

Housing in Cities in the COVID-19 era



OECD Champion Mayors Webinar Series: Inequality Matters

10 December 2020 | 16:00 – 17:30 CET | Virtual event (Zoom)- [Register here](#)

What's the issue?

Housing has become one of the most pressing challenges for OECD cities and many urban households have been priced out of adequate accommodations. On average in the OECD, in the last two decades, house prices have grown twice as fast as inflation and 50% more than the household median income. This has been particularly true in large cities where house prices and rents have often increased faster than national averages. The COVID-19 crisis has revealed and often aggravated pre-pandemic housing challenges in many cities in OECD countries. Housing inequality – marked by differences in prices, quality, location, and accessibility – came abruptly to the fore during lockdown when governments implemented “stay at home” measures to flatten the epidemic curve.

At the initial peak of the crisis, cities, regions/states and national governments deployed emergency measures such as suspending evictions and relocating homeless populations, while some landlords also suspended or cancelled rents. However, such temporary measures will not be enough in the long term for cities to confront the global pandemic, soaring house prices and the climate crisis simultaneously. What can local and national governments do to offer more affordable, sustainable and adequate housing for all?

Panel

Moderated by Aziza Akhmouch, Head of Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE), OECD

- **Lamia Kamal-Chaoui**, Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD
- **Soo-Jin Kim**, Deputy Head of Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division
- **Michael Hancock**, Mayor of Denver, United States
- **Daniela Grabmüllerová**, Deputy Minister, Section of Coordination of EU Funds and International Relations, Ministry of Regional Development, Czech Republic
- **Michaela Kauer**, Director of Vienna's EU Liaison Office in Brussels
- **Sjoerdje Van Heerden**, Scientific Officer, Joint Research Center, European Commission

Key questions

- To what extent is the COVID-19 crisis changing housing needs in different types of cities? Will residents of big cities move to larger, greener and cheaper homes in small- and mid-size cities or even rural areas in the long term? How will these trends affect the future shape and growth of cities? How can cities adapt their existing housing and building stock?
- Which temporary measures taken in cities during the early stages of the pandemic could and should be mainstreamed into structural housing policies? What are the opportunities and limitations of rolling out such housing reforms in cities?
- What are the most effective policy instruments that local and national governments can use to provide more affordable and sustainable housing (e.g. fiscal tools, policies to expand and diversify rental housing markets, land-use regulations, etc.)? What are the trade-offs and how can cities overcome them?

This webinar is organised as part of the **Inequality Matters Series** of the OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative. The series explores thematic topics related to inequality in cities by bringing together the latest OECD research with real-world examples and experiences from Champion Mayors cities.

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