

3.4. Housing

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Flats and housing represent for the citizens an irreplaceable value that cannot be left to uncontrolled market forces. To guarantee housing is in the public and private interest. The housing market must therefore be state-regulated. Our housing policy is based on the obligation of the State to do its best to ensure accessible and acceptable housing for every citizen. Part of the ÈSSD intention is an extensive legal regulation of housing which is usual in all developed countries.

One of the first tasks is to overcome the long-term crisis of house-building respecting all forms of ownership. Therefore we will try to allocate a larger investment amount into housing of 1.5 - 2 per cent of the GDP in the form of both direct and indirect support of private, rented and co-operative flats. It is impossible to accept the absurd situation where the Czech building industry fights the long-term decrease in demand with the simultaneous disappearance of approximately 30 000 flats a year.

At the same time we will table a bill on the establishment of a state fund and municipalities funds for housing development as a public administration institution. These funds will be designed to support the following programs:

- For the municipalities in order to obtain building plots of land, for the construction of a technical infrastructure or for the construction of social flats.
- For the owners of dilapidated houses or flats to fund their repairs and renovations including the repairs of prefabricated tower blocks. The funds will be granted based on the objective assessment of the house condition and an approved individual application.
- For the members of co-operatives in the form of a low-interest and long-term loan.
- For the builders of family houses by introducing a state guarantee for the mortgage loans and target subventions. The state guarantee will be granted depending on the financial position of the applicant.

In addition the ÈSSD will enforce:

- creation of a set of provisions in the tax area giving preferential treatment to investments in home-building, repairs and modernization of the housing fund,
- processing of the proposed bill on rent relationships, balancing and amending the rights and obligations of lessors and tenants and the rights and obligations of lodgers. At the same time it will enact provisions against speculation with the housing fund,
- creation of bills to ensure an economic spending of the public funds into the home-building. It will prepare a law to protect the housing fund in order to achieve an economic use of the existing housing fund and it will introduce a housing register,
- proposal to amend the law No. 72/1994 Coll. on the housing fund privatization. It is a defective law from the legislative point of view allowing extensive speculation, causing the elderly to fear that they may lose the roof over their heads and having a negative influence on the activity of the existing co-operations,
- provisions to increase support of the co-operative home-building. The co-operatives will be granted the status of a public benefit organization under the condition that all income from the housing fund operation be re-invested back into it again. Costs of modernization and reconstruction of the housing fund will be allowable as expenses,
- provision after the evaluation of the real cost of housing development, to change the way of regulating the cost of housing to reconcile them with wages development, public purchasing power and the inflation rate. A deregulation mechanism change will ensure its factual correctness and social sensitivity. The rent adjustments will be announced by law,

- assurance of an effective regulation of prices of the services for housing, preventing its unreasonable increase,
- amendment to the law No. 96/1993 Coll. on building savings and state support of building savings and building saving companies aimed at granting a privileged treatment of the savings of the young,
- amendment to the law on housing support based on size of the members household and income amount, and the rent and the costs of living in the family houses,
- strengthening of the role of local administration and self-administration authorities in the housing policy, increasing the effectiveness of their management. To recognize the status of the municipalities as a non-profit organization in the administration and operation of the housing fund by law under the condition that all income from the housing fund operation will be re-invested back into it. In order to create conditions for the development of social house-building and so called starting flats for the young, the costs for modernization and reconstruction of the housing fund will be allowable as expenses.
- to create in collaboration with the representatives of local self-administrations a long-term comprehensive program of home-building and a strategy based on our economic capabilities and needs.

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(c) ÈSSD