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## **GOVERNANCE, TERRITORY AND HOUSING – INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR HOUSING RESEARCH 2016 BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND, 28 JUNE – 1 JULY**

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Since 1988, the European Housing Research Network organizes an annual conference gathering specialists working on different topics associated with housing. The network has about 1000 individual and nearly 100 institutional members representing almost every country in Europe. This year, the annual conference was held in Belfast under the theme: *Governance, Territory and Housing*, and gathered more than hundred researchers and practitioners.

The organization of the conference was supported by Local Organising Committee and a wide variety of institutions including the City of Belfast as well as politicians, academics and other community bodies throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic. Over the 21st century, housing policy evolved importantly in the United Kingdom. Due to devolution of key powers it became differentiated

between the territories. The conference in Belfast was therefore a unique opportunity to explain these issues, among the others, through the recently published volume on *Housing in Northern Ireland*, edited by Peter Shanks and David Mullins.

The plenary session revolved around four issues. First Plenary session was dedicated to the housing problems in the Northern Ireland. The second plenary session on policy and research entitled *The EU Urban Agenda and the role of housing in times of unrest*, gathered five speakers representing different European institutions: Eleni Paleologou (Deputy Head of Unit in the unit for urban territorial development and social inclusion at the Directorate General for Regional and Urban policy in the European Commission DG REGIO), Gerry Muscat (Head of the Urban Division, European Investment Bank), Jim Hayton (Housing

Adviser, Scottish Cities Alliance) and dr Agata Krause (research coordinator, European Social Housing Observatory at Housing Europe). The discussions and exchange with the audience were particularly rich and vivid because of the recent events in the UK, namely the results of the UK referendum, supporting BREXIT. Third plenary session was dedicated to housing, neighborhoods and communities, during which Prof. Richard Ronald (University of Amsterdam) gave a talk on *Territories and Temporalities of Housing and Welfare: From a Regime to an Assemblage Approach*. Prof. Isobel Anderson (University of Stirling) raised the question of supporting neighbourhoods and communities while Prof. John Flint (University of Sheffield) '*Retrocedata: Relegation, Housing and Neighbourhood*'. The fourth plenary session was entitled *Territory, Space and Social Cohesion* and discussed different social aspects of housing. Crawford (Northern Ireland Housing Executive) presented the topic *How Can Housing Contribute to Peace Building in Northern Ireland?* Prof. Christine Lelévrier (Université Paris Est Créteil) discussed the urban renewal and social mix policies in France. Diana Fitzsimmons and Anette Galskjøt (International Federation for Housing and Planning) raised a key question of *Housing Refugees in Europe – Ensuring Cities Remain Inclusive*.

The conference gathered 23 thematic sessions dedicated to a wide variety of topics relating to housing and corresponding to the workshops operating in the framework of ENHR. Hence, around 160 presentations were given during thematic sessions. It should be highlighted that several topics attracted particular attentions of scholars. In the session *Social housing: Institutions, Organizations and Governance*, the question of housing affordability including new solutions to deliver and manage housing in the time of crisis was tackled from different national perspectives. In total, 14 speakers presented papers taking different case study areas (e.g. Austria, China, Denmark, England, Italy, the Netherlands, the US) to discuss these questions. The session on *Migration, Residential Mobility and*

*Housing Policy*, provided a knowledge on residential trajectories of households and shed light on their changes as well as on particular factors that drive them (e.g. centralization of education, status discrepancy, location close to airports). With changing challenges related to the housing, one can mention the ageing population and the need to address the new type of housing demand. Several papers presented during *Housing and Living Conditions for Ageing Populations* tackled these questions mainly with regard to Western societies and offered the analyses of spatial accessibility of health institutions, housing opportunities for seniors and their residential mobility and plans, as well as they discussed solutions for under-occupation among older tenants in social housing. Concerning the new solutions for housing delivery, the session dedicated to *Collaborative Housing* was particularly rich in papers (17) and gathered scholars from all over the world. Although this subject has not been studied before in the framework of any ENHR workshops, this new thematic will be from now on developed in a dedicated workshop. The remaining thematic sessions included: *Disability and Housing, Disadvantaged Urban Neighborhoods and Communities, East European Housing and Urban Policy, Housing and Family Dynamics, Housing and Urban Sustainability, Housing Economics, Housing Finance, Housing in Developing Countries, Housing Law, Housing Market Dynamics, Housing Regeneration and Maintenance, Land Market and Housing Policy, Metropolitan Dynamics: Urban Change, Markets and Governance, Minority Ethnic Groups and Housing, Private Rented Markets, Residential Buildings and Architectural Design, Residential Context of Health, Residential Environments and People, Southern European Housing and Welfare Policy, Homelessness and Social Exclusion*.

Several speakers from Poland also participated in the conference: dr Magdalena Mostowska (Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies, University of Warsaw) chaired the session on Welfare Policy, Prof. Ryszard Szarfenberg (Institute of Social Policy, University of Warsaw) and dr Aleksandra Zubrzycka-Czarnecka

(Institute of Social Policy, University of Warsaw) and myself, presented a paper in the session *East European Housing and Urban Policy*. Moreover, Polish case studies were adopted in two other presentations by Lydia Coudroy de Lille (University of Lyon) with regard to collaborative housing, and by Greta Garniss (University of Economics, Department of Public Administration) with regard to housing opportunities for seniors in Poland.

Apart from the plenary sessions and workshops, the organizers offered several possibilities to learn more about Belfast and the Northern Ireland during the field trips. Moreover, the conferences was traditionally followed

by slide competition chaired by Ivan Tosics, during which 6 international teams were trying to provide good answers concerning 95 pictures taken all over Europe. The conference ended with Urban Photo Safari, offering to the participants a chance to explore the city in small groups equipped with different short guide-books prepared by local experts. This was another possibility to discover the place in non-classical manner and to share own experience with others during a common dinner.

The next ENHR conference will be held in Tirana (Albania) in September 2017 under the theme *Affordable housing for all! Redefining the role of public and private sectors*.