



Report on the Youth Policy Dialogue with Dan Jørgensen, European Commissioner for Energy and Housing

Title of Youth Policy Dialogue: The European Affordable Housing Plan – making housing affordable

Date: Monday, 20 April 2026

Location: Civic Centre El Sortidor, Barcelona, Spain

Introduction

The Youth Policy Dialogue is part of the European Commission's wider commitment to offer young people a greater role and responsibility within European democracies and policymaking. This dialogue focused on housing and provided young people with an opportunity to share first-hand experiences of housing pressures and to present ideas that can inform the implementation of the first-ever European Affordable Housing Plan.

The Commissioner opened the exchange by underlining the essential nature of having a home and inviting participants to share their personal stories and lived experience.

Participants were chosen to represent a range of lived experiences of the housing crisis, reflecting diverse situations faced by young people across Europe, including study mobility, housing insecurity, discrimination, barriers to independence, long commuting distances, and accessibility needs linked to disability.

Summary of the preparatory meeting (Online meeting)

On 14 April participants, the moderator and Commission representatives from the Housing Task Force and the regional representation office in Barcelona convened for a preparatory online meeting. The agenda was as follows:

- Practical details for the dialogue on 20 April
- Open floor for questions from participants
- Introduction by moderator and all participants, as well as the issues they would like to raise during the dialogue

Summary of the Youth Policy Dialogue (In person-meeting)

The Youth Policy Dialogue took place on 20 April 2026 in Barcelona and was moderated by Jorge Galindo Alfonso.

Structure of the Dialogue

Part 1: Dialogue with the Commissioner

- Welcome and introduction by the moderator, including an overview of objectives and format.
- Opening remarks by Commissioner Jørgensen.
- Young people shared personal experiences of housing pressures.

- Moderated discussion and open Q&A, with immediate reactions by the Commissioner.
- Closing remarks from Commissioner Jørgensen

Part 2: Recommendations for the Commission

- Introduction from the European Commission's Housing Task Force on how the EU is working on housing policy.
- Open floor for additional input and proposed recommendations for Youth Dialogue participants.

Topic(s) of discussion

During the exchange, young people highlighted the following themes:

- Unequal housing conditions across Europe and the need to scale solutions.
- Housing insecurity and its impact on wellbeing and life chances.
- Affordability, income constraints, and widening rent–wage gaps.
- Practical barriers linked to study and work (commuting, contract types, household composition).
- Discrimination in access to housing.
- Accessibility and disability-related housing barriers.
- Housing and climate objectives, including renovation and low-carbon approaches.

Commissioner Jørgensen's main reactions and elements emphasised

The Commissioner:

- Characterised housing as a generational challenge in Europe, requiring solutions tailored to different needs (students, families, people with disabilities).
- Acknowledged both the benefits and risks of short-term rentals and indicated work towards EU-level legislation to provide cities with practical tools to manage impacts on housing availability.
- Emphasised better use of existing housing stock (including addressing empty properties), reducing market pressures linked to commodification, and repurposing buildings for housing needs such as student accommodation.
- Stressed that disability should never be a disadvantage in finding a home, while noting the need to balance accessibility requirements with overall affordability.
- Highlighted the role of cooperative housing and the importance of sharing best practices across countries, while recognising that EU funding alone is not sufficient.

- Reiterated the value of lived experience alongside reports and technical analysis.

Main takeaways

Following the dialogue, young participants prepared four recommendations for the Commission's further work on housing:

Recommendation 1: Tackle the climate and housing crises together

Promote traditional building methods and incentivise low-carbon materials to deliver affordable, sustainable homes. Prioritise renovation and better use of existing homes, while protecting current tenants throughout refurbishment and rehabilitation.

Recommendation 2: Increase the supply of available housing

Make better use of existing building stock by expanding and supporting social rental agencies and removing legislation that keeps units off the market. Promote non-profit, cooperative and community-led housing to ensure long-term affordability. Mobilise EU funds, financing and public guarantees to invest in new student housing, support young home-buyers and innovative construction models.

Recommendation 3: Commit to long-term, cross-party planning agreements across all levels of government

Develop long-term planning agreements for affordable and social housing that involve all levels of government and align planning targets across local, regional and national borders where housing markets are interconnected. Protect affordability and tenure over time by keeping homes within their intended category/segment, maintaining quality standards, and enabling long-term residence.

Recommendation 4: Put social justice and equal opportunity at the centre of housing policy

Ensure access for groups with structurally lower incomes. Promote mixed neighbourhoods with public, social and private housing that can accommodate different households and family types of all ages, while ensuring homes are well connected to jobs, education, and essential services.

Follow-up Activities (if applicable)

The Commission invited continued participation as it rolls out the European Affordable Housing Plan, including through upcoming public moments for engagement on housing policy.

Annex: Dissemination activities

[Youth Dialogue in Barcelona: Young voices help shape the EU's next steps on housing - Housing](#)

<https://x.com/JorgeGalindo/status/2049013297832231258?s=20>

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From Sara, a participant:

