



We, CECODHAS Housing Europe, DELPHIS, the International Union of Tenants and the Members of the ERHIN Stakeholder Forum (listed below), met on October 6, 2014, in Brussels to confirm our commitment to work collectively to promote Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the social/ affordable housing sector for the purpose of maximizing benefits to society.

The sector contributes to the Europe 2020 goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. At the same time, more and more European citizens are in need of affordable accommodation and there is an increasing need for investment, especially in growing urban areas. To address the diversity of needs, different forms of housing occupancy should be supported through tenure neutral housing policies, including rental and cooperative housing.

Confronted with growing economic, social and environmental issues, the housing sector is undergoing significant transformation across Europe. All housing providers have to further develop, adapt or even change their business practices to face the present and future challenges. Social and affordable housing providers have a particular responsibility towards society as a whole.

More than ever before, today's complex challenges require housing providers and their stakeholders to work closely together to support and further develop Responsible Housing: a form of fair and ethical housing production and management which improves the economic and social conditions of local communities. Responsible Housing creates a basis for social cohesion, local development and attractiveness, quality of life for tenants/residents and local actors, thus maximizing long term shared value.

Corporate social responsibility can be a powerful tool to support this transition and help providers address current and upcoming challenges. In particular, it can help improve the quality of the relations and cooperation between social housing providers and their different stakeholders (including tenants and their representatives), and the way they work together to achieve their common objectives. CSR is based on a strategic commitment and leads to the development of balanced relations, relying on clear and transparent objectives, respective roles and responsibilities, for the benefit of all partners.

Signatories:

Therefore, the underwriting parties agree on the following:

- 1) In our understanding, CSR in social and affordable housing contributes to:
 - ▶ **economic sustainability and responsibility**, through sustainable investment in housing projects and communities, the search for alternative or new sources of funding, responsible and effective procurement practices, partnerships with local authorities and energy providers, moderate housing costs for residents;
 - ▶ **local social sustainability** through, in particular, the quality and affordability of dwellings, the consideration of proximity to services, security of tenure, the need to promote social mix, social integration and communities' stability;
 - ▶ **safeguarding the environment and natural resources** through, in particular, energy efficiency measures, green infrastructures and green areas;
 - ▶ **good governance and fair relations to stakeholders**, through improved management and business ethics, transparency and accountability, stakeholder dialogue and involvement, strengthening tenants' institutional and structured participation;
 - ▶ **responsible human resources management** by providing equal opportunities and fair employment conditions, supporting reconciliation of work with family life, good working conditions, and providing training opportunities for staff.
- 2) CSR principles should be in the DNA of Responsible Housing Providers; it is about what they do and how they do it. We support the spread of CSR within the social and affordable housing sector and in our activities and areas of work. We will encourage the establishment of partnerships among the various housing stakeholders at national, regional and local levels.
- 3) Investing in Responsible Housing is about creating shared value and economic and social returns for citizens and communities. EU countries should make long term financial commitments in order to provide accessible and affordable housing. The undersigned partners will support all forms of investment and financial commitments which contribute to provide and further develop a more sustainable and affordable housing market in the European Union.