



EESC and Eurofound Joint Conference

10 November 2026, 9:30-16:00

Venue: Eurofound, Wyattville Road, Loughlinstown, Dublin D18KP65

Concept note

Europe's housing crisis has moved to the forefront of the EU political agenda, yet progress in addressing it remains uneven and the structural drivers of housing exclusion persist. Against this backdrop, the conference will focus on practical and coordinated solutions from a civil society governance perspective, exploring how European institutions, Member States, organised civil society and local actors can work together to deliver affordable, inclusive and sustainable housing. Particular attention will be paid to the links between housing, homelessness, energy poverty, social cohesion, competitiveness and territorial cohesion, as well as to the role of housing as a fundamental right.

The purpose of the event is to identify effective measures to increase the availability of affordable and sustainable housing, improve access to housing for all, and strengthen cooperation across all levels of governance.

The conference will serve as a concrete contribution to the Housing Alliance, launched on 19 June 2026, by fostering dialogue and cooperation between EU institutions, organised civil society, national governments, and local and regional authorities. Building on the Alliance's role as a bridge for exchanging knowledge, experience and good practice, the event will aim to translate shared commitments into practical action from a multi-level governance perspective. It will examine how recent and forthcoming EU initiatives, including the Affordable Housing Plan, the Affordable Housing Act, the Anti-Poverty Strategy and the legislative framework on short-term rentals, can support stronger coordination and more effective implementation, while fully respecting Member States' competences.

The event also builds on the EESC's extensive work on housing with successive EU Council Presidencies, including exploratory opinions under the Danish and Cypriot Presidencies, as well as Eurofound's evidence-based research and analysis. This engagement will continue under the Irish Presidency, notably through the forthcoming EESC exploratory opinion *Making Housing Affordable – Increasing Modern Methods of Construction and Lowering Costs*. By bringing together stakeholders from across the housing and homelessness ecosystem, the conference will provide a platform to discuss, consolidate and promote the implementation of recommendations emerging from recent EESC opinions and relevant Eurofound publications.

This event has been recognised as an Associated Presidency Event as part of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026.

Concept of the programme

PANEL I – Housing for All: Responding to Diverse Needs by Combining Affordability, Inclusion and Fundamental Rights

The housing crisis disproportionately affects the most vulnerable groups, and providing housing solutions that respond to the needs of different segments of the population has become more and more complex across Europe. Demographic trends such as urbanisation resulting from the expansion of the services sector, changing household structures, population ageing and migration flows have increased the demand for flexible living, smaller households and accessible housing.

On top of these trends, the development of online platforms offering short term rentals has exacerbated the housing crisis by putting pressure on rent prices in many cities. At the same time rural areas are facing specific challenges in developing and maintaining their housing stocks.

This panel will look at this multifaceted issue exploring how to combine sound and viable economic solutions with a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) as recommended by the EU fundamental rights agency, that is grounding housing policies in EU fundamental rights law.

Panel II – Boosting Sustainable Housing Supply in the EU

The responsibility for housing provision lies with EU Member States, regions and cities. However, while each country faces a specific set of challenges, the crisis is pan-European in scope.

It appears that housing supply in Europe is not able to meet the demand. The housing markets face multiple challenges, notably an insufficient construction of new residential dwellings and slow progress in renovating the existing, energy-inefficient building stock. The supply chains disruption following the COVID pandemic and the energy crises following the invasion of Ukraine as well as the conflict in the Gulf Region have caused inflation and rising interest rates.

Key challenges in the domain of construction include low productivity, labour shortages, land scarcity and fragmented regulations, whereas the renovation sector is confronted with high investment costs and stricter banking rules for financing together with the difficult balancing the costs and benefits of renovations over the short, medium and long term.

In its recent Opinions the EESC pointed out that overcoming fossil fuel dependence and improving access to renewable energy sources is a major basis to make housing more sustainable and to reduce energy costs.

This panel will consider the work that the European Commission has carried out with the European Strategy for Housing Construction and with the forthcoming Construction Services Act and Housing simplification package.

The panel sessions will be rounded up by **thematic practice-oriented breakout sessions** in the afternoon.

- **Workshop A:** Social Housing fostering Resilience and Protection
- **Workshop B:** Housing Unaffordability
- **Workshop C:** Sustainable financing approaches