

access to social and affordable housing, Belgrade 11 February 2010



**United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe**

Housing Challenges & Policy Solutions in the UNECE region

by Ms. Christina von Schweinichen

Deputy Director

Environment and Human Settlements Division



UNECE

Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Programme of work and challenges

- The Committee's programme of work reflects the main challenges related to the housing sector in the UNECE region
- In the most advanced economies, distressed urban areas are created by
 - social exclusion
 - spatial segregation and
 - decreasing public expenditure for housing



UNECE

Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Challenges in transition countries

- EECCA and SEE countries face problems resulting from
 - weak institutional and economic framework;
 - the withdrawal of the state;
 - the degradation of the existing housing stock and the backlog in maintenance and repair;
 - inadequate policies for the vulnerable and poor.



UNECE

Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Response to Housing Challenges

- Social Housing → Guidelines on Social Housing
- Maintenance and management of multifamily stock → Guidelines on Condominiums
- Housing finance → Housing Finance Systems for countries in transition
- Land administration → Land Administration in the UNECE region
- Land use & spatial planning → Spatial planning – Key Instrument for Development and Effective Governance
- Energy efficiency → Green Homes
- Informal settlements → Self-made cities

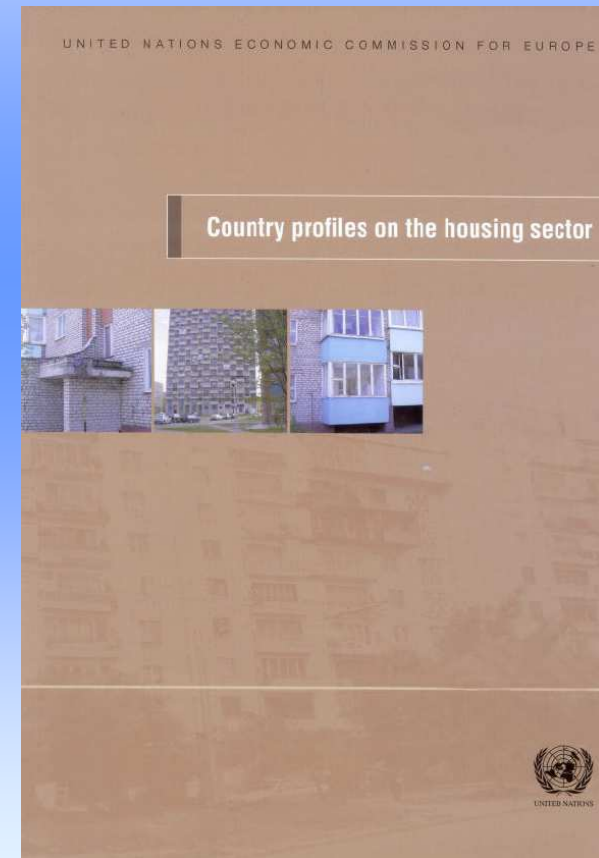


UNECE

Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Country Profiles on the Housing Sector

- What are they?
- Objectives
 - To provide a tool for policy makers for analyzing housing policies
 - To promote dialogue between ECE member countries
- The outcome:
Policy recommendations





UNECE

Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Major Conclusions and Recommendations the Country Profile of Serbia (2006)

1. Development of a comprehensive housing strategy
2. Institutional development and capacity building
3. The legal framework should be revised
4. Reform of the housing finance system



UNECE

Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Guidelines on Social Housing

Prepared by a task force of international experts

Aim of the Guidelines:

- To enhance sharing of experiences on social housing policies in the ECE region
- To extend encompassing and well researched information on the different policies available for the provision of social housing



UNECE

Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Enhancing exchange of information and best practices

Vital Spaces –
Newsletter to reach
out to 6500 readers across
the UNECE region!



SOCIAL RENTAL HOUSING – LESSONS LEARNED FROM A PROJECT, by Doris Andoni

This article does not aim to make an analysis of the impact of a housing project but rather show how other factors rather than the number of units to be constructed and its implementation period can make a project a good intention. A case in point presented here is the project in Westchester County in New York. The success or failure of the project has to be assessed after it has produced its outputs vis-à-vis the 'good intention'.

Introduction
For a developed western society, the construction of 1,000 social rental units will not make a cover story, especially for countries such as Britain or Holland where approximately 27 – 35% of the housing stock fall in this category. However, I read an article in New York Times shared by a colleague that talks about a landmark desegregation agreement that the Westchester County of New York has entered into, which would compel it to create 750 houses and apartments for moderate-income people in predominantly white communities and market them to nonwhites in Westchester and New York.



Ms. DORIS ANDONI is DIRECTOR OF HOUSING POLICY DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT AND TELECOMMUNICATION OF ALBANIA.

To understand the significance of this figure, I took the population and housing stock figures for Westchester Country from the

Internet. Westchester has 953,943 inhabitants, 357,142 families and 358,293 housing units of which 60% are in private ownership. This means that the new project will address about 0.2% of the county's families. In Albania the percentage is 0.14%. This figure does not seem to have a great impact on the population of the county and for this reason alone, the project would not become a cover story.

The article says "The agreement ... would settle a lawsuit filed by an antidiscrimination group and could become a template for increased scrutiny of local governments' housing policies by the Obama administration". "This is consistent with the president's desire to see a fully integrated society", "Residential segregation underlies virtually every racial disparity in America, from education to jobs to the delivery of health care" so I understand that what makes news for this project is the establishment of a model for the development of local housing policies aimed at integrating the different races in USA.





UNECE

Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Thank you!

by Ms. Christina von Schweinichen
Deputy Director, Environment and Human Settlements Division