



## European Housing Policy Benefits Migrants, Not Europeans

A recently published report titled “[Non-European Foreigners and Social Housing in France](#)” regarding France’s social-housing system (HLM) contended that sub-Saharan African migrants benefited from the system immensely, while the poorest French citizens [effectively are unable to access it](#).

The Fondation Pour L’innovation Politique (Fondapol), one of France’s [key political think tanks](#) and a [research institute](#) focused on immigration, organized the aforementioned study and found that the HLM system was highly flawed, as French families who need it most cannot benefit from it. A mere 11 percent of non-immigrant French people can access such social-housing benefits, while 57 percent of African immigrants and their descendants live in subsidized housing.

The study noted that beneficiaries of HLM occasionally remain in social housing for several generations, denying access to needy French citizens. The report criticizes the system for entrenching families in social housing accommodations for long periods of time. Consequently, migrant populations embrace low-cost housing for many years, and eventually congregate in ghettos, virtual parallel societies shut off from state authority and French society and culture.

Per a 2023 report, the price of housing in France has doubled in the last two decades, making [homeownership in France](#) a pipe dream for many. For years, the right-wing National Assembly party (formerly National Front) has been decrying “[the foreign preference](#)” in council housing. Little wonder that recent [polls](#) have revealed that about 70 percent of French people say they welcome a referendum on immigration.

During an [interview](#) with *Le Point*, Prefect Michel Aubouin, former inspector general of administration and director of the reception and integration of foreigners, urged for a major revamp of French housing laws to address the housing crisis for French nationals.

In neighboring Spain, [leftist government policies](#) have made [properties harder to rent affordably](#), as there are now an average of 27 families interested in every rental home advertised in Spain, compared to 17 per property in the first quarter of 2023.

People most severely impacted are those looking for housing in the medium and lower price ranges, observers have warned.

According to a 2022 report, Spain had [the worst housing deficit for rental or purchases in all of Europe](#), with merely about seven percent of its housing stock being public, compared to 20 percent to 30



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Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on April 14, 2024

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percent in other European countries. Under President Pedro Sánchez, rental housing availability has deteriorated to historic lows, with rental stock nosediving to a mere 28 of the real estate market, as per 2023 [data](#) from the real estate website Idealista.

Areas of Madrid's city center have changed drastically, with local residents getting displaced by investors, real estate speculators, and tourists.

[Spanish law](#) benefits tenants or illegal occupants, thus making it harder for property owners to evict squatters or non-paying tenants. That being said, Spanish military personnel often have to wait months for housing and can be readily evicted if they fail to pay their rent, even in military housing. Such military personnel have a grace period of only three months, compared to the two years in the private sector. Notably, 40 soldiers were [evicted](#) from properties that the Ministry of Defense owned last year alone.

Across the Channel, the U.K. government last year planned [to loosen reception rules](#) to facilitate the process of housing asylum seekers in private accommodation, with the mayor of London earmarking funds in 2023 to the [non-profit project](#) First Brick, meant to supply homes particularly for "LGBTQ+ people [so they] can live safely, joyfully, free from oppression." Members of the public were even [asked](#) to donate money to the project.

In [January](#), British taxpayers were paying around £6 million every day to "keep illegal migrants in hotels." In 2023, The Daily Telegraph [published](#) the contents of an official Home Office document sent to Downing Street in 2022, [cautioning](#) that without instant measures, another 1.1 million foreign workers and students could enter Britain before the next general election.

At one point of time, the British taxpayer was paying £8 million daily to around 400 hotels for asylum seekers. These accommodations [entailed](#) four-star country estates and tourist hotspots.

However, ordinary British nationals have to spend more on housing than their counterparts in New Zealand, Ireland, Australia, and Canada, as per a [report](#) in March 2024 by the Social Market Foundation. The same report detailed that Brits have to spend almost 26 percent of their disposable income on housing costs, as opposed to 24 percent in Australia and Canada.

Even the leftist *Guardian* [reported](#) last month that Britain's "expensive, cramped and aging" housing stock fared terribly compared with other advanced countries, according to the Resolution Foundation.



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