



Workshop 7

The role of key civil society groups in the renovation wave

4 March 2021 | 14:00 – 15:30 | EESC - Brussels

Organised by:

Architects' Council of Europe (ACE),
International Union of Property Owners (UIPI) and the EESC section for Transport, Energy,
Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)

The [Architects' Council of Europe](#) (ACE), the [International Union of Property Owners](#) (UIPI) and the [EESC section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society](#) (TEN) organised an online workshop on the role of key civil society groups in the Renovation Wave strategy. The workshop demonstrated that a Renovation Wave in Europe cannot be achieved without the mobilisation of key civil society groups, notably representatives of owners and architects. Speakers explained how these groups can play a crucial role in engaging, advising and supporting citizens in their renovation journey, and ensuring that quality projects are delivered. They are also key partners for public authorities at all governance levels.

The workshop was split into three sessions. In the introductory session, the EESC Rapporteur for the Renovation Wave, Mr Pierre Jean Coulon, highlighted the importance of involving all the stakeholders in this strategy and having the point of view of the property owners and the architects.

It was followed by a Video Welcome Address from the Energy Commissioner, Ms Kadri Simson, who stressed that the ambition of the renovation wave can only be realised with a strong team working together. “Those of you listening today make up that team: You are our champions on the ground. We are counting on you to help us create that safe improved future and to help empower consumers along the way”.

The Secretary General of UIPI, Ms Emmanuelle Causse, closed this introductory session demonstrating the importance of organisations like UIPI and ACE to act as the missing link between policymakers and citizens, in order for the Renovation Wave to be successful.

The first panel discussion *‘Raising awareness among final users’* allowed speakers to present very concrete examples of tools developed by civil society groups, from [mobile applications](#) and professional software to public platforms and information hubs.

The Secretary General of the Norwegian Homeowners’ Association Huseierne, Mr Morten Andreas Meyer, noted how member organisations can guide policymakers raising questions and bringing forward concerns and expectations that are important to homeowners. “Our projects *‘Strømsmart’*, which matches an immature supplier side of services or products with homeowners, advising, helping for buying and also giving a financing solution, and the *‘Index of housing expenses’*, which lists all the costs of living in a home in all municipalities in Norway so all policymakers and other interested parties can see how much it cost to live in a home; are good examples. It is important to find the cost effective measures that the homeowners are willing to support”, underlined Mr Meyer.

The second speaker, Council Member of the Conseil National de l’Ordre des Architectes of France, Ms Julie Fernandez, explained the challenges and opportunities that are crucial to building renovations: “Now our challenge is that more firms invest in this new market that represents an important source of income as well as a way for architects to fight against climate change.”

The workshop was also an opportunity to debate policy initiatives and instruments that can best support the mobilisation of civil society in the second sub-panel discussion. The Deputy Head of Unit B3 Energy Efficiency: Buildings and Products, at the European Commission Directorate General for Energy, Ms Paula Rey García, emphasised that this strategy needs to be a shared project all over Europe, including municipalities, citizens and the private sector, as its goal is to improve people’s lives. The final panellist, the Member of the European Parliament, Mr Marcos Ros Sempere, stated that the New European Bauhaus initiative, whose co-design phase is currently in full swing, will act as a catalyst for the Renovation Wave given its bottom-up approach.

After an enriching Q&A session in which all speakers interacted with the audience, Mr Coulon closed the Workshop highlighting the need to work together and to share ideas. “We are working for the citizens and with the citizens, we will success if we work by the citizens”, he concluded. At the closing session of the Civil Society Days, the Executive Board Member of ACE, Eugen Panescu, delivered the main take-aways from the workshop which can be read below.

Main outcomes

- A Renovation Wave in Europe cannot be achieved without the mobilization of key civil society groups as representatives of owners and architects.
- Raising awareness about the challenges and opportunities relating to building renovation is crucial and the New European Bauhaus can be seen as an interesting/promising initiative in this regard.
- Two principles for building renovation are of particular importance: *affordability* and *quality* of projects, and they can be achieved at the same time.
- Policy objectives must be achievable and fit for purpose, based on trust, common effort and dialogue.