



Proposal for a welcome speech for the conference

**“The crisis and the EU responses: implication for affordable housing”
27th October 2010, Brussels**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you all for attending our important conference today. This is indeed a crucial time not only for our sector but for the European society. Since beginning of 2008, in the whole European Union, 7 millions of people have been forced into unemployment (official figures from Eurostat). In response to that crisis, governments in many countries have set up plans to reduce public spending in order to reduce public deficits and sovereign debts. All this will have an effect on the people who live in the homes we build and manage; it is likely that this will increase the waiting lists to access affordable housing as this will affect in the same time our capacity to build more homes.

At the same time the European Union is discussing long-term responses to that situation both in terms of policy priorities and in terms of financial resources. The Europe 2020 strategy and the discussion on the future budget of the EU are therefore at the center of our conference today. This conference is a moment of reflection on where the EU is going and how affordable housing could be integrated into the future policies of the EU, while remaining the competence of Member States.

The conference is divided into 4 thematic sessions that will explore the possible relations between, on the one hand, future EU policies which will be at the core of the Europe 2020 strategy and on the other hand, national/regional housing policies, as well as the question of on the EU can financially support affordable housing. For those sessions we have invited the people who have the power in Brussels, people from the European commission, Members of the European Parliament, but also people who like us are trying to influence positively the future direction of the EU. I thank them all already for their contribution.

Our conference will be concluded by the representative of the Belgian Presidency of the EU, M. Christos Doulkeridis, Secretary of State for Housing of the Brussels Region. I wish you a good day of discussion and I hope that at the end we will have clear ideas of the challenges ahead and maybe already some ideas about how to take them up.

Thank you,

Vít Vaníček, President of CECODHAS Housing Europe