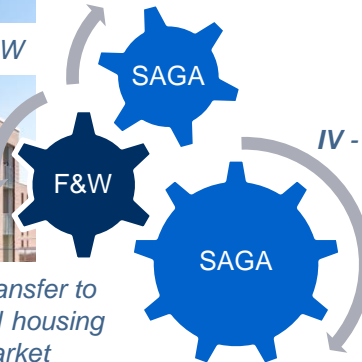
- responsible for refugee accommodation, currently housing about 30,000 refugees in Hamburg
- Holds also rental flats
- including specific support structure for migrant tenants, such as e.g.:
  - special accompanying & mentoring team for relocation
  - promote tenant competence (Training by F&W)



II - Operation by F&W

I - Built by Investor

III - Transfer to „normal housing market



### → SAGA – Municipal Housing for Hamburg

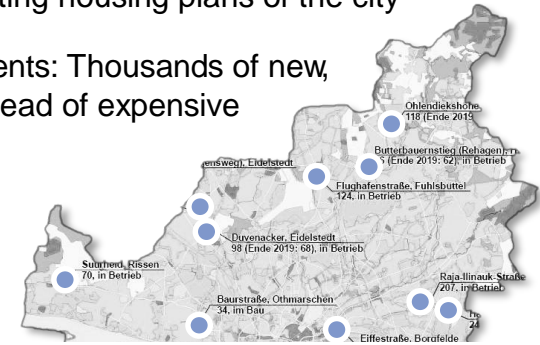
- founded 100 years ago
- more than 137.000 rental flats in Hamburg (every 6th Hamburg citizen lives here)
- biggest municipal housing company in Germany
- high amount of public subsidized housing (20 % below market rents)
- The aim of SAGA
  - housing for low and medium income
  - attractive and strong neighborhoods with good social mix
  - integrated district development
  - social dedication paired with economic success



## 03 LESSONS LEARNED

- Better integration through dignified housing
- Better integration through mixing in housing complexes and in a German community
- If refugees live in container units, they would at some point have to move away from a social structure they had build.

- Swift decisions thanks to § 246: UPWs complement the existing housing plans of the city
- Sustainable investments: Thousands of new, high-quality flats, instead of expensive containers

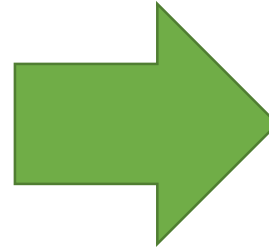


THANK YOU!



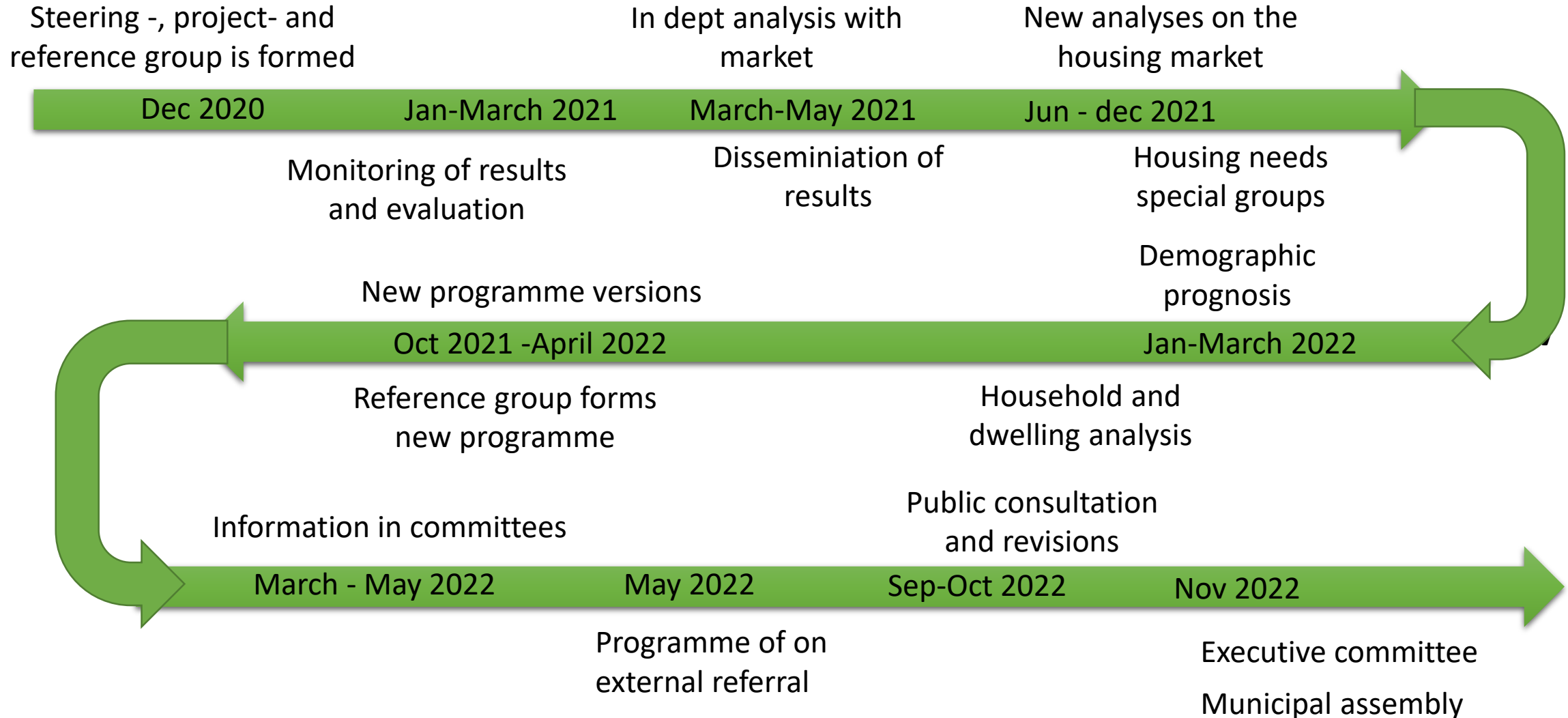
Hamburg

# Municipal housing programme 2022-2030





# Municipal housing programme – Planning



# Objectives, measures and indicators

## A well-functioning housing market

The objective is that new and existing housing should contribute to:

- provide increased mobility on the housing market
- promote immigration
- widen the range of housing alternatives
- counteract segregation
- elderly residents' housing needs are to be met
- Increase in physical availability in the housing stock
- more affordable homes on the housing market

# Objectives, measures and indicators

## A well-functioning housing market

- The municipality must have established detailed plans for at least two years of housing construction.  
*Responsibility: municipal executive committee, Land development unit, Detailed planning unit*
- AB Bostaden must offer good rental housing for everyone. This requires a wide range of locations, sizes, amenities, standards and rent levels. In order to continue to offer a wide range in the future, renovations in the older rental stock should, where possible, be carried out in a careful and sustainable manner.  
*Responsibility : municipal building committee, municipal assembly  
Detailed planning unit, Building permit unit, Public Housing company*

# Objectives, measures and indicators

## A well-functioning housing market

### **Annual construction**

- Construction in progress
- Construction in different districts
- Diversity in construction

### **Housing shortage and living standards**

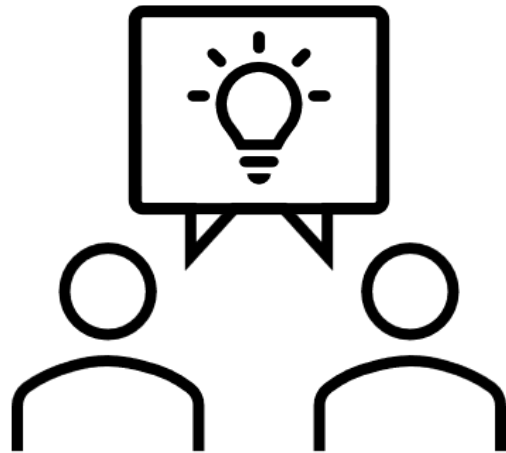
- Crowding
- Homelessness
- Internal relocations

### **Prerequisite for housing construction**

- Household purchasing power of housing

# Focus on dialogue and cooperation!

## Formalized dialogue



Common view on  
challenges for the  
housing market



Cooperation

# Example: Refugees

**Umeå municipality is responsible for arranging – activities for integration, social inclusion and housing for certain groups:**

- ABO, KVOT (refugees from accommodation by the Swedish Migration Agency and refugees directly from refugee centers in other countries)
- EBO (self settlers)
- EKB (unaccompanied refugee children)

# Housing strategies in Umeå

- Umeå municipality have ca 300-350 apartments for refugees (municipal housing company Bostaden)
- Geographically spread around the municipality
- Time-limited secondhand contract  
2 years + 2 years + 1 year (family) – 4-5 years (lengthening contracts)
- Different sizes (the biggest size is with 5 rooms)
- Vision zero - no homeless childrens!



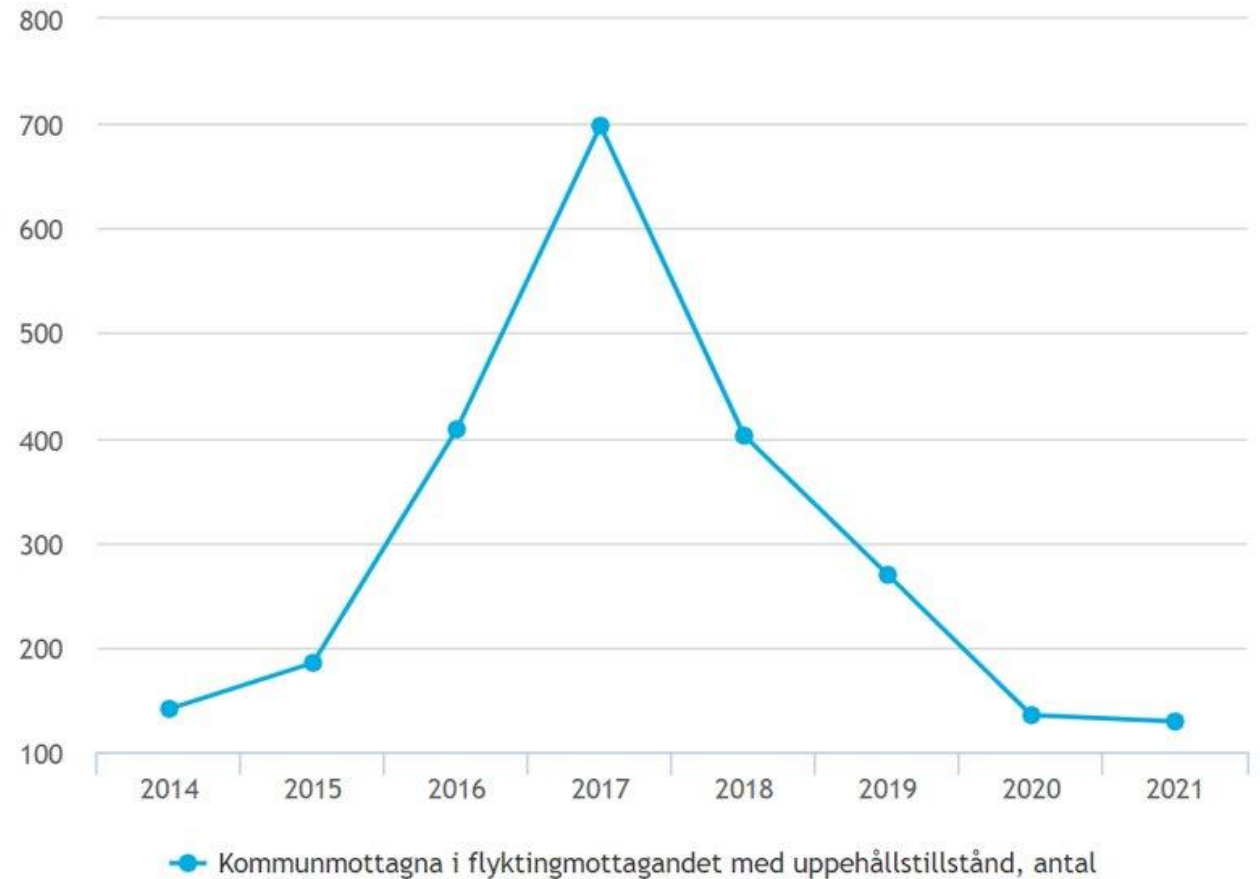


# Housing strategies in Umeå

## Challenges

- Housing shortages.
- Reoccurring **spikes** of refugees
- The difference in refugee households makes it difficult to match appartements.
- Everything starts with housing – key role for social inclusion.
- Price level of new apartments too high
- Queue system → 4-5 years to 10 years

Refugees annually received by the municipality



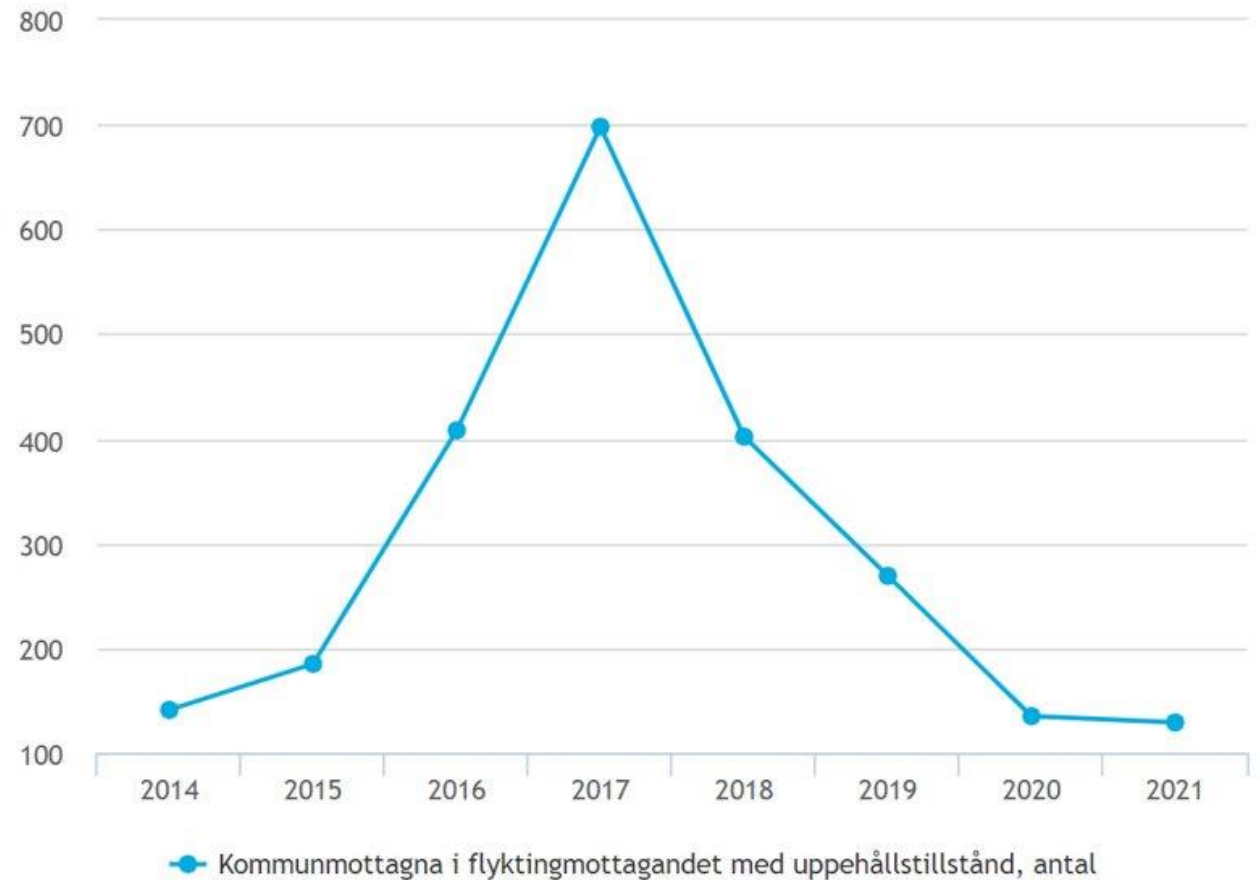


# Housing strategies in Umeå

## Positive strategies

- Early contact help with different housing companies
- Early help to get in the housing queue
- No homeless children!
- The opportunity for families to get firsthand contracts after 5 years

Refugees annually received by the municipality



# Housing programme and strategies i Umeå

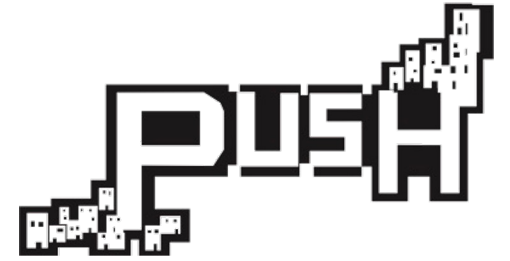
Thank you!

Daniel Levisson

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# PRECARIOUS HOUSING IN EUROPE



→ LEUPHANA UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



**LEUPHANA**  
UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG

# BACKGROUND: PRECARIOUS HOUSING IN EUROPE

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership, funded between 2019-2022

Goal: develop teaching and learning materials on housing-related poverty

Basis of today's comment:  
working papers on refugee housing and policy solutions



# HOW & WHY HOUSING REMAINS PRECARIOUS FOR REFUGEES

- vulnerability connected to legal status and intersectional variables
- sometimes “locals first” waiting lists in public sector
- use of destitution to encourage voluntary returns in some countries, attempts to limit “pull factors”

Example: “hostile environment” in the UK with spill over effects to all migrants

- transition from the reception system difficult because of language barriers, limited knowledge of housing market, limited affordability and suitability (size!)
- housing market often exclusionary, discriminatory and even exploitative (→shadow economy, see Bernt et al. 2021)
- growing shares of homeless among refugees



# WHY CROSSNATIONAL POLICY ADVICE IS DIFFICULT

- Complexity due to different welfare regimes, different notions of „inclusion“
- considerable divergence in the levels of support across European countries and even between cities and local authorities in those countries
- different responsibilities for housing policy-making, different tenure and housing market structures
- reasons for why housing becomes precarious, or remains so, not only lie in decisions or non-decisions in the field of housing, planning or land ownership



Examples of European attempts for refugee inclusion in housing



# FACILITATING HOUSING AND RENTAL ACCOMMODATION FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

## Example: **Welcome Home Program in Warsaw**

target groups: refugees in danger of becoming homeless

rents flats from landlords and subsequently sublets these flats to refugee families at below market rents, secure tenure for at least 2 years (<https://en.ocalenie.org.pl/what-we-do/our-initiatives/welcome-home>)

## Example: **Startblok Riekerhaven13 in Amsterdam**

target groups: local youth & young refugees aged 18-27

Cooperation between municipality & housing association

(<https://startblokriekerhaven.nl>)



# USE OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK AND/ OR RENOVATION OF VACANT BUILDINGS

Example: **Curing the limbo in Athens**

target groups: refugees and local unemployed

Municipality of Athens, financed by the Urban Innovative Action program

City with many vacancies and high levels of unemployment

Housing in exchange for civic engagement, building skills, language training

<https://curingthelimbo.gr/en/home>





# MODELS FOR COOPERATION OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ACTORS

## Example: **Sharehaus Refugio in Berlin**

target group: 40 refugees living in a shared flat for 12-18 months

city-owned space that functioned as a coop- style refugee housing, community centre and café

The Share House Association & City Mission (<https://refugio.berlin>)

## Example: **Social Rental Intermediation in Brussels**

target group: migrant families, refugees, vulnerable people and people at risk of poverty

social rental intermediation between private landlords and people excluded from the housing market (<https://www.fedais.be>)



# COMBINATION OF APPROACHES AND MECHANISMS FOR ACCESS TO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, INFORMATION SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE IN FINDING ACCOMMODATION

Example: **No Recourse to Public Funds** (UK)

target groups: destitute migrants and migrant families

housing, specialist support and immigration advice (<https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/>)

Example: **The No Accommodation Network** (NACCOM; UK)

target group: homeless among asylum seekers and refugees

small voluntary organisations who run night-shelters for destitute asylum seekers, host refugees and asylum seekers in spare bedrooms, and purchase property (<https://naccom.org.uk>)



# CONCLUSION

Housing among the primary assets in refugees' process of socio-spatial inclusion and rooting in host country

Yet, increasing housing prices, lack of affordable and social housing, discrimination

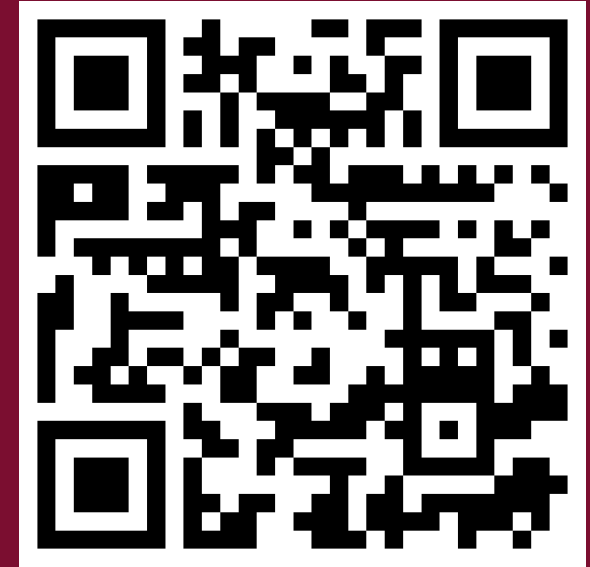
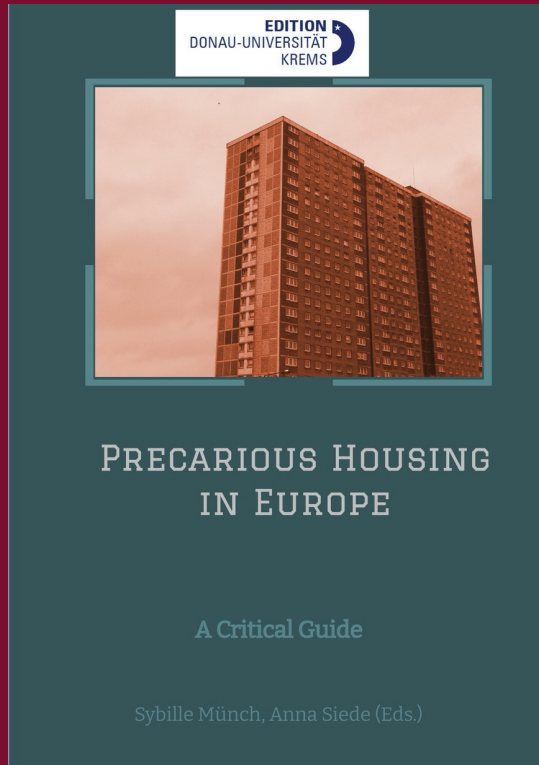
Policy goals between “integration” and “hostile environment”

Differences among countries, but also cities

Vibrant networks of third sector and civil society initiatives across Europe, but often project-based and /or reaching small numbers



# CONTACT



Free download: <https://door.donau-uni.ac.at/view/o:2583>

Free online resources on immigrant housing:  
<https://mdl.donau-uni.ac.at/push/mod/page/view.php?id=94&forceview=1>

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<https://www.leuphana.de/institute/ipw/personen/sybille-muench.html>

