

BFW demands for the 2024 European election (EN)

Housing construction in the European Union is in crisis. High construction costs and rising interest rates are making housing unaffordable for broad sections of the population. The regulatory requirements from Brussels as part of the Green Deal and the EPBD revision have contributed significantly to this.

In the next legislative period, the focus must be on the affordability of housing. After all, housing is a basic human need. New homes must therefore be built. In Europe, it is the SME sector that builds the housing that people need. The EU must offer SMEs the framework conditions they need to create affordable housing.

1. Strengthening the SME sector.

SMEs are a central pillar of the European economy and society. European Union policy must therefore be consistently geared towards strengthening SMEs. This includes, in particular, dispensing with excessive bureaucracy and small-scale regulation. The SME housing industry needs the political framework conditions to create affordable housing. Technological openness and the innovative strength of the free market must be maintained.

2. Affordable housing for everyone.

The affordability of housing is the central issue of our time. Housing is a basic need. The EU must therefore do everything in its power to ensure that its citizens have access to affordable housing. So far, the EU has not prioritised this issue. The framework conditions must be created so that housing can be freely financed and housing construction is not dependent on state subsidies.

3. No harmonisation of building classes.

The BFW Bundesverband is calling for an evaluation on a scientific basis of the extent to which the EU building classes are comparable with each other and can serve as a basis for European standards. If the evaluation shows that comparability cannot be proven by the European Commission, the use of building classes for European specifications must be abandoned. Instead, the member states must be given targets that they must implement on their own responsibility.

4. Ensure compliance with the principle of subsidiarity.

In Europe, the principle of subsidiarity applies, which states that a higher political level may only take on tasks if the subordinate levels are unable to do so. The BFW Bundesverband calls for this principle to be consistently adhered to. The EU is strong when it concentrates on the essential core issues. Not everything has to be regulated in detail by the EU. National room for manoeuvre must be retained.

5. Making higher new-build standards economically viable.

The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) contains higher requirements for the standard of new buildings. From 2030, all newly constructed buildings must be zero-emission buildings. These extremely high requirements are not economically feasible. The BFW Bundesverband rejects these higher new-build standards. The EPBD must be reduced to an economically viable level. The preliminary assessment of economic viability must be carried out by the EU.

6. Emission efficiency instead of energy efficiency.

The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) is focussed on energy efficiency. The BFW Bundesverband is calling for a paradigm shift towards emission efficiency. The system of requirements for the construction of buildings must be fundamentally revised. The climate targets can only be achieved by focussing on emission efficiency.

7. Shaping subsidy law for the future.

It must be ensured that national and European funding programmes close existing profitability gaps. Additional costs for higher standards must be compensated. The funding programmes need a paradigm shift and must be consistently converted to emission efficiency.

8. Reduce bureaucracy.

The European Union must focus on the important things and give people and the economy the freedom to act. This requires less regulation and bureaucracy. The BFW Bundesverband demands that the European institutions refrain from creating more regulation and bureaucracy and start a process to identify and abolish unnecessary regulation and bureaucracy. The EU does not have to regulate everything in detail. In many cases, European targets that are consistently implemented by the member states are sufficient. The EU needs as much regulation as necessary and as little as possible.

9. Practical design of the EU taxonomy.

In addition to the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, the EU taxonomy represents another enormous challenge for the SME housing industry. Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular are faced with the challenge of financial institutions and investors demanding data on the sustainability of companies. Requirements also arise as a result of integration into the value chain. These reporting obligations are a particular burden for small and medium-sized companies. It can also make access to financing more difficult. The BFW Bundesverband is therefore calling for the EU taxonomy to be designed in a practical way, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises.

10. Observe the limits of EU construction products law.

The Europe-wide harmonisation of product qualities in construction product law does not work without contradictions. The reason for this is the lack of harmonisation of testing standards, which leads to differing construction qualities across Europe and therefore also to differing efficiency values, among other things. The European harmonisation of energy standards is therefore already failing due to the regulations of European construction product law. Only if the limits of European harmonisation in construction product law are also observed will this lead to a strengthening of free European competition.

11. Limit European standardisation to security.

The aim must be to adapt the processes of standardisation in such a way that construction becomes cheaper. Only good, simple, cost-effective standards that are limited to hazard prevention should form the basis of regulatory requirements for construction. The BFW Bundesverband is therefore calling for an impact cost assessment for standardisation procedures that takes into account the costs of building and living.

12. Securing the free movement of workers.

Skilled labour is needed to build affordable housing. That is why it is important to secure the free movement of workers in Europe. This can help to ensure that skilled labour is available along the entire value chain and that affordable housing can be built.

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