



HOUSE-IN Policy Information #1

Forced migrants' access to housing

Challenges, responses, and recommendations to enable arrival through supporting the right to adequate housing



Why do we need to look at access to housing for forced migrants?

There is a need to address access to housing

The aim of the HOUSE-IN project was to look at the capacities to provide forced migrant newcomers with adequate housing and learn from good examples. This

**Why do we look at the access
forced migrants have to the
housing market?**

03 | Gaps in eligibility for affordable housing

🏠 Case examples:

In Vienna, the municipality has 100 years

housing for the residents, but it is only since 2006 that the services have been extended to non-Austrian citizens due to the EU Equal Treatment Directive. Newcomers, however, no matter where they are from, can only access Vienna's social housing

(non-EU citizens). Additionally, the applicant has to have lived for two years with one single residence address in Vienna before application. In Leipzig, social housing is, theoretically, accessible without a wait-

issue. In Riga, social housing is available only to citizens with low income, and even

ble housing – which in theory might also be an option for middle-income social groups – is not yet developed as a viable alternative either for newcomers or the domestic

ble rental apartment from the municipal housing company LKF requires queuing for

working, or studying at a university in this academic city. After getting a residence permit and being allocated to a municipality, refugees are eligible to access rental units and are placed in another queue to increase their possibilities of accessing housing.

04 | Gaps in legal framework

🏠 Case examples:

In most rental housing areas, tenants are asked to provide references and prove that

tion. Very often this is provided through the income or savings of the person, which is in many cases non-existent for forced migrants. Especially long procedures in ob-

or access to the job market take time and leave the newcomer vulnerable.

work regarding housing provision is organised according to the legal status of the

Agency has the responsibility of housing asylum seekers. Providing housing for a newcomer who has been granted a residence permit as a refugee, employee, or other is the task of the respective municipality where the newcomer is settled.

In Riga, it is common practice for landlords to request an advance payment consisting

in addition to the deposit, which makes accessing housing very expensive. Refugees may encounter additional barriers such as opening a bank account, which is necessary for most housing contracts.

05 | Understanding the housing market and the prices

🏠 Case examples:

The Vienna housing market is characterised by a strong segmentation between private and social housing with each seg-

rent caps or unlimited rent contracts.

In Riga, the price of utilities can be higher than the actual rent, due to high heating expenses in winter for buildings with low

may be omitted from rental advertisements and are often asked for informally.

expenses is a bureaucratically intensive process.

In Lund and Helsingborg, the price of municipal rental housing varies between existing apartment buildings and newly built housing. Rents of new apartments are higher due to current regulations and standards as well as high construction

06 | Gaps in collaboration between institutions

🏠 Case examples:

With what was learned after the long summer of migration in 2015, the collaboration between NGOs and public administration improved in Vienna and Leipzig. A challenge remains in terms of the precarious resources that most

long-term funding opportunities are an ongoing problem and mismatch with the long-term nature of the problems that have to be resolved. In Riga, the lack of a comprehensive national system of housing integration renders such collaboration rather fragile and unsystematic, hence putting even more responsibility on the involved people working in the administration and their intrinsic motivation. The crisis moments – such as in 2015 and now with Ukraine – do intensify collaboration but not necessarily in a structured, sustainable way. The city of Lund has developed new housing projects for refugees in collaboration with the private and housing-cooperative sectors, while supporting integration of newly arrived refugees through collaboration with civil society organisations. However, Living Concept (a successful project implemented in Linero by the municipal housing company LKF, the municipality's housing department,

07 | High level of social competence needed from newcomers

🏠 Case examples:

Without an elaborated structure, newcomers are dependent on their contacts

housing, jobs, or education opportunities.

cult the integration process is for people who cannot rely on broader contacts

one of the reasons underlying structural homelessness is that people such as refugees lack anchoring in the housing

and do not have enough points in the mu-

also lack knowledge regarding the implications of provisional rental contracts that they signed when settling down – municipi-

after two years, and so they would have to leave again.

08 | Distant shelters and temporary housing of ers

🏠 Case examples:

The asylum centre near Riga and the new temporary housing project in Dalby, a vil-

and limited the exchange opportunities are for newcomers when housing options are located far away from the social hubs. The city of Leipzig follows a mixed concept for the accommodation of asylum seeking persons. It is a combination of so-called "decentralised housing" – housing in rental apartments (by the municipality, homeowners or subletters) anywhere they are available on the housing market – and

While those community accommodations

sizes and are spread over all districts of the city, the largest shelters and a high share of available apartments are located quite far from the city centre. Participat-

ing or job opportunities become much

with locals and long distances to lan-

nities, etc.

04 | Advocacy for renters



05 | Coaching and counselling for forced migrants



01 | Cooperation

03 | Bridging eligibility requirements

