

CONCEPT NOTE
RIGHT TO THE CITY CONFERENCE
BARCELONA, 10th and 17th of MAY 2018

Introduction:

This cycle of debates provides the occasion for an open debate among people from different parts of the world that are involved with the struggle for defending the right to affordable and adequate housing. On the occasion of the 50th year anniversary of the publication of Henri Lefebvre's «Right to the City», we aim to contextualize the Right to Housing under the larger framework of the Right to the City, understanding housing as a basic right that is closely linked to the way in which we interact with our communities, both in an immediate (neighborhood) and a larger scale (city). Today, many cities around the world face situations that threaten the Right to Housing and the livelihoods of our communities.

From the rise of rents to the systematic expulsion of neighbors, we are facing global challenges that have local consequences. Thus, it is fundamental to open up the debate, going across borders to exchange experiences and strengthen the resistance. With this goal in mind, [Habitat International Coalition](#), [Observatori DESC](#) and the [Global Platform for the Right to the City](#) organize a cycle of conferences to gather different points of view from around the world to discuss what are the main challenges our communities are facing in terms of Right to Housing and to the City.

The events will focus on two main topics: first, gentrification and expulsion of neighbors and, second, the rise of rents and rent control as a potential solution. The idea is to mix a diagnosis of the situation with possible policy solutions and the experience of social movements.

Day 1 (10/5)

Opening

Kathrin Golda Pongratz (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences / UIC Barcelona) – 15 minutes

Opening of the cycle of debates, giving a brief approximation of the issues that will be treated, focusing more on the overall general urban point of view of the Right to the City (once the other tables will focus more on the right to housing).

Short introductory presentation of David Madden and the book “In defense of Housing”.

David Madden (London School of Economics) – 30 minutes

Presentation of the book “In defense of housing”

Presentation of some of the main elements of the book under the larger thematic framework of the cycle

of conferences. General overview of the book and focus on some relevant points on the right to housing (if possible, connected to the two main thematics that will be explored in the tables: gentrification and rents).

First Roundtable: Gentrification and Eviction of Neighbours

Focus on gentrification under a right to housing point of view, particularly centered on the expulsion of neighbors and possible measures that can be implemented to revert the process

Moderation:

Irene Escorihuela (Observatori DESC), Barcelona

Institutional /Academic point of view:

Andy Yan (Simon Fraser University), Vancouver – 25 minutes

General presentation of the issue of right to housing in Vancouver, focusing on how the problem has evolved during the last few years specially in terms of affordability, financiarisation and foreign inversion. A brief presentation of some of the recent measures that are being taken by authorities to advance on these issues.

Richard Brown (Center for London), London – 20 minutes

General presentation of some of the main trends that London is facing in terms of gentrification, with a special focus on neighborhood resistance and possible policies that are being tested and implemented to counter back this process.

Social movements point of view:

Patrick Lacoste (Un centre-ville pour tous), Marseille – 20 minutes

General overview of some of the main issues observed in Marseille downtown in terms of urban renewal, gentrification and expulsion of neighbors. Particular focus on the work of local social movements.

Local point of view:

Vanesa Valiño (Barcelona City Council) – 20 minutes

Overview of the policies being tested and implemented by the Barcelona City Council in order to address the rapid and aggressive gentrification process the city is currently facing.

Questions and debate: 30 minutes

Day 2 (17/5)

Second Roundtable: Rent Price Control

Focus on the rise of rents that can be observed in many cities over the last few years, focusing more specifically in the ways this trend can be reverted, both through policy and regulation, as well as through community organizing

Moderation:

Iolanda Fresnillo (Ekona, Observatori DESC), Barcelona

Institutional /Academic point of view:

Anna Vergés (Metropolitan Observatory of Housing), Barcelona - 20 minutes

Brief introduction and contextualization of the issue of rise of rents in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, explain the role of the Observatory and contextualize the mechanism of the reference index for rent prices.

Ian Brossat (Deputy of Housing, Municipality of Paris), Paris - 20 minutes

Present the experience of Paris with rent control legislation, going through how it was conceived, implemented, its effect and its annulation last year by the administrative court.

Social movements point of view:

Grischa Dallmer (Berlin / Mietergemeinschaft (Tenants Union) - 20 minutes

Brief contextualization of rents increases in Berlin, what is the local framework in terms of regulation and rent control and what is the perspective of social movements on possible solutions.

Local point of view:

Irene Sabaté (Sindicat de Llogaters- Tenants Union), Barcelona - 20 minutes

Brief contextualization of recent rent increases in Barcelona, with a particular focus on the role of regulations (specially the LAU), the creation of Barcelona's Renters Union, their current campaigns and what changes and solutions they defend.

Questions and debate: 30 minutes