

## **SOUTHERN EUROPEAN WORKING GROUP**

### **Call for webinar on**

### **Southern European housing policies in the 2020s: the farewell to residualisation?**

**16th March 2023**

The second half of the 2010s was marked by the deepening of the housing affordability crisis (associated with the intensification of tourism and the reinforcement of financial investment in housing) which put the housing issue back at the centre of the civic-social and political debate. The growth of renting to the detriment of ownership (traditionally dominant in Southern European countries) and the substantive increase in housing prices made even more pressing the need for public policies capable of compensating for market weaknesses - weaknesses now extended to the so-called “middle classes”.

The lack of affordable and social housing and a weak territorial cohesion policy has also led to a rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation or living in insecure or inadequate housing, which refers to circumstances where people have to share housing or even rooms, squatters or people at risk of being evicted or those suffering from domestic violence.

The COVID 2019 pandemic brought some temporary relief to the escalating prices, uncovering at the same time many of the structural weaknesses that negatively affect the housing conditions of the most vulnerable groups, simultaneously reinforcing aspirations for the introduction of alternative forms and uses of housing and residential public space. The pandemic brought a new financial boost to the countries of the European Union (Recovery and Resilience Plans) which could be capitalised on in the context of housing policies. In the second half of 2022, inflation and rising interest rates, partly as a result of the war, will not only reinforce the problem of affordability, both in terms of ownership and renting and other types of temporary accommodation, but will also increase the difficulties in paying housing expenses (direct expenses - rents and loans; indirect expenses - water and electricity, etc.).

We are therefore facing a scenario of profound changes in housing with deep consequences that are leading to a new social outlook and, no less importantly, to a rethinking of political positions. In this context, the countries of Southern Europe are particularly interesting cases, since they were “traditionally” classified as “residual”, with minimalist housing policies, aimed exclusively at the poorest segments.

In the framework of the European Network for Housing Research Southern European Housing WG we intend to promote a discussion and review of the “state of the art” of current housing policies (and their respective narratives - political, media, citizens etc.) in Southern European countries and/or regions and/or cities, problematizing them in the context of the above- mentioned changes. For that, we propose a webinar to reflect upon housing politics and housing policies in SE.

The themes (not mutually exclusive) to be worked on are:

- Changes in narratives (civic, private market, political parties and politicians etc.) and perceptions in relation to housing and the role of the State
- Changes in perceptions and practices (tenure, housing models, living arrangements)

- Current changes in housing policies and housing solutions (rental and real-estate market regulation, affordable and social housing, housing support for vulnerable groups etc)
- Changes and impact of EU strategic goals and funding schemes (Green Deal, Recovery and Resilience fund, Affordable housing initiatives etc) on housing policy in SE

**Abstracts for the webinar should be submitted by 20th December 2022 (max. 300 words)** to Working Group coordinator Héctor Símon-Morenos ([hector.simon@uvr.cat](mailto:hector.simon@uvr.cat)).

As an outcome of the webinar our intention is to propose a Book or a Special Issue of Housing Policies in Southern Europe depending on the participation. After the selection of the abstracts, the SEWG coordination team will make a proposal (structure and synopsis) to one/several publishers and will inform participants about a concrete publication strategy and deadlines.