



experimentcity europe

a new european platform for co-housing:
cooperative, collaborative, collective and sustainable housing cultures

stiftung
trias

t22:
Institut für kreative Nachhaltigkeit

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foreword

by Michael LaFond, id22: experimentcity

The experimentcity europe platform for co-housing cultures is initiated and coordinated by id22: Institute for Creative Sustainability in Berlin, in cooperation with many outstanding European partners. The initiative is funded by the European Commission's "Europe for Citizens Programme," as well as Berlin's Senate Department for Urban Development. The Stiftung trias is also providing financing and has made it possible for this brochure to be designed and printed.

Co-housing refers to innovative housing forms which are self-organized, inclusive and non-speculative, representing the diverse European landscape of cooperative, collaborative, collective and community-oriented housing cultures.

This publication introduces the experimentcity europe network and its partners, including model projects and strategies regarding co-housing. The following pages document the launching of experimentcity europe in the context of the EXPERIMENTDAYS 10 housing fair in Berlin, October 27-31, 2010. This included visits to projects, discussions and a conference, complemented by an interactive website as well as a follow-up meeting in Milan in March 2011.

experimentcity europe was launched in the context of the 2010 European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

It is maintained that co-housing cultures, as they are emerging specific to each city and region, offer significant contributions to local social housing practices and to sustainable urban development. At the same time, the diversity and affordability of such participatory housing projects is often threatened by processes of gentrification and

segregation, i.e. rising property values and rents, as well as exclusionary housing.

experimentcity europe finds its roots in Berlin in a cooperation among civil society and local government. Berlin has both a long tradition and an exceptional diversity of cooperative housing projects. Here, as in so many European cities, there is a growing interest in collaborative housing as a response to various changes including demographic trends as well as economic, environmental and ecological challenges. More and more people are rediscovering the value in community, cooperation and neighbors, and in being able to cooperatively design and manage their own housing. The economic securities and ecological benefits of co-housing are attracting many to these housing forms.

Still, many questions face this emerging European co-housing movement.

How is the diversity of housing cultures to be regionally and internationally compared and evaluated?

What housing and urban development policies are needed to help develop and maintain co-housing?

What are the potential contributions of co-housing projects toward current and future urban challenges?

This includes:

- > social integration and regulation of gentrification
- > the production of new affordable housing
- > barrier-free housing for families and elderly
- > energy efficient housing
- > sustainable urban development



[mission statement]

berlin manifest

for the emerging european co-housing-cultures movement,
diversity and democracy

March 2011

In sustainability-oriented European cities, civil society can expect to enjoy “rights to the city” and “rights to housing.” Urban populations are increasingly understanding this to mean further democratizations, including the right to personally develop and maintain desired housing forms. This is leading to a movement of “co-housing cultures”: innovative housing which is self-organized, inclusive and non-speculative, including cooperative, collaborative, collective and community-oriented housing projects.

experimentcity europe has been initiated to:

1. study, network, support and publicize the great diversity of European co-housing cultures, especially in the context of communicative, process-oriented sustainable urban developments.
2. support initiatives increasing social inclusion and gender equality, especially concerning lower-income groups in collaborative housing projects.
3. encourage housing and ground ownership strategies such as land trusts and long-term lease agreements working for affordability and against gentrification and speculation.
4. assist experimental housing demonstrating environmental technologies and energy efficiency.
5. offer new housing options for increasingly diverse and engaged urban populations, working against trends towards societal isolation and individualization.
6. assist innovative co-housing projects demonstrating successful strategies for the self-design and management of housing, contributing to further democratizations of urban planning and development.
7. work for political and social policies necessary to enable and maintain collaborative housing projects, including a range of cooperative, ownership and rental models.
8. support new forms of cooperation among civil society, government and business, in order to more effectively support collaborative housing.
9. improve communication and networking at the European level by developing a common language and tools for ongoing exchange. Transfer experiences and best practices among European partners.
10. develop and exchange housing communications strategies, including online databases, publications, fairs and other events.

[Introduction]

Being the change we wish to see ...

by Rolf Novy-Huy, Stiftung trias

What are my visions of housing and home? Do co-housing, co-operative and multi-generation housing projects reflect on personal or perhaps also socio-political questions? Note that Germany's population for example will decrease from 82 million people in 2010 to 65 million in 2060, and at the same time this population will dramatically age. In 2008 there were 4 million people 80 years or older, and in 2050 this group will be 10 million people!

Acknowledging this background and the disintegration of family structures, the Stiftung trias definitely considers the question "How are we going to live in the future?" to be political. Demographic changes will influence all parts of society and the topic of care for elderly people is only one of many issues. This is not only a German problem as shrinking and aging populations are being observed from Portugal to Russia. Economic questions (future income cuts for elderly) and environmental problems will give us additional future challenges.

Although collaborative housing in Germany is still a relatively small movement, it is attracting significant public attention because of its innovative potential and self-help attitude. In this sense it is critical to encourage people to take their futures into their own hands, instead of supporting consumerism and governmental dependencies. And so each cooperative project represents another building block in a foundation serving sustainable solutions. trias thus sees an important role in working on the larger, long-term questions of development, and not just in organizing support for individual model projects.

Important challenges facing us include non-speculative land uses, the conservation of fertile land resources and preventing land-grabbing in third world countries. Small organizations and foundations like trias are not able to sufficiently deal with all of these questions locally, not to mention internationally. Working in networks helps to exchange knowledge, share inspiring ideas and new points of view but also build solidarity among those working for change. Working across Germany, trias' function is not only to raise money, but also to develop and communicate information. Working at the European level is expectedly even more challenging - and enriching. And so this new European co-housing culture platform represents a fantastic opportunity for the further exploration and development of crucial social questions important to our common future. This is a great step towards international understanding – also one of our objectives.

**You must be the change
you wish to see in the world.**

Mahatma Gandhi



experimentcity europe :: partners

trias, Germany :: id22, Berlin :: Politecnico di Milano, DIS, Italy ::
Kollektivhus NU, Stockholm :: IgBW, Vienna :: Stroud Common
Wealth, UK :: Quatorze, Paris :: National Taiwan Uni, Taipei ::
Koti kaupungissa - Hem i stan, Helsinki :: City of Gdynia, Poland



European Model Projects >

co-housing cultures

experimentcity europe emphasizes a practical approach. While informed by theory, this begins with a search for European model projects and strategies regarding the wide diversity of co-housing cultures. Initial challenges involve the identification and comparison of best practices, as well as trying to understand what is unique and special about both the various housing forms and their differing local situations.

The following selected models are only a very small sampling of the many different ways in which people are organizing their own living situations. Through this we see that cooperative and collaborative projects can indeed provide excellent centers for research and development of a wide range of topics from affordable, intergenerational and ecological housing, to creative and sustainable urban development. How and why are such housing initiatives being developed – or being frustrated? What can or should be learned from each of these projects and their respective cities? How can co-housing best be supported – by civil society, by financial institutions or by the government?

[experimentcity]

Berlin event

summary of week's activities including project visits and discussions, October 27-31, 2010

The experimentcity europe platform's first event was held in the context of the EXPERIMENTDAYS 10. The week in Berlin was organized to bring the network partners together, get to know Berlin actors and initiatives, share best practices and investigate what strategies both governmental and grassroots actors in a variety of European cities are using to support participatory housing projects. The week



included an international conference (p. 27) and the Berlin housing project market (*Projektbörse*), as well as an evening of short housing films, discussions and other activities.

The European partners stayed at the **ufafabrik**, a housing/cultural project established in 1979 in Berlin Tempelhof, recognized by the UN Habitat program as an international best practice. The week began at the ufafabrik with introductory partner presentations and short films. A tour was made of the ufafabrik grounds, including green roofs, solar power schemes, an organic bakery and store, children's farm, free school, neighborhood center, several different cultural stages and much more. (www.ufafabrik.de)

Visits during the week included the following model projects:

ExRotaprint (www.exrotaprint.de)

A co-operatively organized, non-profit "social sculpture" including a combination of artists, educational and social initiatives, light industry and housing, organized since 2005 in an architecturally spectacular former industrial grounds. The affordable activities are permanently secured through a long-term lease with non-profit foundations who were able to obtain the property from Berlin.

Regenbogenfabrik (www.regenbogenfabrik.de)

This housing/cultural project was formed in the 1970s, when a group of about 50 young people squatted in an abandoned factory and adjacent block of flats. The project includes affordable housing, a children's playground, cafe, small hotel, workshops and cinema.

Haus Schwarzenberg (www.haus-schwarzenberg.org)

In the middle of the gentrified downtown, this cultural center has maintained affordable spaces since the early 1990s for alternative and collaborative art, including galleries, cafe, cinema, studios, bookstore, etc.

Forum Factory (www.forum-factory.de)

This cultural space is part of a large vocational training center, located in a soon-to-be developed area, expecting more cultural initiatives but also various housing projects.

K9 (www.kinzigg.de)

K9 is a self-managed, politically-oriented housing project, with an open living concept and a lot of public space for community work, education and networking. Needed renovations have been financed through self-help funds from the Berlin government as well as private loans and significant personal contributions. Residents have a long-term lease with a housing cooperative which owns the property.

[October 29, 2010, Forum Factory in Berlin]

International Conference: Collaborative Housing

Collaborative housing: sexy, cheap and available?

The EXPERIMENTDAYS 10 international conference took place on October 29, 2010 at the Forum Factory in Berlin. Around 120 attendees witnessed presentations of model strategies made by housing experts from Berlin as well as other European cities. Moderation was provided by Dan Borden from EXBERLINER magazine and the save berlin initiative. The main question the conference explored was: “What are urban actors – policy makers, researchers, developers and activists – in each of the participating cities doing to support a diversity of sustainable, non-speculative and affordable housing projects?”



Maria Krautzberger, Berlin Permanent Secretary for Transport and Urban Planning

Speaking on behalf of Berlin’s Senate, Ms. Krautzberger welcomed the audience and noted that some of the main urban development goals for the city were to find and build on co-housing best practice examples and strategies, to learn from ‘experiments’ and the creative culture, as well as to support appropriate projects and sustainable development.

Michael LaFond, Director, id22: Institute for Creative Sustainability, Berlin

Mr. LaFond briefly presented the Institute, which also hosted the conference. He argued that many of Berlin’s problems are common around Europe, including gentrification, a slowing economy and weakened social housing, but the diversity of co-housing cultures offer innovative solutions to such urban challenges. Berlin, the city with the greatest variety of sustainable, collaborative housing approaches in Europe, includes building groups, cooperatives and rentals. Ideally these projects should not exist for profit but be self organized.

Anna Meroni, DIS, INDACO, Politecnico di Milano, Italy

DIS focuses on service design as well as strategic design for social innovation and sustainability. Regarding housing, Ms. Meroni said that homes should be used creatively. Ideas include: using common space for a neighborhood restaurant, competency exchange among residents, cooking cooperatives, community gardens, food cooperatives as well as public events. A main challenge is how to support and replicate these ideas. In order to achieve these goals, DIS uses networks to encourage ‘design thinking’, develop toolkits and generate new ideas.

Reiner Nagel, Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development

Mr. Nagel presented Berlin as an exciting city, slowly growing with many creative opportunities. Building cooperatives and co-housing are an important part of the Berlin government’s ‘green’ policy. Such housing projects have a long history in Berlin and interest remains high. The city has set high goals for increasing the numbers of these types of buildings and has focused on selling public land to building cooperatives at fixed prices. In the future, Berlin needs more socially integrated neighborhood management and more urban pioneers.

[October 29, 2010, Forum Factory in Berlin]

... International Conference: Collaborative Housing

Petra Hendrich, Initiative für gemeinschaftliches Bauen und Wohnen (IgBW), Vienna

Ms. Hendrich discussed Vienna's strong reputation for funding community-oriented housing through publically owned apartments, as well as direct and indirect subsidies, with city public housing being reserved for both lower and middle class citizens. Developers have strong political ties and the city tends to give subsidized land and housing to them instead of small housing groups. IgBW was created in 2010 to support collaborative housing through networking and encouraging the local government to support collaborative housing groups instead of developers.

Rolf Novy-Huy, Stiftung trias, Germany

Mr. Novy-Huy explained that the Stiftung trias is a foundation giving support to non-profit collaborative housing projects while protecting the original aims of the projects. The support is given both financially and through knowledge and experience. A good instrument for supporting these projects in Germany is the *Erbpacht* or long-term lease, freezing the land price for up to 99 years. This process is non-speculative and can provide steady income to foundations or cities as land owners. Collaborative housing can also be supported by finding suitable building sites and improving conditions for project planning.



Florian Schmidt, Projektbüro Kreativquartier Südliche Friedrichstadt, Berlin

Mr. Schmidt's organization is working to create a sustainable masterplan for Berlin's southern Friedrichstadt. This area is located in Berlin's center and is segregated and paradoxically developed, with poor residents living next to expensive offices and popular tourist sites. A masterplan is proposed for this area, consisting of working and living zones, including temporary work spaces, as well as collaborative and conventional housing. The quarter would be planned through a participative process, with design competitions.

Dick Urban Vestbro, Chairman, Kollektivhus NU, Stockholm

Mr. Vestbro noted his organization protects existing cohousing units as well as encourages new projects. Most of the cohousing in Sweden is originally planned by housing associations. A significant part of the projects is collective cooking and dining. Cohousing is also a good environment for children, with other kids in the buildings as well as constant adult supervision. The advantages of having neighbors are increasingly apparent for the large numbers of one and two person households in Sweden, including seniors. Sustainable lifestyles are also encouraged, with fewer resources used.



Concluding meeting

October 31, 2010 at the K9 House Project in Berlin

The final meeting including all experimentcity europe partners in the context of the EXPERIMENTDAYS 10 took place in an events space of the Berlin K9 housing project. All participants were invited to express their opinions, both regarding positive and critical feedback concerning the EXPERIMENTDAYS 10 events as well as future plans and ideas for the experimentcity europe platform.

Berlin event feedback:

The week of activities was generally praised for its diversity of projects and participants, and for the significant amount of information exchanged through presentations, tours and discussions. The co-housing examples and perspectives were considered to be stimulating and motivating.

Interest was expressed in learning about more socially sustainable and affordable projects, as well as in allowing more time for discussion.

For the future, participants expressed interest in a well-defined mission statement or 'manifesto' for the platform, and in adding representatives from other cities and countries to the network. Interest was also expressed in identifying funding for common projects, for example for organizing exhibitions and publications and in conducting relevant research.

[follow-up meeting]

Milan meeting

March 24 - 26, 2011

The network's second meeting was organized in Milan, in the Politecnico di Milano, coordinated by DIS, Dipartimento INDACO. Discussions dealt with participation tools such as design and co-design tools, and a productive environment was created in which material and knowledge collected during the Berlin meeting could be creatively developed. Workshops importantly focused on the further building of a European movement supporting co-housing cultures.

Workshops discussed and developed:

- > A common lexicon, comparison and narration tools
- > Communication strategies
- > Networking, internet, databases. A European website and online platform
- > Moderation and co-design tools
- > Implementation strategies and dealing with municipalities
- > Grants and fundraising. Grant applications and common projects

Visits to three Milan collaborative housing projects were made:

- > Casa Ecologica: the first ecological building in Milan, built through a co-op
- > Urban Village Bovisa: the first co-housing in Milan, by cohousing ventures
- > Parco Paolo Pini: an ex-psychiatric hospital transformed into a public-inclusive space

Milan experts joined European partners during the meeting's two days, contributing their knowledge and learning from the network.

Two public discussions dealt with bottom-up and top-down collaborative housing initiatives at the local and the European level, gaining attention for the topic of sustainable housing in Milan and Italy.

Discussion 1

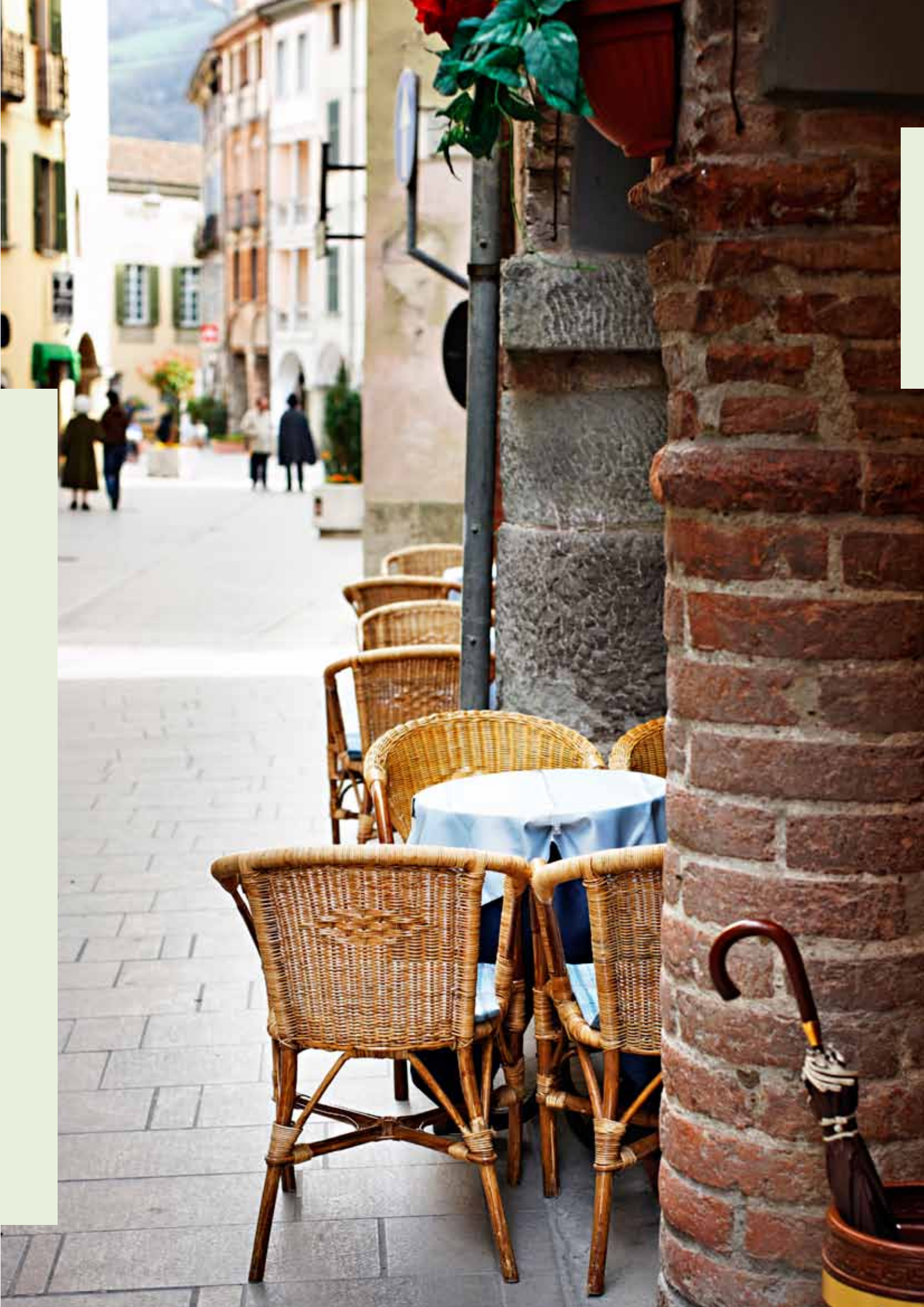
Friday, March 25: hosted by CCL (consorzio di Cooperative di abitazione). European examples served to inspire local co-housing discussions.

Discussion 2

Saturday, March 26: at the fair FALACOSAGIUSTA (DO THE RIGHT THING – Exhibition of Critical Consuming and Sustainable Lifestyle). Dialogue among European and local partners dealt with co-housing, state-of-the-art and future visions.

Milan meeting organized by:

DIS (Design and Innovation for Sustainability) team:
Liat Rogel, Anna Meroni, Ezio Manzini, Marta Corubolo,
Chiara Gambarana



experimentcity europe
collaborative housing | diversity | sustainable cities

founding partners

- > id22: Institute for Creative Sustainability (Berlin, Germany)
www.experimentcity.net
- > Politecnico di Milano (Polimi), department INDACO (Milan, Italy)
www.design-polimi.it
- > Initiative für gemeinschaftliches Bauen und Wohnen (Vienna, Austria)
www.gemeinsam-bauen-wohnen.org
- > Stiftung trias (Germany)
www.stiftung-trias.de
- > Kollektivhus NU (Sweden)
www.kollektivhus.nu
- > laBOMBAsudios (Bucharest, Romania)
www.labombastudios.ro
- > Stroud Common Wealth Co Ltd (UK)
www.strouldcommonwealth.org.uk
- > Quatorze (Paris, France)
www.quatorze14.org

new partners

- > Koti kaupungissa – Hem i stan (Home in the city) (Helsinki, Finland)
www.hemistan.fi
- > Town of Gdynia (Poland)
www.gdynia.pl
- > Buurthuis Bonnevie (Brussels, Belgium)
www.bonnevie40.be
- > Samenhuizen (Belgium)
www.samenhuizen.be
- > Johann Daniel Lawaetz-Stiftung (Hamburg, Germany)
www.lawaetz.de

international guest

- > Graduate Institute of Building and Planning,
National Taiwan University (Taipei, Taiwan)
www.bp.ntu.edu.tw

The existing published brochures concerning legal forms for housing and other topics are available to order at:

www.stiftung-trias.de > Informationen > infomaterial



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