



International Union of Tenants  
Association Internationale des Locataires



## **The right to housing**

### **Future perspectives of a European Housing policy for a more social Europe**

**5th of October 2009**  
10-12h

**Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung**  
EU Office

38, Rue du Taciturne  
1000 Brussels

Many people across Europe are experiencing a great housing need which is aggravated by the current economic crisis. Rising costs for housing and energy will further increase the number of 78 million people in Europe already at risk of poverty. Significant numbers of people cannot access housing in the market at all. In this context, housing rights are strongly gaining relevance. These rights can promote equality and non-discrimination in housing systems and inspire effective responses to homelessness, poverty and difficult housing conditions.

Minimum European standards have been specified by the Council of Europe's Committee of Social Rights and the European Court of Human Rights. The major elements of these standards are: accessibility, adequacy, prevention and reduction of homelessness, and affordability. A newly elected European Parliament, the appointment of a new EU-Commission and the likely ratification of the Lisbon Treaty offer a particular window of opportunity for institutional and political changes. Therefore it is now time to clarify the legal obligations and move on with the implementation of the right to housing in Europe.

The EU should push for including housing rights in the scope of non-discrimination legislation in the member states and the EU and take further institutional, legal and political measures at the community level in order to guarantee affordable and decent housing for all its citizens. The construction and maintenance of social housing should be actively promoted at the European level and EU funds be made available e.g. for energetic refurbishment of buildings to alleviate the energy bill and thus increase social cohesion and green growth within Europe.

The conference will discuss how concrete steps can be made in that direction. It takes place on the occasion of the International Tenant's Day/ UN World Habitat Day 2009 and is a cooperation of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and International Union of Tenants.

## Program DRAFT

### 10h00 Welcome and Introduction

- **Ms. Anke Fuchs**, President of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin

### 10h15 Panel discussion

#### *Chair*

- **Ms. Barbro Engman**, President of the Swedish Union of Tenants, Stockholm

#### *Panel statements*

- **Mr. Mats Odell**, Swedish Minister for Local government and Financial Markets, Stockholm (tbc)
- **Mr. Thomas Hammarberg**, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (tbc)
- **Ms. Constanze Krehl**, Member of the European Parliament, Brussels (tbc)
- **Mr. Franz-Georg Rips**, President of the German Union of Tenants, Berlin

### 12h00 Lunch Buffet

Interpretation will be provided in English, German and Swedish.

The event takes place within the International Tenants' Day 2009.

Please find the full program here:

[http://www.iut.nu/EU/IUT\\_Brussels/Tenants%20Day/Invitation\\_Registration\\_2009.pdf](http://www.iut.nu/EU/IUT_Brussels/Tenants%20Day/Invitation_Registration_2009.pdf)