Social aspects of housing policy

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In ratifying the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, all Member States have accepted the right of each citizen to adequate housing. It should be noted that the Structural Funds and other European instruments already have an indirect impact on national housing programmes and that, since 1955, housing programmes and assistance have been run for coal and steel workers on the basis of the ECSC Treaty. The rapporteur, Mr Brian CROWLEY, proposes a series of measures to be introduced at both Member State and EU level. In the case of the former the rapporteur calls on the Member States: - to develop a housing policy; - to take preventive measures so as to guarantee a minimum level of security for persons facing serious social exclusion problems; - to take measures to combat property and housing speculation by means of deterrents which will prevent owners from leaving housing unoccupied. At Union level, the rapporteur proposes a European housing policy which will seek: - the collection and analysis of information on housing policy in the Member States; - the evaluation, exchange and promotion of examples of good practice in Member States, particularly towards the homeless and those whose economic situation means that they remain trapped in poor quality housing; - the establishment of minimum objectives for alignment with regard to ensuring access to housing for all; - the setting up of a Task Force to monitor the impact of EU policies on the housing sector; - the creation of a European housing forum with a consultative role (comprising representatives of European bodies responsible for housing policy, including local housing authorities, researchers, associations, property developers, credit institutions, tenants and local and regional authorities); - the implementation of a Community programme (IGLOO) to assist the funding of housing sector projects, taking account of urban development, housing, education, job training, social services and health issues, with the participation of the population groups concerned; - the extension of the ECSC system as a model for intervention by the European Union in the question of housing; - an increase in funding for the SAVE programme in order to promote energy-efficient housing.