

SPRINGS 2026 NEWS



Build Europe Congress in Cambridge: a successful exchange on Europe's housing challenges

Build Europe successfully held its annual Congress in Cambridge, United Kingdom, from 27 to 29 May 2026, hosted by the Home Builders Federation (HBF). The three-day event brought together members from across Europe for discussions on the main challenges facing the housing sector and on the future direction of housing policy at both national and European level.

A highlight of the Congress was the traditional roundtable discussion, during which each federation provided an overview of recent developments in its domestic market. While national circumstances differed, members reported many common challenges, including declining housing affordability, rising construction costs, labour shortages, lengthy permitting procedures, and increasing regulatory complexity. The exchange once again demonstrated the value of Build Europe as a platform where members can openly share experiences, compare approaches and learn from one another.

The Joint Committee reviewed the latest developments concerning the European Affordable Housing Plan, the European Strategy for Housing Construction, State aid rules for housing, permitting reforms, taxation and access to finance. Members also exchanged views on the



implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) and discussed Build Europe's ongoing advocacy activities with the European institutions. The Board of Directors further reviewed the Build Europe's strategy on affordable housing, welcomed the application for full membership from the Estonian Real Estate Federation, and discussed future priorities for the organisation.

The Congress also marked an important moment for Build Europe with the retirement of John Slaughter as President of the Joint Committee. Frank Hovorka, from FPI, was elected as his successor. Members expressed their gratitude for his longstanding commitment and contribution to the Association over many years. Hosted in the historic setting of Jesus College, Cambridge, once again, Build Europe Congress confirmed the strength of Build Europe's network and the importance of cooperation between national federations in addressing Europe's housing challenges.

The presentations can be found [here](#).

HOUSING POLICY NEWS

Build Europe helps shape EU housing ministers' discussions in Cyprus

On 11 and 12 May 2026, housing ministers from across the European Union met in Nicosia, Cyprus, for an informal ministerial meeting dedicated to housing. Organised under the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU, the meeting focused on affordable, sustainable, and adequate housing, with discussions centred on increasing housing supply, mobilising investment, and promoting innovation in the housing sector.

In the lead-up to the meeting, Build Europe actively sought to contribute to the policy debate. The Association encouraged its national member federations to engage directly with their respective housing ministers and share Build Europe's key messages on the structural causes of housing affordability challenges and the measures needed to increase housing supply. A common letter was circulated to ministers across several Member States, highlighting the importance of efficient permitting procedures, workable planning frameworks, land availability, and investment conditions that enable housing delivery at scale.

Ahead of the ministerial discussions, Build Europe also joined forces with the Cyprus Property Developers Association to raise awareness of the sector's priorities through a digital press conference. During the event, Andreas Ibel, President of Build Europe, stressed that Europe's housing crisis can only be addressed through a significant increase in housing supply and called for policies that facilitate development, investment, and innovation. He emphasised that housing shortages across Europe are primarily linked to structural constraints affecting housing delivery systems, including lengthy permitting procedures, regulatory complexity, limited land availability, rising construction costs, and barriers to investment. Mr Ibel also underlined that private developers are an essential part of the solution and that increasing housing supply remains the most effective way to improve affordability over the long term.

During the ministerial meeting, participants exchanged views on the need for coordinated action at European level while fully respecting Member States' competences in housing policy. Discussions explored ways to simplify administrative procedures, accelerate permitting processes, improve access to financing, and support innovative construction methods and digitalisation. Ministers also examined how public and private investment could be better mobilised to support affordable and sustainable housing across Europe. The discussions in Cyprus reflected many of the priorities consistently advocated by Build Europe, notably the need to strengthen housing delivery capacity, remove barriers to development, and create the conditions for greater investment in new housing.

The Build Europe's co-signed letters for national housing ministers can be found [here](#). More information can be found [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Build Europe attends European Parliament high-level event on the housing crisis

On 5 May, Filiep Loosveldt, Managing Director of Build Europe, attended the joint European Commission–European Parliament High-Level Event on the Housing Crisis in the EU. The event brought together European policymakers, financial institutions, housing organisations, local authorities and construction stakeholders to discuss the future European Affordable Housing Act and possible solutions to Europe's growing housing crisis. A clear message emerged throughout the discussions: Europe will not solve its housing affordability challenge without

significantly increasing housing supply. Several speakers highlighted the need to accelerate housing delivery through simpler procedures, faster permitting, greater investment capacity and innovation in construction. A particularly interesting contribution came from the City of Hamburg, which presented its “Cost-Effective Construction Initiative”. By simplifying building standards, optimising processes and reducing administrative burdens, Hamburg identified potential savings of up to €2,000 per square metre of residential construction.

For Build Europe, the discussions confirmed that housing affordability and housing supply are two sides of the same coin. Europe needs more homes, delivered faster and at lower cost.

While much of the debate focused on rental housing, Build Europe underlined that homeownership remains an important aspiration for millions of European citizens. Enabling families and young households to access their own home should remain a central objective of housing policy. The event also demonstrated a growing recognition among European institutions that excessive complexity, lengthy permitting procedures, and regulatory barriers are part of the problem. Simplification is increasingly seen as part of the solution.

Build Europe will continue to engage with the European Commission and the European Parliament to ensure that the future Affordable Housing Act supports housing delivery, encourages investment and helps more Europeans realise their dream of owning a home.

The presentations and program of the event can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Build Europe participates in discussion on long-term investment and housing at the European Parliament

On 20 April, Federico Nahuel Lazzari, Secretary-General of Build Europe, and Amberto Cagnacci, from Assoimmobiliare, participated in a high-level event at the European Parliament on Long-Term Investment to Tackle the European Housing Crisis, organised by the Investment and Competitiveness Intergroup together with representatives of the housing, financial, energy and real estate sectors. The event was hosted by MEP Annalisa Corrado and featured contributions from MEP Borja Giménez Larraz, rapporteur of the European Parliament’s housing report, and Matthew Baldwin, Head of the European Commission’s Housing Task Force.

Speakers highlighted that housing shortages have become a major social and economic challenge across Europe, affecting affordability, labour mobility, competitiveness and social cohesion. MEP

Borja Giménez Larraz presented the key conclusions of the European Parliament’s housing report, emphasising the need to increase housing supply, simplify permitting procedures, mobilise land, promote innovation, and attract both public and private investment. Matthew Baldwin outlined ongoing work under the European Affordable Housing Plan and stressed the importance of combining public support with mechanisms capable of mobilising long-term private capital.

Discussions focused on the barriers currently limiting housing delivery, including lengthy permitting procedures, regulatory complexity, rising land and construction costs, and insufficient investment incentives. Participants agreed that public funding alone will not be sufficient to meet Europe’s housing needs and that stronger cooperation between public authorities, financial institutions and private investors will be necessary to deliver housing at scale.

The event also examined the relationship between housing affordability, energy efficiency and decarbonisation. Speakers underlined the need for stable and predictable regulatory frameworks, support for renovation and electrification, and greater investment in innovative construction and heating solutions.

More information can be found [here](#).

Build Europe contributes to High Level Construction Forum discussions on housing construction

On 30 April, Build Europe participated in the 6th Annual Meeting of the High Level Construction Forum (HLCF) in Brussels, represented by Secretary-General Federico Nahuel Lazzari. The event brought together representatives of the European Commission, Member States, industry, workers, researchers, and other stakeholders to discuss the implementation of the European Strategy for Housing Construction and the broader European Affordable Housing Plan. The discussions focused on the competitiveness of the construction ecosystem, housing affordability, permitting procedures, innovation, skills, digitalisation, circular construction, and offsite construction. European Commission representatives, including Director-General Kerstin Jorna and Housing Task Force Head Matthew Baldwin, underlined the need to increase housing supply, accelerate permitting procedures, scale up industrialised construction methods, and mobilise both public and private investment to address Europe’s housing shortage.

During the afternoon breakout session on residential permitting and administrative procedures, Build Europe contributed to the discussion by sharing its views on the key barriers affecting

housing delivery. In its written contribution, Build Europe stressed that permitting simplification must focus on practical measures such as clearer procedures, binding timelines, reduced duplication between authorities, effective digital tools, and greater predictability for project developers. Build Europe also highlighted that simplification should not be understood as lowering environmental or safety standards, but rather as removing unnecessary delays and administrative complexity that increase costs and constrain housing supply.

The permitting workshop reflected many of the concerns raised by Build Europe. Participants identified regulatory complexity, overlapping requirements, fragmented governance structures, and the involvement of multiple authorities as major sources of delays and uncertainty. The European Commission confirmed that work is underway on a comprehensive assessment of how EU legislation affects housing delivery, which will feed into a future housing simplification package planned for 2027.

The meeting also highlighted the growing importance of offsite construction, digital permitting, innovation, and modern construction methods as tools to improve productivity and accelerate housing delivery. The Commission announced its intention to continue working closely with stakeholders through the HLCF and to organise further discussions on industrialised and offsite construction in the coming months.

More information can be found [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Andreas Ibel, President of Build Europe, outlines solutions to Europe's housing affordability crisis

In an interview published on 17 May, Andreas Ibel, President of Build Europe, argued that increasing housing supply remains the most effective way to improve affordability across Europe. Mr Ibel highlighted common challenges affecting housing markets, including lengthy permitting procedures, limited land availability, rising construction costs, financing constraints, and growing regulatory complexity. He stressed that housing shortages are primarily the result of structural barriers to housing delivery rather than market failure. To address the crisis, he called for faster permitting, more developable land, stable investment conditions, and stronger cooperation between public authorities and private developers. He also underlined the need to mobilise both public and private investment and to treat housing as a strategic priority for Europe's

competitiveness, social cohesion, and economic development. More information can be found [here](#).

Member States call on the European Commission for greater coherence in housing and permitting rules

In April, a group of seven EU Member States (Ireland, Austria, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) has called on the European Commission to review its approach to simplifying permitting and environmental procedures, arguing that greater coherence between existing rules is needed to support housing delivery and infrastructure projects.

In a joint letter addressed to Economy Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis, the countries stressed that faster and more predictable permitting procedures are essential to address housing shortages and accelerate investment. While supporting the Commission's broader simplification agenda, they warned that some of the proposed measures could inadvertently create additional complexity rather than reduce it. According to the signatories, the main challenge is not necessarily the volume of regulation, but the lack of alignment between different pieces of EU legislation. They therefore called for clearer and more coherent implementation of permitting and environmental rules, arguing that this would help reduce costs, support competitiveness, and facilitate the delivery of housing and critical infrastructure projects.

The debate reflects a broader discussion at EU level on how to simplify administrative procedures while maintaining environmental objectives and legal certainty. Housing delivery and permitting reform are expected to remain key issues in the development of future European housing initiatives.

More information can be found [here](#).

Eurogroup discusses housing policies from Spain, Ireland, and Croatia

At the informal Eurogroup meeting held in Nicosia on 22 May, euro area finance ministers discussed housing policy measures implemented in Spain, Ireland, and Croatia as part of a broader exchange on housing affordability challenges across Europe. The three national approaches combine different instruments, including large-scale social housing programmes, incentives for new housing construction, taxation of vacant properties, support for first-time

buyers, rent regulation measures, and restrictions on short-term rentals. The discussion reflects the growing importance of housing affordability as both a social and an economic issue across the European Union.

More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

EU Short-Term Rental Regulation becomes applicable

On 20 May 2026, the EU Short-Term Rental Regulation became applicable across the European Union, establishing a common framework for the registration and transparency of short-term accommodation rentals offered through online platforms. The Regulation aims to improve the availability of reliable data on short-term rentals and to support local authorities in enforcing their own housing and tourism policies. It responds to growing concerns that the expansion of short-term rental platforms has increased pressure on housing markets in many cities, while making it difficult for authorities to monitor the scale of the phenomenon. Under the new rules, each short-term rental property offered through an online platform must receive a unique registration number, which must be displayed in listings. Registration procedures must be available digitally, allowing hosts to submit the required information online. In addition, platforms are required to transmit monthly activity data to a national Single Digital Entry Point established by each Member State. By introducing common registration and reporting requirements, the Regulation seeks to improve transparency in the short-term rental market and provide public authorities with better tools to monitor and enforce local rules.

More information can be found [here](#).

UIPI launches survey on young Europeans' attitudes towards homeownership

In May 2026, the International Union of Property Owners (UIPI) launched a pan-European survey entitled "To own or not to own? How young Europeans view property", aimed at gathering evidence on the housing aspirations of Europeans under the age of 35. The initiative comes amid growing debate at EU level on housing affordability and access to homeownership. According to UIPI, a narrative is increasingly emerging in Brussels that younger generations prefer a more mobile lifestyle based on renting rather than owning a home. The survey seeks to test this

assumption by collecting direct feedback from young Europeans across different countries and housing situations. The objective is to determine whether declining homeownership rates among younger generations reflect changing preferences or are primarily the result of barriers such as housing affordability, access to finance, and limited housing supply. The findings are expected to contribute to ongoing discussions on housing policy at European level and provide evidence on the aspirations and challenges facing future homeowners.

The link to the survey can be found [here](#).

FISCAL & FINANCIAL NEWS

Build Europe participates in EIB housing investment discussions in Paris

On 19 May 2026, Build Europe participated in the EIB Group Housing Roadshow breakfast meeting in Paris, which brought together representatives from the housing, investment, and financial sectors to discuss the delivery of affordable and sustainable housing in Europe. The meeting included the participation of EIB Vice-President Ioannis Tsakiris. Build Europe was represented by Managing Director Filiep Loosveldt and Frank Hovorka, from FPI. Discussions focused on financing models for affordable housing, public-private partnerships, and mechanisms to mobilise private capital while supporting long-term affordability objectives.

The meeting also explored possible approaches for a French pilot framework combining affordable rental housing, progressive homeownership pathways, and innovative investment structures. Further exchanges with the EIB are expected in the coming months.



Build Europe discusses Taxonomy simplification and submits feedback on EU Taxonomy review

On 3 April, Build Europe’s Taxonomy Working Group met to analyse the European Commission’s proposed revisions to the EU Taxonomy Climate and Environmental Delegated Acts and to identify key issues for the residential development sector. The discussion focused on the implications of the proposed changes for the construction of new buildings and on the preparation of Build Europe’s responses to the Commission’s calls for evidence. Participants welcomed the Commission’s objective of simplifying and improving the usability of the Taxonomy framework, particularly through greater alignment with the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). At the same time, members highlighted several practical concerns regarding the proposed criteria, including the transition from Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) to Zero-Emission Buildings (ZEB), new circular economy requirements, and biodiversity-related obligations.

Following the meeting, Build Europe submitted feedback to the European Commission on both the review of the Climate Delegated Act and the Environmental Delegated Act. In its response on the Climate Delegated Act, Build Europe supported the principle of aligning the Taxonomy with the EPBD, but warned that the proposed shift towards ZEB-based criteria could create uncertainty at a time when national methodologies and definitions are still being developed across Member States. The Association called for transitional arrangements, legal certainty for projects already in the pipeline, and clearer distinctions between the requirements for substantial contribution and the “Do No Significant Harm” (DNSH) criteria. Build Europe also stressed the importance of recognising existing national permits, certifications, and standards in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and administrative burdens.

In its feedback on the Environmental Delegated Act, Build Europe focused on circular economy and biodiversity provisions. The Association expressed concerns about the proposed requirement to use digital tools to record and store information on building materials, noting that the widespread availability of digital product passports remains several years away. Build Europe therefore called for a phased and proportionate approach linked to market readiness. The Association also argued that the proposed increase in waste recovery thresholds under the DNSH criteria could create significant practical challenges and should be introduced gradually. Regarding biodiversity, Build Europe welcomed the move away from purely location-based

restrictions towards a framework based on avoidance, mitigation, and compensation measures. At the same time, it stressed the need for clearer guidance, legal certainty, and stronger incentives for brownfield redevelopment. The Association underlined that projects on previously developed land should benefit from more favourable conditions within the Taxonomy framework, reflecting their contribution to limiting land take and supporting sustainable urban development.

Build Europe's responses to the consultations on the EU Taxonomy can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Commission study examines costs and redistributive effects of reduced VAT rates

On 30 April 2026, the European Commission published a study assessing the fiscal costs and redistributive effects of reduced VAT rates across the European Union.

The analysis finds that reduced VAT rates applied to essential goods and services such as food and beverages, housing, water and electricity, and health-related products are generally the most effective in supporting lower-income households. By contrast, reduced rates on items such as restaurants and accommodation generate more limited redistributive benefits while often entailing significant fiscal costs.

The study also highlights that the benefits of reduced VAT rates vary across population groups. Pension-age households, female-headed households, and rural households tend to benefit disproportionately from reduced rates because of their specific consumption patterns. More broadly, the findings contribute to the ongoing debate on the effectiveness of VAT policy as a tool for social redistribution. The report suggests that while reduced VAT rates can support affordability objectives, their efficiency depends heavily on the products and services concerned and on the characteristics of the households benefiting from them.

More information can be found [here](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL & TECHNICAL NEWS

Build Europe Technical Working Group discusses EPBD implementation across Europe

On 7 May, Build Europe's Technical Working Group met to exchange views on the national implementation of the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). The discussion was initiated following a request from the Spanish association APCEspaña, which presented concerns regarding the transposition of the Directive in Spain and proposed a questionnaire to compare implementation approaches across Member States. The exchange focused on several key elements of the revised EPBD, including the definition of zero-emission buildings, mandatory solar energy requirements, life-cycle global warming potential (GWP) calculations, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and sustainable mobility provisions. Participants agreed on the importance of preserving the performance-based nature of the Directive and avoiding national gold-plating that could unnecessarily increase construction costs and reduce housing affordability. APCEspaña explained that Spain is transposing the Directive mainly through revisions to the Technical Building Code and expressed concerns about proposals that could introduce overly prescriptive requirements, particularly regarding on-site solar generation, sustainable mobility obligations, and the definition of zero-emission buildings. The Spanish delegation stressed the need to maintain technological neutrality and flexibility, while ensuring that implementation remains aligned with the original objectives of the Directive. Representatives from Poland and Czechia provided updates on their national transposition processes. The Polish delegation explained that the government is preparing new technical building requirements that would apply the EPBD deadlines of 2028 for public buildings and 2030 for private buildings, while seeking to avoid disproportionate impacts on housing costs. The Polish association highlighted its active involvement in the national working groups responsible for the transposition process and shared practical examples of discussions on energy performance, electric vehicle infrastructure, and building standards. The Czech delegation reported that the transposition process remains ongoing and that detailed technical parameters have not yet been finalised. The Association of Developers stressed the importance of maintaining technological neutrality, allowing multiple compliance pathways, ensuring

proportionality in solar requirements, and limiting additional administrative burdens linked to life-cycle emissions calculations and sustainable mobility measures.

Following the meeting, Build Europe, APCEspaña, and the Polish Association of Developers (PZFD) held a dedicated coordination exchange to compare national approaches in greater detail. The discussion confirmed the value of sharing practical experiences among Build Europe members, particularly regarding the definition of zero-emission buildings, the implementation of renewable energy requirements, and measures to minimise additional costs for homebuyers while achieving the Directive's objectives. Participants agreed that further exchanges between national experts could support a more balanced and proportionate implementation of the EPBD across Europe. The topic was further discussed at the Build Europe Congress in Cambridge.

Build Europe meets DG Environment on land take, soil monitoring, and urban green spaces

In May, Build Europe met twice with officials from DG Environment (DG ENV) to discuss the interpretation of land take indicators under the Soil Monitoring Law and their interaction with the Nature Restoration Regulation. Build Europe highlighted concerns about the way some Member States may interpret parks, gardens and other non-sealed urban green areas when implementing no net land take objectives. DG ENV clarified that the Soil Monitoring Law does not provide a legal definition of land take and that the EU's no net land take objective is a policy target rather than a binding legal obligation. DG ENV also confirmed that the Nature Restoration Regulation operates independently from the Soil Monitoring Law and focuses on maintaining and increasing urban green spaces. Build Europe will continue to engage with the Commission to promote a coherent interpretation that supports both environmental objectives and housing development.

Commission launches consultation on Birds and Habitats Directives stress test

On 12 May 2026, the European Commission launched a public consultation as part of its ongoing stress test of the Birds and Habitats Directives. The exercise aims to assess whether the Directives continue to achieve their nature protection objectives in a cost-efficient manner,

while identifying opportunities to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and simplify implementation. Contributions can be submitted until 4 August 2026. The results of the stress test are expected by the end of the year and will contribute to the Commission's broader simplification agenda. Build Europe's Technical WG will analyse and consider drafting a first response in due course.

More information can be found [here](#).

Committee of the Regions adopts opinion on environmental simplification package

On 7 May 2026, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) adopted an opinion on the European Commission's proposals to simplify administrative burdens in environmental legislation. The opinion acknowledges the objective of reducing administrative complexity and accelerating permitting procedures, while arguing that simplification should not weaken environmental safeguards or shift responsibilities from project developers to public authorities. The CoR expressed concerns about several elements of the Commission's proposals, including fixed EU-level deadlines for environmental assessments, limitations on access to justice, and measures that could transfer administrative or financial burdens to local and regional authorities. It also called for maintaining existing environmental management requirements and preserving information systems such as the SCIP database until equivalent alternatives are fully operational. The opinion further stresses the importance of adequate resources for public administrations, stronger involvement of local and regional authorities in permitting procedures, and the need to ensure that simplification efforts remain compatible with the EU's environmental and climate objectives. The CoR's recommendations will feed into the ongoing legislative discussions on the Commission's environmental simplification package.

More information can be found [here](#).

NEWS FROM BUILD EUROPE MEMBERS' AND OTHER COUNTRIES

France – National decline in housing permits in April 2026

In April 2026, France issued permits for 28,979 dwellings, a decrease of almost 20% compared with April 2025 and nearly 30% compared with March 2026. The decline was mainly driven by a reduction in permits for multi-family housing, although the average monthly level of permits during the first four months of 2026 remained above that recorded during the same period in 2025.

More information can be found [here](#).

Germany – Country records increase in housing permits

In March 2026, German authorities issued permits for 21,775 dwellings, marking an increase compared with the same period in 2025. The figures suggest a gradual recovery in housing construction activity, following a prolonged period of declining building permits and housing output in Germany.

More information can be found [here](#).

Ireland – IHBA House Building Summit discusses housing delivery

In April 2026, the Irish Home Builders Association (IHBA) held its annual House Building Summit, bringing together policymakers, industry representatives, and financial stakeholders to discuss the delivery of 300,000 new homes by 2030. Discussions focused on planning reform, infrastructure, investment, and measures to accelerate housing supply in Ireland.

More information can be found [here](#).

Italy – Government adopts new Housing Plan

On 30 April, the Italian government approved a new Housing Plan aimed at making around 100,000 homes available over the next ten years. The package combines the renovation of public housing, new social and mixed-tenure housing developments, and measures to attract private investment through simplified and accelerated procedures.

More information can be found [here](#).

Cyprus – According to Andreas Ibel, President of Build Europe, build-to-rent can support housing supply in Cyprus

In an interview published on 27 May, Andreas Ibel, President of Build Europe, stated that build-to-rent schemes can help increase the supply of rental housing in Cyprus, provided that the right regulatory and investment conditions are in place. He stressed that improving housing affordability ultimately requires a significant increase in housing supply, supported by faster permitting procedures, legal certainty, and a stable investment environment.

The full interview can be found [here](#).

Build Europe’s upcoming activities

- 9 June 2026: Construction Competitiveness Workshop
- 10 June 2026: Monitoring Committee
- 19 June 2026: Launch of European Housing Alliance (Brussels, Belgium)
- 21 June 2026: Expert Workshop: Building Permit Processes in the EU
- 22 June 2026: Launch of Future of Cities Coalition (Brussels, Belgium)
- 28-30 October 2026: Build Europe Congress in Naples (Italy)