

Open letter

We, the policy-makers from London, Lille, Ghent and Brussels, are committed to supporting Community Land Trusts in our cities.

Housing has become the highest expenditure for Europeans and one in ten citizens are overburdened by their housing cost. This rises to one in four among private renters, and four in ten for people living below the poverty line¹.

This situation is intolerable. We believe that everyone should be able, according to their income, age, aspirations and problems, to find somewhere to live that offers dignity, protection and that is, above all, affordable.

Citizens from our four regions have joined forces to demonstrate that Community-Led Housing, including Community Land Trusts, is a key part of the solution for our cities, allowing citizens to develop and manage new homes.

As city mayors we support the objectives of the Sustainable Housing for Inclusive and Cohesive Cities (SHICC) project, to promote and develop Community Land Trusts across the Interreg North-West Europe region.

London CLT has pioneered the Community Land Trust model in London, and in the UK over the past ten years the number of CLTs has increased from 14 to over 300. In France, where the City of Lille is a pioneer, city regions such as Paris, Rennes, Nantes and many stakeholders such as social housing cooperatives are also involved in disseminating this new model. In the wake of the CLTs of Brussels and Ghent, numerous initiatives by civil society and public players are springing up in Belgium's cities. The dissemination of the model elsewhere in Europe is now a reality, with similar initiatives emerging in Amsterdam and Berlin.

We welcome this. We appreciate that the European institutions have recently encouraged all countries to invest in affordable housing.

We call on all city and national governments to support Community Land Trusts, and community-led housing more generally, with policies that foster these civil society initiatives.

On 10 May, we met in London for a joint working session to demonstrate our shared ambition to support Community Land Trusts, to help inclusion and cohesion in our cities.

¹ Housing Europe (October 2017), *The State of Housing in the EU 2017*

Signed by:

Martine Aubry, Mayor of Lille

Marthias De Clercq, Mayor of Ghent

James Murray, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, Greater London Authority

Rudi Vervoort, Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region