

ECCAR General Conference in Bologna

19-20 November 2020

CommunicAction – A common front to protect human rights at the local level

Working group

“Tackling discrimination by ensuring equal access to housing in the real estate business”

Description and objectives of the working group

Access to qualitative housing is a fundamental human right. In reality, recent studies show exclusion and discrimination in the access to proper housing. This exclusion can be based on diverse grounds, such as ethnicity, impairments, income, ...

Ghent was the first Belgian city that started measuring discrimination on the housing market through correspondence testing. These situation testings are a core aspect in the local anti-discrimination policy.

Together with Professor Pieter-Paul Verhaeghe, the city of Gent will share the medium terms effects of the methodology adopted in Gent of measuring discrimination through correspondence testings and will discuss how to implement proactive and reactive testings.

After this presentation, other cities will briefly introduce their practices and tools on equal access to housing in the rental market, including communication actions and trainings.

Bologna, for example will bring the experience of its Housing Policies department, as well as a proposal by a local civil society network on how to effectively engage private owners of houses.

The participatory workshop has 2 objectives:

1. Give insight in the approach of situation testings in the real estate business and answer some questions: Can correspondence testing help to understand the phenomenon of discrimination and challenge discrimination? Are there effects on informing real estate agents about correspondence testing? Could mediation and collaboration with the real estate sector be effective?
2. Explore with all participants: how far can cities and other local stakeholders go in taking measures? What steps can be undertaken to ensure equal access to housing?