

MANIFESTO

APRIL 2009

Strictly speaking, housing is not a European competence, but its provision and construction are affected by the European legislation and decisions.

In anticipation of the elections of June 2009, UEPC (European Union of Developers and House Builders) ⁽¹⁾, the representative body of housebuilders and developers across Europe, wishes to highlight three major issues facing its members.

UEPC is raising the issues to stimulate debate and help generate solutions.

1. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY MORATORIUM

In a difficult economic climate, the increase in legislation, regulation and standards is having a paralysing effect on the industry and is hindering the activity of the various economic stakeholders in the house building and development sector of the Member States.

Besides the increasing demands posed by the many different texts applicable to our sector of activity, the lack of protection from legal liability arising from the permanently changing regulations in force is a major issue threatening our profession today.

By applying the theory of cost-benefit analysis, **UEPC therefore proposes a legislative and regulatory moratorium so as to make it possible to simplify the *acquis communautaire*** and so safeguard the transposition and the actual implementation of the European legislation and standards already in force.

Furthermore, favourable to a participatory approach, **UEPC proposes that the consultation of the stakeholders be strengthened upstream from the drawing up of European laws, regulations and standards.**

As a body well positioned to develop and nurture creative ideas, UEPC is available to discuss draft texts with the European bodies.



**Restoring the past,
building the future !**

*UEPC = + than **30,000 developers and house builders** affiliated to the federations of 13 states ⁽¹⁾.*

*Its members' activities = **10% of the gross national product and employment** in Europe.*

*Together = build and develop **1,000,000 homes + several million m² of commercial buildings** (offices, shopping centres and semi-industrial buildings) **per annum**.*

*Housing in the European Union = **about 163 million units**.*

*In 2008 in the 27 **about 1,9 million construction permits for housing were granted** ^(*).*

*In the Euro zone alone the **number of construction permits granted in 2008 = 1,26 million** ^(*).*

^(*) Eurostat (Italy & Austria excepted)

2. FREE COMPETITION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE BUILDING OF SOCIAL HOUSING

Aware of the need to build homes intended for people on low-incomes, UEPC is keen to restate the interest of private developers and builders to develop social housing on terms equivalent to those of the public sector.

The existence of competition distortions between the public and private sector in some member states is, UEPC feels, not helpful and **it believes there are clear benefits in establishing free competition between these two sectors for the building of social housing.** It believes that consideration should be given to the social nature of the occupier, and not the nature of the accommodation or of the landlord.

Furthermore, UEPC intends to promote the shift from subsidies "on demand" to subsidies "on supply", so as to enhance the access of low-income European citizens to housing.

Further to this, **UEPC feels that VAT rates should be reduced for the acquisition of housing of all types.** This is to say without limiting it to a social political scope. The reduction of the VAT would make it possible to put accessible housing for everyone on the market.

3. SUSTAINABILITY IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT PARTNERSHIP

UEPC approved a Sustainability Charter on 25 April 2008 that sets out its commitment to playing a full part in ensuring sustainable development in the 21st century.

This Charter sets out the commitments that UEPC has made to promote the reduction of carbon emissions through new buildings together with the adoption of improved standards of environmental performance in new construction.

It further defines what UEPC considers as the chief policy challenges in favour of the evolution of energy performance standards in the building industry, and integrates the relevant aspects of energy policy, the need to take full account of consumer requirements, the promotion of innovation, by facilitating the emergence of an extensive choice of varied solutions in different parts of Europe, while developing the indispensable skills and supply chains.

UEPC is firmly convinced that the realisation of its vision depends on the effectiveness of the partnership that it intends to forge with the other stakeholders closely involved in this area and more particularly the European Parliament.

UEPC therefore would like to implement with the support of the newly elected Members of the European Parliament and other key partners, the manifesto set out in its Sustainability Charter⁽²⁾ in the context of a joint action.



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⁽¹⁾ The European Union of Developers and House Builders is an international association (aisbl) created in 1958. It represents the national federations of Developers and House Builders of Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, United Kingdom, Morocco and Turkey.

⁽²⁾ UEPC Sustainability Charter dated 25 April 2008
<http://www.uepc.org/whatsnew/en/uepc-news-46.pdf>