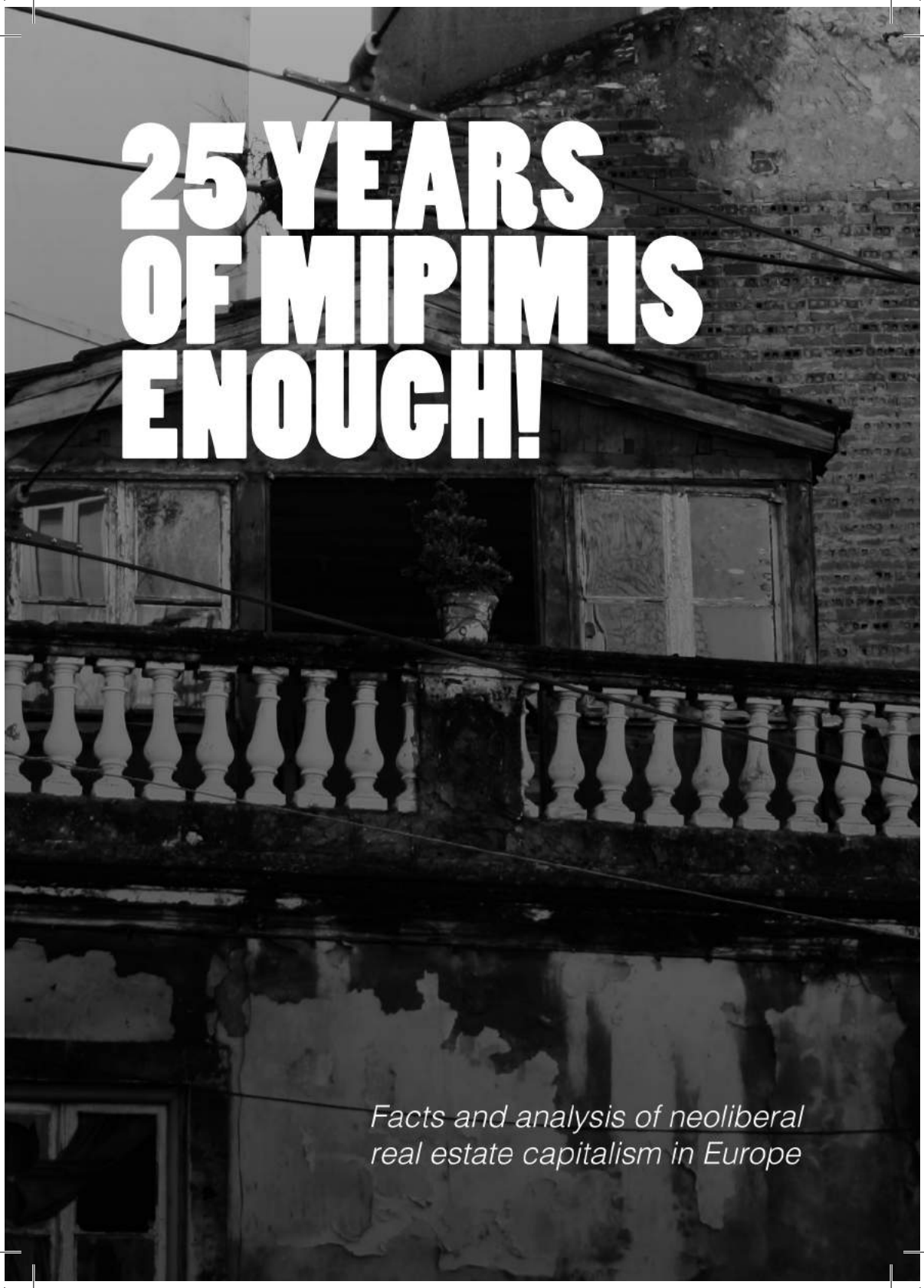
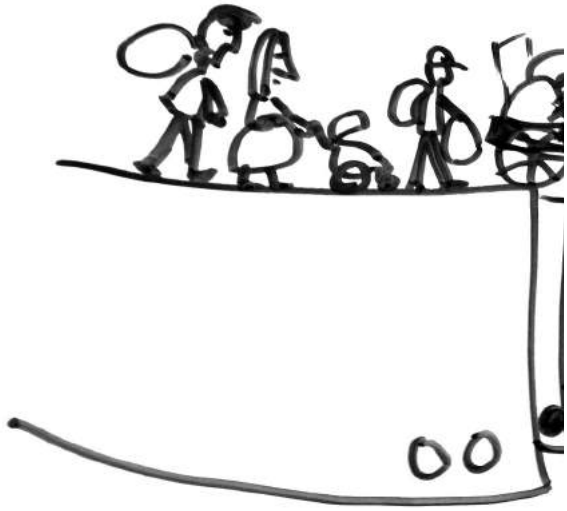

25 YEARS
OF MIPIM IS
ENOUGH!
Facts and analysis of neoliberal
real estate capitalism in Europe

HOUSING
FOR
PEOPLE
NOT FOR
PROFITS!

INTRODUCTION

After 25 years, for the first time real estate managers, asset dealers and city sellers have not been alone at this year's global property party "Mipim" in Cannes. The European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and the City, together with protesters from the region, have also been there. At our "Anti Mipim Tribunal" we presented cases from 12 countries which showed some of the consequences of the business which was celebrated at the Mipim. We accused of concrete business actors and local authorities for violating the right to the city. We stressed that these violations are not isolated cases but that they are necessary parts of a structural process of commodification, privatisation, financialisation and real estate speculation. We demonstrated why this profit-orientated business should be replaced urgently by alternatives that are orientated on the right of everybody to a have secure, adequate, guided by the everyone's right to a healthy, non-segregating and affordable place to live. And we started to discuss HOW "Mipimism" – which is another word for the neoliberal ideology of real estate capitalism – really can be stopped and can effectively overcome.

This publication aims at presenting the different cases that were introduced by social movements and organizations at the European Action in the "Anti Mipim Tribunal" which was held



in Cannes alongside the annual MIPIM event – the international market for real estate professionals, which also calls itself the world's property show... These cases illustrate and are paradigmatic of what is happening to our homes and our cities, what is actually the type of business that is prepared and sold at MIPIM, whose mechanisms and social and economic consequences must be shown to and analysed by society, in its mechanisms, as well as social and economic consequences of it. In addition to the specific cases of the various European cities, the first chapter is the final statement that results from collective analysis of the movements of the European Alliance on Mipimism, its critique and alternatives.

The European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and

the City is made up of a diverse range of groups, organisations and social movements and originated from meetings held in Germany and in Greece in 2013. We say STOP to the misery caused by speculation, financialisation and austerity measures. We want to promote an ethical and just approach whereby housing is a human right and a human necessity and all people without discrimination, have real access to the cities in which they live.

October the 19th we prepared the European Day of Action for The Right to Housing and the City. Groups from various European ciities came together: Amsterdam, Athens, Berlin, Budapest, Dublin, Geneva, Lisbon, Lorient, Malaga, Paris, Poznan, Rhine-Ruhr region, Rome, Rouen, Warsaw and groups from elsewhere took action to demand lower rents, the end of all evictions, especially those driven by real estate speculators, the State and the Troika, the construction of adequate levels of social housing, and to demand an end to the overwhelming debt burden that has been placed on ordinary citizens, mass housing and the public budgets. Globalised financial markets and profit-oriented transnational corporations are controlling large sections of land, buildings and the housing stock in many European countries. It is our strongly held view that across Europe housing must be based on the needs and rights of people and not those of profit.

In order to meet the local housing needs it is necessary that new housing construction and a significant part of the existing housing stock in all towns and cities of Europe, as well as housing finance and land, are excluded from markets and organised under a direct public and decentralised democratic control.

At the same time all tenants, mortgage payers/holders, dwellers and homeless across Europe time, by international law must have enforceable rights, which guarantee common standards for the security of tenure, affordability, accessibility, construction quality, democratic participation and fairness.

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SUMMARY

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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN ACTION COALITION FOR THE RIGHT TO HOUSING AND TO THE CITY

25 YEARS OF MIPIMISM IS ENOUGH!

During the past 25 years some of us have been promised private homes, but all we got is debt and the threat of eviction. Others paid rising rents, and what we got is a lack of maintenance, and gentrification. Many have been pushed out of our neighbourhoods; others are homeless or badly housed. During the past 25 years much financial investment has come through our cities, but at the end the vast majority of us are poorer. In the view of the financial investors we, the producers of their buildings, the inhabitants of their assets play only one role: We shall pay for their business and loans; be it as tenants, as mortgage payers or as citizens and tax payers. Now, after 25 years of mortgage-induced human disasters, after all the misery produced by privatisations, after all the losses for our communities, after all the economic crashes and after all the huge socialisation of the costs it is really time to say "NO" to this business. NO to their destructive ideas of a total market, where houses and other social infrastructure become private, purely financial, assets! NO to their reduction of the city, our common habitat, to a globally competing business place, filled only with commodities! NO to the plundering of our environments and the urban heritage of humanity! NO to their workfare, precarisation and control of the inhabitants! NO to their speculative banking systems and their strategies to force us into debt! NO to the public bailout of their crisis, their crashes! NO to their systems of greed, structural irresponsibility and profit extraction!

LOOK BACK IN ANGER

When the first Mipim took place 25 years ago the crisis of the fordistic "factory society" with its mass housing machines was already 20 years old. In reaction to that crisis the neoliberal ideology of homeownership has been normalised and the "right to buy" progressively replaced the right to equal housing rights.

In 1989 the time was ripe for the lift-off of the property business from its territorial relations and the

freeing from its role as a mere service for industrial production and social reproduction. The real estate business became an "industry" in its own right.

As Mipim was one of the main events promoting this development, we may call the corresponding ideology and practice "Mipimism". The Mipim since 25 years has been celebrating the crimes of financialised property speculation by organising an annual spectacle for the rich and their servants with business talks on yachts and streams of Champagne.

"Mipimism" is the cynical celebration of the systematic dispossession of the majority of inhabitants from their right to the city by a minority of global real estate managers and investors.

Mipimism from its beginning was warmly welcomed by market-driven governments in Europe. Germany for instance, after a long political disputes, in 1989 abolished a law which protected the huge sector of not-for-profit rental housing from being sold off. Soon afterwards the iron curtain fell and Eastern Europe became an El Dorado for privatisers and speculators. At the same time the enlarging European Union moved in the direction of neoliberal market policies without a counterpart in social rights and equality. Step by step, all barriers for the free flow of globally accumulated and heavily concentrated capital were abolished.

Much of this capital was invested into housing and commercial real estate, making living in the European major cities more and more unaffordable. Tourism, urban entertainment, the concentration of retail, mega-events and large scale urban projects transformed many city regions into agglomerations of transnational property investments.

At the same time financial accumulation and new technologies of shadow banking promoted the development of huge transnational mortgage and housing bubbles. The crashes since 2007, the public bailouts, the fundamental crisis of the EU and the mortgage misery in southern Europe during the past years… All this is the consequence of 25 years of Mipimism.

DIAGNOSIS OF THE RESULTS

Let's have a look at the latest results, as they appear to the members of our European Action Coalition: In Southern Europe and Ireland the "Troika" (European Commission, European Central Bank, IMF) reacted to the debt crisis with conditions which fundamentally attack the housing rights of ordinary people. Instead of liberating the real use-value of the (i.e. foreclosed) housing stocks from financial abuse and bankruptcy by transforming it into social, public or common housing, the Troika enforced a bailout of the failed mortgage banks without protecting the indebted homeowners. As a

consequence there has been a dramatic increase of housing precarity and forced evictions in all countries.

In **SPAIN** for instance economic growth during the past decade was mainly based on tourism and real estate. The result was an enormous housing bubble. At the same time no social housing provision was established. In order to get a house people were forced to slip into the debt system and borrow money at high risks and on bad terms. When the bubble burst people were not able to pay their mortgages. 200.000 families have been evicted, 400.000 foreclosure processes are going on. At the same time the unemployment rate is 27% and 3.5 million homes are empty. The state bailed out the banks resulting in extraordinarily high public debt, being a threat for the whole economy not only in Spain. Recently, a new phase of selling out real estate has started in Spain. Dozens of international funds have started to acquire homes and real estate companies for very low prices from bad banks, public and private shareholders. This business is also glorified at the MIPIM.

Rather similarly, **PORTUGAL** during the past 25-30 years promoted private mortgages and the creation of a housing bubble as a "solution" for mass housing. Underpinning logic: the more credit is available, the higher the prices of houses will be. Now, after the crash most families are indebted for their whole life. Because of the austerity policies enforced by the Portuguese government on the orders of Troika, people are also losing their jobs and can't afford the loans anymore. In its "memorandum of understanding" with Portugal the Troika also imposed the full liberalisation of the rental housing market which means rent increases and evictions. The new urban renewal plans and infrastructure are also a part of the austerity regime. Consequently, there is a deep transformation of city centres. Local residents and traditional commerce are replaced with hotels, franchised shops, hostels and luxury houses. Within a few years this has caused a fundamental change in the city's social composition. The working classes will have no space inside the central city districts any more.

In **GREECE** the housing problem is a direct consequence of the austerity policies implemented by the Greek government following the Troika adjustment programmes and consecutive memoranda since 2010. Housing precarity has increased because of the expansion of credit and dependence of access to housing from bank lending in previous years, but also because of the heavy taxation that the government is imposing on private property and the increasing housing costs. People can no longer pay for their houses because of rising unemployment (almost 30% at the end of 2013), reduction of income, cuts in pensions and wages leading to an

acute impoverishment of wide parts of the population.

As a result people are indebted to the banks, the state and social security funds. Inability to pay and poverty are penalised and people are threatened with income, pensions, movables and property confiscations. The protective frame and moratorium of evictions that was in place until the end of 2013, is now being withdrawn and housing auctions and evictions are starting to take place. But it is not only private property and housing that is under threat. As part of the adjustment program a huge privatisation and clearance programme is taking place, putting all public land and property on sale to international and local investors in order to increase public revenues. Housing precarity and auctions are also used as a way to produce a slump in the real-estate market in order to provide for better 'investment opportunities' further jeopardising the right to housing and the city.

Also in **ITALY** housing provision had already been weakened by the liberalisation of the rental market and the total withdrawal of the public sector from housing. In addition, the EU 'fiscal compact' enforces the reduction of the budget by 900 billion euros over the course of the next 20 years. As housing policies haven't been a government priority since a long time, this means that there never will be an adequate state budget for public housing. As part of its austerity measures the Italian government has also cancelled the housing benefits for tenants, including low-income groups. This decision now is forcing 300,000 families which receive these benefits into a situation where they cannot pay the rents.

The results of this political program for deepening of the housing crisis are highlighted by the fact that today over 250,000 families are living under the threat of eviction. In 80% of the cases the reason is non-payment because of due to a lack of income, unemployment or similar problems of the users. The number of evictions has doubled since 2008, coinciding with the burst of the housing bubble. There are more than 650,000 households on the waiting list for public housing, while more than 4 million houses are empty. This clearly shows the negative effect of the crisis on the working class and the failure of neoliberal policies.

IRELAND has been the No.5 among the heavily indebted Euro countries under Troika's command. To a large extent the Irish crisis was a result of the commodification of housing and cities which intensified under what was called the 'Celtic Tiger' era. During this period house prices increased by 300%, a debt bubble emerged and the domestic class of bankers and property developers amassed huge fortunes. The

collapse of the housing bubble virtually bankrupted the banking sector as a whole, leading to Ireland's bank bailout and causing a sovereign debt crisis from which the country has yet to recover. Meanwhile, the impacts on housing have been just as severe. There are 100,000 mortgage holders in serious mortgage arrears. At the same time, since 2008 the national housing waiting list has doubled. The number of families in Dublin becoming homeless in recent years has also doubled. Meanwhile, there are approximately 270,000 empty houses as well as many empty and unfinished 'ghost estates'. Many of these were built in the isolated rural communities with poor access to schools and other facilities. Moreover, the government continues to favour a housing strategy involving debt-based private homeownership. For the many people who cannot access credit, the only housing policy (there is no housing strategy) is that of an unregulated and inadequate private rented sector and the handing over of the little social housing that remains to housing associations.

Within the past 25 years housing did not only become a disaster in southern Europe and the peripheries. Even in the former "welfare states" of Western Europe privatisation, financial market driven policies and austerity measurements have caused a huge housing crisis.

In **BRITAIN** the council housing stock has been decimated, home ownership has massively increased, tenants have been pushed into insecure tenures. A third of renters are in the private sector and a large number of them are impoverished. Squatting residential properties has been criminalized in a general shift to shore up property rights. We are seeing a massive deregulation of the planning procedures in the interest of developers. Demolition and rebuilding of social housing is failing to provide affordable homes for local people and leads to ever more reduction of a secure council stock. Thus homelessness has risen steeply with funds solely for management, rather than breaking the cycle. It is readily apparent that change will not occur from representational bodies, due to the fact that a third of parliament members are buy-to-let landlords. "Revolving doors" policies between local municipalities and private developers are common practice and are showcased spectacularly at MIPIM. These ensure profits for an elite of housing speculators and investors at the cost of ordinary tenants.

In **FRANCE** during the 25 years of MIPIM the country's huge heritage of public housing and public urban planning has been commoditised. Rents have doubled, prices of real estate have tripled. While speculation allowed an excessive accumulation of capital the resulting high costs for housing reduced the income of the middle

and working classes. During these 25 years slums developed around the main cities. Courts ordered 2,214,687 evictions and the number of homeless tripled. Today 2 million households are on the waiting lists for social housing while 2.4 million housing units are vacant.

In the **NETHERLANDS** a broad social rental sector had been built from the beginning of the twentieth century that gave access to affordable good quality housing to approximately 1/3 of the Dutch population (5 million people in 2012). But this social housing system has been under attack over the last 25 years. The social housing corporations got entangled in a leak to the capital market. The social housing stock was privatized. Thousands of social rental homes were demolished and were floated in megalomaniac urban renewal and gentrification programmes. As a result the social housing stock has been seriously reduced. At the same time the Dutch government has been executing neoliberal policies promoting privatisation, home-ownership and high rent increases. Currently the government is paving way for a massive sell off of the social rental housing sector to foreign investors. Also since 2013 it is further taxing the social housing sector millions of euros to pay for the debts of the crisis. Through these dynamics, the shortage of affordable housing in the Netherlands is growing; hence people are increasingly forced to accept temporary rental contracts without any tenant's rights. "Vacant property protectors", commercial companies that were born from the interests of real estate, have found a way to bypass all tenants' rights completely, thus setting a new norm for the right to housing: it will be precarious.

In **BELGIUM** the governments (federal, regional and municipal) in general have failed to create a housing policy that respects the constitutional Article 23 concerning the right to housing. Thus, they failed to ensure affordable (social) housing for those who need it in the long term. Increases in the cost of real estate and the gentrification of cities has resulted in a reduced access of low income households to housing, to evictions of residents and in overall to the negation of the right to housing. Especially in the main Wallonian cities, housing speculation is a primary reason for the process of gentrification and therefore the displacement of the original population. In Charleroi, Liège, Brussels, as in Louvain-la-Neuve, in the province of Brabant, people can no longer afford to live in their hometown and are moving to more affordable areas. In Brussels about half of the children already live in inadequate housing, – unsafe or too small. Most quality housing is very expensive. The demand for social housing is most pressing in Brussels (40,000 households waiting).

Also in **GERMANY** the former sectors of non-profit and public housing have been commercialised and privatised. Social housing support was heavily reduced while the conditions for transnational financial investments were massively improved and urban development was subordinated to the logics of location competition. Since 2000 more than 2 million rental housing units were sold. Approximately 900,000 housing units today are under direct control of transnational financial investors. At the level of the housing and facility management the results were disastrous: forced to extract a high return and interest from an aged housing stock, landlords reduced maintenance and the workforce in their management. In affected neighbourhoods nobody seems to be responsible and the living conditions of the precarious renters are worsening. Some of the companies "defaulted", others meanwhile use the growing global demand for "secure" financial assets in German property to refinance their business and sell their shares at the stock exchange. At the same time the intensifying housing crisis in German cities allows high rent increases. Under these conditions improvements of the housing stock can also become profitable. But who can afford it? The social costs for "repairing" of the consequences are enormous. Some municipalities and regional states seek for solutions. But at the same time public banks and governments are continuing to sell housing companies to private business controlled by financial investors.

Mipimism has not only been active within the European Union. Also beyond the EU borders the neoliberal transformation of cities into assets of postmodern business models is causing enormous cost for the people, their urban heritage and the environment.

In the **COUNTRIES OF EX-YUGOSLAVIA** MIPIMism arrived only after the wars had ended, therefore quite late and in the form of selling off of infrastructure and natural resources. The effects of homegrown and international privatisation have been disastrous. They lead to mass impoverishment, unemployment and critical levels of precariousness. Property development is almost completely deregulated and politicians are able to sign off public assets without due process. The current uprisings in Bosnia are a good example of the effects of the marketisation of public assets and the deregulation of planning and political power which go hand in hand in the states of post-war Yugoslavia.

In **TURKEY** the neoliberal urban regime was adopted after 2001 when the country confronted its most serious economic crisis. Gecekondu housing

(informal housing) which for decades enabled poor dwellers to meet their housing needs by squatting state land was no longer tolerated.

To this end, starting from 2002, relevant rules and regulations were enacted to prohibit squatting while urban transformation/ renewal projects dominated the urban agenda with forced evictions and demolitions of settled neighbourhoods. Through these projects which target both informal and historical neighbourhoodsof low-income groups living in the centre, the neighbourhoods were "cleansed" and fell into the hands of developers, a process which is a clear example of "accumulation by dispossession". Those recognised as beneficiaries are relocated to mass housing blocks in the periphery, which means a violation of their economic, social and cultural rights. Because they have to pay for unaffordable bank loans upon their new houses, most sell their shares with debts and move out, more impoverished and deprived than ever. Tenants who can afford to live in the big city because of low rents in specific neighbourhoods do not enjoy rights to remain and are thrown out into the streets.

The city is being designed as an Ottoman Disneyland focused on the demands of high income groups, global capital and rich tourists.

The Mass Housing Administration (TOKI), directly linked to the PM and the Ministry of Environment and Urban Affairs, has hegemonic powers over local governments. These institutions together with pro-government municipalities are the perpetrators of the neoliberal urban regime. In 2012, a new law which targets the transformation of areas prone to 'disaster' risk was enacted. The law does not emphasise 'disaster' in any part of the text except in its heading. Its primary objective is to ease the implementation of regeneration projects through by the government. Property and housing rights are violated with this law which also dismisses the rights that are secured by national and international laws and clears the way for a new wave of plundering of natural, cultural, historical values and our cities.

CONCRETE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST MIPIM-ATTENDEE

At the "Anti-Mipim Tribunal" in Cannes members of the European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and to the City pointed out the following concrete cases of violations of housing rights or of democratic and social principles in their cities by public actors and businesses attending the MIPIM:

Habitat et Participation

www.habitat-participation.be

ORGANISED GENTRIFICATION AND SEGREGATION IN BELGIUM

The **BELGIAN** organisations "Habitat et Participation", "Solidarités Nouvelles" and "Réseau brabançon pour le droit au logement" place their accusations on the Belgian government and the investors at Mipim who should have moral and live up to their responsibilities. They explain how big developers, hand in hand with the government, transform Brussels by constructing buildings for the middle and upper classes. This process is much faster than the construction of new social housing. Local authorities prefer to sacrifice social mixing for the benefit of private funders. In the best case, people leave their town or allow them to build "lightweight" alternative housing. However, in most cases, households are placed in a situation of poor housing. They stay put and are forced to devote an ever larger share of their income to housing at the expense of other vital expenses (food – health).

For the past 40 years, without investment, public authorities in Charleroi let insecurity and criminality set up (much like London and Berlin). Politicians have let the land's value drop. But now, the city has been sold to private funders. The aim of all this investment has been to attract investment, bringing a huge profit.. All the investment had for objective to attire investor, who makes a lot of profit. In Charleroi, fight against poverty to attract investors can take a funny twist, via anti-begging regulations. The Government set in motion mechanisms to punish and relocate insecurity via municipal regulations. Indeed, the homeless and prostitutes run the risk of being penalised with sanctions, put to jail or expelled from the city. Is there no other way to fight poverty?.

Organisations also demand that the government supports self-build housing. Self-construction is a real response to the housing crisis because it gives people access to training and to a real ownership. It's a sort of empowerment. Far from demonising the investment in our country, the meaning of our work is to put people at the centre of its habitat and to apply the law to the City for citizens.Everyone has the right to live in a place properly and adapted. To inhabit is not the same as housing, it means to be involved in the world, to participate and contribute to its transformation.

1/Lebreton Alexis et Mougel Grégory, «La gentrification comme articulation entre forme urbaine et globalisation: approche comparative Londres/Berlin», Espaces et sociétés, 2008/1n° 132-133, p. 57-73. DOI: 10.3917/esp.132.0057

Radical Housing Network

radicalhousingnetwork.org

SELLING LONDON AT MIPIM

MAYOR BORIS JOHNSON AND OVER 20 UK COUNCILS PARTICIPATING IN THE MIPIM CONFERENCE WHICH IS FUELLING THE HOUSING CRISIS

Boris and councillors will be meeting potential business partners in Cannes for the selling of public land and to approve 'regeneration' plans for more hotels, offices, luxury housing, shopping centres in UK cities.

As London councillors will be setting off for MIPIM on Thursday there will be a 'speak-out' of people's difficulties in finding affordable, secure housing in the UK. This will be followed by a presentation of three reports about the disastrous impacts of corporate housing developers benefitting from lucrative public contracts. A competition is being held to bring the most 'For Sale' signs in protest at policy to marketise housing which makes profits for speculators, landlords and developers, and ignores the housing need of the communities experiencing 'regeneration'.

Nic Lane from 'Brent Housing Action' says: *"We, the people who have been affected by deals made at MIPIM by our "representatives" knew nothing of these deals until it was too late. Residents all over London are being forced out of their communities because of rising rents, and the building of unaffordable 'affordable' housing schemes to replace council housing."*

Liliana Dmitrovic of 'People's Republic of Southwark' added: *"We are coming to City Hall to show that our land, our cities, and our homes, will not be sold by politicians to line the pockets of developers. These are the individuals responsible for the housing crisis, and we believe that everyone deserves a decent home."*

The "Radical Housing Network" in **LONDON** accuses the London mayor Boris Johnson of cultivating a metropolis for global elites and forcing lifelong communities to disperse. Across London **council estates are being demolished and unaffordable homes are taking their place**. They accuse Brent Housing Partnership and the corporate councils of Brent and Southwark, the construction firm Willmott Dixon, developers Lend Lease, Berkeley Homes, and the housing associations Catalyst and

Genesis that control the new housing product. All these are making MIPIM-deals without transparency or consultation with those affected.

BERKELEY GROUP IN HACKNEY

In 1999 Hackney Council in London decided to knock down and rebuild Woodberry Down Estate – one of London's largest housing estates, with roughly 2,000 council rented homes. But the big winners are not the tenants but developer Berkeley Homes. Some blocks have been demolished and some tenants re-housed, but most buildings, including the oldest and worst blocks of flats, with serious problems of damp, are still standing. Meanwhile, two glossy tower blocks for sale by the developer stand on the prime part of the estate, with an attractive view of the reservoir.

Recentre-scheduling has extended the re-development from five to eight phases going up to 2032 – and Phase 2 is just starting. The number of projected homes has gone up from 4,000+ to 5,557. Most will be for sale by Berkeley Homes at anything up to **£1,000,000 for a nice penthouse**. Many will be rented back to local people at **rents of about £1000 a month**.

None will be council rented – Genesis Housing Association will own the properties for rent, which will as a result be more expensive and have less security of tenure. Even on the best projections there will be far fewer of these social rented properties than the number of council rented homes on the original estate. The rest of the Genesis owned properties will be part-rent, part-buy. The cheapest part rent, part buy homes are £60,000 for a 25 per cent share, and the total monthly outgoings (mortgage, rent and service charge) are £812 – still **too expensive for local people**.

There is a gulf between the communal facilities provided for most of the Woodberry Down tenants and the ones in the neighbouring Berkeley Homes blocks for sale, where residents can enjoy the exclusive use of a gym and swimming pool. Shops have been re-located to the ground floor of private-for-sale 23-storey Residence Tower. In the process the local people have lost their bakery, takeaway and betting shop.

Woodberry Down is just one of the projects all over London that have turned out to be nice little earners for Berkeley Homes. At the end of 2012 it was reported that Berkeley Group was to pay a dividend to its shareholders for the first time since 2008 after a rise in profits. The dividend would be 15p per share in April 2013 as the first stage of a plan to pay out £1.7bn to shareholders over the next decade. As a shareholder, founder Tony Pidgley will receive around £1m from the dividend.

Berkeley snapped up cheap land after the 2008 financial crisis and has been building in London to sell on to overseas buyers, spending £500 million on buying sites in the four years to 2012. In the six months to October 31 2012, Berkeley's revenues had increased 69pc to £686m and pre-tax profits had risen 41pc to £107.5m. At the end of 2013, Berkeley Homes reported a further 19 per cent jump in profits.

Berkeley Group is also the developer of what has been named Kidbrooke Village in Greenwich. This stands on the site of what was once the Ferrier Estate of more than 2,000 council rented homes. These were demolished over four years, the last of them in 2013. Kidbrooke Village will have 4,398 homes, which will not be completed till 2029. In this case Southern Housing is the housing association which will own the social rented and part rent/ part buy properties. The shared ownership properties are estimated to cost from about £800 per month for a one-bed home to £1,300 a month for a 3-bed home – this for a 25 per cent share plus rent. Only 740 of the homes in Kidbrooke Village will be for social rent. The homes for sale by Berkeley Homes are going for between £370,000 and £800,000.

Possibly Berkeley Group's ideal development is the Saffron Square quarter in Croydon. There will be 794 homes of which none will be social rented and 36 will be part rent/ part buy. As Berkeley's representative said on the phone in answer to the question as to how much affordable housing there would be, 'We've done very well on that', pointing out that you had to be earning at least £30,000 to be able to afford the part rent/ part buy properties. These 36 properties are owned by Affinity Sutton housing association. The cost of part buying/part renting an Affinity Sutton one-bedroom flat will be approximately £823 per month – Affinity helpfully points out that this compares to privately renting a similar flat locally at £1000. The Saffron Square development will include the 43-storey Tower with 414 homes for sale by Berkeley. Prices on the properties for sale run from £334,500 to £1,050,000.

Developer St George is part of the Berkeley Group. Analysis shows that St George is repeatedly using viability assessments which persuade local authorities that increasing the number of affordable homes in its schemes will stop it meeting 'industry-standard' profit margins of between 17% and 20%. St George's published accounts show that in the six years to 2012 its margins averaged 25.5% and its accumulated after-tax profits were £268 million. Critics say that the viability system is not reflecting economic reality, and that the public can't test whether viability assessments are based on reasonable assumptions because

Cannes, Tribunal Anti-MIPIM

they are confidential. Common sense says that a viability system that allows a developer to make massive profits and yet deliver few affordable homes must be fundamentally flawed.

Police stations, fire stations and office buildings in London are being closed and sold off to developers. Berkeley Homes has bought Whetstone police station for redevelopment into 83 flats and houses. Abell and Cleland House used to be a ministry building. **Now prices for homes there start at £1.81 million** – call Berkeley Homes. They are also poised to launch 190 Strand, another big office-to-residential project.

Lend Lease's relationship with Southwark[1] *gave birth to one of the most appalling instances of* ***community displacement****, coupled with financial mismanagement and barefaced lies. A revolving door between Southwark employees and Lend Lease, coupled with the fact that Lend Lease has paid for Southwark to attend MIPIM, provides a striking illustration of the networks of power that are leading to the sale of our cities from under the noses of citizens.* ***Stoory of the South Kilburn estate*** *– one of a number of "regeneration" projects managed by the Brent Housing Partnership which have seen local residents "decanted" to make way for luxury apartments.* ***Perfectly adequate homes have been demolished****, and in many cases nothing has been put in its place, as money runs dry and building plans stalled. The pattern will be familiar to communities across the country.*

Radical Housing Network

Demonstration Paris

Droit au Logement
droitaulogement.org

NOVOX
no-vox.org

AGAINST REAL ESTATE SPECULATION AND PRIVATISATION OF PUBLIC PROPERTY IN THE PARIS REGION

Activists from the PARIS region accuse their public authorities of commodifying their neighbourhoods and of selling public land to speculators.

AN EUROPEAN ANTI-MIPIM INITIATIVE:

For the past twenty-five years, Cannes has been the site of MIPIM *(Marché International des Professionnels de l'Immobilier)* which, as the name indicates, is a market for the sale of land, mostly public, for high-value real estate projects.

Meanwhile, since 1990, the housing crisis has worsened across the planet:

- Globally, one billion human beings have precarious shelter or live on the street;
- In France, as assessed by the Abbé Pierre Foundation, the housing crisis is deepening, particularly in the Paris region.

MIPIM does not help humanity. It is the means for a small elite to enrich themselves at the expense of the huge majority of citizens. **It leads to exclusion, the unequal distribution of urban space and an ever-increasing number of poorly-housed or homeless persons.**

MIPIM has no goal but profit. It offers to speculators – the most powerful, the most well-supported by the banking sector, the most complicit with the political world – the opportunity to purchase land that is for the most part **public**. These lands are often sold as part of planned developments set in place by public authorities, or in huge bursts precipitated by real-estate fever.

Housing movements in fifteen European countries, brought together to coordinate **for the right to housing and to cities**, have decided to organise for the first time a campaign against the devastating effects of MIPIM, and to expose them to the public. The ultimate goal is to reach a turning point in housing policy, in multiple countries and especially in Europe, so that the right to housing and to cities is a right for everyone, and so that speculation – the source of extreme social and economic instability – gets contained and banished.

IN THE PARIS REGION, THE POLITICS OF HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT ELEVATE THE MARKET AND DEGRADE THE RESIDENTS.

SIGNS THAT THE HOUSING CRISIS IS WORSENING

The Paris region, particularly in its most dense zones, has been subject to intense speculation, nourished and maintained by public actors from the construction, finance and housing sectors.

In 2012, the Paris region saw 545,000 demands for social housing – one household out of six – while only around 50,000 social housing units were distributed.

Nearly **one million households receive public assistance to pay their rent**, which is almost one out of every three.

There were **31,000 judicial decisions supporting evictions** in the Paris region, representing one quarter of the French total, and of the French evictions carried out by the police, nearly half were in our region.

41,000 regional households, recognized and prioritized by the Law for the Enforceable Right to Housing – the Dalo Act of March fifth, 2007 – are still **waiting for rehousing**. 33,000 of them have been waiting for more than six months, which is the maximum delay allowed by the law.

Finally, and a sign of the deepening crisis, the last fifteen years have seen a **resurgence of shantytowns in the Paris region** – these had earlier been completely absorbed into the city – and the number of homeless persons who are being rejected by emergency shelter services is steadily rising.

THE HOUSING SHORTAGE IS AT ITS PEAK

This shortage is fuelling the soaring costs of property, real estate and rent:

- There is an under-production of new homes as a result of the Malthusian housing policies of many municipalities. In 2013, 49,000 housing projects were started, of which less than 15,000 were social housing.
- This is far from the annual targets established by the Paris region, which called for 70,000 new homes, including 20,000 as social housing.
- This is even further from the objectives set by François Hollande, which would amount to 100,000 new homes per year, including 30,000 as social housing, if you count the Paris region as representing twenty percent of the French population. The amplitude of the

additional needs arising from the housing crisis is not taken into account here.

THE PUBLIC POLICY OF THE STATE, THE REGION, THE DEPARTMENTS AND THE MAJORITY OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE PARIS REGION HAVE PRODUCED THIS UNPRECEDENTED SURGE IN THE COSTS OF PROPERTY, REAL ESTATE AND RENT.

- In 2013, the **average selling price of a new apartment in the region was €5900/m²**. In 2000, it was €3000/m². **Prices have doubled for no reason other than land speculation**.
- The **average private rent in the region is €18.8/m²**, against less than €11/m² in 2000.
- The **price of land or buildings has tripled**. It is in this sector that public actors are the most to blame.

THE POLITICAL BLAME THEY SHARE:

- **The municipalities** are the local controllers of planning policies and the delivery of construction permits. They have pushed up prices through their urban development policies by initiating operations in working-class neighbourhoods, limiting the construction of housing and, for the richest of them, **blocking the creation of social housing**. Many have preferred building offices rather than lodging. **3.8 million m² of office space are vacant** – this is equivalent to 60.000 homes, or almost two years of regional housing construction! Land transfer taxes were increased in order to reinforce development and gentrification policies, particularly in the richest communes, instead of fighting against the housing crisis by, for example, investing in the production of low-cost social housing.
- **The General Councils** of the seven regional departments, particularly the richest among them, prefer to sell their property to the highest bidder, rather than to entrust them to public housing developers. Because they profit from the land transfer taxes, the councils are discouraged from fighting against speculation. The sales of the ancient quarters of the gendarmerie and the real estate of the Parisian hospitals are emblematic.
- **The Paris region:** Except forfinancially supporting the construction of social housing, the Paris region has not played its role as moderator and watchdog. Faced with real estate speculation and municipal development practices, they've

found rising prices to be in their financial interest. We've got to keep an eye on a number of vacant schools, which may soon be fed to real estate speculators.

- **The state (along with the communes) is principally to blame for the situation.**
  - On the one hand, since the middle of the last decade, the **large-scale market-price sale of the properties and buildings of public** administrations and enterprises has become a governmental priority. As a result, **the housing crisis has worsened**.
  - The state has also found a financial interest in the raising of land transfer taxes, allowing it to offload certain social responsibilities and duties onto the departmental governments (such as welfare provision and the Parisian public hospital system).
  - Finally, and most importantly, the state has encouraged the overheating of the real estate and property markets, using tax breaks to promote the purchase of new private housing by the rich, and refusing to regulate the market, which would break the real estate fever and lower rental prices.
  - Supporting developers and the real estate market has been a governmental priority, so that the 2009 economic crisis only marginally impacted real estate and rental prices (thanks to safety measures put in place by the Sarkozy government to protect developers and their financial backers). Prices have declined in many countries, but France has the highest among the rich countries, relative to household income. [1]
  - It should also be noted that since 2002 the state, while reducing funding for social housing, has also done nothing to reorganise the region to make it more efficient against the housing crisis.
  - The most recent law, which created the metropolis of Paris, has been challenged by numerous politicians. The abilities and organisation of this new municipal organization are so vague that they can only perpetuate the existing bad policies.
  - **Greater Paris:**
    - In order to streamline the organisation of the region, and with the hope of pushing the city to the forefront of the world's metropolises, several laws have been adopted that lay the groundwork for this new political stratum. However, the supervision and regulation of

prices – especially for land – has only been marginally addressed.
- This new body may fund and support the market, in other words, export Parisian prices to the periphery, with neither the aim nor the will to enforce the right to housing for all at an accessible price.
- The corporation of greater Paris, which precedes this new metropolitan body, subcontracts the management of the region's land to the AFTRP, the Technical Agency for Property in the Paris Region. This organisation, which had its head office occupied by the poorly-housed on January 11th *[eleventh]*, have a heavy presence at MIPIM, because they sell so many public lands.

THE MIPIM ARE SELLING OFF OUR HERITAGE. ENOUGH!

What are **the properties for sale** in the Paris region? Basically, urban and peri-urban land:
- Deindustrialised tracts of land;
- Land in working-class neighbourhoods, opened up by urban planning (which is rare in rich areas);
- Land and buildings sold by the government and public enterprises;
- Protected peri-urban zones and urban agricultural lands that can be developed quickly, notably those managed by public land organisations similar to the AFTRP.

These lands are mostly public, owned by local authorities, municipalities, communes, departments, and state-controlled administrative enterprises. The AFTRP is one of the technical institutions that offers land to the highest bidder.

This is why we've come together to denounce **our own** public authorities, those we elected to serve us but instead send representatives to MIPIM:
- They come to **commodify our neighbourhoods**, those in which we can still afford to live, and **encourage rising rents and property prices**. These policies **chase us to the periphery**, far from the economic centres where we can find employment.
- They come to **sell our public lands to speculators**. We, the residents of the affected districts; the **badly housed and homeless**, hit hard by costly housing and the recession; the tenants of public housing; youths and migrants forced to live in expensive, cramped and indecent housing; the middle classes who sink deeply into long-term debt to these same financiers to buy a home; we are

being **squeezed out of OUR living spaces**. WE are the huge majority of the regional population, those who require decent, affordable, energy-efficient housing close to work.
- And they come to trample our interests, the public interest that would explore all of the ways to keep people in their neighbourhoods, to construct lodgings for those who need them, to curb real estate and land speculation through dissuasive tax measures, and to build energy-efficient housing.

We therefore demand, from the Paris region but equally from all regions:
- The immediate cessation of all public land sales to those in private real estate, especially those sharks, vulture and other predators who participate at MIPIM;
- The allocation of land towards the construction of social housing, the development of emergency accommodations for the homeless and those who live in indecent and abnormal shelters, and support for those activities that generate employment in the general interest;
- The transformation of vacant office space into social housing, principally in the areas west of Paris, which is mostly a corporate zone;
- The taxation of profits coming from real estate and land speculation, and the use of these taxes to finance social housing;
- The establishment of an emergency plan to create 50.000 *[fifty thousand]* vacant homes – through development and building requisition – to satisfy the legal right to housing, and to provide shelter for those who await relocation;
- And that the new Metropolitan Paris political body be given the capacity to enforce these measures and to lower housing prices to a level compatible with the income of the majority of regional inhabitants.

DOWN WITH SPECULATION!
OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE NOT FOR SALE!
A ROOF IS A RIGHT!

Demonstration Ruhr Metropolitan Area

MieterInnenverein Witten u.
Habitat Netz e.V. Witten, Ruhr
www.mvwit.de

THE BIG 5 ACCUSATION OF FINANCIAL LANDLORDS IN NORTHRHINE-WESTPHALIA

BY HABITAT NETZ E.V., WITTEN (RUHR)

In Germany rental housing is more important than in most other countries, especially in the cities. In the Ruhr metropolitan area nearly 68 % of all housing units are rented. Most of the buildings in this region were constructed during the decades of industrial growth, by coal and steel companies, trade unions and municipalities as part of the non-profit housing sector. In 1989, when the national government abolished a law which protected non-profit-housing from being sold out, it opened the way for a **deep process of commodification** and privatisation of the existing housing stock. At the same time German governments alongside with the EU also liberalised financial markets.

After 2000, when the global housing bubble started, transnational financial investors soon became attracted by principal offer the huge stocks of mass housing. To them the high portion of rental housing looked like a huge potential for privatisation, comparably low rents gave reason to expect high rent increases and high vacancy rates looked like an easy way to improve the performance. **Many public institutions, municipalities and industrial companies in Germany sold their rental housing stocks to those transnational financial investors**. Approximately 900,000 housing units today are under direct control of financial investors, many of them have been traded more than one time. The quantitative effects concentrate on particular cities and regions in Germany, especially cities in the Rhine-Ruhr area.. In Dortmund, one out of five rental flats is under control of the financial markets, in other towns it is 10%.

The new “investors” financed their buyouts with little equity and huge loans which were placed on the (often repaid) properties as mortgages and then refinanced by complex and very big (partly over 6 billion) securitisations. These securitizations very much influenced the business models. The new landlords had to follow the limits set by the loan conditions. **The whole housing**

business, in every aspect aspect, became a function of finance.

The consequences for the tenants and the housing stocks were and are disastrous: Forced to extract high returns and interests the landlords heavily **reduced the maintenance of the aged housing stocks and the workforce in their management. Tenants are suffering from defects in heating, from humidity, not working escalators or unavailable garbage collection services**. The obligatory annual balances for **service fees are often wrong** or the landlord does not present them at all. In a **raising number of cases water and energy supply was questioned because the landlord did not pay**. Service providers often are changed, **sometimes tenants do not know who is responsible at all**. A part of the companies "defaulted". Some housing "portfolios" with important housing schemes in **disfavoured satellite towns today seem captured within an endless loop of asset-stripping**.

To these and other problems with the consequences of the financial business-models organized tenants reacted to these with protest. The media covered their daily stories. Soon broad criticism from various sectors of society, especially in the Land NRW, made it a political issue. Tenant associations organised advocacy and public pressure, which during the 2010 NRW elections led to promises by the Greens and the SPD. The main reaction was a parliamentarian commission which for the first time intensively studied the business models of the new investors and its consequences.

After more than 2 years of work the commission presented a voluminous report with studies and a list of political proposals. Meanwhile one of the proposals – a stricter law on municipal control of badly maintained housing – is passing the parliamentarian process. But many municipalities are in deep debt. They hardly will implement the new instruments. At the same time public banks and governments in other Länder have continued to sell housing companies to privatebusinesses related to financial investors.

For some years it seemed that a couple of large securitisations for mass housing debt, which were created between 2005 and 2007, would fail to fulfill repay-obligations in 2013. But then the crisis of sovereign debt in southern Europe led to international capital running away towards more "secure" investment opportunities, which some of them are finding in German real estate. This demand for investment assets at low interest rates made it possible that nearly all large securitisations which ended in 2013 could be repaid and refinanced by new loans. And at the same time these new conditions at international

capital market allowed the exit of the invested funds.

Three huge investment platforms started their IPO during the last 18 months and are now publicly traded housing companies. The new shareholder structures meet a rapidly changing market. Accessible housing had become rare in prospering cities and rents are rocketing. The new financial situation as well as the housing market environment now leads to shifts in the strategies of the investors. Rent increases and expensive modernisation are becoming another thread for the tenants.

It is typical that nearly all of the financial "investors" which have been active in this business as well as the municipal agencies of those cities who have been heavily affected by the business – Dortmund, Bochum, Düsseldorf, Cologne – visit the MIPIM 2014. They hardly will negotiate a return to non-profit housing. The financial investors are mainly looking for new shareholders and other exit options. The municipalities who are under pressure by high deficits continue to sell our land and infrastructure. We, the inhabitants, have to pay the price. Will it be forever?

5 BIG FINANCIAL LANDLORDS IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA ATTENDING THE MIPIM

During the years of the global housing bubble 2003-2007 many public institutions, municipalities and industrial companies in NorthRhine-Westphalia sold their rental housing stocks to transnational financial investors. Many houses were sold several times, some companies failed. Here is a selection of 5 important "investors" who attend the MIPIM (directly or through a parent company). Together they control nearly half a million housing units in Germany.

The Anti-Mipim **Habitat Netz e.V., Witten (Germany)** accuses some of the large financialised landlords in this region for **extracting profit from the housing stocks without respect to standards and needs**. Currently local tenants associations i.e. accuse the largest German landlord Deutsche Annington (185,000 flats, majority of shares controlled by UK based TerraFirma) for **increasing rents** for modernisation although they have accumulated hundreds of millions of Euro from the tenants in recent years. Tenant organisers also demand that the financialised former public company LEG (95,000 housing units) immediately stops and revises its many unjustified **rent increases** in cities like Bochum, Bielefeld, Dortmund, Düsseldorf and Witten. And they call on the French Real Estate Investment Trust "Foncière des Régions" to stop the **pressure against the tenants** of the neighbourhood "Zinkhüttenplatz" in Duisburg. There, its subsidiary "Immeo" wants to sell the land of a well-designed social housing

estate to the developer of a huge Factory Outlet Centre (FOC). For the construction of this gigantic and destructive shopping centre the housing schemes have to be demolished. Immeo since years is **trying to push out the tenants, mostly elderly steel workers**. But a part of them is consequently resisting.

DEUTSCHE ANNINGTON IMMOBILIEN SE, BOCHUM

179,000 units, 99,000 in NRW |11 bn € total assets, 3,3 bn € equity | 2260 employees | Partial exit of Terra Firma-Funds through IPO July 2013. Principal shareholders: Monterey Holdings SARL (Luxembourg,-SPV of TerraFirma Funds): 84,4%, Norges Bank (Norway's central bank): 5,4%.

Deutsche Annington, the housing platform of the British private equity manager TerraFirma Capital Partners, is the largest German landlord and a "pioneer" of strategic Real Estate Private Equity in German mass housing. After buyouts of workers estates from the federal railways (2001, 64,000 units), the E.ON company Viterra (2005, 138,000 units) and other industrial portfolios controls 179,000 own housing units at various places in Germany, with a focus in the Ruhr district (99,000 units in NRW). During various strategy-changes Deutsche Annington became famous for its **problematic reduction of maintenance and of the number of employees**. Especially in 2008, when Annington tried to replace traditional facility services by a centralised call centre, many tenants were frustrated and vacancy rates rose. The Viterra buyout in 2005 was re-financed by the so far largest securitisation of residential property in Europe, the" GRAND plc" with a volume of 5,4 bn € and a period until 2013. After intensive negotiations with the creditors Annington managed to refinance it in 2012/2013. After that big step TerraFirma started a partial exit via an IPO in summer 2013. With easier access to fresh capital Annington now is trying to implement a portfolio strategy where parts of the housing stock gets modernised, which means **rising rents**.

LEG IMMOBILIEN AG, DÜSSELDORF

95,000 housing units, all in NRW | 5.2 bn € total assets, 2 bn € equity | 900 employees | Exit of GoldmanSach/Whitehall Fund since IPO February 2013. Principal shareholders: Global asset managers like Black Rock (12,3%), MFS/Sin Life (5,4%) Morgan Stanley (3%), Perry Capital (7%), free float 61,5%.

The "Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft NRW" originally was a state-owned company for urban renewal and housing. In 1987 it took over significant parts of the bankrupt trade unions' housing company "Neue Heimat". The housing stock includes many (former) social housing estates from the 70ies. In 2006

a conservative-liberal government decided to sell the company. Against this plan a plebiscitary initiative collected more than 63,000 signatures. Nevertheless the government in 2008 sold it to a consortium of funds, mainly controlled by Goldman & Sachs. Although the government promised special contracts would protect tenants and employees the **rents were raised significally, maintenance was reduced and whole company was restructured**. Only 5 years after the buy-out, in February 2013, the investors started the exit via an IPO. Recently the GoldmanSachs funds sold their last shares. LEG is buying other properties and **increasing rents higher than ever before**.

GAGFAH S.A: LUXEMBOURG / FORTRESS LLS NYC

144.000 units, ca. 20.000 in NRW | 8 bn € total assets, 2.2. bn € equity | 1280 employees | Partial Exit of Fortress funds through IPO 2006. Principal shareholder: Fortress Investment Group LLC: 41.3%.

The current GAGFAH Group is the result of 3 major buyouts of former public housing companies by the Funds of the U.S.-investor Fortress: In 2004 Fortress bought the old GAGFAH (82,000 units) from the public pensions fund BfA. In 2005 the housing company of the Lower Saxony, NILEG, and in 2006 WOBA, the company of the City of Dresden, followed. Already in 2006 Fortress, which is famous for its tactical share deals, organized an IPO via the new holding GAGFAH S.A. in Luxembourg. Soon, "financial engineering" (several CMBS-securitizations) and the extraction for the dividends led to "asset stripping" and to a heavy reduction of maintenance. In order to get more liquidity parts of the housing stock were sold. The GAGFAH case became **a scandalous main example of the bad consequences of housing privatisation in Germany**. For some time it looked as if it would fail to pay back the securitisation loans until 2013. Thanks to low interest rates and the growing interest of stressed investors also GAGFAH finally managed to re-finance the loans and now tries to improve its economic performance, – in favour of the shareholders, not of the tenants.

Foncière Développement Logements Paris / Foncière des Régions Metz

FDL: HOUSES: 2335 IN FRANCE, 38,614 IN GERMANY, CA 37,000 IN NRW | ASSETS: 0.8 BN € IN FRANCE, 2.5 BN € IN GERMANY | EQUITY: CA. 1.3 BN € | CA. 320 EMPLOYEES IN GERMANY | SHAREHOLDERS FDL: FONCIÈRE DES RÉGIONS 31,6%, GMF/COVEA 19,4%, PREDICA 15,1%, CARDIF 13,7%, GENERALI 8,9

Originally a subsidiary of Foncière des Régions, the company Foncière Développement Logements (FDL) is a REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust, SIIC) specialized in housing transactions in France and in Germany. In 2006 FDL bought up the former ThyssenKrupp housing company from funds organised by Morgan Stanley and the German Corpus group. Within one year these "investors" had heavily stripped the financial capacities of the housing stocks and renamed it to "IMMEO". **Tenants struggled with single privatizations and bad repair**, but in difference to other investors the work force was not radically reduced. FDL over the years carried losses of the German subsidiary. Obviously it made sense within the REIT. During the past years FDL significantly reduced its NRW-portfolio through sales to other private investors. When the city of Duisburg decided to plan a Factory Outlet Center on the land of a marvelous social housing estate, the Zinkhüttenplatz, IMMEO soon agreed to **sell the land and push the tenants out. A tenant group is resisting**.

BGP INVESTMENTS S.A R.L. LUXEMBOURG / BGP HOLDINGS PLC MALTA

Housing units in Germany: > 25,046 | Assets in housing: > 1.1 bn €, equity: 0.4 bn €.

Shareholder BGP Investments: BGP Holdings plc: Bare Trust and GPT, Australia.

BGP was a joint venture between the two Australian private equity investors Babcock & Brown and GPT. Financed by huge securitised loans they bought up 40,0000 housing units in Germany between 2003 and 2007, mainly workers homes and larger social housing estates in the "satellite towns" of Cologne or Munster. As a consequence of the financial crises Babcock & Brown was liquidated in January 2009. Later GPT decided to stop all business in Europe. Since then the only task of BGP is to "wind down" the business and sell the properties in order to reduce the losses of the shareholders. As a consequence the housing schemes of BGP since **years are without a responsible landlord. Maintenance stopped, management often is absent. Tenants and social workers miss a responsible partner**.

Spanish State “Stop Evictions”

Encounter Athens
encounterathens.wordpress.com

Committee for a metropolitan park at Hellinikon
parkoellinikou.blogspot.gr

Occupied theatre empros
www.embros.gr

Network for the protection of Saronikos bay
saronikossos.wordpress.com

Solidarity for all
solidarity4all.gr

GREECE: PUBLIC GOODS ARE NOT FOR SALE – STOP TRADING OUR COLLECTIVE HERITAGE

The **ATHENS** groups "encounter Athens", "Struggle Committee for a metropolitanpark in Helliniko", "Occupied Theater EMPROS", "Solidarity for all" and "Network for the protection of Saronikos bay" are accusing the state company TAIPED (Hellenic republic asset development fund), the Greek government and the Troika for the austerity and privatisation policies they are implementing, in favour of the banks, the financial sector and big investors. The processes of deprivation and dispossession that are taking place are putting people and local communities in fear and insecurity, while undermining the possibilities of their future recovery.

THE SELL-OFF OF PUBLIC LAND AND PROPERTY IN GREECE AS PART OF THE ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME FOR THE REPAYMENT OF THE PUBLIC DEBT

The Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (TAIPED) was established the 1st July 2011 (Law 3986/2011), under the middle-term-fiscal strategy that was imposed by the Troika and adopted by the Greek government. It constitutes the agency responsible for implementing the privatisation programme of Greece with the sole purpose of using its revenues for paying up the country's public debt. TAIPED is a "société anonyme", whose sole shareholder is the Hellenic Republic with a share capital of €30 million. The Fund is not a public entity and is governed by laws pertaining to private economy. Full ownership, possession and occupation of all 'state owned assets' (land, infrastructure and public companies) that are to be privatized are transferred toTAIPED with the provision that these assets cannot be transferred back to the Greek state.

TAIPED is supported by a crew of specialists on real-estate speculation and privatisation processes (as well as experts in technical, legal and urban design matters), the enormous fees of which are covered by the money collected from the privatisation of public assets. At the same time, in order to safeguard the

viability of the investments through the facilitation of the sell-off and subsequent development of all state-owned property, the Implementation Law which established TAIPED, included a unified planning framework providing land use and density regulations for the development of all state-owned real estate property. This framework which promotes the intensive development of mostly tourist and vacation-home enclaves may bypass statutory land use and environmental regulations and plans, as well as existing procedures and official bodies. Therefore, a key element of the decision-making process of the entire privatisation program the lack of democratic participatory processes and, of course, transparency.

Today, the portfolio of TAIPED includes around 10,000 plots of land (http://www.hradf.com/en/portfolio) all over the country a substantial portion of which includes environmentally sensitive and/or protected areas. Since 2011 TAIPED has launched 23 calls for the **privatization of land assets**, while 8 clearances have been completed. The destructive work of TAIPED is ongoing, as the privatisation programme consists of the main mechanism for debt repayment. This year TAIPED presented to Troika a list of 'mature' projects for privatisation raising the target for revenues for 2014 at 3,5 billion euros.

Overall our accusation towards the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund is grounded on the following reasons:

- TAIPED is a state company whose function damages the public good.
- TAIPED is the vehicle for a **massive land dispossession** and **land-grabbing** process in Greece that sells off public property (real estate, infrastructures and companies) of vital importance for both the present and future of local societies, with the sole purpose of contributing to the repayment of a commonly acknowledged non-sustainable debt.
- TAIPED contributes to the further **impoverishment** of the Greek state and local societies/communities, **depriving them of common goods that are essential for their future social and economic recovery**, promoting private investment and speculation, while **displacing social and collective uses** and excluding large parts of the population.
- TAIPED executes a huge **asset clearance programme**, with limited profitability exchanging the country's future recovery for immediate liquidity to the Greek government in order to comply with the fiscal targets of the adjustment programmes.
- TAIPED is providing important 'investment incentives' **by bypassing existing environmental, developmental and other regulations** promoting

intensive development schemes (touristic, logistic etc) with harmful societal and environmental consequences.

INFORMATION ABOUT SELECTED PRIVATISATION CASES IN ATHENS: FORMER HELLINIKON AIRPORT AREA AND COASTAL FRONT

The property of Hellinikon, a 620 Ha site which includes the former airport of Hellinikon and the Agios Kosmas beachfront area in Athens, constitutes the peak of the privatisation program that is currently underway in the country and involves the concession of the property to private investors who are going to develop and operate it for the next 99 years.

The process of tender submission for the development of the site was completed in February 27, 2014 with only one contestant – the real-estate company "Lamda Development", member of Latsis Group – submitting a final offer to TAIPED. According to information leaking to the press, «Lamda Development» is planning to build malls, a casino, hotels, luxury homes etc. with a total area of 1,7 mil. sq. meters, thus, creating an enclave of wealth and luxury for selected few.

The creation of *'tens of thousands of jobs'* is used by both the government and TAIPED as a basic argument in order to acquire a consensus for the promoted urban development model while they are trying to hide that these are mainly temporary, precarious and low-paying jobs and deceiving the hundreds of thousands of unemployed people in our country. At the same time, it is projected that the concession price for the Hellinikon property will not exceed 0,5 billion euros which will be paid in the next 15 years in yearly installments. Essentially, this is considered to be a free concession, since the state is obliged to cover the cost of a number of necessary infrastructure works along with the moving cost of several public agencies that are currently located on site, thus making the accrued cost much higher than the offered price.

In direct opposition to the government's and TAIPED's plan lies the timely demand posed by local governments, the academic and research community, local movements and political parties for the creation on site of a public metropolitan park that will meet the real needs of the community for recreation, sports and culture and improve the environment and climate conditions of Athens.

VOULIAGMENI PENINSULA AND ASTERAS TOURISTIC COMPLEX

This peninsula and beach-front property – owned by both the

Greek state and the National Bank of Greece – has a total area of approximately 30 Ha (50 Ha including the beach) and has signified, with the three hotels and the marina located on the site, an icon of the tourism sector in Greece. The property value is estimated at approximately 2,5 billion euro (based on pre-crisis property tax valuation). Past attempts to fully privatise and intensify the development of the site had consistently failed due to constitutional provisions and the opposition of local movements. In fact, statutory local land use plans and regulations provide for the renovation of the existing hotels only, while a major portion of the property that includes forested areas and archeological sites has been designated as a protection area.

However, the recent national legislation providing for the development of public properties allowed the bypassing of existing land use regulations and thus, the terms of the bid for the site allowed, at first, the construction of up to 8,600 sq.m. of residences. Nevertheless, these new terms were apparently deemed not profitable enough for the candidates and therefore, just before their submission of the second-phasebids, it became publicly known that new planning terms provided for the construction of luxury residences of up to 39,500 sq.m., the demolition of two of the hotels, as well as the controlled access to the beach and the archeological sites by the investor through the turning of the existing public road into a private one. In total, the new master plan for the property provides for the construction, in a forested area, of a beach-front high-income enclave, catered solely to foreign investors and buyers, which apart from housing will also include shopping, restaurants, entertainment, anchorage, etc.

The total abolition of applicable planning terms which allows the intense residential development of the coastal area of Athens is not, however, contingent with any planning or public gain. Instead, the 4 candidates that have submitted a binding offer (Colony Capital Acquisitions LLC, a California based investment fund; AGC, an Arab-interest investment company; Plepi Holdings LTD, a company formed by Greek and Saudi Arabian entrepreneurs; and Lamda Development) seem to pursue buying off the property at a price that does not reflect either its real value or the surplus value it can create, since their offers are only a bit higher than the current stock value of the property which has dropped, because of the crisis, to around 270 mil. euro. In fact, the bidding price is expected not to exceed the amount of 350 mil. euro!

Even though the Greek state owns 40% of the property, it will only collect 20% of this amount, that is, around 70 mil. euro. However, this is not the net amount that will be

attributed to the payment of public debt, since from this amount all costs accrued for the payment of consulting services provided to TAIPED for the selling of the property as well as the mandatory provision by the state of any required infrastructure. Therefore, a real financial loss to the Greek state is a very plausible prospect of the sell out of this property which is further substantiated by the significant reductions in future tax revenues that will be generated by this development due to tax breaks provided by recent legislation pertaining to the attraction of strategic investors.

EVICTION OF OCCUPIED THEATRE EMPROS

The EMPROS Theatre is located in downtown Athens in a historic preservation building that functioned first as a printing press of the former newspaper 'EMPROS' and then as a theatre, under the same name, until 2005. Even though, the property was transferred to the state in 1950 by Law (L.1530/50), the legal status of its ownership is still in question since there is no certificate of transfer and ownership, while there is a pending lawsuit for the annulment of this transfer submitted by 6 citizens since 1951! Despite this legal uncertainty, TAIPED reassures prospective investors that there is no risk involved regarding the ownership of the property since the pending lawsuit is not valid due to the time lapsed. According to existing land use regulations, the only permitted use for the building is a civic one (PD, 18.3.98).

In November 2011, the building was occupied by a group of artists who are using it as a free, self-managed space for artistic and social activities. Since then, the 'EMPROS' theatre is being managed by an open assembly and a great number of cultural events, performances, concerts, discussions etc have been organised, some of them with particular intensity and density.

At the end of 2013, the property was put for sale through the electronic auction and since then, TAIPED is systematically pursuing the evacuation of the building so that it will be available to the future owners. In October 30, 2013, the police intervened in order to evacuate and seal the building and arrested two actors who were in rehearsals. A big support and solidarity was expressed against the eviction of the assembly managing the building and in favour of the cultural and political activities taking place.

SALE AND LEASE-BACK OF 28 PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Twenty eight state owned buildings (with 320,000sqm total surface) were privatised, with the sale and lease-back method, at the price of 261 mil. euro to two recently created REIT companies: the National Pangaia* (portfolio of 14 buildings

at a price of 115.5 mil. euro), and Eurobank Properties** (the rest of the buildings at a price of 145.810 mil. euro). These were civil service buildings which house five ministries (i.e., Culture, Internal Affairs, Justice, Health and Education), thirteen public tax agencies, the general laboratory of the state and police headquarters in Athens, Thessaloniki and Serres, for which the Greek state guarantees a lease-back period of 20 years (estimated at 600,000 mil. euro).

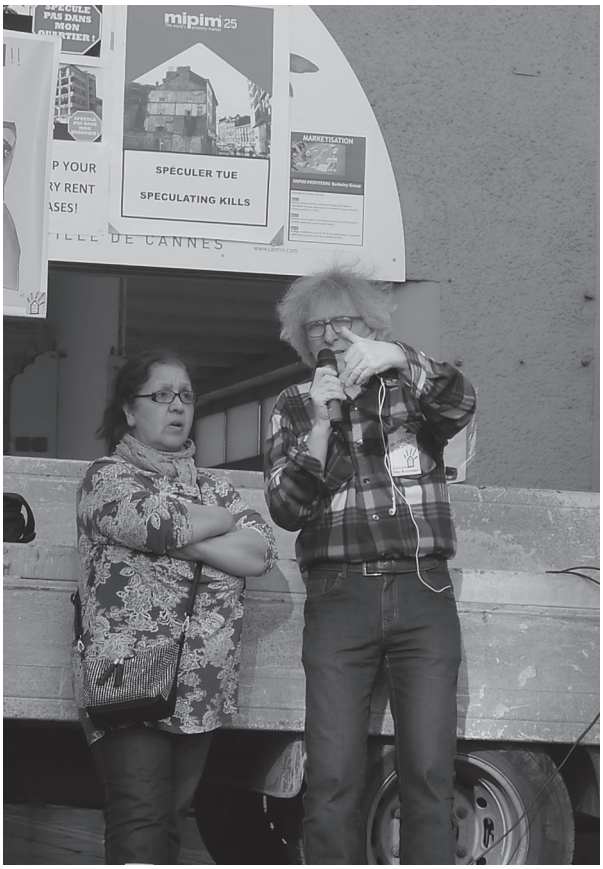
The Court of Audit has suspended the deal (until it receives further clarifications) based on the argument that there was **lack of transparency and impartiality** in the tendering process, since the two nominated companies are subsidiaries of the two business groups (NBG Securities SA and Eurobank Equities Investment Firm S.A, respectively) which acted as financial consultants to TAIPED for the privatisation of these 28 buildings. In its decision, the Court has also expressed reservations regarding the bidding process because it is not sufficiently justified whether the concession is profitable and advantageous to the Greek state compared to other public lending options and because of binding clauses in the deal.

Both REIT companies have managed to increase significantly the value of their asset portfolio because of this deal, being actually endowed by the Greek state to boost their profitability.

- **National Pangaia REIC:** after this privatisation deal holds a real estate portfolio worth more than 1 billion euro, and was immediately sold (66%) to the, Israeli interest, Dutch company Invel Real Estate. In order to buy Pangaia, Invel took a loan from the National Bank of Greece corresponding to 60% of the price (580 mil of which only 160 mil is own share and 418 mil. is from the loan, plus 74 mil. from the transfer of asset value).
- **Eurobank Properties:** after the acquisition of this second 'package' of public buildings, it was sold to the Canadian fund 'Fairfax'.

PUBLIC GOODS AND PUBLIC LAND ARE NOT FOR SALE, OUR FUTURE IS NOT FOR SALE

Encounter Athens, Committee for a Metropolitan Park in Hellinikon, Occupied theatre Empros, Solidarity for All (solidarity4all.gr), Network for the protection of Saronikos Bay.



Cannes, Tribunal Anti MIPIM

European Action Coalition for the
Right to Housing and the City - Ireland

IRELAND'S 'BAD BANK' NAMA

Local activists from **DUBLIN** accuse the National Assets Management Agency (NAMA), Ireland's "bad bank", for selling parts of their city to massive financial institutions with an interest in cheap real estate or cheap debt linked to real estate. With implementation of a Strategic Development Zone in Dublin's Docklands NAMA wants to establish a 'fast track planning' in order to attract international "investors" without any strategy around social or affordable housing.

The National Assets Management Agency, Ireland's 'bad bank', attended this year's MIPIM conference. The agency, which has about EURO 20 bn in real estate assets, was set up following the financial crisis to save the Irish banks from their own reckless lending by buying their toxic real estate assets. Its job is now to sell those, so it can give the banks the EURO 32 bn it promised them.

As a huge player in the Dublin property market, NAMA's main focus is on selling parts of our city to massive financial institutions with an interest in cheap real estate or cheap debt linked to real estate. Companies like Blackstone, Lonestar Capital and Oaktree Capital have already been buying assets from the bad bank. But the upcoming implementation of a Strategic Development Zone in Dublin's Docklands is set to move things up a gear. A Strategic Development Zone is a provision in Irish planning law to designate a specific area for 'fast-track planning'. The idea is simple; get rid of the planning appeals process. NAMA has said that 'fast track planning' is vital to attract international "investors" to "Ireland's most important internationally marketable land bank". The strategic Development Zone, moreover, has been designed to exclude the traditional inner-city working class communities and does not include any strategy around social or affordable housing.

To be clear, NAMA is an agency set up by the state but with a blatantly commercial focus largely oriented around selling our city to international financial firms. The fact such a significant and expensive public institution holding one of the largest property portfolios in the Europe has adopted such a narrow commercial remit could not be more symptomatic of the Irish state's failure to responds to the need to develop sustainable cities and respond to the housing crisis. With a over 100,000 people on the social housing waiting lists, the same number again unable to pay their mortgages, and the number of families becoming homeless in Dublin doubling, how can selling office blocks to hedge funds be the priority? No doubt this is what NAMA was explaining to its 'international partners' at this year's MIPIM.

Unione Inquilini
www.unioneinquilini.it

International Alliance of Inhabitants
www.habitants.org

UNIONE INQUILINI

In **ITALY** Unione Inquilini (Tenants Union) together with the "International Alliance of Inhabitants" (IAI) has protested against the presence of the "Cassa Depositi e Prestiti" (CDP) at the Mipim. The CDP is a joint-stock company under public control. Under the pretext of creating so-called "social housing" this "housing investment fund" is in fact active in the **process of privatisation of common property as well as in the speculation with unused land**. CDP has a capital stock of more than 2 billion Euros, which is mainly composed of the savings of individuals collected at post offices. But more than 800 million of the capital stock is controlled by Polaris Investment SGR, a company incorporated under Luxembourg law whose main shareholder is the powerful banking foundation CARIPLO. It is an Italian example of epidemic "private-public partnership" in the field of housing. To its investors CDP guarantees a return of 3% above inflation. At the same time there is no concrete responsibility for social housing. The Tenants Union and the IAI accuse the CDP: for violating article 42 of the Italian Constitution, which requires a social function of property. In fact CDP is using the capital of small savers to organize a **financial speculation** against their own interests.

Also for violating law 881 with which Italy in 1977 ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In fact CDP supports the **reduction of public interventions on** into the housing market in favour of financial speculation.

Demonstration Paris

Bond Precaire Woonvormen
bondprecairewoonvormen.nl

Speculation research collective SPOK
speculanten.nl

ACCUSATION OF THE AMSTERDAM METROPOLITAN AREA

The "Bond Precaire Woonvormen" from the **NETHERLANDS**, a Union of people whose housing situation is precarious is accusing **Camelot Europe**, one of the largest "vacant property managers" protecting commercial companies, that it is **bypassing all existing tenant laws and using people in need for housing as 'real-estate pawns' and as 'outsourced dwellers' that only serve to facilitate speculation**. Currently, the Mipimist Camelot is housing thousands of people throughout Europe, **without assuming the slightest responsibility every landlord should bear**. The speculation research collective "SPOK" is accusing the **Amsterdam Metropolitan Area since the shortage of affordable housing in the region is grinding**, yet at the same time the **(office) vacancy rates are excessive**.

The Mipim is celebrating its 25th birthday this year. As all previous years, a lot of Dutch companies and local governments will be present, the latter also paying € 1600,- for an entrance fee probably paid for from our taxes. One of the local Dutch authorities present for the Mipim festivities, that really should have stayed at home to work on solving the serious housing shortages in its area, is the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area.

Despite the continuing Dutch policies promoting home-ownership, in Amsterdam alone 270,000 people are searching for an affordable house to rent. **They cannot afford or are not interested in buying a house. Nor can they rent on the liberalised (expensive) rental housing market in Amsterdam where prices have become extremely high**, as one of the results of the home-ownership promotion policies.

Out of the 270,000 people looking for a rental house in the Amsterdam area, at the moment 70,000 of them are in urgent need of housing. But the **social housing stock in the Netherlands, and especially in Amsterdam, has been seriously reduced by privatisation, demolition and many urban renewal and gentrification programs**. When a tenant leaves a social rental house in Amsterdam nowadays, there is a chance of 25% that it will be sold and 25% that it will be liberalised. Even though the demand for social houses in increasing.

The availability of social rental housing is with no more than 6,500 a year, painfully insufficient. In

Amsterdam the average **waiting time for a social rental house is more than 10 years**. The only way policymakers and even social housing corporations respond to this housing shortage, is by increasing rents and the price of real estate. Especially in the wake of the economic crisis, their efforts have been to lure investors into **building more expensive houses and other expensive real estate, mainly office buildings**.

With 6 million square meters enough to house 100,000 people, and a vacancy rate of 17%, the vacancy of officebuildings in Amsterdam is the highest of the Netherlands already and one of the highest in Europe. Yet it is very likely that the policy makers of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area today have come to Cannes to make more deals for building offices and other real estate that have no real demand from the public or companies. Certainly they have no use to solving the affordable housing shortage.

The real estate deals negotiated in Mipim are of great influence on housing and living conditions in Amsterdam. Yet **Amsterdam citizens haven't any say** in them at all. In fact, the Mipims lack of transparency (or even: secrecy) is a direct **violation on democratic decision-making and enhancing corruption and criminal activities**.

In Amsterdam we have a lot of experience with this. In 2007 a major fraud was discovered within the biggest Dutch real estate funds consisting of public money. Many millions of euros were stolen from pensioners by money-laundering deals. The perpetrators were regular Mipim guests. One of the board members of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, a prominent politician from the liberal party was convicted for **corruption**. His appearance on the Mipim played an important role in his conviction. It was mentioned extensively by the judge in his verdict.

The Amsterdam Metropolitan Area has no place on the Mipim. Instead of being involved in dodgy real estate deals, problems should be first solved at home.

BPW AGAINST ANTI-SQUAT AND TEMPORARY RENT CONTRACTS

The Bond Precaire Woonvormen (BPW), a Union of people whose housing situation is precarious, is a collective of volunteers who demand a halt to the **rapid increase of temporary renting contracts** and who support tenants who are in this precarious situation, often threatened with **eviction**.

The Netherlands has a broad social rental sector which is currently under heavy attack by different dynamics: The social housing corporations got entangled in a leak to the capital market, the government

executes neoliberal policies promoting privatisation, home-ownership and high rent increases. It is actually currently paving way for a massive sell off of the social rental housing sector. The social housing sector is now being taxed to pay for the debts of the (real estate) crisis caused by the neoliberal ideology promoting home-ownership. **Huge private debts were transferred into public debts as banks were bailed out by the state**. But the speculative housing bubbles and fake economic growth we saw last decades are 'natural' results of the logic of capitalist logic and a reason for today's austerity measures. These systematic problems are now resulting in roaming off the social housing sector, less capacity to invest and build social rental housing and are actively attacking social housing as a public and humane achievement.

According to such dynamics, people people are increasingly forced to accept temporary rental contracts without any tenants rights. The BPW is acting and organising against this growing tendency of precarisation of housing, the anti-squat model and other precarious forms of housing.

There is a shortage of affordable housing in the Netherlands. For that reason, people are increasingly forced to accept **temporary rental contracts without any tenants rights**. There is a thick package of tenants rights in the Netherlands that is compiled of several laws. Now, 'vacant property protectors', commercial companies like Camelot, that were born from the interests of real estate, have found a way to bypass all tenants rights completely.

They let often young people or others with little money and an urgent need for housing live in vacant properties to 'protect' those properties (from vandalism and such) by keeping them occupied. The occupants can be **kicked out of these houses within two weeks**. And they are forced to **give up their privacy rights** (article 8 of the European Convention on Human rights), as the company will randomly inspect their premises to see if they 'behave properly'.

The surpassing of tenant rights is done by using 'on loan'-contracts which are private law, instead of civil law. These on loan-contracts are full of conditions that benefit the home-owners and the company, but not the inhabitant. For example: an inhabitants cannot have pets, cannot receive their family for dinner by Christmas, cannot have children, cannot leave dishes in the kitchen, cannot get in touch with the owner of the building or sometimes even with the press. On top of that, inhabitants are intimidated with serious fines or threatened with eviction if they don't abide these rules. The contract can be ended at all times within two to four weeks without providing any reason and without the inhabitant having a

right to substitute housing or moving costs. In Dutch law, these rights are included in normal rent situations.

At the same time the inhabitants often pay a monthly fee of somewhere in between € 150,- and € 400,- as well as their own energy and water bills. This is, by Dutch law, considered a situation of rent, and thus Rent law applies. Still, inhabitants are usually afraid to challenge companies like Camelot in court, because of the fines and the hight costs of court cases in general. It's not only students anymore that live like this. More and more lower income people in general who need a house urgently, are forced to accept these temporary rental contracts without any tenants rights.

But why do people live like this and in increasing numbers? One of the reasons is that **there are huge quantities of vacant properties**. In the Netherlands for example 16% of all office buildings are empty: That is almost 8 million square meters. And 8% of all shops are empty.

Another reason is that the vacant property protecting companies like Camelot introduced 'anti-squat' as a 'new' ('lifestyle') way of living, 'flexible and adventurous' in 'crazy places' like vacant castles of vacant fun fares. They made it look atractive to many people.

More importantly, anti-squat companies, and especially Camelot, have a strong lobby and big marketing budgets. They invest a lot in lobbying (local) government officials. The Dutch law 'Wet kraken en Leegstand' (Law that prohibits squatting and vacancy) for example has given a tremendous boost to the anti-squat companies in the Netherlands, with them offering their services to municipalities and housing corporations, who all of sudden – because of the new law – had 'to do something about vacancy in our municipalty' on their to-do-list. Another example is France, where Camelot helped to introduce a law that made temporary living in vacant buildings possible. That law was named after Camelot.

It is also due to a lack of counter information from social movements (the Dutch tenant unions failed to prioritise this problem) about the precarisation of housing, that the government is just following these market driven tendencies with policies that allow the **ongoing precarisation**.

In the Netherlands there are an estimated 50 anti-squat/vacant property protection companies active: Camelot (currently one of the fastest growing companies from the Netherlands), Interveste, AdHoc, HOD, Bezet, AK-Beheer, Alvast, Anna vastgoed, Bewaakt en bewoond, De vastgoedbeschermer, de Kabath, FMT, Interim, Livable, SLAK, VVB wonen, Villex, Voorkom Leegstand, Zwerfkei. FMT, AK beheer (was Antikraak BV) and NAK

were recently bought by VPSitex, which is owned by funds that are maintained by TDR Capital, a British 'highly selective private equity firm'. Vacant property protection is lucrative business, since it is making use of housing for profit only.

DIFFERENT TEMPORARY RENT CONTRACTS

But of course the most important reason for the growth of anti-squat is the shortage in housing. Ironically enough, Dutch housing policy is responding to this housing shortage by pursuing even further deregulation of the conditions under which temporary rent is permitted. The traditional Dutch renting contract is permanent (i.e. time-unlimited) but in recent years the number of temporary renting contracts has increased considerably. There are many different forms of contracts now: Campuscontracts (students); Youth contracts; Short stay (expats); Temporary rent under the Vacancylaw (which was expanded per 1 juli 2013 to 7 en 10 years and liberalised rents); contract for a fixed period (Huurovereenkomst voor bepaalde tijd / locatie en tijdgebonden contracten); contract of 'in nature short term' (´naar zijn aard van korte duur´used often to by-pass the Vacancylaw); Antisquat; On loan.

The urge for new forms of temporary contracts is still imperative and lobbyists, companies and politicians are advocating for it more and more, especially in the large cities. These 'flexcontracts' are often placed one after another, pushing aside the permament (time-unlimited) renting contracts. Nowadays, it's almost impossible for a person to know about all these dynamics and only specialists can know what their rights are in this jungle. This confusion only experts to conformation and passivity in Dutch society on this subject. As a result an **increasing diversity of people live outside of the social system of rent protection and social housing. Whereas in fact these people usually qualify for social housing**. Politics is hardly interested in this and masks the conflict behind it. They are happy with leaving difficult issues for the courts to decide when things get rough.

SOME GENERAL DEMANDS OF THE BPW

The BPW considers the precarisation of housing as a transfer of risk to citizens, with corresponding negative effects on the lives of those involved. De BPW supports people who are in precarious housing situations in various ways (amongst them is legal advise, organising, media, demonstrations). We try to create political (on national and local level) pressure for **demands** such as:

- Stop hollowing out tenant rights / a halt to the rapid increase of temporary renting contracts;
- Stop the breaking down the social housing sector;
- Social housing corporations should stop making use of

'middle men' (these are the 'vacant property protection' companies like Camelot) to exploit their vacant houses. Instead, they should fix the houses and rent them out for affordable rents.
- Punish abuse of flexcontracts.
- Affordable rental housing as a collective right / give people rental contracts with real rights instead of temporary contracts that serve only the interests and profitability of real estate.

IN LINE WITH THIS, THE BPW IS FULLY SUPPORTING THE DEMANDS OF THE EUROPEAN ACTION COALITION FOR THE RIGHT TO HOUSING AND THE CITY.

NETHERLANDS: ACCUSATION AGAINST VACANT PROPERTY MANAGER CAMELOT

Camelot Europe is an international vacant property management company, that started in the Netherlands. Their business is vacant property management services to provide real estate clients with a 'cost effective, high quality and flexible solution' to protect vacant properties against vandalism and such. Camelot provides these services in the UK, Ireland, Scotland, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.

Its 'services' to the real estate sector are in fact a way to maximise profit from vacant properties by exploiting people in need of a house. Camelot was one of the first Ductch 'anti-squat' companies that came up with the idea of having people in need of housing living empty buildings as 'property protectors' on temporary flexcontracts and without any tenants rights. These dwellers can be kicked out of their house on a two-week notice, are deprived of privacy as Camelot will randomly inspect their premises to see if they 'behave properly', and are forced to agree to a set of conditions that constrain their freedom of behaviour and mobility.

As a result Camelot is currently housing thousands of people throughout Europe, without assuming the slightest responsibility that a landlord should bear. It is exclusively housing people for profit, not for people or the right to housing.

There are many more vacant property protection companies in Europe and beyond that operate like this. But since Camelot is assuming a position as 'market leader' and has certain specific activities and characteristics, our accusation is directed at Camelot and as follows:
- Camelot is using the shortage of affordable housing by offering people in need of a house a temporary place provided they **give up their (tenants) rights**.
- Camelot is bypassing legislation regarding the protection of

tenants. In doing so it is creating a group of **second-rate tenants**.

- Camelot is using inhabitants as **'real estate pawns'** and **'out-sourced dwellers'** that only serve to facilitate speculation by protecting vacant property and to facilitate the break down and the privatisation of the social housing sector.
- Camelot is jointly responsible for the **real estate bubble** by enabling real estate speculators returns on their vacant property; returns that are produced by exploited people in need of housing. Because of this, speculators don't devaluate their property and property values remain artificially high, which makes building new properties profitable. As a result, natural areas and public spaces continue to be sacrificed for new (office) buildings, that have no demand from companies or citizens; new buildings that only serve to empty out older buildings in the area. With its vacant property protection, Camelot helps this vicious circle to remain unbroken.
- Camelot **subordinates the right to housing to the profitability** of realestate and is with its services and marketing actively contributing to the acceptance of this mindset in Dutch society.
- Camelot **discriminates** in the acces to housing, **intimidates** inhabitants and treats them with **arbitrariness**.
- Camelot allows people to live in bad housing conditions, **doesn't invest** in maintenance of dwellings or improving the quality of the housing conditions for the inhabitants.
- Camelot defiles **the privacy of inhabitants** and imposes them with other far-reaching constraints in their freedom of behaviour and mobility. In fact Camelot defiles over 50 different clauses of several laws and (international) conventions concerning tenants and human rights.
- In spite of claiming otherwise, Camelot is **not contributing to solving the shortage in housing**, as it is not investing in (realising) permanent affordable rental housing. Camelot also places people in (vacant) social rental housing, but **never reinvests the related returns** in social rental housing.
- Camelot is misleading the public by presenting its vacant property protection service as a solution for the shortage of housing. It's misleading because its so-called 'corporate social responsibility' is in fact the **exploitation** of people in need of housing.
- Camelot is an active lobbyist of local, regional and national governments and social housing corporations. It is actively promoting **'flexible housing without (tenant) rights'**. Camelot does this in several European countries and is

advising lawmakers and politicians how to make 'housing without (tenant) rights' possible, if it isn't yet. Camelot introduced such legislation for example in France, where it was named the Camelot-Act.

- With ist activities, Camelot is one of the driving forces behind the increasing **precarisation of housing** in the Netherlands and other European countries.

SPECULATION RESEARCH COLLECTIVE SPOK

Bond Precaire Woonvormen

Resisting Evictions/ demonstration Spain

Demolitions and evictions in Portugal

Habita - Colectivo pelo Direito à Habitação e à Cidade

www.habita.info

LISBON: SELLING THE CITY TO TOURISM

From **LISBON,** "Habita" accuses ESTAMO (which is a public company responsible for the sale of public property) and the CML (which is the municipality of Lisbon), which have been players in MIPIM over the past few years. Together these two public entities are organising a processes of **gentrification** in Lisbon, **moving away the popular classes and the elder from central neighbourhoods of Lisbon and replacing them with higher classes and tourism**. These are promoting speculative operations and the sale of public infrastructures in the retail market. Furthermore "Habita" accuses the Portuguese government and the Troika for liberalising the rental market, facilitating the process of eviction – two months of delay is enough to be evicted – rent increases and also stimulating gentrification. Last but not least, "Habita" accuses bank-owned real estate funds. Millennium-BCP for instance bought land and promoted processes of **mass eviction of the poor** from working class areas in collaboration with the municipality of Amadora. The banks – with the help of the State in terms of regulation, tax exemption, etc. - have also been co-responsible for the number of empty houses (in Portugal there are 750,000 empty houses) and for the housing bubble in Portugal. The bubble drove thousands of **families into lifelong debt and evicted many of them**. Even after losing their homes they still owe their loans to te bank. The Troika and the government are also accused for **promoting austerity measures and privatisations in favour of banks**.

The group "Habita!" accuses the municipality of Lisbon (CML) for **selling the city to the real estate industry and tourism**.

"The approval of a new urban master plan together with the enactment of a law which accelerates and simplifies evictions and liberalises rents (imposed by the troika in the memorandum of understanding) created the conditions to **expel families and small businesses from the city centre in order to replace them with offices, hotels, luxury housing and franchised business**. This plan is promoted by Lisbon's City Hall together with speculative funds, architects, lawyers, and construction firms. This is the kind of team that takes part in MIPIM.

Lisbon has **thousands of buildings which are vacant** for speculative reasons. In the future they are going to be hotels and expensive/ luxury houses.

Evictions, gentrification, removal of families and individuals from the city centre, the closing of hundreds of traditional stores, associated with land speculation

are the consequences of the liberalisation of the real estate market and urban plans which serve the capital and speculative players. The city centre becomes more expensive, inaccessible, ceases to be a centre for people to live on, since they're not entitled to participate in this transformation process. **It is not a democratic City**, for the market authoritatively expels citizens.

Real Estate Funds and the Town Hall in Amadora evict people of popular neighbourhoods in order to demolish them so they can build and sell middle-class apartments through bank loans.

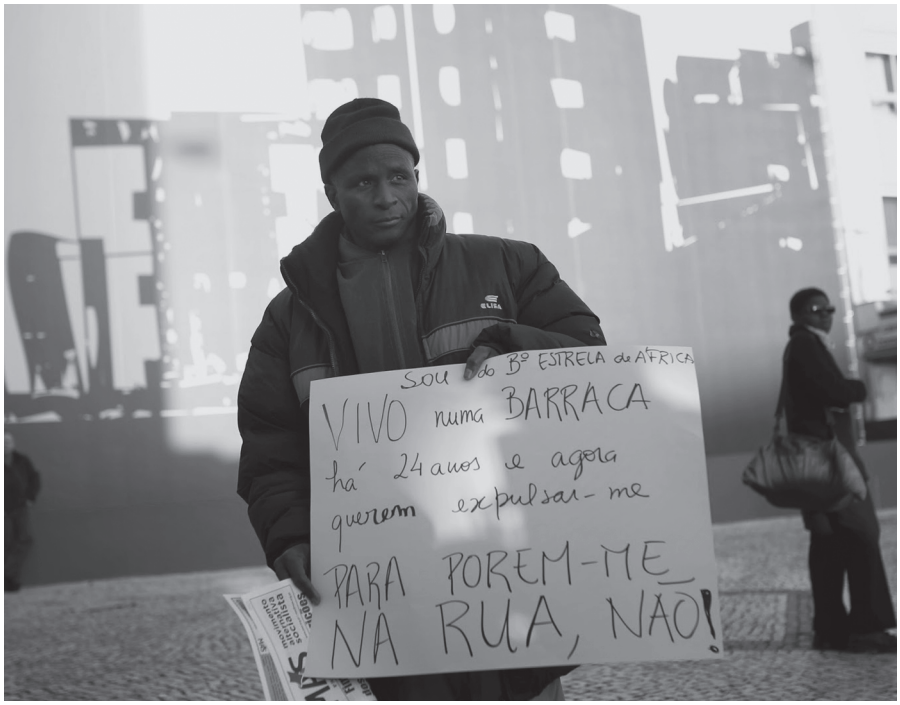
Real estate funds belonging to a Portuguese bank – Millennium BCP – bought the land of 40 year-old neighbourhood Santa Filomena, in Amadora.

Through the use of **coercive force and public expenditure** of Amadora's City Hall, **people are being evicted from their houses with no alternative**, no solution at all, finding themselves thrown out to the streets. **When they struggle they are criminalized**.

Where is the right to housing? Where is Democracy? The only thing that matters is the market, the capital, the real estate fund and its property. This land belonged to the communities for over 40 years, this land has belonged to the communities. Now, it is nothing but an asset of a real estate fund to be traded at the stock exchange market.

Commodification of land and housing destroys society and crystalizes the city's human development and life!

Demonstration in Portugal



Ocupation of a bank in Spanish State

Plataforma Afectados por la Hipoteca

www.afectadosporlahipoteca.com

THE SPANISH BUBBLE AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST EVICTIONS

In 2007, **housing prices were at an all-time high**. If we consider these disproportionate prices along with soaring interest rates and decreasing income (since unemployment went from 8.3% in 2006 to 17% in 2009), we find ourselves with an impoverished and debt-ridden citizenry, living in fear of an uncertain future.

In 2006, the V de Vivienda movement (a reference to V for Vendetta that translates to "V for Housing") was born in Barcelona. For two years, they articulated the struggle for the right to decent housing and denounced the housing bubble, calling for an end to the **violence of real estate speculation**. When the bubble burst two years later, some of that group's activists realised that **people were going to stop being able to pay their mortgages**, and that the struggle would no longer be about access to housing but that many families would actually be left without a home. They also discovered that **Spanish mortgage law would leave them with a debt hanging over their heads for the rest of their lives**. So in February of 2009, the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH) was born, which put the failure of housing policies on the agenda and would prove a major blow to the administrations that had pushed the population to become indebted.

The biggest difference between the V de Vivienda movement and the PAH is its members. While the first was mostly made up of young people in precarious work who organised and fought to leave their parents' homes, the majority of the PAH is made up of families who are being foreclosed on.

In Stop Evictions campaign we use the institutional mechanisms to delay the eviction and we put pressure on the bank using media and social networks. If none of it works, then we resist the evictions by making a public call to turn up on the day to block the legal authority and police. Obra Social campaign denounces that **while in Spain banks are starting foreclosure processes and accumulating empty houses, thousands of evicted people have no place to go and the Government refuses to give real solutions**. The PAH recovers these buildings as social housing for these families. With a People's legislative Initiative

campaign we needed 500,000 signatures to propose a legislative change. We collected almost 1.5 million but the Government refused to discuss the proposal. After, we started the Escrache campaign to persuade those politicians that had expressed their opposition.

STOP EVICTIONS completing with "the PAH Social work" supporting the families rehousing victims of the illegal eviction at their homes or in any banking houses (specially at houses from rescued banks) making possible de human rights, and maintenance the resistance of the families at their homes.

Today PAH has stopped over 1000 evictions.

And over 1150 people are living in the buildings occupied by the PAH.

PAH today is Spain's most important social movement, but it's neither perfect nor a panacea to all of the country's ills. We do a lot of things that were being done many years before, in the neighbourhood movements, the squatters' movements and so on. The platform was born at the right place at the right time and it has understood how to learn, grow and expand without losing its essence. Perhaps with time, we will be able to bring together all of the different social struggles taking place at this moment in history.

ACCUSATIONS ON MIPIM PARTICIPANTS

From **SPAIN** the platform of the mortgage-affected (PAH) accuses the Spanish government, private equity funds and banks for continuing the gambling with the homes and lives of the people. Last August the "bad bank" SAREB sold 50% of the shares of a portfolio of badly maintained 1,000 housing units to a fund managed by H.I.G. for only 50 million €. In June the Municipal Housing and Land Madrid (EMVS) announced that had sold 1,860 social rental homes to the private equity firm Blackstone for only 128.5 mill €. Also the Housing Institute of Madrid (IVIMA) is going to sell 2.935 officially protected flats to funds. The bank BBVA-ANIDA transferred about 1.000 properties to funds of the Baupost Group. Etc. The "party" has just begun. The banks still have huge amounts of homes which they want to sell sooner or later. Vulture funds have taken the first step to control the real estate division of Bankia and Catalunya Banc. La Caixa is negotiating the sale of 51% of Servihabitat to Texas Pacific Group. PAH accuses all these actors to be responsible for the **evictions of families**, for the **reduction and plundering of social housing estates and for the exclusion of the citizens from access to dignified housing**.

Plataforma Afectados por las Hipotecas (PAH)

Demonstration Spanish State

Istanbul Urban Movements

istanbulkentharekетleri.wordpress.com

THIS IS OUR MANIFESTO OF LIFE FROM TURKEY

In 2003, when Turkey participated in the MIPIM for the first time, more than 20 projects in Istanbul were showcased for the global capital. Among these was the Haydarpaşaport **project which aims to gentrify the area around the main train station** on the Asian side of the city and to **turn the ages-old Ottoman cultural heritage Haydarpaşa Station into a hotel**. Another 2004 Mipim showcase, the Galataport project, targeted the main harbour and its vicinity. The regeneration of the historical Fener-Balat neighbourhood and of deindustrialized Kartal were other projects at the MIPIM 2004. These projects which have no public benefit at all are still on the agenda. Galataport and Kartal regeneration have almost started. Thanks to its neoliberal urban agenda, Turkey was selected as the "country of honour" in MIPIM 2013 and one of the 3 "countries of honour" in 2014. **Projects of displacement and forced evictions, projects that devastate natural sites** such as Emaar Square in Camlica or Maslak 42 were exhibited. Developer Ali Ağaoğlu whose bribery operations and corruption scandals leaked lately was hailed as a prominent figure in MIPIM 2013. Besides, the luxurious project of informal Derbent neighbourhood was put on exhibition while the inhabitants had been holding negotiations with the local municipality! In 2014 MIPIM, Zorlu Center Mall, actually a public land grabbing project which furnished an unbelievably high rent to developer Zorlu (thus a disgrace to the city) was among the candidates for best practices! It is no wonder that MIPIM presents Turkey as *"…one of the largest and most dynamic construction industries and an expanding international coverage"* since **urban lands of the country – especially those in the big cities – are for sale to global capital while the populations are faced with housing rights violations of all kinds**.

Today there is a huge amount of on-going 'urban renewal' and 'renovation projects' is going on in Istanbul; and these projects are virtually rebuilding the whole city. **Solid and well-built buildings, registered historical buildings, whole neighbourhoods are being destroyed and forest land conservation areas and archaeological reserve areas are eliminated just for the sake**

of annuity. Renovation projects are initiated into some historical neighborhoods and people's homes are being expropriated by force. Very valuable historical buildings are demolished by the state. This neighbourhood culture, which has been established through living together for dozens or perhaps even hundreds of years is being destroyed all at once. People are being sent away from their neighbourhoods where they have been surrounded by the good and strong neighbourly relationships and strong ties of soildarity established through many years, from their places of work where they earn their living, without being offered any social support and security, and are being sent to the far corners of the city to live in poor conditions.

In Sulukule, Tarlabasi, Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray Zeyrek and in Sulaimaniya, which are all unique historical districts located in the historical peninsula and which include invaluable examples of civil architecture, many registered and important buildings are being demolished. Precious examples of the Ottoman architecture, wooden houses, are exterminated ruthlessly. İstanbul is losing its unique historical, architectural character.

Despite judicial decisions regarding the salvage of these areas, the archaeological wealth the underground archaeological wealth, as well as that above the ground, that is being blatantly destroyed before the very eyes of the whole public.

Previously public areas are now being transfered to privite persons. Hospitals, schools, historical sites, foundations, land, forest land, residences, public institutions and facilities are being rapidly privatised; and new hotels, shopping centers and many other touristic facilities are being constructed in their place. Today 156 school buildings in Istanbul have been marketed for this purpose.

Hospitals are converted into hotels, the historical Haydarpasa Train Station is being converted into a hotel, Emek Movie Theatre, is being converted into a Shopping Centre. For the construction of the third bridge, forest lands are being destroyed, homes located on the route of the construction are being plundered;

NATURE is plundered. In the Black Sea, our streams, our water supply, our coasts are under threat by hundreds of Hydro-electric Plant projects.

Capitalism is attacking from all directions. Now any ideology or a particular worldview is not important at all. Because this process will not leave to us a world where we can live; For this process won't leave us with a world we can live in, there won't be left any air

to breathe. They do not leave us any clean water and shelter for housing. They're forcing us to be surrounded by unemployment and to be left without bread.

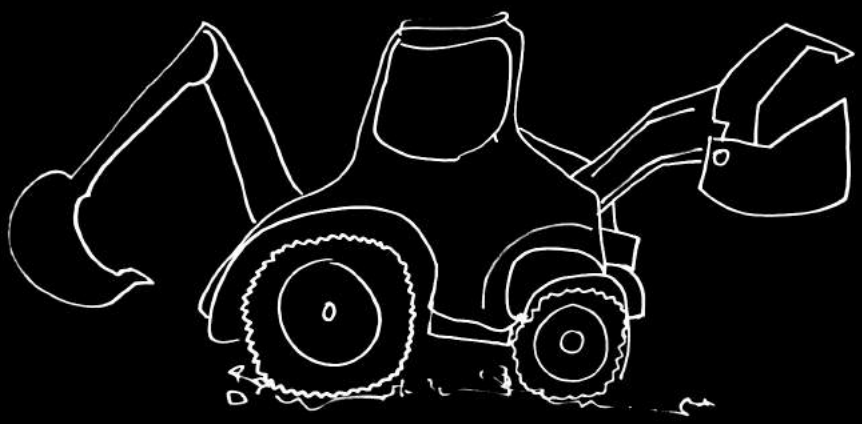
This extinction is something that is very important for everyone, because everyone is going to get hurt. In this system, all the victims, the oppressed, the marginalised, irrespective of any ideology, should come and act together with the aim of reclaiming what is being taken away from them by force.

The only way to overcome this problem is to somehow reshape social consciousness in a way that subordinates individual interests to those of the public and puts social benefits at the top of all other concerns.

Otherwise, we simply cannot find the air to breathe, cannot find a single piece of healthy food left in the near future. Rivers, streams, seas, green areas, forests, water, meadows will all be extinct. In a world surrounded by hotels and shopping centres, in a global market where we are not customers, we will become waste people pushed out of life with each passing day.

In Capitalism, with neoliberal policies, all the precious resources are used up for the welfare and pleasure of a handful of people, a small majority in society. The world we live in, our habitat is sacrificed to ambition and greed. It is a problem within the system itself and it should be explained thoroughly to younger generations very well. And if we can manage to do this, then neither special law articles nor specially designed rules can overcome the power brought about by the togetherness and unity of society and can be justified. And then, also supported by the huge energy of the youth, we can build a more sustainable world for ourselves…

Istanbul Urban Movements



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