Housing and Food: Communities and local governments driving fair sustainability transitions

EVENT CONCEPT NOTE

EUROPEAN POLICY DIALOGUES

NOVEMBER 6TH, 2025, EESC, BRUSSELS

Housing and Food: Communities and local-governments driving fair sustainability transitions

Europe’s long-term wellbeing depends on fair and locally-driven sustainability transitions. Housing and food, our most basic human needs and the two largest household expenses, are powerful entry points for change. Yet, solutions to Europe's housing and food challenges need to go beyond affordability to ensure sustainability and fairness amid mounting climate and geopolitical pressures.

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ECOLISE
COMMUNITIES FOR LOCAL GREEN DEALS
European Economic and Social Committee
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Detailed Event Overview

Europe’s long-term wellbeing depends on fair and locally-driven sustainability transitions. Housing and food, our most basic human needs and the two largest household expenses, are powerful entry points for change. Yet, solutions to Europe's housing and food challenges need to go beyond affordability to ensure sustainability and fairness amid mounting climate and geopolitical pressures.

Location

VMA building: Rue Van Maerlant/Van Maerlantstraat 2, Room VMA22

How to get to the EESC

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This policy dialogue series will spotlight action by European civil society and local governments, and advocate to center them in the EU's Affordable Housing Plan, the implementation of the Vision of Agriculture and Food and other related strategies and post-2027 EU budget planning.

This event series features two stand-alone yet integrated sessions over one day hosted at the European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels and livestreamed. Attendance is open for one or both sessions.

ARRIVAL & JOINT OPENING

9:00 | Participant arrival, security pass
9:30 | Event opening with Stoyan Tchoukanov, Incoming NAT President, EESC

HOUSING
Morning session

10:00 | Session framing by ICLEI Europe and Patrick Janssens, Alderman of urbanism and housing Antwerp

10:30 | Dialogue round 1: What housing do we want? Focus on social equity, inclusion and sustainability in housing. Panel and audience discussion centred on case studies.

11:30 | Break

11:45 | Dialogue round 2: How do we get there? Focus on multi-level governance, finance, and regulation in housing. Panel and audience discussion centred on case studies.

12:45 | Final reflections from Agnese Papadia, Member of Cabinet of EU Commissioner for Energy and Housing

FOOD
Afternoon session

14:00 | Session framing by ECOLISE: What is the role of community led initiatives in creating Just and Sustainable Food Systems?

14:30 | Dialogue round 1: How can EU policy promote care for our land, soil and farmers? Panel and audience discussion centred on case studies.

15:30 | Break

15:45 | Dialogue round 2: How can commons-based food economies deliver food justice and reshape Europe's food systems to be more resilient? Panel and audience discussion centred on case studies.

17:30 | Event close

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Morning session l Housing

Organised by ICLEI Europe

Housing is increasingly unaffordable in the EU. Meanwhile, as a noteworthy contributor to GHG emissions in the buildings sector, housing is also a focal area for climate action. In advance of the European Commission's Affordable Housing Plan's upcoming release, this session offers insights in two rounds of dialogue, addressing: What housing do we want? And How do we get there together? Presenters and panelists will talk about social equity, inclusion, and ecological sustainability in housing, along with governance, finance and regulation. Insightful case studies will be presented on housing stock rehabilitation in an ecological and socially friendly manner (Vitoria-Gasteiz), homelessness governance (Turku), and alternative housing models like Community Land Trusts (Brussels).

"To make housing more affordable, more sustainable, and of better quality

It will be a European effort, anchored in local realities

We need a radical overhaul of the way we tackle this issue"

- Von der Leyen, SOTEU 2025

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Morning session I Housing

Organised by ICLEI Europe

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS

Patrick Janssens
Alderman of urbanism and housing Antwerp, ICLEI Europe RexCom Member

Sorcha Edwards
Secretary General of Housing Europe

Joseba Aranzabal Iraeta
Architect and dwelling rehabilitation manager at the City of Vitoria-Gasteiz

Agnese Papadia
Member of Cabinet of EU Commissioner for Energy and Housing Dan Jørgensen

Thomas Kattnig
Vice President Workers' Group, European Economic and Social Committee

Anne-Laure Wibrin
Coordinator of Community Land Trust Brussels

Sari Heino
Health and Wellbeing Specialist focusing on long-term homelessness elimination at the City of Turku

Emiliano Rocchetti
EU policy officer at the International Union of Tenants

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Afternoon session l Food

Organised by ECOLISE

Featuring ECOLISE's food systems position paper, outcome of a participatory policy process, this session brings together EU policymakers and grassroots innovation to advance fair and sustainable food systems.

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Afternoon session I Food

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Food systems are a major contributor to the ecological crisis, responsible for around one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions due to industrial agriculture, deforestation, and food waste. Yet, food systems can also be part of the solution: local, sustainable practices have the potential to reduce emissions, restore ecosystems, and align with the goals of the European Green Deal. Community-led initiatives (CLIs) across Europe are already implementing such practices, building democratic, regenerative food systems that prioritise biodiversity, climate resilience, local empowerment, and fair access to food.

To fully unlock their potential, CLIs need formal recognition, resources, and a voice in EU food policy. Building on a year-long participatory policy positioning process led by ECOLISE and supported by ECOLISE members and partners, this session will present a set of policy recommendations for EU-level food system transformation. It will offer practical and strategic insights from place-based initiatives that are bridging food, climate, biodiversity, and social justice goals. Rooted in real experiences and territorial diversity, the session aims to inform EU food and agriculture policy, including the CAP, Farm to Fork Strategy, and broader Green Deal implementation, calling to centre communities and local public actors in EU food policymaking as co-creators of Europe's food future.

“To fully unlock their potential, CLIs need formal recognition, resources, and a voice in EU food policy.”

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CONFIRMED SPEAKERS

Sakis Arnaoutoglou
MEP (S&D), ENVI Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety

Cristina Guarda
MEP (Greens/EFA), AGRI Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Stoyan Tchoukanov
Incoming NAT president, EESC

Leida Rijnhout
ECOLISE Director, Member of the Club of Rome

Herwig Ranner
Team Leader, Coordinator Climate Change Issues Unit B2 DG AGRI & EU agriculture negotiator at the UN Climate Negotiations.

Joanna Stawowy
Member of Cabinet, European Commissioner for Agriculture, European Commission

Giulia Gouet
Senior Advocacy Officer, Slow Food

Jonathan Peuch
Advocacy Officer, FIAN

Madeleine Coste
Head of food at Eurocities

Ruth Marie Kondrup
Coordinator of Nordic Seed Alliance; Permaculture Denmark; ECOLISE Council Member

Ruby Van der Wekken
Producer member of Oma Maa Food cooperative in Finland, team member of RIPESS Europe

Christos Karystinos
Permaculture designer & educator, Evolving Cycles NPO Board Member

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