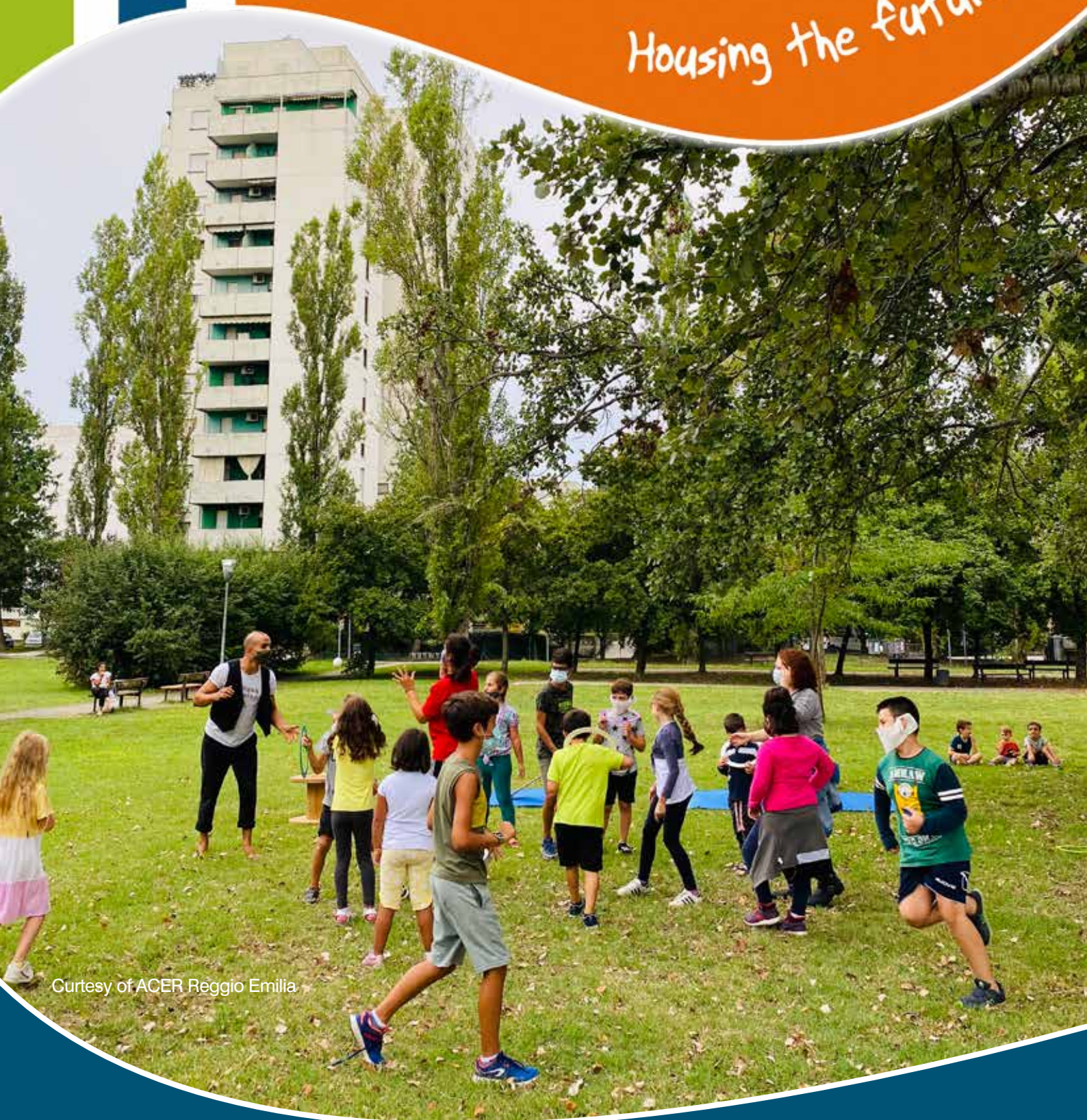


Housing the future



Courtesy of ACER Reggio Emilia



Curtesy of Bolton at Home



Curtesy of Vosgelis



Curtesy of LFK



Curtesy of Vosgelis

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Welcome to Eurhonet

We are a network of 38 housing providers from France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Austria, Denmark and the UK. We play a key role in supporting our members to work together by maximising the opportunity to learn from each other, develop new ideas and innovate together.

Eurhonet's members have a mission of shared interest to serve customers and society as a whole. Each member of Eurhonet has the same ambition: To improve our professional practices and performance by sharing skills and developing a common view of excellence. That's why the idea of '*Leading European Housing*' is in the DNA of our network.

Eurhonet is a non-profit-making partnership with the objectives of:

- Improving the professional performance, internal processes and working methods of our members by sharing experiences and gathering, testing, implementing and benchmarking models of best practice;
- Supporting our members to invest in their staff and attract more new employees to the sector, as well as enhancing existing staff training and development opportunities;
- Reinforcing our influence and representing the interests of our members within the institutions and structure of the European Union, as well as regional and national bodies, whilst fully respecting the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of each member;
- Encouraging and supporting the participation of our members in EU projects and keeping them informed about relevant EU programmes and funding opportunities.

Eurhonet Members in 2020

Austria

Wiener Wohnen – Vienna

Denmark

Boligforeningen AAB – Copenhagen

France

Delphis – Paris

FSM – Melun

Habitat 62/59 Picardie – Calais

Opal – Laon

Valloire Habitat – Centre-Val de Loire

Vosgelis – Vosges

Germany

Bauverein AG – Darmstadt

DOGEWO 21 – Dortmund

GBG Mannheim – Mannheim

Gewoba – Bremen

GWG München – Munich

HWB – Hofheim/Taunus

VOLKSWOHNUNG – Karlsruhe

Italy

ALER BCM – Brescia

FederCasa Piemonte – Piemonte

ATER Treviso – Treviso

CISPEL – Emilia-Romagna

IPES Bolzano – Bolzano

Sweden

Bostadsbolaget – Göteborg

Botkyrkabyggen – Botkyrka

Bostads AB Mimer – Västerås

Familjebostäder – Stockholm

Gavlegårdarna – Gävle

Halmstads Fastighets AB – Halmstad

Helsingborgshem – Helsingborg

Hyresbostäder – Norrköping

ÖrebroBostäder – Örebro

Lunds Kommuns Fastighets AB – Lund

Skövdebostäder – Skövde

Stångåstaden – Linköping

Uppsalahem – Uppsala

VätterHem – Jönköping

Växjöbostäder AB – Växjö

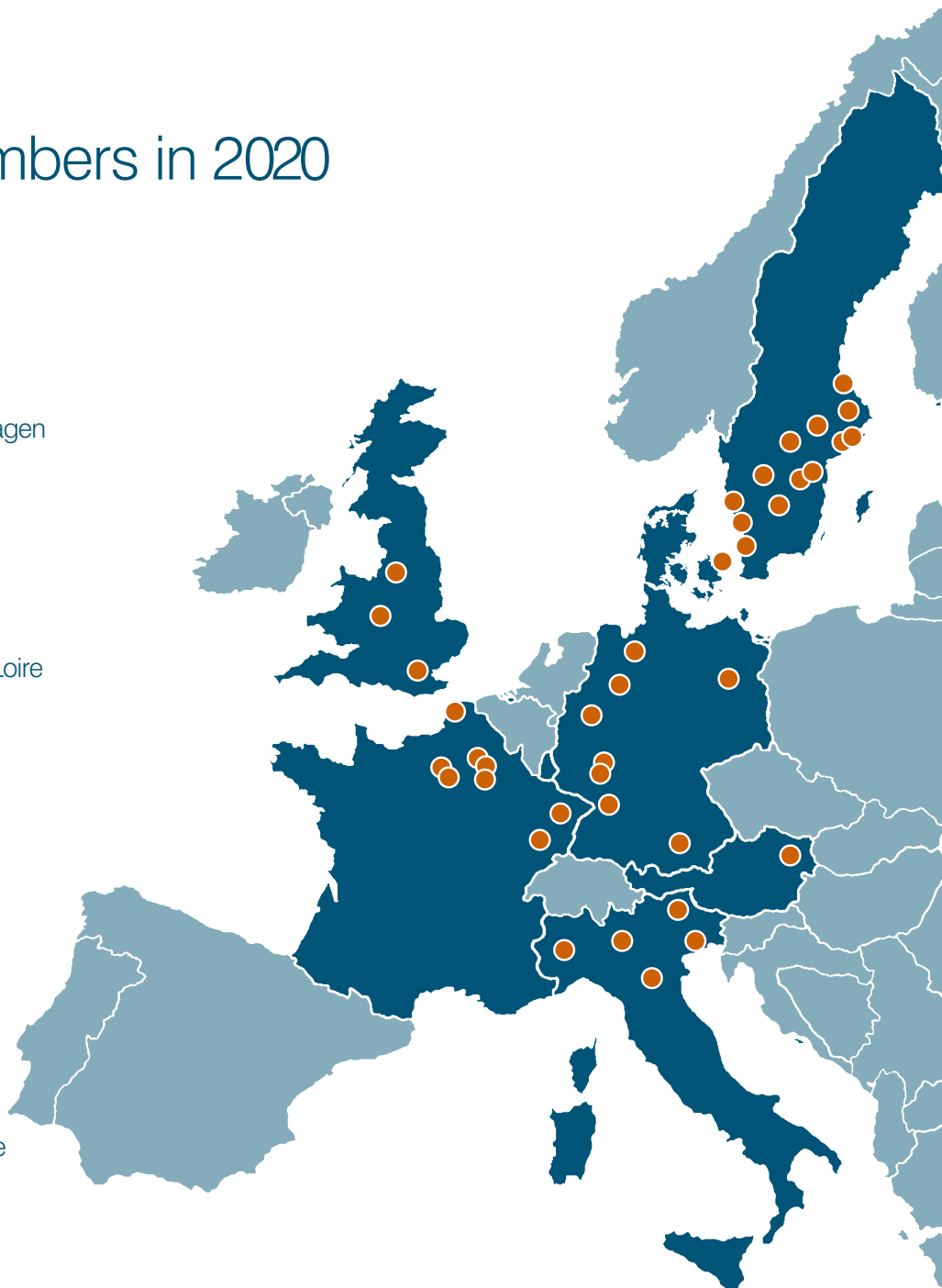
Varbergs Bostad – Varberg

United Kingdom

Bolton at Home – Bolton

Matrix Housing Partnership – West Midlands

Poplar HARCA – London





Foreword from the President

It is an honour to be President of Eurhonet and follow on from Oliver Barry, who was previously the Chair. Many thanks to Oliver for his three years in the role.

2020 has been a strange and tough year for all of us across the world with the pandemic affecting life in many ways. For Eurhonet this has been obviously affected the way we would normally operate, and you can see that the Exchange Programme and the Junior Executive Academy had to be cancelled for obvious reasons.

We have though been able to make sure that a number of key events have been able to take place virtually, and the Topic Groups have continued to meet to take forward their work, and this is outlined in this report.

The world make look a bit different as we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, and our partnership will no doubt need to reflect these changes, but the one thing that is certain is that strong partnerships will be even more important in the future and thanks to the explosion in new ways of communicating will mean Eurhonet will come back stronger.

It is important to acknowledge to great work all our members have done in supporting residents during this last year, and it is our commitment and our values that hold Eurhonet together, and means that we can learn from each other, and share our experiences, which is what Eurhonet is all about.

Please enjoy reading this Annual Report, and thanks to all those people who have worked hard to make sure Eurhonet has continued during the past year.

As this is my last year as President I want to simply say it has been a pleasure to have held that position, even if it has been in a difficult time, and I look forward to seeing you all in person once we get to the point where we can, but in the meantime please still use this network, share experiences and learning and most of all, look after yourselves and the communities we work in.

Jon Lord
President of Eurhonet



Courtesy of DOGEWO21

COVID-19 and best practice from members

By mid-March 2020, due to the pandemic outbreak, most of the European countries in the Eurhonet membership went into lockdown.

Soon after, under the guidance of the Improvement TaskForce, the Secretariat ran an internal survey to understand how members' day-to-day activities were impacted, how the management reacted and what measures were put in place with staff and tenants to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. The survey was updated in September 2020.

As such we have identified some common trends on how each member responded and what effect these actions had on business continuity.

Members' Covid-19 Task Forces

Some members already had Crisis Groups/ Business Continuity Groups or guidelines in place to tackle emergencies. For other members, COVID-19 Task Forces were created ad hoc.

These 'COVID-19 Task Forces' included the Chief Executive, Head of Communications, Head of HR and the Security Manager. In some cases, the Task Force also comprised of the Management Group/Top-Leaders Team which included the various Heads of Department. In Sweden, since public housing providers are owned by the

Municipality, a representative from the City Council was often part of the company's COVID-19 Task Force.

At the peak of the pandemic, Task Forces usually met once a day (or once a week depending on their composition).

The following aspects have been key:

- **Agile planning and decision making** – having a Gold, Silver and Bronze command and control operation in place as well as escalation arrangements with pre-determined triggers points.
- **Maintaining good communication and engagement** with staff, stakeholders and tenants.
- Being informed of the latest issues and guidance through **good co-operation with local authorities**.
- **Emergency and contingency plans updated regularly** to be able to react quickly to any subsequent crises.

Impact on working routines

Members reported that the biggest impact of COVID-19 was the shift from office to home working, and from face-to-face communication to telephone and email both internally and with customers.

IT departments played a key role in facilitating this transition. To different extents, members were prepared to move to remote/agile working and no major disruptions have been reported. However, some work that required presence on the ground – particularly in countries that experienced hard lockdown measures – had to be postponed (e.g. new construction, renovations or apartment inspections).

In general, the management pointed out the great flexibility and adaptability demonstrated by the staff and the strong sense of community and mutual support between colleagues and customers.

There is no doubt that digitalisation has been driven forward and implemented at a faster pace because of the COVID-19 contingencies. Members have found that more things can be done remotely.

The lessons learned from this crisis and the massive impact that it had on businesses helped members rethink and expand their emergency plans – our members are better positioned to face future risks and crises.

Support to staff

Communication between senior leaders and employees across each organisation were reinforced in order help understand concerns and identify the best solutions for continuity of work and collaboration.

Isolation in the home office has been an issue for some employees. Further stress due to organisational challenges has been reported for those employees with young children in countries where kindergartens and schools have been closed.

Our members have put a range of measures in place to support employees. This has included access to trained mental health workers offering counselling support, virtual mindfulness sessions, virtual fitness sessions and guidance on physical and mental wellbeing, as well as giving more time off work.

Support to tenants

Members worked hard to stay connected to their tenants, particularly the most vulnerable ones. As you will read in more details in the best practice reported below, members performed regular home telephone and video calls (working with volunteers and charity organisations) and organised socially-distanced activities, such as live concerts, theatre performances, gardening session, crafts and sports – see best practice below.

Also, members provided help with shopping (again working with charitable organisations) and strengthened their approach to tackle anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.

Considering the economic challenges that the lockdowns created, members softened their rent recovery policies and did not take legal action for arrears that had arisen as a result of COVID-19, including evictions.



Courtesy of Poplar HARCA - Rehan Jamil

Best practice from Helsingborgshem AB, Sweden



Neighbourhood walks

As a way of showing our presence in vulnerable parts of the city, each working day between 16h and 19h, company employees walked across neighbourhoods in pairs. We did this to give residents a sense of security whilst getting an insight into the changing needs of our tenants as a result of COVID-19. The walks continued until the end of the year. We also increased the hours of operation for our security emergency by two hours a day, until the end of the year.



Dare to Care concept

The Dare to Care concept is a way to tackle domestic violence. We call on our tenants to 'Dare to Care' about the people living around them by, for example, by checking that their neighbours are well and generally being more attentive about their wellbeing. During the COVID-19 period we have also promoted the concept by putting information in visible places in our buildings, such as laundry rooms, waste rooms, stairwells, etc.

Best practice from Lunds Kommuns Fastighets (LKF) AB, Sweden



LKF has put in place targeted action aimed at children and young people, elderly tenants and those at risk of domestic violence.

During the summer, in collaboration with Save the Children and sport organisations, LKF promoted several activities for children ranging from crafts and experimental workshops to theatre performances.



Stronger Together campaign

To support its commercial tenants, LKF ran the '#Stronger Together' campaign. The initiative, that ran for five months, saw LKF buy marketing space in the commercial tenants' premises to advertise LKF. In return for this additional source of income, shop owners were able to offer residential tenants favourable discounts on their products and services. The evaluation of the campaign shows that businesses were able to attract more customers and even increased their turnovers, minimising the risk of unpaid rents for the LKF.

Best practice from ACER Reggio Emilia, Italy



Courtesy of ACER Reggio Emilia

Welfare on the Road project

To reach out to tenants during the hard lockdown period, ACER Reggio Emilia kicked off the 'Welfare on the Road' project. A camper van was equipped and used as a mobile office to meeting with tenants and provide assistance on the spot by:

- Delivering important items such as food and drugs, especially to the elderly;
- Providing utilities and rent payments;
- Delivering masks and other PPE;
- Collecting requests and inputs from the residents.

Estate Popolare initiative

The data collected during the lockdown launched a summer project called 'Estate Popolare'. The initiative came about as a result of tenants' requests: staying outside, getting around, rebuilding connection, social cohesion, taking care of the neighbourhood.

About 100 activities were developed in 10 neighbourhoods, such as creative workshops and events. The 'Estate Popolare' activities promoted a sense of social identity, created supportive and empathic communities and reduced the sense of loneliness and marginalization that the lockdown exacerbated.



Best practice from Bolton at Home, UK



Courtesy of Bolton at Home

Community group consultation

We have conducted a consultation with the community groups that we support to:

- Understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted them
- What best practice approaches we could learn from our community groups to meet the change in community needs due to COVID-19
- Use the findings obtained through the consultation to inform our wider Community Investment Team strategy to shape how we respond as an organisation.

My Corona

My Corona is an oral archive of Bolton voices during the pandemic. It includes real stories highlighting the highs and lows, and tells how communities have stayed connected. Bolton at Home reached out to residents, artists, community groups and organisations working and living in Bolton and produced a series of mini podcasts.

Best practice from Bolton at Home, UK



Courtesy of Bolton at Home

Test and Learn

We also delivered a series of 'Test and Learn' projects to trial the effectiveness of different short-term community initiatives (up to 12 weeks) that addressed the issues created by COVID-19. This encouraged innovative and different approaches to engaging with our communities during the pandemic. Some good examples include:

- Installing Wi-Fi in outdoor sites for residents' use;
- Introducing local motion initiatives to help residents become more active outside in their communities as many Bolton residents became increasingly inactive and isolated during lockdown;
- Online creative art competitions (with prizes and applause) and community photography competitions;
- Piloting socially distanced outdoor food growing sessions/site development for volunteers on our community food growing projects. Each project had a maximum of six people attending and a member of staff to ensure risk assessments are adhered to;
- Socially distanced 'men in sheds' sessions on several community sites.

Best practice from Poplar HARCA, UK



Courtesy of Poplar HARCA - Rehan Jamil

Computer devices and Wi-Fi to access vital services

Our Employment & Training Team, jointly with our Community Development & Wellbeing Team provided our most vulnerable residents with computer devices and Wi-Fi data dongles to keep them connected and able to access vital services.

Families home schooling children who had no access to proper devices and good Wi-Fi connection benefitted from the Connecting Communities partnership, of which Poplar HARCA is one of the lead partners.

Part of the scheme is a tailored Digital Skills Training package.

Health Spot

In partnership with the local General Practitioner (GP) Care Network, our youth service, Spotlight, developed 'Health Spot' – a youth-friendly GP service based at our building. It aims to meet the health care needs of our younger communities. This model has been designed to make the experience as welcoming as possible for young people including an option where their youth worker can attend the appointment if they wish.

Best practice from Poplar HARCA, UK



HARCA Centres Unlocked

As our community centres closed, we reached out to centre users virtually. We created the 'HARCA Centres Unlocked', a Facebook page offering live and pre-recorded health and wellbeing-related online activities for all ages. At the height of the pandemic, there were average weekly views of 1,184.

Support to unemployed tenants

Our Employment & Training Team supported people who had lost their jobs and helped them find another one. Those on zero-hours contracts who were forced to continue working despite having shielding family members, were given advice and links to proper protection. Those who needed to complete their qualifications and accreditations were assisted in Google and Zoom classes.

Best Practice from DOGEWO21, Germany



Outdoor concerts, bingo and gymnastics sessions

DOGEWO21 runs four neighbourhood agencies in different quarters of Dortmund. The idea behind it is to offer more than (another) meeting point. Together with our partner, Diakonisches Werk, we try to support and enable tenants to create activities of their own in order to build stronger neighbourhoods and add to our tenants' quality of life. Even though the neighbourhood agencies are of course open to tenants of all ages (including children) most of our visitors and active tenants are seniors.

Up to the beginning of the pandemic, lots of different activities attracted several hundred participants per month – and the NBAs (as many people call them) had become an important part of the lives of many elderly tenants.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the general lockdown in March 2020 all activities had to be stopped and the neighbourhood agencies had to close completely. However, already in April, DOGEWO21 was able to start a new set of outdoor activities to entertain its tenants, particularly the elderly ones, such as outdoor concerts and music events but also outdoor bingo and gymnastics sessions.

Best Practice from Valloire Habitat, France



Since the beginning of the pandemic, as it happened to our Eurhonet colleagues from all across Europe, Valloire Habitat's administrators, management teams and employees had to get reorganised very quickly in order for the company to continue its mission.

This unprecedented period changed the life of the company and its employees, customers and suppliers. As soon as the lockdown was eased in May 2020, our Communication Department started filming 23 interviews to give voice to Valloire Habitat's employees on how their working routine changed and adapted to the pandemic.

The interviews generated the following six thematic video clips (available on Valloire Habitat's YouTube channel):

- **Continue the activity despite everything:** on teleworking, reduction of the payment time for suppliers, ensuring continuation of projects;
- **Daily services:** on the work of community outreach teams, their fears and tenants' recognition;



- **Solidarity actions:** on how employee-led initiatives have enabled the donation of protective masks to hospitals, and donations to 'Restos du Cœur' for the provision of hot meals to those in need;
- **A monitoring system for the most vulnerable:** on how employees supported residents in difficulty (seniors, young people);
- **Governance in action:** on how digital meetings have made it possible to steer the company and support economic and social activity;
- **Maintaining connections with employees despite the lockdown:** about meetings with staff representatives to prepare for 'the new normal' and how Yammer has helped in keeping connections between employees.

What is Eurhonet for you?



Norman Diehl
CEO
Hofheimer Wohnungsbau GmbH, Germany

What is Eurhonet for you?

A platform to exchange knowledge of and experiences with current and upcoming relevant topics on a European level.

What are your expectations of Eurhonet?

Sharing interesting ideas and projects within an international environment.

What was the biggest thing you gained/learned from Eurhonet?

The networking with a diverse group of members provides us with a broader perspective on many topics. In general, we can gain inspiration and learn from the best practices of other members.

What is your feeling of the network?

Very dynamic and positive members who want to face the challenges in the housing sector together.

Can you describe Eurhonet in three words?

International, innovative, informative.



Christian Schantl
International Relations Officer
Wiener Wohnen, Austria

What is Eurhonet for you?

To manage a house is not only taking care of the buildings but most of all, the tenants. A network like Eurhonet helps us to do this.

What are your expectations of Eurhonet?

To listen and learn how we as the owner and caretaker of Europe's biggest municipal housing company can improve our business.

What was the biggest thing you gained/learned from Eurhonet?

That is not a specific topic. It is more a regular update of the newest developments, the opening of our minds for upcoming issues and the knowledge that we are not alone with our problems.

What is your feeling of the network?

Eurhonet is a great network of open-minded people, who all face the same challenges and are willing to share their solutions with others.

Can you describe Eurhonet in three words?

International, friendly, future-orientated.



Courtesy of Vosgelis



Fabrice Barbe
CEO
Vosgelis, France

What is Eurhonet for you?

Eurhonet is a real opportunity to share with our colleagues from other European countries; beyond the legal differences, we share the same values and often face the same difficulties.

This exchange allows us to learn from the experience of our colleagues and to benefit from our own in topics ranging from energy-efficient construction, housing for the elderly, new services, etc.

What are your expectations of Eurhonet?

In addition to social and construction issues, we need to work together on organisational issues.

I think that the next step would be for Eurhonet to make its voice heard in Brussels, so that with this way, social housing companies are listened to by the European institutions.

What was the biggest thing you gained/learned from Eurhonet?

Eurhonet showed me that whatever the country, we faced the same difficulties or the same questions and that sometimes our neighbours had found the solution I was looking for.

What is your feeling of the network?

Two essential things beyond what I have already said: first, I don't speak English very well but the team and the members are very welcoming, very nice and very understanding. Secondly, the Eurhonet team is very efficient and they do a great job to make Eurhonet an efficient and pleasant network.

Can you describe Eurhonet in three words?

Sharing, kindness, common ambition.



General Assembly

Due to COVID-19 contingencies, the 2020 General Assembly took place virtually on 22 October 2020 via WebEx.

The whole event revolved around the impact of COVID-19 on the sector and the actions taken by Eurhonet members to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on tenants, particularly the most vulnerable ones.

To set the scene, Ms Sorch Edwards – Secretary General of Housing Europe, presented the EU COVID-19 Recovery Plan and explained how public and social housing providers could benefit from it. Furthermore, she delivered a summary of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) released in May 2020 by the European Commission aimed at providing policy guidance and tailored advice to each EU country on how to boost jobs and growth, while maintaining sound public finances.

The conference continued with the presentation of the key findings of the two COVID-related surveys the Secretariat ran in April and September 2020. After that, members presented their best practice and concrete measures taken to support vulnerable tenants during the pandemic and particularly during national lockdowns.

To conclude, topic group leaders took the floor to report on how the pandemic impacted members in their respective fields and drew some lessons for the future.

(Video recordings of this webinar are available on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website).

Sustainable Construction Topic Group

Taking sustainability to the next level through the sharing of best practice and learning in the delivery of energy efficient, low carbon housing, tackling fuel poverty, and minimising material waste and pollution.

The group's activities got off to a good start in February 2020 with a physical meeting of the group in Epinal, France hosted by Vosgelis. However, due to COVID-19, plans for a May meeting in the UK at South Yorkshire Housing Association had to be cancelled. Instead, the group quickly transferred to a series of five well attended virtual sessions. In

October the group again met virtually to consider how new build and retrofit activity in the sector had been affected by, and was responding to, the impacts of the pandemic.

A fuller description of the group's meeting is given below, followed by a summary considering how sustainable construction has fared during COVID-19.



Physical Meeting - Epinal, France February 2020

In 2020 we had the chance to have just one physical meeting, from 4-6th February, before COVID-19 hit. The brief written in the agenda said, "The year 2020 will be of symbolic relevance for the contrast to climate change." In retrospect we now know that it was a historical year for a very different reason.

The meeting considered developments toward the ambition of delivering nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (nZEB). Participants analysed the

French forthcoming E+C- regulation and how nZEB are being defined in Italy and the UK. The group also had a key session considering the BuildTog++ pilot sites, including some new candidate projects as well as updates from each ongoing pilot building.

Use of materials, reuse and recycling were also discussed with group members sharing presentations on the approach to this issue in their home countries. In addition, Vosgelis presented an ambitious material re-use construction project, an idea which had been borne out of discussions at a previous topic group meeting.

The field visit was centred on timber construction (the group visited a wooden passive house) and 20 dwellings for elderly people. Participants also visited an apartment designed as a dedicated resource for educating customers in good energy use behaviours.



First Virtual Meeting (split into five sessions) May 2020

The group conducted its first online meetings in May 2020. Divided into five sessions between 6th and 22nd May, each one considered: improving sustainability in construction projects, how to address the performance gap, energy performance and review of the group's BuildTog++ projects.

In the first session Thilo Cunz shone a light on sustainability in building projects and how different labelling systems attempt to categorise and measure performance. From the main focus – “what is sustainability?” – he turned to different certification schemes and their differing focus on the various areas of sustainability. Thilo presented a tool through which the user could define their own focus and thereby identify the most relevant labelling system for their purposes. Subsequently, participants had the chance to discuss the approach to sustainability management in their own organisations and to apply this tool in practice.

The second session was opened by a virtual tour through Accord Housing Association's 'LoCal' timber housing prefabrication factory. Participants had the chance to virtually visit the factory only

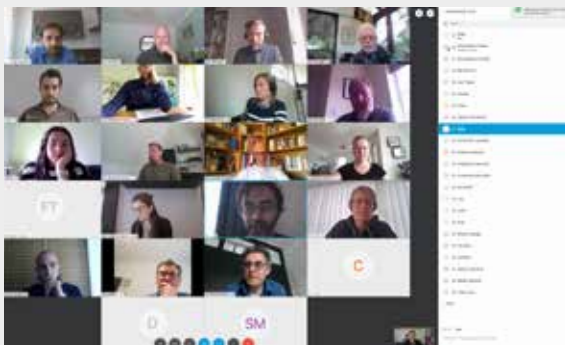
hours after the official inauguration of the new factory (there was still cake...!) and see the significant scale of the new enterprise. Gordon Watts presented on the subject of forthcoming UK policies that should help to avoiding the energy performance gap. The meeting concluded with a workshop to provide participants with a forum to discuss how planned quality could be achieved on site.

The next session concentrated on the future for energy in housing – which was the title of a talk from Julien Dijol from Housing Europe. He provided insight into how regulation will continue to develop to meet the climate protection aims of the European Union. The session was concluded by country presentations about the regulatory approach in different member states.

The fourth session considered analysis of monitoring data showing the performance of the first generation BuildTog++ projects. Thilo Cunz presented the data that came from several years of building use. He drew conclusions about which solutions worked well and which ones should be changed in this and future projects. The session was rounded off by consideration of the next generation of BuildTog++-projects.

In the last session, Patrick Daly presented CHARM's ambitious project: a plastic-free construction by Accord Housing Association. Not only will the final building be virtually free of plastic materials, but the construction process will be optimised to minimise plastic use. The group got the chance to consider plastic-free solutions developed for the project. In a subsequent workshop example construction details were studied and discussed by smaller groups, thinking about ways that plastic could be avoided.

(Video recordings of this webinar are available on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website).



Second Virtual Meeting October 2020

A topic group meeting was held in October to review the general COVID-19 trend across the EU and the response of the construction sector for new build projects and energy retrofit/refurbishment. The meeting considered the impact on workflow, how COVID-19 was impacting design choices, how on-site practice has accommodated COVID-19 safety and positive developments coming out of the pandemic.

The sector response has varied across Europe but there are some common themes. During periods of strict lockdown, some countries paused new build activity leading to project completion delays. Whilst others

continued throughout the pandemic with the implementation of COVID-19 safety restrictions. COVID-19 has led to greater consideration of home working spaces, communal space design and has highlighted the importance of outside space in the design of our homes. Design and project delivery meetings have very largely moved online, including site inspections by photos or video instead of in person, and there has been a move away from physical documentation.

In general, there has been a slowing in building refurbishment/retrofit work in order to minimise contact with residents. During periods of strict lockdown in many cases works have been limited to strictly necessary emergency works with more discretionary works such as energy efficiency improvements put on hold. However, as part of COVID-19 recovery plans, some governments have committed significant funding to energy efficiency retrofit as part of a green recovery plan.

It is notable that as vaccination programmes gain momentum and the end of the pandemic comes in sight, the climate change agenda in general will regain prominence.

(Video recordings of this webinar are available on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website).



**Johann Christian
PLAGEMANN**
Sustainable
Construction Topic
Group Co-Leader



Gordon WATTS
Sustainable
Construction Topic
Group Co-Leader



Courtesy of ACER Reggio Emilia

Social Integration Topic Group

Examining how housing providers can further promote and foster social integration by harnessing their asset platform and partnership networks to support and assist our most vulnerable residents and communities including young people, older people, migrants and refugees.

Due to COVID-19, this year the group hosted two online meetings. The first meeting was held in June, in collaboration with the Ageing Topic Group. The focus of the meeting was to share how members had responded to the immediate needs of their more vulnerable residents, particularly older people during the pandemic. Our second meeting was held in October, in collaboration with the European Federation for Living (EFL) Social Domain Working Group. The focus of this meeting was to examine how housing providers were adapting their services and support for vulnerable residents and how they were dealing with the longer-term challenges of ongoing restrictions and community lockdowns.

Outside of the meetings, our Topic Group Leader has also been working closely with the new EFL Social Domain Co-ordinator to help re-launch the partnership between our two groups. This includes developing a joint publication with EFL to be published in 2021 that will seek to track how housing companies have responded to the pandemic. It will cover the initial response of members, the adaptation of services during lockdown and how learning from the crisis can help to inform housing providers' roles as part of the recovery process.

First Virtual Meeting (with the participation of the Ageing Topic Group) June 2020

Our June meeting allowed members to exchange their own experiences of how their companies had reacted to the early stages of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

All participants reported about having never experiencing a crisis of this magnitude and scale before. Many companies initially prioritised welfare calls to their most vulnerable residents and supported the mobilisation of emergency relief where their Municipality had the responsibility to lead and co-ordinate.

Many participants talked about working with community partners as a way of ensuring

resources reached the most vulnerable. The majority of companies were also directly delivering welfare support such as emergency food and assistance with shopping and essential supplies. However, this has been more difficult for companies that operate across extensive geographies with dispersed stock.

All had harnessed digitalisation and social media platforms to engage with residents on a more informal basis and the range of social engagement activities to help boost the morale of residents and reduce feelings of isolation during lock down has been amazing to hear about, from neighbourhood walks through to outdoor theatre and music concerts.

(Video recordings of this webinar are available on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website).

Second Virtual Meeting October 2020

In October the group came together with EFL to discuss the impact of the pandemic on housing services, residents and communities.

Participants were introduced to the Social Index survey developed by Clarion, a UK housing provider. The index is a tenant survey but Clarion, in an effort to try and understand the social and economic impacts on residents, had recently added a set of COVID-19 related questions. Data received showed that women were more likely to say they were not coping well. Older residents were coping well and younger residents were more likely to be struggling. Residents with disabilities were more likely to report that their

physical and mental health had got worse and that it had been difficult to access food and medicine.

We also had presentations from InCommon about the importance of sustaining intergenerational relationships during times of crisis and HACT, which focused on the future role of housing providers in the recovery and reset of places. Key points covered included the role of housing associations as community anchors, the strengthening of community engagement at the core of service delivery, capacity building with local infrastructure and embedding agile working and unlocking talent.

(Video recordings of this webinar are available on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website).



Natalie JONES
Social Integration
Topic Group Leader



Ageing Topic Group

The Ageing Topic Group aims to improve quality of life for the elderly by enabling them to live independently in homes and communities that are adapted for their needs and allow inclusion.

The Ageing Topic Group is a perfect platform to receive and to share knowledge and experience about the challenges concerning an older population. An important part of every meeting is the field visit, where participants can see different examples and solutions of the member companies of Eurhonet.

In 2020, the group was fortunate to have planned a meeting at the beginning of the year, which occurred within weeks of most of Europe going in to lockdown.

Physical Meeting - London, UK February 2020

The focus of the meeting was to work on the production of a factsheet for Eurhonet members, detailing ideas to tackle isolation through promoting neighbourhood and community development and activities.

As part of the meeting, the group also completed a study visit to the Gateway Housing scheme in Tower Hamlets, East London. Gateway Housing offers general and specialist supported housing, including sheltered schemes for older and vulnerable residents.

The group was shown around recently refurbished Edith Ramsay House and Mandela House. Both had assistive technology and an interior designed to give the schemes a modern feel. Self-contained flats encourage tenants to live independently, but with on-site support.

Most homes overlook the gardens, many with balconies and a communal lounge allows for activities and entertainment. This inclusive approach helps to tackle loneliness and isolation, ensuring residents feel valued and included. Each scheme has an IT suite and residents are supported to go online through computer skills classes. Residents also use telecare technology to support their independence and interact with their families using Skype.

Members had the opportunity to speak to residents and hear about their lives and the rich culture of the local area. Most of the residents had lived in the East End most of their lives, and all were pleased with the refurbishment. The local history is celebrated in Gateway's 90th anniversary exhibition East End: "the place we call home". The exhibition shows how social housing has played a key role in the history of East London, and how Gateway and other housing associations have contributed to this thriving community.



Virtual Meeting (with the participation of the Social Integration Topic Group) June 2020

The second meeting of the year was a virtual one and involved the Social Integration Topic Group. Participants had the opportunity to discuss the challenges caused by the pandemic and share innovative solutions on how we have supported our most vulnerable tenants.

(Video recordings of this webinar are available on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website).

The group also contributed to the General Assembly by sharing examples of best practise on reducing isolation and supporting vulnerable tenants.

For example, volunteers have been brought in to give support with befriending calls, at food banks and digital group sessions, and to give general advice to residents. To provide cheerful activities in difficult times, a number of members have arranged outdoor activities and are continuing to adapt to provide constant support to the most vulnerable tenants.



Nicola WESTERBERG
Ageing Topic Group
Leader



IT in Housing - Digital Communications and Technology Topic Group

Sharing best practice and innovation to help deliver business efficiency and customer satisfaction through technology and communication.

2020 was a special year for all of us. The IT in Housing group had planned for a couple of meetings already when we were forced to rethink everything and organise virtual meetings instead.

First Virtual Meeting - May 2020

Automation is a powerful tool that allows companies to get more done in less time. The potential is huge for public and social housing operators.

The first virtual meeting of the group took place in May and focused on the following topic: "Could a robot do your job? - Automate the tasks you dread for!"

In this webinar, our colleagues from AB Mimer showed what Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is, what are suitable areas of applications for public and social housing providers and what are the costs for implementing the technology against the savings it could bring.. Some examples have been proposed to show how robots can facilitate some operations such as mailing, invoicing or even with tenants.

(Video recordings of this webinar are available on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website).

Second Virtual Meeting - June 2020

COVID-19 measures have had a big impact on members' day-to-day activities. The shift from office to home working, and from face-to-face communication to telephone and email both internally and with customers put great pressure on IT departments that played a key role in business continuity.

The second meeting of the group focused on the question: "How did the lockdown help us to further promote digitalisation in our company?"

In this session members shared their experiences and presented their strategies for digitalisation and digital transformation in their companies. It was a great chance to learn from each other and bring home some new ideas.

(Video recordings of this webinar are available on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website).



Generally, the pandemic revealed some weak spots and on the other hand offered us a great opportunity to become even better. As a group, we have identified the following future topics:

- The need to invest in our websites and mobile apps in order to optimise our customer service;
- How to support residents with digital skills and those without at the same time;
- How to reach residents digitally when they have no internet access;
- How to improve ergonomics at non-optimised home workplaces.

At the same time, we revealed some lessons learned:

- Staff are more adaptable to working together digitally than expected;
- There is potential for digital tenant communication, but vulnerable tenants are left out and/or need other ways of communication;

- Develop digital skills in co-workers;
- Digital leadership skills also need to be developed;
- Co-workers will continue to work from home, so the companies need to take care of the equipment of home workplaces to avoid future health problems;
- Develop web pages focusing on self service and ease of use.

We will work on these topics in our meetings in 2021.



Thomas HARRY
IT in Housing Topic
Group Co-Leader



Alessia PARESCHI
IT in Housing Topic
Group Co-Leader

What is Eurhonet for you?



Stefan STORZ

CEO

VOLKSWOHNUNG GmbH, Germany

What is Eurhonet for you?

Different cultures and legal frameworks lead to different solutions for our common European challenges: climate change, urbanisation and demographic change to name only three. I consider Eurhonet a way of interconnecting the people who create these solutions and to learn from each other.

What are your expectations of Eurhonet?

I hope to implement VOLKSWOHNUNG into a network of people and organisations that are first among those who innovate the European housing sector and to accelerate our path to innovation.

What was the biggest thing you gained/learned from Eurhonet?

That there are a myriad of solutions for creating and maintaining affordable and sustainable housing in European cities that we hadn't even thought of yet.

What is your feeling of the network?

For me, it is a collaborative network of people with innovative visions for the European housing sector – I am glad to consider myself a part of it.

Can you describe Eurhonet in three words?

Solutions, innovation, collaboration.



Fredrik MILLERTSON

CEO

Lunds Kommuns Fastighets AB, Sweden

What is Eurhonet for you?

Eurhonet is an interesting network that gives us an opportunity to get an overview of the housing market in Europe.

What are your expectations of Eurhonet?

Get the opportunity to learn from companies in the rest of Europe and share our knowledge, but also to make new contacts and give staff the opportunity for development.

What was the biggest thing you gained/learned from Eurhonet?

How differently we work to help our tenants during the pandemic year 2020.

What is your feeling of the network?

Very good feeling, will be very interesting when we can return to meet again.

Can you describe Eurhonet in three words?

Professional, inspiring, networking!



Courtesy of LKF



Christian HØGSBRO
CEO
Boligforeningen AAB, Denmark

What is Eurhonet for you?

A great opportunity to connect with European colleagues and get inspiration from partners across Europe.

What are your expectations of Eurhonet?

To be inspired and inspire colleagues.

What was the biggest thing you gained/learned from Eurhonet?

So far COVID-19 has unfortunately limited my participation in the network. I hope to be able to meet my fellow Eurhonet members soon. So far it has been interesting to learn that we face more or less the same challenges across the continent in terms of providing affordable housing.

What is your feeling of the network?

Everybody has been so warm, welcoming, and friendly.

Can you describe Eurhonet in three words?

Inspiring, network and best practice.



Improvement Task Force

Eurhonet has several objectives – but sharing best practice and networking are the main goals. Our network creates opportunities where members can meet across borders to discuss, share and learn about common needs and challenges.

Not an ordinary year

The year started according to plan, but as things took a completely different turn Eurhonet, like other organisations, needed to change. Travel stopped and borders closed. It was not a sacrifice but a necessity that we at Eurhonet also needed to adapt to the new situation. A strength of the network is that we are flexible and driven by a desire to meet and share. We are built on that driving force.

A new way of working

Having seen the contingencies, the Secretariat quickly set up a platform to allow digital meetings. Of course, we realise that this way of working cannot replace physical meetings and spontaneous dialogues and interactions, but at least video conferencing meant we could continue to be relevant as a network and progress with our workplan.

Supported by the Secretariat, all our topic groups organised and ran several webinars through the year involving external lecturers and opportunities for break -outs in small groups. All webinars have been recorded and a video library has been created on the Members Only Zone of the Eurhonet website.

Likewise, we have carried out all the Executive Committee meetings planned during the year digitally and conducted our annual General Assembly via WebEx.

However, some planned activities did not suit digital forums. Our esteemed Junior Executive Academy, held annually in July in Bochum, Germany, had to be cancelled. It was the same situation for our CEO Academy in June. Several planned study visits organised in connection with topic group meetings also became digital meetings.



As a consequence of not being able to do everything we had planned, we decided to temporarily reduce the annual membership fee as a one-off measure. We felt this was a fair and logical decision since we could not carry out all of the activities we had planned to do.

Despite all the challenges, the commitment and presence has been very high and this gives us a good reason to believe that we will be able to come back even stronger, even more engaging and once again be able to meet, learn from each other, be inspired and exchange experiences later in the year.

The Structure and Governance Review

Many of you will understand how important it is for an organisation to keep a close watch on how it is structured and governed, so that the way it works aligns with its business objectives. At the beginning of 2020 we decided to test this and have carried out a detailed review to ensure the way we are governed reflects our purpose. Noting the importance of this work, the Executive Committee agreed to have an external agency undertake this research to provide independent and objective advice on their findings.

Currently this work is on hold as the Executive Committee felt that this work would need to be progressed more fully once the global pandemic is under control. It is anticipated that this work will resume later this year or in early 2022. They have agreed that change is needed and have considered a number of options but further work is needed before final recommendations are made.

This is an importance piece of work and will shape the future focus and role that we will play in representing social housing across Europe. Your Eurhonet will still be here for you, and will be stronger than ever!



Lars LÖFGREN
Improvement Task
Force



Ian ANKERS
Improvement Task
Force



Courtesy of DOGEWO21

Marketing Task Force

The Marketing Team has not been able to carry out any activities in 2020 due to COVID-19. Recruitment of new members often requires that you can travel and meet, which has been impossible in the past year.

Nonetheless, Valloire Habitat from France joined our network at the beginning of the year. The company operates in the region of Centre-Val de Loire and manages 18,310 homes, 37,900 tenants and employs 264 staff.

As soon as it is possible the Marketing Team will resume the work. The plan for the coming years is to continue expanding and consolidating our network.



Fredrik TÖRNQVIST

Marketing Task Force Leader

EU-Funding TaskForce

Towards the end of 2020, the Council of the European Union adopted the new package of EU funding that will run from 2021 through to 2027.

Towards the end of 2020, the Council of the European Union adopted the new package of EU funding that will run from 2021 through to 2027.

Priorities have not changed significantly from the previous 2013-2020 programme, however what has changed is that organisations within the UK are no longer eligible to apply for EU funding.

There is also some scope for Covid recovery work in each of the funding streams.

- Major funders such as **Erasmus+** are open for applications in the Education, Training and Vet sectors. This includes higher education, Mobility actions and transnational co-operations.
- **Horizon Europe** has allocated a budget of 95.5 billion euros to strengthen the EU's scientific and technological bases and the European Research Area (ERA). This will boost Europe's innovation capacity, competitiveness and jobs and to deliver on citizen's priorities and sustain our socio-economic model and values.
- The **AMIF** (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) is also open to proposals with an overall budget of 29 billion Euros, with a focus on: strengthening and developing legal migration to the Member States and the effective integration and social inclusion of third country nationals; countering irregular migration; enhancing

effective, safe and dignified return and readmission; ensuring effective initial reintegration in third countries, and enhancing solidarity and responsibility sharing between the Member States.

Other funders include:

- Creative Europe (CREA) for arts based applications;
- European Social Fund;
- European Regional Development Fund;
- European Solidarity Corps.

More information can be found here:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes>.



Shauna MORTON
EU-Funding TaskForce
Leader



Calendar of Activities 2020

JANUARY

- 29-30** Improvement Task Force
Paris, France
- 30-31** Executive Committee meeting
Paris, France

FEBRUARY

- 4-6** Sustainable Construction Topic Group
Epinal, France
- 26-27** Ageing Topic Group
London, UK

APRIL

- 2** Executive Committee meeting
Virtual meeting

MAY

- 6** Sustainable Construction Topic Group
Virtual meeting
- 12** IT in Housing & Comm Topic Group
Virtual meeting
- 12** Sustainable Construction Topic Group
Virtual meeting
- 15** Sustainable Construction Topic Group
Virtual meeting
- 19** Sustainable Construction Topic Group
Virtual meeting
- 22** Sustainable Construction Topic Group
Virtual meeting

JUNE

- 5** Joint Social Integration & Ageing Topic Group
Virtual meeting
- 8** IT in Housing & Comm Topic Group
Virtual meeting
- 15** Executive Committee meeting
Virtual meeting
- 16** Ordinary General Assembly
Virtual meeting

SEPTEMBER

- 10** Executive Committee meeting
Virtual meeting
- 18** Topic Groups Leaders meeting
Virtual meeting

OCTOBER

- 1** Social Integration Workshop
Virtual meeting jointly with EFL
- 7** Sustainable Construction Topic Group
Virtual meeting
- 22** Conference and General Assembly
Virtual meeting

Financial Result 2020

INCOMES	
Membership fees	300.667,00 €
Reimbursement / participation fee	0.00 €
European subsidies (Dreeam)	0.00 €
Various income	1.754,84 €
TOTAL INCOMES	302.421,84 €

GENERAL EXPENSES	
Office rent	15.021,00 €
Documentation/Post	95,90 €
Website	4.598,14 €
Accountancy + legal services	7.971,41 €
Secretariat	113.130,43 €
International Travels	497,48 €
Executive Committee	1.688,40 €
General Assembly	16.957,87 €
CEO Academy	0,00 €
Coordinators	0,00 €
Eurhicycle activities	11.409,32 €
Annual Report	960,29 €
Bank charges	776,67 €
TOTAL GENERAL EXPENSES	173.106,91 €

TOPIC GROUPS & TASK FORCES	
Task EU-Funding	0,00 €
Task Force Marketing	0,00 €
Task Force Improvement Team	679,81 €
Topic Group Sustainable Construction	15.329,25 €
Topic Group Ageing	0,00 €
Topic Group TG Social Integration	0,00 €
Topic Group TG IT in Housing	0,00 €
TOTAL TOPIC GROUPS & TASK FORCES	16.009,06 €

TOTAL EXPENSES	189.115,97 €
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Total Incomes	302.421,84 €
Total Expenses	189.115,97 €
RESULT OF THE YEAR	113.305,87 €

ASSETS	
Financial assets	252.00 €
Guaranty in cash	252.00 €
Amounts receivable within one year	13.329,68 €
Invoice out to be paid	0,00 €
Other amounts receivable	3.843,92 €
Various advances to suppliers	9.485,76 €
Cash (current account ING Bank)	353.521,37 €
KBC - Company account	353.521,37 €
Internal transfers	0,00 €
TOTAL ASSETS	367.103,05 €

LIABILITIES	
Social Funds	336.979,92 €
Permanent means - Shared capital	157.338,77 €
Profit carried forward	66.335,28 €
Result of the Year	113.305,87 €
Amounts payable	29.323,13 €
Trade debts	15.323,56 €
Suppliers	15.323,56 €
Deferred grant to be received	0,00 €
Taxes, remunerations and social security	13.999,57 €
Taxes	982,17 €
Holiday pay	13.017,40 €
Other amounts payable	0,00 €
Provision	800.00 €
Provision for DREEAM project	800.00 €
TOTAL LIABILITIES	367.103,05 €

Organisational Structure



Executive Committee Members

- **President:** Jon LORD - Bolton at Home, UK
- **Vice President:** Fredrik TÖRNQVIST – Stångåstaden, Sweden
- **Vice President in charge of finances:** Anja BADER - GWG München, Germany
- **Representing France:** Francis DEPLACE – DELPHIS, Hervé EUZEN – Opal, Olivier BARRY – FSM
- **Representing Germany:** Sybille WEGERICHT – Bauverein AG, Klaus GRANIKI – DOGEWO21
- **Representing Italy:** Mina BOZZONI – ALER BCM, Carlo SANSOTTERA – Federcasa Piemonte, Gianfranco MINOTTI – IPES Bolzano
- **Representing Sweden:** Cathrine HOLGERSSON – Gavlegårdarna, Lars LÖFGREN – Hyresbostäder i Norrköping
- **Representing the UK:** Christopher HANDY – Matrix, Steve STRIDE – Poplar HARCA
- **Representing Austria (Observer):** Christian SCHANTL – Wiener Wohnen
- **Representing Denmark (Observer):** Christian HØGSBRO – Boligforeningen AAB

Topic Groups Leaders

- **Sustainable Construction:** Johann Christian PLAGEMANN – Gewoba, Germany & Gordon Watts – SYHA, UK
- **Ageing:** Nicola WESTERBERG – Hyresbostäder i Norrköping AB, Sweden
- **Social Integration:** Natalie JONES – Accord, UK
- **Digital Communications & Technology:** Thomas HARRY – Mimer, Sweden & Alessia PARESCHI – GWG München, German

Task Forces Leaders

- **Improvement Task Force:** Ian ANKERS - Bolton at Home, UK
- **Marketing Task Force:** Fredrik TÖRNQVIST - Stångåstaden, Sweden
- **EU-Funding Task Force:** Shauna MORTON - Bolton at Home, UK
- **Exchange Programme:** Malin WETTRE - Stångåstaden, Sweden



The Secretariat

Based in Brussels in the heart of the European neighbourhood since 2012, Eurhonet Secretariat supports the network by ensuring the coherence and the implementation of its annual Work Programme. The Secretariat is also responsible for maintaining good relations with all housing stakeholders, including EU institutions and Housing Europe, which is one of Eurhonet's main partners.

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Members

Austria



Denmark



France



Germany



Italy



Sweden



UK

