



**2021/2255(INI)**

15.6.2022

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Committee on Culture and Education

on the New European Bauhaus  
(2021/2255(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Antonius Manders

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committees responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into their motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative aims to improve the way people live together by reimagining public spaces for new uses and ways of living, encompassing both urban and rural areas, to create awareness about the built and designed environment, including in terms of quality and sustainability; whereas the NEB initiative should also turn the benefits of the green transition into a tangible reality in people's everyday lives at local and neighbourhood level; whereas NEB projects should be consistent with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- B. whereas the NEB should facilitate and steer the transformation of our societies in line with three interlinked values: inclusion – from valuing diversity, to ensuring accessibility and affordability, to improving aesthetics – quality of experience and style that goes beyond functionality, and sustainability – from climate goals to circularity, zero pollution and biodiversity;
- C. whereas housing policy in the Member States should be guided by the common principles of bringing down housing prices to make housing accessible to residents both for sale and rent, including with the option to purchase the property at a later stage, as well to ensure legal certainty;
- D. whereas the NEB Lab will reach out to society, industry and the political sphere to connect people and find new ways of creating new living spaces together;
- E. whereas NEB projects should invest in good thermal isolation to partly offset rising costs and to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement;
- F. whereas the implementation of the NEB initiative should be guided by the four thematic axes and principles of inclusiveness, reconnecting with nature, maintaining and regaining a sense of belonging, prioritising vulnerable people and neighbourhoods, and fostering sustainability through long-term, life cycle and integrated thinking in the industrial and housing ecosystem, and whereas these principles should be fed into the 'Renovation Wave' guidelines;
- G. whereas the NEB movement focuses on interconnected transformations of physical places, of environments that enable innovation, and of our perspectives and ways of thinking;
- H. whereas the NEB will initially be funded by different EU funds, including Horizon Europe, the LIFE programme and the European Regional Development Fund, as well as through national resources and initiatives in the Member States; whereas around EUR 85 million of EU funds will be dedicated to NEB projects in 2021 and 2022;
- I. whereas the NEB initiative should focus on creating a healthy, aesthetically pleasing

and accessible environment and landscape, decent housing that is healthy, accessible and affordable for all, new quality employment and workplaces, an inclusive society, and a sustainable economy and way of living;

- J. whereas the NEB initiative should be based on innovation at all levels and the active participation and involvement of people and local communities, for example through the social economy and local organisations; whereas there is a need to mainstream a gender-equal and intersectional approach, inclusivity for persons with disabilities and intergenerational solidarity in the planning of buildings, living spaces and future ways of living; whereas the NEB initiative aims to capitalise on natural and cultural assets to regain a sense of belonging in the EU;
- K. whereas the NEB movement will include massive renovation projects; whereas although asbestos has been banned in the EU since 2005, it is still often present in administrative buildings, schools, housing, public transport facilities and other infrastructure;
- L. whereas the NEB movement should be a continuation of the original Bauhaus, which introduced the role of art and architecture in addressing societal needs;
- M. whereas the NEB must connect all Member States;
- N. whereas residents of the Member States face growing difficulties in finding affordable housing, mainly due to housing speculation, the expansive growth of short-term holiday rentals and the consequential increase in rental prices;
- O. whereas the NEB should ensure environments are designed for ability and empowerment so they actively welcome everyone;
- P. whereas the cost of living in EU countries is rapidly rising due to inflation and the energy and fuel crisis in the euro area; whereas energy poverty is rising among low-income households in the EU;
- Q. whereas inclusive environments such as shared infrastructure and services and public spaces give people a sense of shared identity and belonging;
- R. whereas rental prices have increased by 16 % and house prices by 34 % since 2010; whereas 25.1 % of private tenants in the EU spend over 40 % of their income on rent, while consumer prices have increased by 5.1 % and energy prices by 28.6 % since January 2021;
- S. whereas the inclusion of local communities and meaningful local ownership play a key role in the process of decarbonisation;
- T. whereas the need for housing in the EU will increase due to the number of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine and conflicts in other non-EU countries;
- U. whereas homelessness in the EU has risen by 70 % in the past decade; whereas estimates show that approximately 700 000 people are homeless on any given night in the EU; whereas 4.1 million people in the EU are exposed to homelessness each year

for a short or long period, while there are more than 11 million empty houses in the European Union;

- V. whereas buildings are responsible for 40 % of the EU's energy consumption and 36 % of its greenhouse gas emissions;
1. Welcomes the fact that sustainability, inclusion and aesthetics are intertwined values at the core of the NEB initiative and calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure they support the right to decent housing, including social housing for vulnerable groups that is healthy, accessible, affordable and responsive to everyday needs and ensures the wellbeing of all; highlights the importance of sustainable architecture and interior design and the increased use of sustainable building materials as part of the preservation of architectural heritage, landscapes and tangible and intangible cultural heritage; notes that high-quality design of the built environment can contribute to wellbeing and social cohesion;
  2. Calls on the Commission and Member States to cooperate with relevant stakeholders in pursuing a Design for All approach to remove accessibility barriers, and to pay particular attention to groups and individuals who are at risk of exclusion, poverty and health-threatening hazards such as air pollution; stresses the need for the NEB initiative to contribute to the reduction of homelessness and housing shortages by exploring links between the Housing First approach and the NEB initiative and the need for it to support projects providing quality employment opportunities, both in cities and in rural and remote areas; calls on the Commission to present a clear NEB roadmap for the next decade with clear objectives and encourages it to launch a dedicated user-friendly and accessible website on best practices;
  3. Calls on the Commission to ensure gender equality and the inclusion of minorities and persons with disabilities in the NEB; calls on the Commission to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities;
  4. Stresses that the Commission's announcement of the NEB initiative must be followed up by concrete action and receive sufficient financial support in the long run to make it meaningful and ensure added value;
  5. Stresses the need to support changes not only in cities, but also in rural and remote areas; calls on the Commission to ensure the NEB Lab is inclusive and involves rural and remote areas; calls on it, furthermore, to support projects providing inclusive job opportunities, in particular in rural and remote areas;
  6. Highlights the need to promote the NEB values in every Member State;
  7. Calls on the Commission to continue the green transformation of the industrial ecosystem, including the construction sector, on the basis of the principles of the NEB initiative, supporting the necessary energy transition in the housing sector without increasing the cost of living; acknowledges the need for a skilled and qualified workforce to support the circular economy; stresses the role social economy enterprises and cooperatives can play in improving sustainability;
  8. Calls on the Commission to use the NEB to achieve social sustainability while

protecting people in the EU, in particular vulnerable groups, from the social impact of the European Green Deal with regard to housing and energy efficiency;

9. Calls on the Member States to closely cooperate and share their experience in the modernisation of buildings and the development of new solutions for the construction of sustainable, energy-efficient buildings;
10. Points out that the NEB initiative should help to reduce building costs and construction time and promote creative thinking and planning, while at the same time following the ‘think global, act local’ approach;
11. Welcomes the Commission’s Level(s) framework, which provides clear priorities and a standardised basis to assess and report on the sustainability of buildings throughout their full lifecycle; encourages the Member States to use the Davos Baukultur Quality System to determine the quality of a building project and its strengths and weaknesses from a Baukultur perspective<sup>1</sup>;
12. Calls on the Commission to create an own fund to finance NEB projects and to cooperate, during the decision-making process, with EU residents, neighbourhood organisations and relevant social enterprises, such as non-governmental organisations and cooperatives, as well as with local authorities;
13. Expects a successful NEB initiative to create new quality employment in the construction, restoration, architecture, design, textile, cultural and creative sectors, and to offer upskilling and reskilling opportunities;
14. Welcomes the NEB initiative, as it could contribute to strengthening a diverse interactive society and a shared sense of belonging by promoting the EU’s cultural heritage buildings and natural areas, while at the same time fostering creativity and innovation inspired by different cultural backgrounds, geographical settings and climatic conditions;
15. Recalls that cultural heritage plays an important role in enhancing and creating social capital because it helps to reduce social disparities, facilitates social inclusion and promotes social cohesion and intergenerational dialogue<sup>2</sup>; notes that the uptake of digital technologies by cultural heritage sites can make it possible for them to offer accessible and innovative experiences for communities;
16. Urges the Commission to increase its efforts to make this initiative more inclusive; notes that most contributions are related to aesthetics or sustainability, while accessibility, affordability and inclusion are less present;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote and support universal design, sustainable and flexible life cycle housing solutions, inclusive communities and solidarity between the generations through the NEB initiative, enabling older people and persons with disabilities to live at home and in their community, to continue to play

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<sup>1</sup> For a definition of Baukultur, please refer to the Council conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative.

<sup>2</sup> Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe.

an active role in society and to pass on their experience and knowledge to younger generations; stresses the need for a people-centred and inclusive approach when it comes to planning and organising the surroundings and recreation facilities around buildings and neighbourhoods;

18. Considers that the NEB should guarantee a high quality of private and social housing; welcomes the acknowledgement of the need to prioritise reuse, regeneration, life extension and transformation of existing buildings over the construction of new ones whenever these activities are technically, economically and functionally feasible, as they help to reduce energy needs, carbon emissions and pressure for new buildings, and to improve health, comfort and wellbeing; is concerned about the disproportionate impact of the poor energy performance of social housing on those who already have low living standards;
19. Regrets that there are no plans for residents to participate in the NEB committees; urges the Commission to encourage an ethical architecture approach and engage the people most concerned by an NEB project as active participants in the design process, while respecting their cultural differences and diverse needs and perspectives;
20. Calls on the Commission to place, in the NEB, a greater focus on disadvantaged groups, including people experiencing homelessness, racism, discrimination, poverty and social exclusion; emphasises, in this regard, the human-rights-based and intersectional, non-discriminatory approach at the NEB's core;
21. Calls on the Member States to introduce aid for young people and families to enable them to find housing, taking into account their needs;
22. Calls on the Member States to examine the possibility of setting up public architect teams to advise authorities, promote spatial quality and improve the design and sustainability of public projects; encourages policymakers and authorities to roll out stronger regulatory and fiscal support mechanisms for energy upgrades and renovations of existing buildings which take into consideration the intangible heritage and culture of buildings;
23. Calls on the Commission to proactively reach out to social actors and organisations representing civil society and, notably, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, to ask them to become NEB partners; recalls that in order to make the NEB inclusive, a non-paternalistic approach taken together with the people concerned is essential, who need to be equally represented as promoters, community managers and key interlocutors for the initiative;
24. Proposes using the NEB to protect the right to the city<sup>3</sup> and to help inhabitants to reclaim the city as a space created with their participation for encounters, societal interaction, collective actions and activities, on the basis of collective participation;
25. Calls on the Commission to take action through the NEB to help marginalised Roma communities living in environmentally polluted areas who have no access to safe drinking water and sanitation and to help them to find decent, safe and adequate

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<sup>3</sup> See the website of the Global Platform for the Right to the City: <https://www.right2city.org/>

housing; urges the Commission to implement NEB projects that aim to truly improve the living conditions of this vulnerable group and to contribute to territorial developments avoiding spatial segregation of marginalised Roma communities and other vulnerable groups;

26. Proposes the use of NEB to develop neighbourhoods with open, inclusive, accessible and vibrant spaces that promote equality, cultural exchanges and democracy and strengthen the sense of community, coexistence and cooperation;
27. Calls on the Commission to ensure that NEB projects promote social and affordable housing as a way to combine social justice, environmental performance and urban aesthetics;
28. Proposes that the NEB be used to develop sustainable, aesthetically pleasing and inclusive neighbourhoods that allow for access to affordable goods and services for all;
29. Proposes that the NEB promote social cohesion and interaction by developing projects that provide cultural and creative activities and care for people of all ages and groups, such as community centres and multigenerational housing projects;
30. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to invest in developing new, sustainable building techniques and designs in relation to the NEB initiative, in order to provide decent housing at affordable costs for all, also with view to tackling energy poverty; calls on the Commission and the Member States to invest in new forms of city planning in order to create sustainable, green and inclusive living;
31. Calls on the Commission to draw up concrete guidelines and guiding principles in line with the NEB to ensure the concepts for the EU's built environment are of a high quality in terms of architecture, space and the sustainability of the materials used; notes, however, that public space, infrastructure and buildings must be constructed with the local planning context in mind to prevent regional differences and specificities from being levelled out;
32. Proposes that the NEB focus on the use and energy upgrade of existing empty housing in the EU; stresses that NEB projects should aim to bring back to life, renovate and reuse existing buildings instead of building new ones, and use as little new space as possible;
33. Stresses that social housing must remain affordable for people with low incomes and that the NEB could contribute to this goal;
34. Considers traditional artisanship based on regional value chains, in particular in the construction and design sectors, essential for sustainable development; stresses that traditional craftspeople strengthen social cohesion and the preservation of rural communities; welcomes initiatives such as Interreg's CRAFTS CODE as an opportunity to promote the traditional craft sector; calls on the Commission and the Member States to designate a European Year of Craft with a view to making the craft sector more attractive and strengthening the principles championed by the NEB initiative; invites the Member States to incentivise the preservation and revaluation of local traditional craftspeople's work by creating a network and involving it in relevant vocational

education and training and higher education curricula;

35. Calls on the Commission to take into account the fact that housing costs should be no higher than 25 % of the disposable income of a household; calls for cooperation with local authorities, residents and other relevant stakeholders to ensure affordable rents and security of tenure based on fair and safe tenancy agreements;
36. Encourages the Member States to appoint an NEB initiative contact body to coordinate local efforts and participate in an EU-wide formal and informal network to exchange best practices, and also calls on them to foster the mobility and training of professionals and students; calls on the Commission and the Member States to include all levels of governance in the development and implementation of the NEB initiative and to build on the movement of civil society organisations and partners created by the NEB;
37. Underlines the need to develop accessible and affordable NEB housing solutions for young people, groups that are vulnerable to social exclusion and people who are not considered eligible for housing aid, but are still unable to afford a mortgage or high rental prices;
38. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to use the NEB as a tool to implement the Parliament resolutions on combating homelessness<sup>4</sup> and ensuring access to adequate and affordable housing<sup>5</sup>, by promoting social and publicly funded housing;
39. Considers that the digital transition can be key to enhancing the use of local resources and skills, as digital fabrication in fab labs or industries allows products to be distributed locally and, in many cases, gives a new life to certain traditions that could otherwise fade away;
40. Stresses that the Commission and the Member States should use NEB housing solutions to provide permanent housing for homeless persons and enforce the ‘housing first’ principle;
41. Underlines that SMEs are important employers at the local level and can adapt quickly in order to innovate; warns, however, of the risk that they may be pushed out of markets owing to the very rapid transition to large-scale solutions in industries such as the construction materials industry; invites the Commission and the Member States to reflect on how to best support SMEs involved in construction, design or materials production;
42. Welcomes the inclusive nature of the NEB movement; proposes cooperation with stakeholders and local authorities to ensure equal access to housing for all and tackle discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disabilities, economic and social status and religion;
43. Underlines the important role of the NEB in promoting gender equality; proposes the use of NEB housing and neighbourhood projects to ensure access to safe and affordable

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<sup>4</sup> European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2020 on tackling homelessness rates in the EU, OJ C 425, 20.10.2021, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all, OJ C 456, 10.11.2021, p. 145.

housing for women, in particular single mothers and victims of domestic violence, as well as access to services such as childcare and psychological and social support in the neighbourhood;

44. Calls on the Commission to ensure that all NEB housing and neighbourhood projects provide affordable and accessible connectivity for all local residents;
45. Calls on the Member States, when planning NEB housing projects, to provide a sufficient amount of green and public space per NEB neighbourhood as an investment in healthy neighbourhoods, and to better incorporate environmental considerations in spatial planning; notes that green areas providing public spaces for exercise and relaxation mitigate stressors such as noise, improve social interactions and mental health and decrease social isolation;
46. Calls on the Member States to ensure high-quality shared outdoor space that includes blue and green infrastructure within NEB neighbourhoods, access to nature and the prioritisation of nature-based solutions, an initiative that is in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal; calls on the relevant authorities to provide adequate space to accommodate a significant rise in the use of bicycles as a transport mode, which contributes to a healthy and carbon-free lifestyle and increases the mobility of people of all ages;
47. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that NEB projects help to reduce land use for buildings, by focusing, for example, on the renovation of the existing housing stock and the use of already built-up areas;
48. Notes that empowering local communities to incorporate elements of food security within local areas and regions and to generate energy locally is linked to employment and social affairs and can contribute to social equity, resilience and cohesion, ambitions that chime with the NEB;
49. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that participatory planning and the implementation of NEB projects involve local communities;
50. Welcomes the so-called 15-minute city model implemented by some European cities and invites the Member States to consider replicating that model in more cities in order to make all essential services and amenities accessible within walking distance; underlines the role of mobility and interconnectivity in safeguarding work-life balance and reducing energy and transport costs; encourages the clustering of rural towns, where relevant and feasible, to maintain and improve the provision of services;
51. Calls, with regard to Russia's war in Ukraine, for a re-evaluation of the energy question and, in view of the large number of refugees from that country, to intensify all efforts concerning human rights, such as the inclusion dimension; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take into account these new challenges and implications in the NEB;
52. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure better recognition and compensation of asbestos-related and other occupational diseases for all exposed workers in order to protect the health of construction and other workers involved in the

green transition and the NEB;

53. Calls on the Commission to recognise the digital dimension as an explicit part of how future spaces are conceived; notes that the values that the NEB promotes for the development of the built environment should be mirrored in the digital sphere;
54. Calls on the Commission to ensure good governance, transparency and accountability towards relevant stakeholders for all NEB projects;
55. Calls on the Commission to cooperate with local authorities and stakeholders so that people looking for housing have access to information on available NEB housing projects; stresses the importance of strengthening the institutional and structured participation of tenants and residents and urges the Commission to facilitate this process by providing them with the necessary knowledge and information about the NEB;
56. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to significantly increase their focus on prevention strategies, for example by strengthening labour inspectorates, national health and safety services and social partner dialogue to ensure that all employees have a right to the highest level of health and safety protection possible during the implementation of the NEB;
57. Stresses that the health and safety of workers in construction or renovation, in particular those working on NEB projects, should be ensured, and that protective equipment should be provided;
58. Calls on the Commission to adopt measures for tenants of NEB projects to protect them from exposure to asbestos and other harmful materials during energy renovation work; emphasises that all tenants should be protected from paying the costs of renovation work; stresses that temporary adequate accommodation for tenants should be ensured during renovation works; welcomes the use of safe and sustainable materials in the construction and renovation of all NEB buildings;
59. Calls for EU-funded upskilling and training, in particular in digital tools, of workers in NEB-relevant sectors; calls on the Commission to ensure diversity and equal representation in the NEB work environment; stresses that workers' and unions' rights in the NEB work environment should be safeguarded;
60. Stresses the need for Member States to include NEB projects in the reforms and investments planned in their national recovery and resilience plans in line with the six pillars of the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	14.6.2022
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 39 -: 2 0: 3
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Gabriele Bischoff, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Milan Brglez, Jordi Cañas, David Casa, Leila Chaibi, Ilan De Basso, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Estrella Durá Ferrandis, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Loucas Fourlas, Cindy Franssen, Helmut Geuking, Alicia Homs Ginel, Miriam Lexmann, Elena Lizzi, Sara Matthieu, Max Orville, Sandra Pereira, Kira Marie Peter-Hansen, Manuel Pizarro, Dennis Radtke, Elżbieta Rafalska, Guido Reil, Daniela Rondinelli, Mounir Satouri, Monica Semedo, Romana Tomc, Marianne Vind, Maria Walsh, Stefania Zambelli, Tomáš Zdechovský
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Konstantinos Arvanitis, Simona Baldassarre, Ilana Cicurel, Gheorghe Falcă, Krzysztof Hetman, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Antonius Manders, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Mohammed Chahim, Martin Hojsík, Domènec Ruiz Devesa

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

39	+
ECR	Elzbieta Rafalska
NI	Daniela Rondinelli
PPE	David Casa, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Gheorghe Falcă, Loucas Fourlas, Cindy Franssen, Helmut Geuking, Krzysztof Hetman, Miriam Lexmann, Antonius Manders, Dennis Radtke, Romana Tomc, Maria Walsh, Tomáš Zdechovský
RENEW	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Jordi Cañas, Ilana Cicurel, Martin Hojsík, Max Orville, Monica Semedo
S&D	Gabriele Bischoff, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Milan Brglez, Mohammed Chahim, Ilan De Basso, Estrella Durá Ferrandis, Alicia Homs Giné, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Manuel Pizarro, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Marianne Vind
THE LEFT	Konstantinos Arvanitis, Leila Chaïbi, Sandra Pereira, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop
VERTS/ALE	Sara Matthieu, Kira Marie Peter-Hansen, Mounir Satouri

2	-
ECR	Margarita de la Pisa Carrión
ID	Guido Reil

3	0
ID	Simona Baldassarre, Elena Lizzi, Stefania Zambelli

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention