

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2108(INI)	Procedure completed
Housing and regional policy		
Subject 4.10.12 Housing policy 4.70 Regional policy		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	REGI Regional Development	ALDE ANDRIA Alfonso	02/05/2006
European Commission	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Regional and Urban Policy	HÜBNER Danuta	

Key events			
18/05/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/03/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
29/03/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0090/2007	
10/05/2007	Results of vote in Parliament		
10/05/2007	Debate in Parliament		
10/05/2007	Decision by Parliament	T6-0183/2007	Summary
10/05/2007	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2108(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report	PE382.449	09/01/2007	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE384.350	31/01/2007	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A6-0090/2007	29/03/2007	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T6-0183/2007	10/05/2007	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2007)3179	14/06/2007	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2007)3440	12/07/2007	EC	

Housing and regional policy

The committee adopted its own-initiative report drawn by Alfonso ANDRIA (ALDE, IT) on housing and regional policy. The report started from the premise that "the right to adequate housing at reasonable prices is an important fundamental right" and pointed out that the financial instruments supporting cohesion policy could and did play an important role in this area.

The report called for the identification, at European level, of a series of quality indicators defining the concept of 'adequate housing' and stressed the need for the EU to adopt a "European housing charter". In the context of the Lisbon Strategy, the report also highlighted the need to strengthen the right to housing benefits and other social rights, so that worker mobility can become a reality. MEPs also expressed the hope that national and local decision-makers would adopt measures to help young people get their first home.

The committee said that it was necessary, in the rural environment, to propose incentives for the acquisition, rehabilitation and renovation of old buildings, to support public and private bodies providing advice and personalised guidance to private individuals and business people wanting to settle and to improve the supply of public and private, new and renovated social housing.

MEPs also advocated an integrated approach, given the complexity of the issues affecting housing, in order to ensure the simultaneous introduction of various factors which would promote access to housing, improve building quality, improve quality life for all generations and promote the attractiveness of both urban and rural environments. Such an approach would have a greater chance of success if it were adopted by the local and regional authorities, which could provide an overview, optimal coordination of the policies and measures implemented in a particular urban area and a long-term vision of its development. Cities should therefore be involved to a greater extent in the programming and management of structural funding for housing projects.

MEPs expressed their hope that, in the context of the revision of the cohesion policy regulations in 2009, "the debate will be reopened on extending access to Community funds for the renovation of social housing to all Member States" in order to save energy and protect the environment, as this was currently provided for only for certain countries. The Commission and the EIB were urged to implement the Jessica initiative under the same conditions in all countries.

Among other recommendations, the report called on spatial management authorities to take into account the accessibility of housing, public services and urban transport for disabled people and to plan exercise and recreational areas for children and young people. It also encouraged the EIB Group and the Commission to establish a strategy for boosting the building sector, chiefly in the new Member States, which would constitute structural aid for developing housing and involve the mobilisation of local and regional resources geared to urban projects.

Housing and regional policy

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Alfonso ANDRIA (ALDE, IT) on housing and regional policy by 469 votes in favour, 38 against and 46 abstentions. It stated that the lack of decent housing at affordable prices directly affected the lives of citizens, restricting their options for social integration and mobility in both urban and rural areas. Many European Union cities were experiencing great problems with housing, such as overabundant or insufficient supply, homelessness, soaring costs of purchase and maintenance and buildings in a bad state of repair. Difficulties in gaining access to housing were a cause of social segregation and ghettoisation. In addition, the combination of low incomes, high energy prices and inadequate heating and insulation systems results in energy poverty and energy exclusion.

Parliament considered that the right to adequate and good-quality housing at reasonable prices was an important fundamental right that is recognised in a number of international charters and constitutions of the Member States. It called for the identification, at European level, of a series of quality indicators defining the concept of "adequate housing". It was important for the EU to adopt a European Declaration on housing based on the charter adopted by Parliament's Urban Housing Intergroup. Parliament also insisted on the need to strengthen the right to housing benefits, so that worker mobility could become a reality. It emphasised the need for housing policies to be formulated as part of a spatial planning policy that fosters social balance and a social mix.

With regard to the principle of subsidiarity, Parliament felt that housing-related problems, as a national issue, should be dealt with predominantly at local level and municipalities should be supported. The provision of European guidance would contribute to improve the capacities to solve problems. Given the complexity of the issues affecting housing, an integrated approach, rooted in the principles of subsidiarity and proximity, should be adopted, so as to ensure the simultaneous introduction of various factors which would promote access to

housing, improve building quality, improve quality of life for all generations and promote the attractiveness of both urban and rural environments. An integrated approach would have a greater chance of success if it were taken by the local and regional authorities, which could provide an overall view, optimal coordination of the policies and measures implemented in the urban area and a long-term vision of the development of the urban area in question. Member States were encouraged to involve cities in the programming and management of structural funding designed to co-finance urban actions that are eligible under the operational programmes, and to delegate implementation to them.

Parliament went on to stress the need for greater coordination of financial flows and policies affecting housing, in particular ensuring that the actions supported by the ERDF, the Jessica and Jeremie financial instruments, the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and the other measures concerning housing and urban redevelopment were complementary, and specifically ensuring that residential buildings in historic city districts were renovated. In the context of the revision of the regulations governing cohesion policy planned for 2009, it hoped that the debate would be reopened on extending access to Community funds for the renovation of social housing to all Member States in order to save energy and protect environment, which is currently provided for only for certain countries, given that housing needs are critical throughout Europe. The Commission and the EIB were asked to implement the Jessica initiative under the same conditions in all countries.

Parliament emphasised how important it was for spatial management authorities to take into account the accessibility of housing, public services and urban transport for disabled and elderly people and to plan exercise and recreation areas for children and young people when framing spatial planning policies.

Lastly, it encouraged the EIB Group and the Commission, under Jeremie and in synergy with the Jessica initiative, to establish a strategy for boosting the building sector, chiefly in the new Member States, which would constitute structural aid for developing housing and involve the mobilisation of local and regional resources geared to urban projects.