

ANNEXE 2 to the response to UN Joint Communication from the Special Procedures of 19 April 2021

Notes on Rotterdam's housing policy

Rotterdam Housing Visions

The aim of Rotterdam's housing policy is to be able to offer residents of all types a home in the city and, with this in mind, to ensure that the housing stock is better suited to the needs of the changing population. In successive strategy reports (Housing Vision 2007-2011 (2007), Housing Vision Rotterdam 2030 (2016) and *At Home in Rotterdam*, Addendum to Housing Vision Rotterdam 2030 (2019), Rotterdam has deliberately chosen to cease functioning mainly as an 'escalator city'. Instead, it wishes to be a city in which people can develop their talents and in which, once they have become more settled, they make a conscious decision to remain.

Although the escalator function is an important facet of Rotterdam, it tended in the past to be so pronounced that the number of strong and self-sufficient residents was far outweighed by the number of the more weak and vulnerable. This made it difficult for the city to provide organisational and financial support for the latter group, who are more dependent on the social safety net. Moreover, as the strong and self-sufficient have greater spending power, their presence makes it possible for the city to establish and maintain a wider range of facilities. This benefits all Rotterdam's residents, for example by generating employment in the catering or service sector and by strengthening the networks in the neighbourhood and at the children's school.

In its most recent housing policy document (*'At Home in Rotterdam'*, Addendum to the Rotterdam Housing Vision (2019)), the municipality of Rotterdam has also explicitly chosen to be a city in which its residents can make a life and a career in their current district or neighbourhood. If that goal is to be achieved, there must be a more balanced price range of housing throughout the various districts, because the current housing supply is too one-sided: there are districts with lots of expensive properties where starters can never hope to get their foot on the first rung of the housing ladder, and others with many cheap homes but few if any properties to interest those with rather more to spend. Districts of the latter type have high rates of occupier turnover and tend to have a transient population. This has an impact on the quality of life in the districts and adversely affects their social cohesion.

The city as a whole is currently experiencing strong growth, but the rates of growth vary from area to area depending on area-related factors such as the balance or lack of balance of the housing stock and its quality. For example, some areas of the city are focusing on new builds in the social and middle segments of the market (20% and 30% respectively of the total urban housing programme). In other areas, decisions may be taken at project level to demolish properties because of their poor quality (technical condition, foundations, energy, etc.) and, in order to improve the balance of the housing stock, to replace them with fewer homes but in the middle or higher segments.

Housing Stock Development Area Atlas

The so-called Housing Development Area Atlas¹ is an important tool for the municipality of Rotterdam to help achieve its aim of a balance in the city and in the districts, as laid down in *'At home in Rotterdam'*, the Addendum to the Rotterdam Housing Vision 2030. The atlas is used by the municipality to monitor and manage the housing stock with a view to achieving a better distribution of the segments.

The basic principle is that social housing will be built in districts where there are already many medium-priced and expensive homes. And social housing is built as a standard component of new development projects. Where new residential areas are built, this provides an ideal opportunity to ensure that the housing stock there has the right balance.

¹ See:

<https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/9112505/1#search=%22gebiedsatlas%20ontwikkeling%22>

In those areas where there is already a high concentration of homes in the cheaper segment (for example, large parts of South Rotterdam), it has been decided to build more medium-priced and expensive homes. However, social housing also remains well-represented in these areas. In many of the 'focus neighbourhoods' of South Rotterdam, including Afrikaanderwijk of which Tweebosbuurt is part, the proportion of social housing will fall from 85-95% to approximately 60-70% in the period from 2017 to 2030.