

EDITO- RIAL

The figures on poor housing speak for themselves: rents are soaring, housing prices are increasingly out of reach, and the shortage of affordable housing is worsening by the day. Nothing that has been done so far appears to be improving these trends. Meanwhile a growing number of young people face a reality that compromises not only their present, but also their future.

If the value of a society is measured by how it treats young people, Europe is clearly facing a profound challenge. In one of the world's most prosperous regions, nearly 400,000 minors live on the streets or in emergency or temporary accommodation. Several million are in unfit housing. This situation is all the more urgent because housing is fundamental to social justice and equal opportunity. Deprived of the

conditions they need to live and grow up with dignity from the very start, these children risk being unfairly disadvantaged in their life trajectories and excluded from participation in their society's future.

Homelessness has been on the European agenda for several years, and awareness of the deepening housing crisis is certainly increasing. The intentions of the newly re-elected President of the Commission for a new mandate speak to this clearly: a European strategy to combat poverty; an unprecedented European plan for affordable housing; a Commissioner responsible for housing; a European investment platform for affordable and sustainable housing; and a doubling of the funding available for affordable housing as part of cohesion policy.

These initiatives are welcome, but there are many important points to be

clarified before their credibility can be assessed. The announcements and promises are laudable, but they are not enough to address the problem. For now, the Member States remain the primary parties able to influence the situation, and European budgetary policy severely limits their ability to invest in robust solutions. We must rethink our entire approach to ensure that the fundamental right to housing is finally respected.

It is no longer time for corrective measures and minor adjustments. The crisis is too profound. We need to act more ambitiously. Governments and local authorities must join forces to combat homelessness and ensure that no child is excluded from housing, to regulate the property market and rents, to produce social and affordable housing for families, and to radically reform renovation campaigns

by prioritising the most vulnerable households. Alongside these long-term social and inclusive policies, a range of immediate, concrete measures must be implemented on the ground. Every initiative, every project can hold significant impact.

We cannot leave entire generation behind because of immobility and inaction. Young people are our future. If we give them the stability they need, they will be able to build a fairer, more just and more united society. It is up to us, today, to make decisions that will guarantee their success tomorrow.

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