

Dear Imogen Exton,

Forgive me for my late reply to your letter and request. Unfortunately, I am on a long-term mission for IHS in Cairo, Egypt and your correspondence only reached me yesterday through the diplomatic mail.

After reading the proposal for a new journal "The European Journal of Housing Policy", which you kindly sent to me, I would like to make a few comments:

1. Despite the fact that there are already other journals which address housing as a major topic e.g. Housing Studies, Housing Finance, etc., there is certainly a need for such a new journal which focuses its attention on housing policy and practice. I would underscore more evidently the "practice" aspect in order to give a problem solving orientation to the journal. It should not be so academic but rather bring forward applied research and concrete experiences from various countries. In my view, there is a gap in the editorial market regarding the practice and analysis of policy implementation, and their impact thereafter in the various European countries and cities. I think that policy and practice gives this journal a very good market appeal. Logically, the content should reflect that.

- policy implementation
- practice
- problem solving
- impact evaluation
- institutional mechanisms and policy instruments

2. The process of globalization and the European integration calls for a careful look at the development of the housing markets, finance and policy instruments which all have a close relationship with the macro-economic development process. Furthermore, Central and Eastern European countries and in general, the transitional economies, are all confronted with key housing policy dilemmas which became apparent after the gradual and in some cases abrupt withdrawal of the State from housing production. There are many changes taking place in the housing sector throughout Europe and in the world in terms of tenure and ownership modalities, privatization, local governments involvement, credit and so forth. The process of housing reform pursued in these countries are clear housing policy problems. There is a need to disseminate the European experience, the problems and solutions, and the peculiar policy instruments developed in the various countries of the EU. The new journal could serve as a vehicle. My experience in the Former Soviet Union and in many developing countries pursuing similar macro-economic reforms show that there is a wide interest to know more closely the experiences in Western Europe. Vice-versa is also true meaning that practitioners, policy makers and decision makers are learning from one another in a globalized society. So that the journal should have a little flexibility in the content in order not to be too strictly focused on the EU countries.

3. The housing policy field is multi-agency and multi-disciplinary. Basically, policy intervention tries to influence the behavior of the housing supply and demand by establishing the principles for government intervention (regulations, facilitation, empowerment, etc.) and market provision. Articles will tend to focus on subsidy systems, policy instruments, land development, institutional development and private sector participation, decentralization of housing policy, as well as the regulatory environment. The trend for deregulation is not yet final.

4. The European perspective should be the starting point by mobilizing academics and practitioners working directly with key problem areas of housing policy in the different countries which consequently will allow the journal to address actual and critical issues faced by the housing sector in these countries. Thematic editions, as mentioned in the proposal, could be a very good instrument indeed. Disseminating the journal among public and private agencies involved in the chain of housing policy formulation and implementation will increase its relevance and marketing. However, this perspective should not become an enclosure since the journal can become a vehicle to foster transfer of experiences beyond the European continent.

5. The editorial structure seems to be fine.

6. Nothing to add except that I miss a representative from outside the academic world. If the emphasis is on practice and experiences, it would be wise to invite a major "private" or even public housing developer organization with the necessary reputation to contribute with the development of the journal. As stakeholders in the housing policy environment, they have as much interest in the development of the housing sector as the academics and are certainly potential clients.

7. The total European integration will create a new development scenario in which the housing sector has a major role to play. The journal will have to keep up with the (rapid) changes that are likely to occur and follow very closely the new developments, attempts, solutions, the political dimensions and institutional and financial arrangements that will certainly follow. In terms of building technology, there is not much to be expected but certainly in the environmental, legal and institutional aspects of housing policy. The market future of the journal will depend on its own strategy to keep updated. This reinforces the "practice" and problem solving character it should have. It should be a different journal in all aspects.

8. Universities and particularly those faculties dealing with the planning and management of the built environment as well as the various housing research centers are likely to become the traditional clients of the journal. But an interesting target group could be the housing practitioners, housing organizations and developers who are gradually getting involved in the various aspects of policy formulation and implementation. A marketing strategy will be needed to get the journal reaching them. I believe that the "academic" journals are not managing to address the needs of the practitioners' world. They often publish on-going

academic research with interesting findings but remaining very hybrid and difficult to be translated in useful information to “those who are actually getting their hands in the mass”.

9. It is not advisable to be too focused on a particular region or country.

10. On a world wide basis, most countries are pursuing policy reforms which basically streamline vertical housing policy decisions but large horizontal participation and coordination which are inter-sectoral and inter-agency. The gradual withdrawal of the State and the redefinition of the role and scope of government intervention in the housing sector are common features. Budgetary discipline, privatization and decentralization are redefining the role of central governments and creating new perspectives for housing delivery and production. The mechanisms and level of decentralization differ and the involvement of private sector as well. This process will highlight the singularities of local and perhaps regional housing markets. These are some of the issues that the journal will be able to anticipate and bring forward meaningful contribution to practice and thinking.

Finally, I hope my comments still add to the present debate about the feasibility of the initiative. I wish you success and do not hesitate to contact me in future initiatives of this kind.

Best regards,
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