

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001414/25
to the Commission
Nikos Pappas (The Left)
(7 April 2025)**

Subject: Artificial property holdings, unfair competition and social housing

According to a recent case study on Thessaloniki, ⁽¹⁾ from 2008 onwards, sky-rocketing property prices were accompanied by excessive housing loans, which, at the onset of the economic crisis, resulted in mass foreclosures and the ownership of a large number of properties being transferred to the banks. With a view to limiting financial losses, the banks avoided putting these properties on the market, whereas they are now actively reappearing through the banks' own brokerage mechanisms or sales to investment funds. The thousands of unsold properties, which are mostly small and old, remain out of use by society. This exacerbates the decline of the already limited housing stock and acts as a catalyst for increased market and rental prices.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. How does the Commission intend to address the artificial holding of real estate by banks and funds, which hampers accessibility to affordable housing, especially in urban centres, and examine whether this practice constitutes a form of unfair competition to the detriment of both tenants and private owners?
2. Does it intend to regulate, at EU level, the activities of investment funds and servicers in the housing sector, in order to ensure transparency and the protection of social housing?
3. How could the Commission help ensure that national tax incentives (e.g. exemptions for renovations) do not create unequal treatment in favour of large landlords to the detriment of tenants and vulnerable groups?

Submitted: 7.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Jørgensen on behalf of the European Commission
(18 July 2025)**

The Commission takes note of the issues and concerns raised by the Honourable Member.

The Commission will conduct an analysis of the impact of housing speculation and its economic consequences as well as propose follow-up actions where needed. The Commission will also put forward the first-ever European Affordable Housing Plan in the first quarter of 2026.

Taxation — including national tax incentives — in Member States as raised by the Honourable Member is a matter of Member State competence.

However, the Commission recognises that taxation can significantly impact both the availability and the affordability of housing and believes that Member States should be aware of the effects — both good and bad — that their taxation policies can have on housing markets and prices.

To the extent that they may involve state aid, tax incentives may also have to comply with the relevant state aid rules. Therefore, the Commission will consider issues related to taxation — including the observations of the Honourable Member — when it puts forward the European Affordable Housing Plan.

At the same time, the Commission notes that housing is a multifaceted issue. Most of the determinants influencing housing affordability are largely a competence of Member States, and therefore any new avenue on housing will have to respect the principle of subsidiarity.

¹ ¹Hatziprokopiou, P., Mangou, I. Siatitsa, D. (2024), Assessing vacant homes in the Municipality of Thessaloniki. Thessaloniki Social Atlas, <https://thessalonikisocialatlas.arch.auth.gr/en/items/prosengizontas-tis-kenes-katoikies-sto-dimo-thessalonikis/>