

Housing and accommodation in the face of social, territorial and ecological challenges

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In France, having a place to live is an essential prerequisite for working, building a future, being independent, starting a family, etc. It is a right enshrined in law.

However, the housing crisis has been growing and accelerating for several decades. The number of homeless people has reached dramatic levels. Four million people are poorly housed, social housing applications are largely unmet, and new housing construction is at its lowest level since 1995. At the same time, the purchasing power of French people is being impacted by an increase in housing-related expenses, which have become the largest item in household budgets, while a growing number of them are unable to get on the property ladder.

At the same time, socio-demographic changes are accelerating and intensifying: ageing, new family structures, urbanisation, desertification of certain rural areas, compounded by the increasingly dramatic effects of climate change and biodiversity loss. These profound changes are giving rise to new needs, which are currently difficult to quantify, but which must be taken into account and anticipated: summer comfort, adaptation to dependency, size and location of housing, etc.

The responses to these needs, in terms of quantity but also in terms of social diversity, territorial balance, quality of life, access to nature, etc., must be both national and local, promoting cooperation between the State and local authorities. They must make use of all types of housing: social housing, private rental housing, collective and individual housing, and access to home ownership, with an emphasis on upgrading existing buildings to limit land consumption in line with the Zero Net Artificialisation target and the environmental impact of the sector.

**3 out of 5
French
people**

have difficulty
accessing housing.

Ipsos/ESEC 2024.

**39%
of 18-49 year
olds**

believe that their
home is not suitable
for climate change
and that they will
have to move.

Harris Interactive, Taluna,
Ministry for Ecological
Transition and Territorial
Cohesion, 2024.

The ESEC's proposals to meet current and future needs in terms of housing and living conditions

1 ESTABLISH A NEW LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

→ How?

- By adopting a framework law on housing followed by a five-year regional programme law, based on accurate knowledge of the quantitative and qualitative needs of the regions.
- By establishing contractual roadmaps between the State and local authorities to ensure that objectives are achieved.

→ **Why?** A framework law will define a new framework for housing policy, and the programming law will give all stakeholders the visibility they need to tackle the housing crisis. Contracts with local authorities will ensure that the specific characteristics of each region are taken into account.

2 REGULATE PRICES

→ How?

- By extending rent controls to all towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants in areas where there is high demand for housing (unless the local authority decides otherwise) and by regulating land prices in order to combat financial speculation.

→ **Why?** To halt the growing gap between rising housing costs and French incomes.

3 INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING

→ How?

- By giving social landlords more flexibility to build 750,000 social housing units in five years, 40% of which will be very low-income housing, by eliminating the state levy (RLS) and restoring the VAT rate to 5.5%.

- By creating a private landlord status, allowing private investors to benefit from tax measures based on rent and the quality of the housing, particularly its environmental quality.
- By reconfiguring existing buildings, including converting offices into housing, to integrate new programmes into an already urbanised setting.

→ Why?

- Social landlords have suffered a drastic reduction in their resources, which has greatly hampered their ability to produce housing (new construction and renovation of existing properties).
- Incentives for private owners and regulatory and financial measures for companies that own vacant office space would enable housing to be brought or returned to the market.

4 RESPONDING TO CLIMATE AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

→ How?

- By making it mandatory for every renovation to take summer thermal comfort into account and by creating a 'housing/disasters' mission to prevent the consequences of climate change and extreme weather events on housing.
- By initiating a programme led by the Ministry of Housing to promote new housing practices and the adaptability of housing.

→ **Why?** Climate change threatens the habitability of many homes (heat, cracks, deterioration, etc.). In addition, they are unsuited to new needs arising from socio-demographic changes.

THE RAPPORTEURS

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