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## **Minutes REM Annual Meeting**

**Geneva, 8 November 2017**

### 1. Participation

#### REM Members

- Giampiero Bambagioni, (Chair)
- David Tichy
- Paloma Taltavull
- Reiner Lux
- Enrico Campagnoli
- Nuria Raga Sastre
- Vladimir Kaplinski
- Kat Grimsley
- Donovan Rypkema
- Gyorgy Sumegy

#### WPLA members

- Rik Wouters (Vice-Chair)
- Beatriz Corredor Serra
- Roberta Marconi

#### UNECE secretariat:

- Gulnara Roll (Secretary of the CHLM)
- Domenica Carriero (Secretary of the REM)
- Christian Holländer

### 2. Agenda

- a) Update on the meeting of the Bureau of the CHLM
- b) Proposals for activities of the REM
- c) Other



### 3. Discussion

Giampiero Bambagioni, Chair of the REM, opened the meeting and thanked all participants to have joined it. The Chair presented the meeting agenda, which was adopted without changes. He mentioned that the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) meeting took place the day before and that during that meeting he informed the Bureau about the activities of the REM in 2017. He further highlighted that one of the main activities proposed for the Committee Programme of Work 2018-2019 in which the REM was invited to cooperate by the Committee Bureau, is the preparation of housing finance guidelines.

In this regard, Giampiero Bambagioni pointed out that after the Committee Bureau meeting he immediately contacted the Secretary General of the European Mortgage Federation and invited him to collaborate for the development of the above-mentioned guidelines. The European Mortgage Federation immediately expressed a preliminary availability to contribute to the study.

Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the Committee, presented the other relevant outcomes of the Bureau meeting of Tuesday 7 November 2017. She focused in particular on the following topics and activities of the Committee proposed for the next year:

- a) Implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development:
  - Preparation of a guidance document for aligning the Committee activities with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To prepare the guidance document, it is proposed to conduct regional and subregional workshops, which will be organized within the next 2 years.
- b) Sustainable housing:
  - Housing affordability: Housing migrants study will be published. There is a proposal to have an online database to gather the case studies collected by the publication's author during the development of the work.
  - Condominium management: in 2003, UNECE developed a publication on the topic. It is proposed to update the publication. This issue was for a long time an issue for Eastern European countries. However, now this has become an important issue also for Western European countries.
  - Policy Framework on Sustainable Real Estate Markets: the draft publication should undergo a deep revision to ensure information on implementation of international commitments, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and the New Urban Agenda are integrated. The document should be innovative and modern.
- c) Urban development:
  - Sharing economy/cooperation economy: this is a new area where the Committee would like to work on, in particular due to the new changes in society with the use of ICT. Countries do not know how to regulate companies like UBER, Airbnb. The secretariat does not have any resource for this topic.

Domenica Carriero, Secretary of the REM reported about the involvement of the REM in two other main activities of the Committee: energy efficiency in buildings and smart sustainable cities. In relation to the activities on energy efficiency in buildings, she informed about the work of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards for Buildings, which held its first meeting on 30-31 October 2017. During the meeting,



the Joint Task Force members discussed the implementation of the group's activities planned for 2018, including conducting a survey of member States to collect information for the report on the mapping of existing energy efficiency standards in buildings for the ECE region. She further proposed the REM could provide comments to the questionnaire before it is sent to the member States.

Domenica further mentioned about the possible involvement of the REM in the Smart Sustainable Cities (SSC) activities and in particular, in the preparation of the initiative's two outputs: Guidelines for tools and mechanisms for financing SSC and Guidelines on strategies for Circular Cities. She further informed that Kari Eik, Vice-Chair of REM is leading the first output.

Rik Wouters, Vice-Chair of the WPLA, stated that more synergies should be found between activities of the REM and WPLA. The WPLA will meet a day after and will discuss its programme of work. After the WPLA Bureau meeting, possible joint activities for 2018 should be defined. He further mentioned that WPLA has contributed to the work on SSC with a case study on fit for purpose land register, which has been included in the publication "Enhancing innovation and participation in SSC".<sup>1</sup> He finally stated that land registry and the legal framework are very crucial for countries not only the ECE region because in Kenya, for example, there is an access to relevant data however, the political will is missing.

Nuria Raga commented that the right to property is a human right. At international level several organizations are dealing with this topic. The REM could address issues relevant to the rights to property.

Enrico Campagnoli mentioned that another relevant topic that REM can work on is blockchain. Dubai is already using blockchain for city management; this new technology can be considered also for the use in management and administration.

Domenica Carriero informed the participants that the UNECE is working on blockchain for cities in the U4SSC initiative. There will be an output on this specific topic followed by ITU since UNECE does not have a mandate to work on it.

The Chair gave the floor to the focal points of the REM sub-groups to outline their ideas on possible activities to carry out next year.

Rainer Lux, focal point of the REM housing finance sub-group, proposed two activities:

- A conference on mortgage lending value, in particular, long-term sustainable value. This topic is not only of interest for banks but also for homeowners. His organization could support marketing efforts etc. or also other activities in less developed countries. Two major new regulations from the European Commission have been issued which affected negatively affordability of housing and people would lose access to loans, in particular old people. Mr. Lux proposed this topic for a future REM publication on housing finance.
- An IT tool to verify energy performance certificates. This tool was developed together with DENA for Germany and it is now used by most German banks. He proposed to set up a working group who could work on this tool and make it useful for more countries.

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<sup>1</sup> At <http://www.itu.int/en/publications/Documents/tsb/2017-U4SSC-Enhancing-innovation/mobile/index.html#p=2>



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The Chair thanked Mr. Lux for his proposals and expressed the need to prepare a concept note that takes into account the expectations of the Bureau and possible cooperation with international organizations such as EMF.

Paloma Taltavull, focal point of the housing affordability subgroup, proposed the REM to organize two events:

- An education seminar in Alicante, Spain on 1-2 December on the topic of housing affordability or energy efficiency in buildings.
- A REM-ERES panel on housing affordability during the ERES conference in June 2018 in Reading, UK. This a big event which generally hosts around 400 participants in particular from academia (70%) and private sector (30%). She proposed a time slot of 1.5-2 hours with five people in the panel.

She further proposed to develop a publication on housing affordability, i.e. a collection of articles by several academics or a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal.

Mr. David Tichy, focal point of the energy efficiency in buildings subgroup, informed the participants about the event he organized together with the Ministry of Regional Development of Czech Republic during the European Urban Forum in Prague on 12 October 2017 “Housing Estate: What’s Next?” which presented results of a study on large housing estates. The study report was published as a book. He reported that the sustainability of large housing estates is an important topic for Eastern European countries as well as for other countries. He confirmed his interest to participate in the Joint Task Force on Energy Standards in Buildings. The first exercise is the report of mapping of existing standards for energy efficiency in buildings in the ECE region and REM will revise the questionnaire to be sent to member States as mentioned before. He further mentioned that REM recommended some experts to join the group and contribute to that work.

Gyorgy Sumegy said that Habitat for Humanity is working on energy efficiency in residential buildings in Eastern European countries for long time; research is done with USAID funding. He said further that his organization would like to contribute to the work of the UNECE on energy efficiency as well as on SDGs.

Finally, Donovan Rypkema mentioned about the World Habitat Forum in Kuala Lumpur and proposed to have an informal meeting there if somebody is going.

In this regard, Enrico Campagnoli proposed to have it at the booth of FIABCI.

The Chair then thanked the participants for their input and in consultation with the REM Secretary agreed to share the report from the meeting in the coming days with a list of proposed activities to submit to the Bureau of the CHLM and the WPLA.

#### 4. Follow-up actions:

- UNECE will draft and circulate the report of the meeting firstly to the focal points for revision and then to the group;
- A list of activities will be proposed by the REM members for the coordination with the Working Party on Land Administration and for approval by the Bureau. The activities are reported in Annex I of this report.



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## Annex I

### List of proposed activities

This Annex reports the list of proposed activities of the REM for the year 2017-2018 as per discussion during the annual REM meeting on 8 November 2017.

- Update of the Policy Framework – focal points: Giampiero Bambagioni and Brian Emmott
- Publication on housing finance (with focus on mortgage landing value) – focal points: Reiner Lux and Giampiero Bambagioni (moved to 2019)
- Update of the UNECE publication on condominium management - focal points: Kat Grimsley and Reiner Lux
- Revision of the reports on energy efficiency standards in buildings - focal point: David Tichy and Gyorgy Sumegy
- Guidelines on tools and mechanisms for financing smart sustainable cities (under the U4SSC initiative) – focal point: Kari Eik
- REM events– focal points Nuria Raga Sastre and Paloma Taltavull (some events will be co-organized with the WPLA and will be later added to this list):
  - REM-ERES special panel on housing affordability, Reading, UK – focal point: Paloma Taltavull.
  - Conference on long-term sustainable value and housing finance – focal point Reiner Lux.