

# Delivering Affordable and Climate-Resilient Housing for All

Cities, architects and public, cooperative and social housing providers partnering for resilient neighbourhoods and housing for all

*Adopted by Housing Europe, Architects' Council of Europe, EUROCITIES, UN-Habitat and Global ABC (UN-Environment Programme) on 11 June 2026 at the New European Bauhaus Festival conference "Delivering Affordable and Climate-Resilient Housing for All – Cities, housing providers and architects partnering for climate-resilience while protecting the most vulnerable"*

Europe is facing a growing housing crisis while climate change increasingly threatens the safety, health and well-being of communities across the continent. Heatwaves, flooding and extreme weather events disproportionately affect lower-income households, who often have the least capacity to adapt, while cities, architects and public, cooperative and social housing providers face mounting financial, policy and practical challenges in delivering affordable quality housing. At the same time, the built environment remains a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, requiring accelerated efforts while ensuring access to affordable and quality housing.

Strong alliances between cities, architects and public, cooperative and social housing providers are therefore essential to deliver climate-resilient and affordable neighbourhoods. By combining **spatial planning, building design, capacity building and community engagement**, these partnerships can support a sustainable, beautiful and inclusive transition in line with the New European Bauhaus principles.

Affordable housing and climate mitigation and resilience must go hand in hand. Public, cooperative and social housing are long-term social infrastructures that play a critical role in protecting vulnerable communities from climate risks while improving quality of life and ensuring that the transition to climate neutrality leaves no one behind.

We, the undersigned organisations representing cities, architects, public, cooperative and social housing providers, together with international urban and housing partners, commit to strengthening collaboration to accelerate the delivery of climate-resilient affordable housing and neighbourhoods across Europe and turn climate ambition into concrete action on the ground, contributing to the implementation in Europe of the objectives of the Declaration de Chaillot for Buildings and Climate (Paris, 2024).

Housing and neighbourhoods are not only physical infrastructure, but cultural and social assets that shape identity, belonging and the quality of everyday life.

## 1. Climate resilience starts where housing is built

Spatial planning plays a key role in climate adaptation by shaping where housing is located and how it connects to the wider urban environment. Through land-use policies and development standards, it can reduce exposure to climate risks while supporting resilient neighbourhoods. Climate adaptation must therefore move beyond individual buildings towards integrated district-scale approaches combining housing, public space, mobility, biodiversity and social infrastructure.

We call for:

- Integrate **climate risk assessments** into housing, land-use and regeneration planning to steer development away from high-risk areas and support informed, long-term adaptation strategies.
- Promote **compact, mixed-use and transit-oriented neighbourhoods** that reduce car dependency, improve access to services and public transport, promote the

potential of building extensions and adaptive reuse projects within master planning and building permitting processes.

- Expand **green and blue infrastructure and deploy nature-based solutions** — such as urban trees, shading, green roofs, permeable surfaces and sustainable drainage systems — to improve cooling, biodiversity and stormwater management.
- **Prioritise brownfield development and neighbourhood regeneration based on climate-resilient urban design** approaches that enhance thermal comfort, airflow, public space quality and liveability while limiting land consumption, reducing urban sprawl and support compact urban development.

## 2. Providing the necessary know-how

Delivering climate-resilient affordable housing requires not only investment and regulation, but also strong institutional capacity, technical expertise and long-term collaboration. Cities, housing providers and architects need access to technical support, digital tools, training programmes and peer-learning opportunities to effectively plan, implement and manage resilient and affordable housing solutions.

We call for:

- Dedicated **European technical assistance and advisory support** for climate adaptation in affordable housing;
- **Capacity-building programmes on climate risk assessment, adaptation planning and resilient housing management and whole-life-cycle approaches**, including training for construction professionals, resilient building skills and local value chains supporting low-carbon and circular construction practices;
- **Better access to interoperable climate data, digital tools and local risk mapping** tailored to public, cooperative and social housing, including standardised indicators and updated exposure maps to help target investments where climate risks and social vulnerability intersect;
- Call for **integrated, place-based funding frameworks** facilitating alignment of funding streams for climate adaptation, housing delivery, regeneration / brownfield funding with simplified access mechanisms for local authorities and public, cooperative and social housing providers.

## 3. Building affordable homes without compromising quality

Quality is not an additional cost or a luxury in affordable housing; it is what makes housing durable, healthy, adaptable, low-carbon and truly affordable over time. Renovation, adaptive reuse and circular construction approaches must become central pillars of Europe's housing strategy.

We therefore call for:

- **Robust local data collection to accurately assess the potential for the reuse and conversion of existing buildings** into affordable housing, while ensuring case-by-case evaluation to deliver high-quality and liveable environments.
- **Design quality as a core criterion in public procurement and funding**, replacing lowest-cost selection with life cycle and social value assessment;
- **EU-wide quality benchmarks for housing**, drawing on the Davos Baukultur Quality System or New European Bauhaus principles;
- **Design solutions that allow housing to be resized** and reconfigured in response to demographic changes and evolving lifestyles (“rightsizing”);

- **Embed whole-life carbon assessment in housing policies, funding and procurement, addressing both operational and embodied emissions**, while promoting resource-efficient, circular and sufficiency-based approaches. This includes the use of low-carbon, bio-based, reused, sustainably sourced and locally appropriate materials, as well as reflective and resilient solutions that improve thermal performance and reduce environmental impact across the building lifecycle.
- **Apply an energy sufficiency and passive-first approach** in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive: first reducing energy demand through high-quality architectural design — including orientation, compactness, shading, natural ventilation, daylight, thermal mass and climate-responsive envelopes — then optimising efficient systems, and finally integrating renewable energy generation as part of housing delivery and renovation strategies.
- **Integration of nature-based and water-sensitive design measures** such as permeable pavements, rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling and sustainable drainage systems to strengthen resilience to flooding and water stress.
- **When considering off-site construction, commit to strategic implementation:** enabling resilient retrofitting while residents remain in occupation; delivering high-quality projects on constrained urban sites with limited access; supporting design for disassembly and circular reuse; and maximising the effective use of bio-based materials well suited to advanced manufacturing processes.
- **Procurement and delivery reforms facilitating early-stage collaboration models** and frameworks that support SME participation and long-term partnerships and innovation.
- **Promote Architectural Design Competitions (ADCs)** as a proven tool for achieving quality in the built environment. ADCs should be based on clear procedures, independent professional evaluation, and equal treatment of participants, with the objective of identifying the best proposal for a given task.

## 4. Housing and community for climate resilience

Climate resilience cannot rely only on technical solutions or building performance. Effective adaptation also depends on strong communities, informal support networks and housing environments capable of sustaining care and everyday life during periods of climatic, social and economic stress. Residents hold essential knowledge about local vulnerabilities and care practices that should play a central role in housing and neighbourhood development. Cities and housing providers must therefore move beyond standardised models and promote inclusive housing approaches that respond to diverse households, everyday needs and community life.

We call for:

- **Participatory and co-design processes** involving residents from the earliest stages of housing and neighbourhood development, and recognising the embedded knowledge of local communities;
- **Recognition and strengthening of informal support networks** embedded within housing environments and neighbourhoods as essential components of climate resilience.
- **Housing policies and design approaches that respond to diverse households**, care responsibilities and changing everyday needs;
- **Stronger integration of care infrastructures, shared facilities and community support systems** within housing and neighbourhood planning;
- **Inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches** that improve accessibility, safety, proximity and social interaction alongside environmental performance.

## 5. Preventing climate inequalities

Climate resilience policies must protect those who are most exposed to climate risks, energy poverty and housing insecurity. Vulnerable residents are often disproportionately affected by overheating, poor building conditions, rising energy prices and limited access to green and resilient public spaces. Climate adaptation therefore requires social protection measures alongside technical solutions.

Cities and housing providers play a critical role in ensuring that the green transition remains fair, inclusive and affordable for all.

We call for:

- **Risk assessment and data gathering to determine the areas of greatest disadvantage** and vulnerability to extreme weather events.
- **Community resilience hubs**, cooling spaces and local support services in climate-exposed neighbourhoods;
- **Support housing providers in deploying awareness-raising and preparedness measures and protocols for residents**, particularly the most vulnerable, like targeted communication campaigns or engagement approaches adapted to different groups.
- **Support capacity-building programmes and community-based learning initiatives**, that help residents adopt resilient behaviours and respond to climate risks focused on everyday practices such as cooling strategies, water management conservation and flood preparedness.
- **Encourage the use of digital tools**, early warning systems and interactive platforms to improve access to climate information and support informed decision-making.
- **Funding to support the enabling, adaptation of vacant and derelict buildings and sites** retaining sense of place and local character of historic urban centres.

## Call to Action

The climate and housing crises demand bold and coordinated action across all levels of governance.

Cities, architects and public, cooperative and social housing providers are already developing practical solutions across Europe. What is now needed is a supportive European framework capable of scaling these efforts through stable investment and funding systems, enabling regulation, technical assistance and long-term political commitment.

We stand ready to work together to accelerate the delivery of affordable, inclusive and climate-resilient neighbourhoods that improve quality of life while protecting the most vulnerable.

Together, we call for a European partnership for climate-resilient and low-emission affordable housing that places people, communities and neighbourhoods at the heart of the transition to a sustainable and resilient future.

## Signatories



**Housing Europe** is the European Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing. Since 1988, it has represented public-interest housing providers across Europe, bringing together national and regional federations managing around 25 million homes. Housing Europe promotes affordable, sustainable and resilient housing as essential social infrastructure and supports collaboration, innovation and policy development across the sector.

**Sorcha Edwards**, Secretary General of Housing Europe



**Architects' Council of Europe (ACE)** is the representative organisation of the architectural profession at European level, representing over half a million architects through its member organisations across Europe. ACE promotes high-quality architecture, sustainable built environments and policies that place design quality, cultural value and public interest at the centre of urban development and housing.

**Elizabeth Gossart**, ACE Vice President



**EUROCITIES** is the network of major European cities, bringing together local governments from across Europe to shape EU policies, exchange knowledge and promote sustainable, inclusive and climate-resilient urban development. Through collaboration between cities, EURO CITIES works to strengthen local responses to challenges such as housing affordability, climate adaptation, mobility and social inclusion.

**André Sobczak**, Secretary General, Eurocities



**Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC), hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme**, is the leading global platform bringing together governments, cities, industry, financial institutions, researchers and international organisations to accelerate the decarbonisation and resilience of the buildings and construction sector. Established at COP21, GlobalABC supports the transition towards low-carbon, resource-efficient and climate-resilient buildings through policy coordination, knowledge-sharing, global reporting and international cooperation, including flagship initiatives such as the Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction.

Hanane Hafraoui

**Hanane Hafraoui** Lead, Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC) Secretariat