

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002894/26
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(13 July 2026)

Subject: Access to housing for young people in Sicily

Sicily's persistently high youth unemployment and job insecurity levels prevent many students and young workers from finding their own accommodation. Rising rents, the lack of affordable housing and the proliferation of short-term tourism rentals are exacerbating the housing crisis in Sicily's main university towns (which include Palermo, Catania and Messina) and, as a result, are undermining the right of young people to continue their studies and access the job market without sustaining excessive costs.

By prompting students to drop out, driving young people to move to other regions and Member States and causing the gradual decline of the Sicilian population, this state of affairs could exacerbate the predicament of a region that is already being left behind.

In the light of the above, I ask the Commission:

1. Will it push for EU financial resources — especially those allocated under the Cohesion Fund and ESF+ — to be used more effectively in order to support the construction, redevelopment and renovation of housing with a view to providing accommodation to students and young workers in Sicily and in other areas that are lagging behind?
2. Has it assessed the impact of the proliferation of short-term rentals on housing accessibility in Sicilian university towns, and what initiatives will it implement to support local authorities with a view to striking a balance between developing the tourism sector, providing affordable housing for young people and bolstering economic, social and territorial cohesion?

Submitted: 13.7.2026

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(1 October 2026)

1. Affordable housing for young people is a priority of the European Affordable Housing Plan ⁽¹⁾. Actions include: 1) a Commission/European Investment Bank assessment of a guarantee scheme to reduce or eliminate the need for security deposits; 2) elaborating, through the European Housing Alliance's subgroup on young people ⁽²⁾, innovative accommodation models and targeted schemes to improve access to housing; 3) an Erasmus+ housing pilot to support mobile students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Sicily Regional Programme 2021-2027, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) ⁽³⁾, reallocated EUR 63 million for affordable and sustainable housing, including for young people and students, in occasion of its mid-term review in 2025 ⁽⁴⁾. The ERDF National Metro+ ⁽⁵⁾ programme and Italy's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) ⁽⁶⁾ also contribute.

2. On 9 September 2026 the Commission adopted the Affordable Housing Act ⁽⁷⁾ to enable public authorities to identify areas under housing stress and adopt evidence-based, transparent and proportionate measures to protect affordability and availability ⁽⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://housing.ec.europa.eu/european-affordable-housing-plan_en.

⁽²⁾ Established on 2 June 2026, https://housing.ec.europa.eu/whats-new/news/new-working-group-aims-create-more-housing-students-and-youth-2026-06-15_en.

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/funding-and-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-regional-development-fund-erdf_en.

⁽⁴⁾ Further on, on 30 June 2026, Italy requested an amendment to the programme to further reinforce such investments, which the Commission is currently assessing; in ERDF programmes, according to the principles of shared management, the selection of the specific projects to be funded is under the responsibility of the regional authorities.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://pnmetroplus.gov.it/>.

⁽⁶⁾ Italian RRP contains reform 1.7 of student housing regulation and the following investments: investment in student housing plus and a student housing fund under Mission 4 component 1 and investment 6 in Innovative Plan for Housing Quality (PINQUA) under Mission 5 Component 2.

⁽⁷⁾ Commission proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for measures in Member States to safeguard housing affordability and availability (Affordable Housing Act), COM (2026) 5999 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2026:599:FIN>.

⁽⁸⁾ An accompanying recommendation will support measures to increase housing supply in stressed areas.