

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002362/26
to the Commission
Elena Kountoura (The Left)
(9 June 2026)

Subject: The housing crisis on EU islands and the need for targeted European policies for social and affordable housing

Housing is a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for social and economic well-being. However, it has become one of the most significant social crises facing the EU today.

The housing crisis particularly affects island regions, where structural and geographical constraints, an unchecked increase in short-term rentals, limited land availability, increased housing construction costs ⁽¹⁾ and a lack of adequate public housing exacerbate the situation ⁽²⁾, dramatically limiting the availability of housing for residents, students, seasonal workers and public sector workers such as teachers, doctors, nurses, firefighters and police officers.

In view of the forthcoming European strategy for islands, can the Commission say:

1. How will the European affordable housing plan address the specific housing needs of island communities and ensure that the challenges of island regions are taken into account in every European policy, mechanism and financial tool on housing?
2. Does it intend to propose a 'Statute of the EU Islands' and an 'Islands Pact', as called for by the European Parliament ⁽³⁾, to recognise insularity as a differential feature and address the additional housing costs it entails ⁽⁴⁾?
3. Will it support the creation of a dedicated funding line in the new multiannual financial framework to support social and affordable housing on islands facing significant pressure from tourism, with a view to meeting the housing needs of residents, public officials and seasonal workers?

Submitted: 9.6.2026

Answer given by Mr Jørgensen on behalf of the European Commission
(28 July 2026)

The European Affordable Housing Plan (EAHP) recognises that territories face different housing challenges: urban areas and tourist destinations face housing shortages and unaffordability, while rural and remote areas experience demographic decline.

The EAHP also recognises the 'right to stay' by supporting the renovation and upgrading of local housing in places with economic potential alongside investments in essential infrastructure and services. The EAHP includes ten actions where the EU can support Member States, including islands ⁽¹⁾.

The European Housing Alliance also facilitates cooperation on housing challenges, potentially including islands, among Member States, regional and local authorities and stakeholders.

In addition, the Commission adopted the strategy for Islands ⁽²⁾, recognising the distinct characteristics and challenges of these territories and seeking to better reflect their needs across EU policies including through concrete actions. The Statute of the EU Islands and Island Pact are not among the actions proposed by the communication.

The EU has already mobilised at least EUR 43 billion housing-related investment under the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) through Cohesion Policy Funds, InvestEU, LIFE, the Single Market Programme and Horizon Europe as well as through NextGenerationEU. The Mid-Term review also enabled Cohesion policy funding to be reprogrammed towards housing. Island regions have access to these programmes and funds.

¹ According to Commission data, the cost of building new dwellings increased by 56% between 2010 and 2024.

² According to the recent OECD report 'Policy Pathways Beyond the Shoreline: Enhancing Resilience and Innovation in Island Economies', on some islands, housing costs can be 75% to 130% higher than in mainland areas.

³ See paragraph 9 of the report of 24 February 2026 on the housing crisis in the European Union with the aim of proposing solutions for decent, sustainable and affordable housing.

⁴ For example, the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive sets ambitious targets for renovations and zero-emission buildings, but does not sufficiently take into account the increased construction and renovation costs on islands resulting from their insularity. Without targeted financial support, its implementation may slow down renovations and exacerbate housing poverty, rather than contributing to a just green transition.

⁽¹⁾ For example, the Affordable Housing Act in 2026 will provide a framework to support authorities to identify areas under housing stress and to protect and promote affordability in these areas, in full respect of subsidiarity.

⁽²⁾ COM(2026) 520 final.

Social and affordable housing is among the specific objectives proposed for the future ⁽³⁾. Negotiations on the next MFF are ongoing, therefore final funding possibilities will depend on the co-legislators.

⁽³⁾ Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034 and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 and Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0565>.