



# ARCHITECTURE FOR EUROPE'S HOUSING FUTURE: EU FRAMEWORK

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## Introduction

*'A home is not just four walls and a roof. It is safety, warmth, a place for family and friends. It is belonging. But for too many Europeans today, home has become a source of anxiety. It can mean debt or uncertainty.'* – President von der Leyen, 2025 State of the Union address

Our houses, our homes, are the building blocks of our communities, the foundation of our society and democracy. Housing is not just a commodity, but a fundamental right and a cornerstone of human dignity. But across Europe, there is a palpable feeling of injustice at the sheer unaffordability and unavailability of housing.

What Europe is facing is more than a housing crisis. It is a social crisis. It weakens our cohesion, and it threatens our competitiveness, by limiting labour and educational mobility, thereby exacerbating labour shortages in growth poles. Europe must act decisively to help make housing more affordable for all Europeans. At the same time, efforts to improve affordability should go hand in hand with sustainability and quality. Energy-efficient, resilient homes that are built with the lowest possible carbon footprint reduce maintenance and utility costs while enhancing long-term value, whereas sufficient quality is essential to deliver healthy, safe, and dignified living conditions. Integrating these objectives will ensure that Europe's housing policies deliver lasting social, economic, and environmental benefits.

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**The European Affordable Housing Plan**



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of 24 April 2024

on the energy performance of buildings



**New European Bauhaus**  
beautiful | sustainable | together



# EPBD: Zero Emissions Building (ZEB)

## **BUILD MORE HOUSING -but BUILD BETTER HOUSING (ZEB-aligned)**

### **Lower Embodied Carbon**

Local, low-carbon materials • Lifecycle carbon budgets

### **Lower Operational Carbon**

Passive design • Climate-responsive construction

### **Root Design in Local Identity**

Culture, traditions, vernacular knowledge

### **Connect Buildings to Place**

Territory • Landscape • Climate

### **Innovate and Preserve Craftsmanship**

Modern technologies + traditional skills

### **Create Local Jobs and Value Chains**

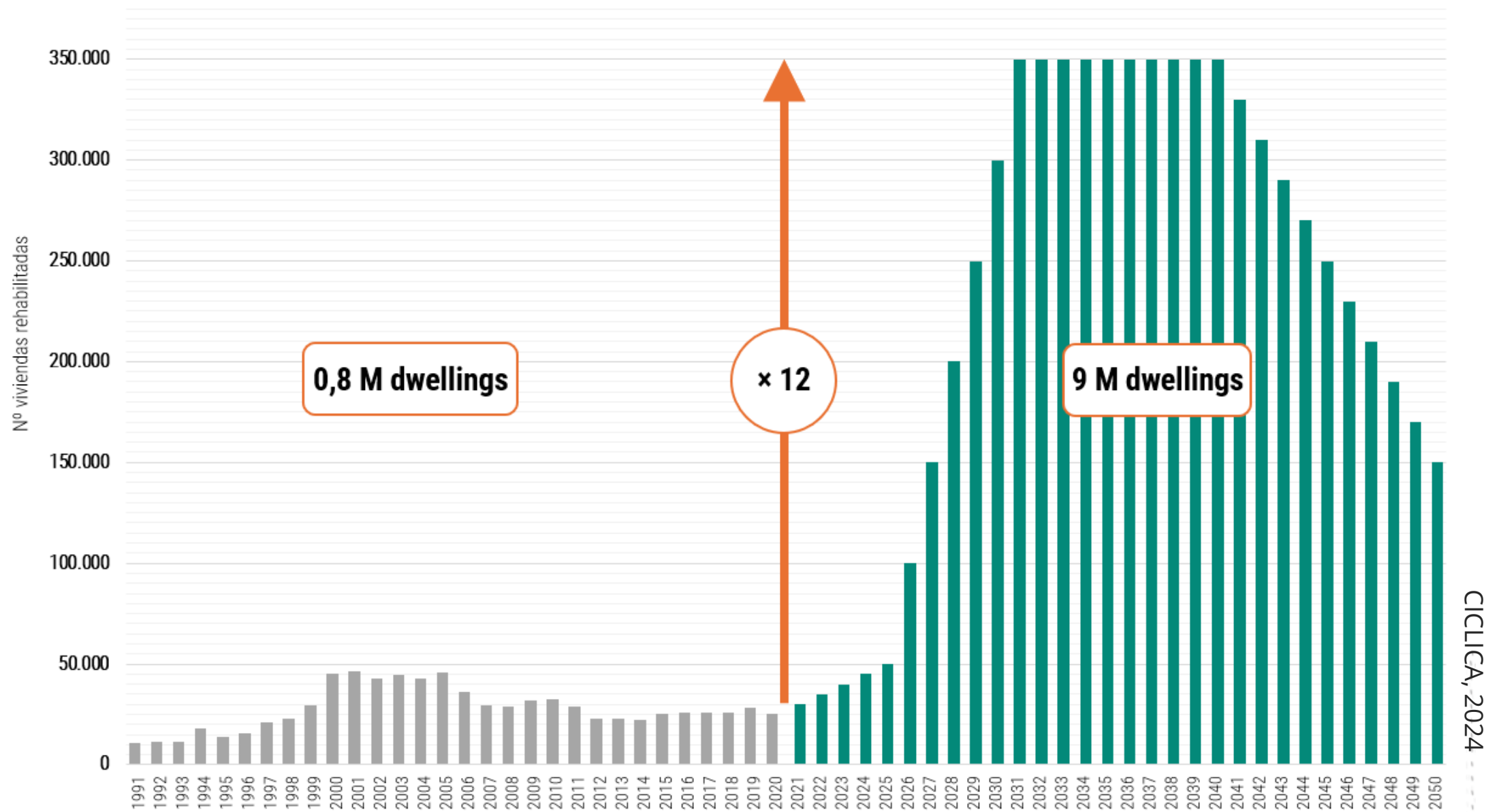
Regional SMEs • Craft industries • Circular economy



New builds are essential, but they demand **major energy and investment.**

RENOVATION is Europe's biggest opportunity for **both climate and housing needs.**

# EXISTING BUILDING STOCK: CLIMATE NEUTRALITY



# EXISTING BUILDINGS, NEW HOUSING

Existing buildings are the most important housing infrastructure in Europe.

*Creating housing from existing buildings can  
save carbon.  
save land.  
save time.*

*preserve memory, history and identity.*

*bring new life to places that are already connected to public  
transport, services, infrastructure and communities*

*PROVIDE HOUSING WHERE THE REAL DEMAND IS.*

**However, it does not always save money.**

This is where policy innovation is essential.

# EXISTING BUILDINGS, NEW HOUSING

Existing buildings are the most important housing infrastructure in Europe.



Self-sufficient building

Preserves neighbourhood  
and community links

Respects the existing urban  
fabric

60% carbon savings

However:  
8% higher costs than  
demolition + new build

Transformation of La Bombeta warehouse into 15 cooperative housing units (Barcelona), Lacol Arquitectes

# NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS

# SOLVING THE ENERGY CRISIS...



# SOLVING THE HOUSING CRISIS...



# NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS

Becomes real when a building is preserved, reused.

**Energy-efficient, circular and resilient housing from existing stock is not the easiest path.**

It requires more intelligence, more coordination, more time and more care than standardised demolition and reconstruction.

**But it is possible.**

We already have good examples.

Talented architects.

Communities willing to keep their identity alive.

Beautiful cities to preserve and transform with care.

The challenge is to create the legal, financial, technical and cultural conditions for them to become the norm.



**THANK YOU!**

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