

Question for written answer E-002170/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: The need to exclude social and affordable housing investments from Member States' deficit calculations and review State aid rules

The housing crisis in the European Union is getting worse all the time, with house purchase and rental prices skyrocketing,¹ making decent housing unaffordable for more and more households, especially low- and middle-income ones. Housing costs absorb most of citizens' disposable income, reinforcing social inequalities and widening the exclusion gap.

Furthermore, the existing State aid framework and the strict fiscal constraints of the Stability and Growth Pact act as disincentives for critical public investments in social infrastructure, such as affordable and social housing, depriving Member States of the possibility of substantial interventions.²

In practice, the current definition of 'social housing' in the 2012 Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI) Decision remains restrictive, creating legal and practical uncertainties in Member States and limiting the effective use of Community financial instruments for affordable housing projects, such as the European Regional Development Fund.³

In view of the above:

1. Does the Commission intend to propose the immediate exclusion of public investment in sustainable social and affordable housing from the calculation of Member States' deficits under the Stability Pact and the European Semester?
2. Is the Commission aiming to revise the 2012 SGEI Decision to include a European definition of affordable housing?
3. What initiatives does the Commission intend to put in place to remove existing obstacles preventing public investment in affordable housing⁴ through the European Structural Funds and the EIB?

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¹ Between 2015 and 2023, house prices in the Union increased by an average of 48 %.

² The strict application of fiscal rules prevents Member States from making long-term, sustainable investments in public, non-profit or cooperative housing.

³ Although social housing is generally recognised as a social service of general interest, many Member States consider the provision of housing to vulnerable citizens to be an economic activity. In these cases, social housing is classified as an SGEI and is subject to EU internal market and competition rules. If a Member State defines social housing in accordance with the 2012 SGEI Decision, it is exempted from the obligation to notify the Commission in advance and is not subject to strict State aid control. This does not apply to affordable housing.

⁴ E.g. regarding compensation for the provision of services of general economic interest at an annual amount exceeding EUR 15 million.