
STUDY: INADEQUATE AND POOR HOUSING COSTS EU €194 BILLION PER YEAR

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Poor housing is costing EU economies **€194 billion** every year in healthcare, social services and lost productivity, research has found.

A study commissioned by the European Parliament and carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) showed that European countries spend nearly **€194 billion** per year in both direct costs, such as healthcare or social services, and indirect costs, like loss of productivity.

These [housing] inadequacies have negative impacts on health, result in a greater vulnerability to accidents, and have a negative impact on productivity and economic output, the study says.

The removal of deficient housing would cost a total **€194 billion**. However, the totality of money spent would be reimbursed nearly 18 months later.

The expenses concerning the disappearance of housing deficiencies would be nullified via medical savings and efficiency gains, experts note.

Quality of housing has gotten better during the past few years, the report says, but basic housing issues, such as insulation or heating, persist in a certain proportion of European homes.

Despite the fact that only 3% of EU members state citizens lack of basic facilities such as toilets or showers, disparities between nationals are present.

In Romania, for example, 22% of the population has neither a toilet, nor a bath/shower, read the report.

Structural problems, such as damp, were, however, more widespread, with 12% of EU residents living with damp or leaks, and 9% with rot in windows, doors or floors. Again, there were clear national differences: in Cyprus, more than half of residents reported a structural issue, whereas in Sweden and Austria, the number was around one in ten.

Economic dividend

In some countries, such as Spain, Greece or Hungary, the spendings would be recuperated in less than a year. And this without including non-health related results, such as home insurance, or potential economic capital.

Eurofound said: The removal of housing inadequacies is a long-term investment that will pay both short-term and long-term social and economic dividends. The positive outcomes are not limited to health, where savings on healthcare provision would be some €9bn in the first year.

The European Parliament ordered study stressed that actions could be taken, such as the improvement of data collection on a national level for intervention to be organized for a strong return on investment.

The eradication of house inadequacies is an investment simultaneously on the short-term, and the long-term.

Furthermore, the results are not just limited to health, but also help simulate local economies, improve social protection and the integration of migrants.

Kaynak/Source: