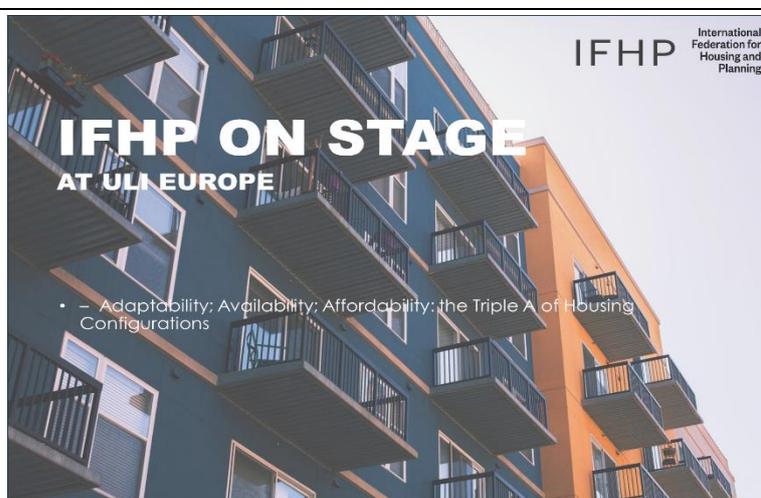# IFHP on the ULI Stage – Adaptability; Availability; Affordability: The Triple A of Housing Configurations

Changes in housing configurations are a growing challenge for cities, and is top of mind for the European Residential Product Council at the Urban Land Institute (ULI), who at their recent convening in Copenhagen, hosted by Rambøll, sourced input from the Copenhagen context. Here Director: International Affairs at IFHP, Regitze Hess shared thoughts on housing adaptability, availability and affordability as essential to "Housing for All" and an ongoing concern for IFHP.

Currently there is a shortage of approx. 250.000 housing units in Denmark. Affordable housing is becoming more and more expensive. Rising market prices are not as such due to rising construction costs but are largely a function of the costs of buying the land to build on, which takes up a good portion of the economic and legal framework for affordable housing in Denmark. Subsidized housing, known as "social housing", is becoming the only way to build affordable housing in Denmark. Competition is tough – private investors and high-income owners or renters takes the lead when it comes to building and living in new housing units. Middle- and low-income families, singles and young families are being pushed out of the greater cities into suburbs and rural areas where housing prices are affordable.

Cities are being segregated due to the – almost sizzling - housing market. But there are examples of how societies have developed solutions to handle housing shortages. After World War II, industrialization in the building sector allowed for massive building activity and thousands of industrial dwelling blocks and high rises was built in surrounding areas of the old cities. This created the modern suburbs, largely based on infrastructure for private cars and some public transportation. But the buildings in these areas were not entirely built in a way so that they can be reused, functionally or materially. That's why we must learn from history, as new solutions are now needed.

There seems to be a new trend towards **sharing** as a means for coping with the lack of housing. It shows a change in how people want to live, towards more connectivity, not only digitally, but also physically, as in daily living close to other ways of living, other generations, and other cultures. Examples of how sharing is becoming a vital part of reusing the city and its buildings can be found in changing forms of occupancy in rowhouses, the use of containers for student housing or retrofitting of former school buildings for inter-generational collective living.

This time is it crucial, also in the construction, building and housing sector, to apply the circular design principles of

- Sharing

- Repurposing

- Reusing

- Retrofitting and

- Renewables

And while housing **affordability** and **availability** is top of mind for many decision makers both in public and private sectors, there is an emerging third A, **adaptability**, which relates to terms of functionality, financing mechanisms, spatial configurations, accommodation of varieties of lifestyles and family structures. Housing adaptability is essential, because there is more to housing than physical layout and bottom line in terms of economic viability. Good housing offers a sound social setting and continues to do so through shifting generations and demographic compositions.

For more on housing:

- WEF Making Affordable Housing a Reality in Cities
  http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Making_Affordable_Housing_A_Reality_In_Cities_report.pdf

- Rebuilding the Relationship between Affordable Housing and Philanthropy
  https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/rebuilding-the-relationship-between-affordable-housing-and-philanthropy/

- Luise Noring, Financing the Inclusive City: A Case Study of Danish Affordable and Social Housing http://www.buildup.eu/sites/default/files/content/financing_the_inclusive_city.pdf

- Home: Ensembles: Cities: Housing and Welfare in Copenhagen, Peder Duelund Mortensen
  http://b-arki.dk/housing.html

- IFHP Housing in Denmark https://www.ifhp.org/product/ifhp-publication

- Housing in Denmark Since 1930 https://www.worldcat.org/title/housing-in-denmark-since-1930/oclc/2795585