



## Social and affordable housing

### Demands

In AK's opinion, **there is a clear market failure in the housing sector**, meaning that **government action is required in the form of market interventions to** ensure affordable housing. A **revision of the Almunia package, in particular the following legal acts, is therefore urgently needed:**

- Communication from the Commission on the application of European Union State aid rules to compensation granted for the provision of services of general economic interest ([2012/C 8/02](#))
- Commission Decision of 20 December 2011 on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to State aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest, notified under document number C(2011) 9380, ([SGEI decision, 2012/21/EU](#))
- Communication from the Commission, European Union framework for State aid in the form of public service compensation (2011) ([2012/C 8/03](#))

The fourth part of the Almunia package, namely the [De Minimis Regulation \(2023/2831\)](#) has already been revised. AK welcomes this reform.

### Reasons and arguments

The European Commission is beginning to recognise the problem of rising rents and purchase prices of own homes and is examining possible remedies. The focus here is on the Almunia package, in particular the SGEI decision (decision on services of general interest) on the application of Art. 106 (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which addresses the permissibility of state measures, including in the housing sector, and their compatibility with EU state aid law.

#### Making the SGEI decision practicable

There is a need to revise the EU documents on SGEI in order to establish a practicable definition of social and affordable housing. The concept of social housing is currently too narrow and does not give the national authorities the necessary scope for appropriate housing policy.

#### Housing as a national responsibility

Even if the topic of housing is to be given a higher status at EU level, for example by assigning the topic of "housing" to a Commissioner, social housing, which is funded from national tax revenues, must consistently remain a national responsibility. It is important that the EU encourages the Member States to promote social housing, provide financial support and remove legal hurdles – in particular the SGEI decision.

### Background

Affordable housing has increasingly become a pan-European problem with the explosion in rents and house prices fuelled by real estate speculation by financial investors.

Furthermore, as a result of the ambitious European climate targets, the focus has shifted to the energy efficiency of buildings and conversion of the energy supply for buildings to renewable energy sources, with correspondingly rising costs for residential construction.

### Contact

**AK EUROPA**  
office@akeuropa.eu

### AK EUROPA

The Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour (AK) is the legal body which represents the interests of approximately 4 million employees and consumers in Austria. It represents its members on all social, educational, economic and consumer policy-related issues at a national level and in Brussels at an EU level.