



Renovate
don't
Speculate

about HouseEurope!

In the realm of social-ecological transformation within the built environment, numerous individuals, groups, initiatives, and organizations are actively advocating for change. At HouseEurope!, we aspire to amplify these endeavors by contributing our expertise and tools to the collective effort. With over fifteen years of experience in developing adaptive re-use and renovation projects, our approach incorporates legislation and storytelling as dynamic design tools.

Our commitment has led us to initiate the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) HouseEurope!. The ECI serves as a powerful tool for direct democracy, enabling popular votes on new laws. Upon garnering support from at least one million EU citizens across seven countries, the European Commission is obligated to consider the proposed legislative changes. This mechanism ensures that citizens have a direct voice in the EU policy-making process, drawing attention to crucial issues.

Our objective is to present an alternative to existing legislation that prioritizes demolition and building new over renovation and adaptation. Achieving this vision requires widespread understanding, participation, and support.

Thank you for considering how you can be a part of HouseEurope! and contribute to the positive transformation of our built environment. Together, we can make a lasting impact on EU policy and promote a more sustainable future.

itinerant exhibition

The following pages comprise all the essential material for setting up a HouseEurope! exhibition in any cultural institution within the EU. Showcasing the initiative serves as a platform to engage European citizens and garner support. The ultimate goal is to raise awareness about the detrimental impact of demolition driven by financial speculation, while advocating for reuse as an environmentally conscious and socially sustainable alternative practice.

“HouseEurope! Soft Launch” at the POWER exhibition CIVA, Brussels



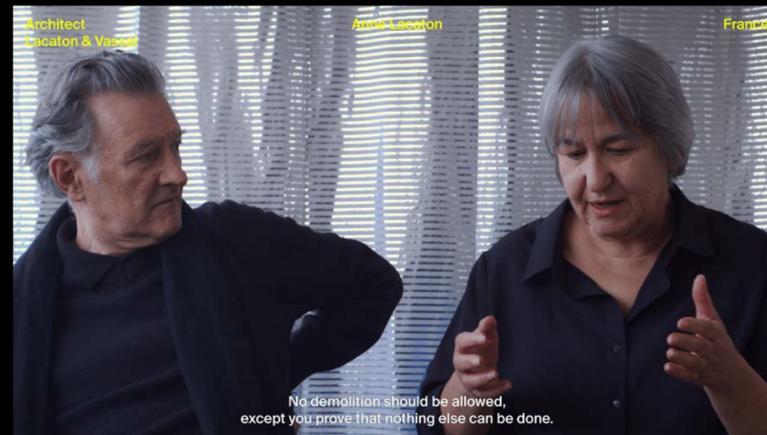


Film

The Demolition Drama

Time: 30

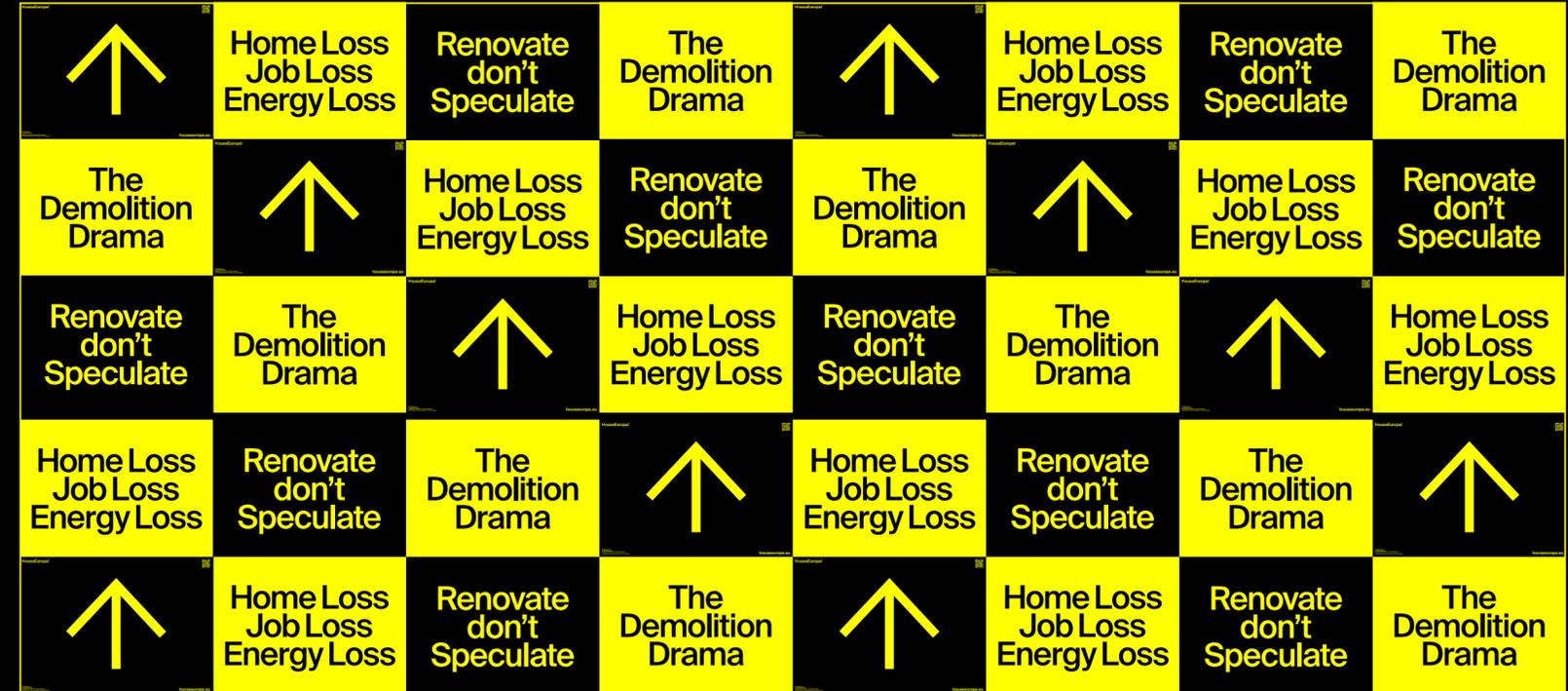
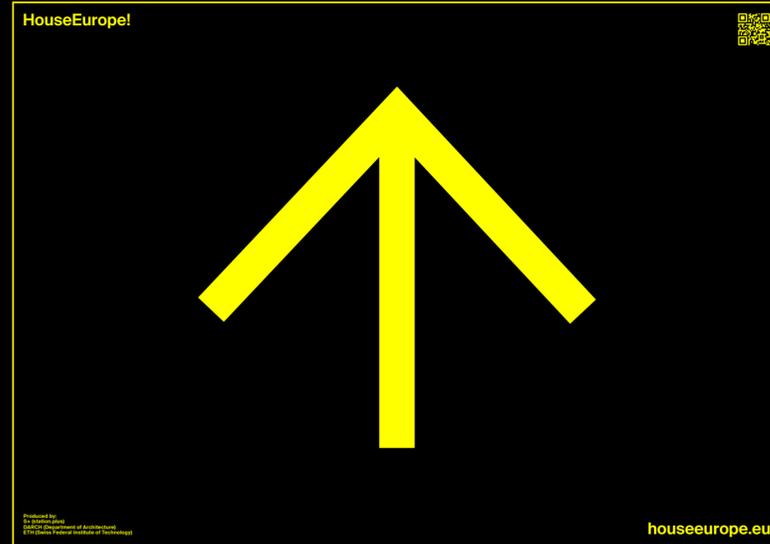
The movie offers a wide perspective on the phenomenon of demolition driven by speculation. With Ann Pettifor, Aris Komporozos-Athanasίου, Joanna Kusiak, Enlai Hooi and Tamara Kalantajevska, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, Jaques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, Oana Bogdan, Charlotte Malterre-Barthes and Ruth Schagemann.



Posters

Size: A1 (59,4 x 84,1 cm)
Can be reproduced locally

A series of posters epitome of the ECI campaign, synthesising the messages fostered by the initiative. They can be arranged as a backdrop for the movie, to devise immersive rooms, or used outdoors as conventional posters. Designed by Berlin based graphic design office HelloMe.



example of their organization to create a backdrop wallpaper

the four posters

Flyer

Size: A5 (21,0 x 14,8 cm)
Can be reproduced locally

A Flyer of the ECI campaign which outlines the agenda of HouseEurope!. They are meant as informative material for the campaign and as takeaways for visitors. Designed by Berlin based graphic design office HelloMe.

HouseEurope!

A citizens' initiative for an EU-legislation that boosts the renovation of existing buildings and stops their demolition driven by speculation.

The Speculation Issue

Today, buildings are treated as investments rather than spaces for people to live. Due to financial speculation, millions of square metres sit empty and ruin, or they are being demolished and replaced: from functioning family homes to abandoned industrial and office spaces.

This practice has negative impacts on both society and the environment. It leads to a shortage of livable spaces for people, while also draining resources that could have been put to better use. Despite the public's focus on issues such as transportation and energy, the building sector is a major contributor to the problems we face today. In fact, it is responsible for 38% of global CO2 emissions. From real estate companies to architects and builders, everyone involved in the building industry has a significant impact on our environment and society.

We are witnessing the relentless destruction of our environment and the wasting of valuable resources. Yet, we maintain a system where it is cheaper to buy something new than caring about the old. We maintain a system that prioritises financial profit over the well-being of the people and the planet. In this system, renovation and adaptation are often neglected in favour of demolition and new construction, with little to no regard for the significant social, economic, and environmental consequences.

Public awareness, our value system, and existing legislation make it possible to sustain this society's lifestyle.

Awareness, Value, Legislation

In Western markets, buildings have not only become an investment but a focal point for financial speculation. Many investors buy properties, not to inhabit or rent them out, but rather in anticipation of financial appreciation. This speculative drive is intensified by various factors, and the ripple effects can be profound.

Our system is designed to tear down and build anew. This worked in the past when resources seemed in endless supply and new construction was cheaper, faster, and easier than dealing with the constraints of existing buildings. The current material and energy shortages show us that this system no longer works and that resources are limited.

The role of the building industry in the problems we face today must become part of our daily conversations because its impact on our lives is dramatic.

The Demolition Drama

By 2050, we will have demolished 2 billion square metres of existing space in Europe. From Amsterdam to Athens, from Riga to Rome, we will have demolished the equivalent of half of Germany's building stock, which is all of Paris or Berlin. Instead, we will have built billions of square metres of new space to replace what was already there. This leads to three main issues:

Home Loss, Job Loss, Energy Loss

Social Issue = Home Loss
We demolish existing buildings that could comfortably house more than 50 million people, while the harsh reality is that every year, countless individuals lose their homes due to demolition and the soaring costs of new construction.

Economic Issue = Job Loss
In the building industry, mainly big players benefit from demolition and new construction. Small and medium-sized businesses have the opportunity to thrive through renovation and adaptation projects.

Ecological Issue = Energy Loss
Our built environment carries a substantial embodied energy, encompassing countless tons of CO2. With each building we tear down, we waste all of the energy already invested in its construction.

Let's fix this!

The Renovation Story

The answer is that we need a social-ecological transformation of the existing building stock.

This means we need to change our attitudes and practices by recognizing the value of existing buildings and supporting their renovation. Renovation is a great answer to ensuring affordable living spaces and supporting small and medium-scale businesses in the construction sector, all while massively reducing CO2 emissions. The renovation wave, initiated by the European Union as part of the European Green New Deal, can help people to live in much better conditions, and even be economically preferable in the long run.

This transformation takes time, but we came up with a simple yet detailed roadmap.

Preservation, Adaptation, Renovation, Transformation

To achieve the social-ecological transformation of the existing building stock we must activate what is already there, through measures focused on building preservation, adaptation, renovation, and transformation.

- Preservation: Reuse, don't demolish!**
We call for the preservation of existing buildings and the energy already invested in them. By doing so, we can save valuable resources and maintain social and cultural values. We aim to prioritize reuse over demolition, taking the first step towards achieving affordable living spaces for all.
- Adaptation: Adapt, don't abandon!**
We call for the adaptation of existing structures and underused spaces. In doing so, we can give Europe's building stock a new purpose and narrative, reframing the perception of value in what already exists. We aim to adapt buildings that have fallen out of use, thereby invigorating the potential of the existing building stock.
- Renovation: Build for the future!**
We call for the renovation, repair, and care of existing buildings. This reduces waste and CO2 emissions. We aim to renovate in a future-proof way, meaning we need to (re)build in a long-lasting way, limiting the unnecessary use of additional material and new construction now, and in the future.
- Transformation: Shift the Value!**
We call for the transformation of existing structures in a social, environmental, and economic sense. We aim to implement policies that ensure equity, resilience, and community-building. We need new cultural narratives: from viewing spaces as commodities to seeing them as necessities.

HouseEurope! the European Citizens' Initiative

There are already many people, groups, initiatives, and investors out there making a difference by advocating for a social-ecological transformation of the existing building stock. We support these efforts and bring our expertise and tools to the table. In more than fifteen years of developing adaptive reuse and renovation projects, we have built a practice that considers legislation, advocacy, and storytelling as active design tools.

This is why we decided to launch a European Citizens' Initiative called HouseEurope! Simply put, a European Citizens' Initiative, or ECI, is a great tool for direct democracy. Much like the Swiss referendums that allow a popular vote on new laws, the ECI enables citizens from all EU countries to propose new laws or changes to existing ones. If one million EU citizens from at least seven countries support the cause, the European Commission must consider the proposal and dedicate a working group. This gives citizens a direct say in the EU policy-making process and helps raise awareness of important issues.

Together, we aim for an alternative to the current legislation that favours demolition and reconstruction over renovation and adaptation. But to make this happen, we need everyone to understand, join in and support the call. We need each other!

Join, Support, Sign

You rent an apartment? You own a building? You care about the environment? You work in the building sector? Almost everyone is or will be affected by speculative real estate practices and the harm they cause. Because here's the deal: every building is up for demolition, you just don't know yet! In fact, speculation fuels demolition and new construction. This comes with a loss of homes, a loss of jobs, and a loss of energy.

You can make a difference – put an end to this practice and make a change in reality! With your support, your voice, and your signature we can push for regulations that recognize and protect the value of existing buildings. But this is not just about materials and energy; it is also about the values we hold as a society. By activating buildings that have been abandoned, we will pave the way for a livable future – for ourselves, our children and all future generations.

Who We Are

Houseeurope.eu

We are a growing team of citizens that brings together diverse perspectives and expertise from the fields of architecture, labour and politics, to our initiative. Together, we are committed to creating precedents for the social-ecological transformation of how we live together.

Produced by:
S+ (station.plus)
DARCH (Department of Architecture)
ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)



station+ DARCH ETH zürich

HouseEurope!

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Renovate don't Speculate

The Demolition Drama



HouseEurope!

houseeurope.eu

Tape

Size: 5cm width

The tape is meant to be used to stick on walls or wrap around objects (i.e. seats, video supports, etc) to become part of the exhibition setting, or to mark a particular area.
Designed by Berlin based graphic design office HelloMe.



let's fix it! ↑

above: 5 cm x 20 cm

let's fix it! ↑ let's fix it! ↑ let's fix it! ↑

above: 5 cm x 66 cm

Extra Small

With this compact set-up you can support the HouseEurope! initiative by featuring key campaign elements like posters, leaflets, and a screen for the video. Strategically placed in exhibition spaces, lobbies, or other high-traffic areas, these elements aim to raise awareness about the principles and objectives of the HouseEurope! initiative.



Small

For a small-scale approach, the minimum installation of a HouseEurope! booth involves showcasing the video with contextualising posters. This compact format is versatile, making it suitable for group exhibitions and ideal for installation in common spaces within a museum, such as halls and lobbies.



Medium

A medium-sized immersive space is envisaged, dedicated to projecting the video. This setup offers flexibility, allowing installation in any room through the use of posters and tapes. This format draws inspiration from the successful implementation already in place at CIVA in Brussels.



Large

An expansive exhibition dedicated to HouseEurope! is envisaged, encompassing video projections, various research materials associated with HouseEurope!'s topics, including its "Renovation Stories" catalogue. Collaboratively developed between the institution and the HouseEurope! team, this exhibition would serve as a platform for our teams to work in tandem. Together, we can craft an engaging exhibition that not only narrates the HouseEurope! initiative but also delves into the broader architectural practice of reuse.



Ambassadors and Partners

Ambassadors

We are building a group of ambassadors who are dedicated pioneers to advancing the social-ecological transformation. These ambassadors come from different sectors and fields, and they share our vision of a more just and sustainable future. They support our initiative and help us to raise awareness of the importance of the issues we are addressing.

- Lacaton & Vassal
- Herzog & de Meuron

Partners

We are actively seeking partners who can join us in our mission to raise awareness, promote dialogue, and gather support for HouseEurope! initiative. We are particularly interested in collaborating with organizations and individuals who can contribute their resources and expertise in effectively communicating the importance of our cause. Our ideal partners would provide their platforms and networks to host meaningful conversations, engaging both members and the wider public in discussions about the transformative potential of adaptive reuse and the value of preserving existing buildings. Together, we can amplify our message and gather the necessary signatures to drive real change in the building sector.

- ACE (Architects' Council of Europe)
- CIVA

Who we are

Advisors

Carsten Berg, Daniel Häni, Verena Konrad, Barbara Metz, Silke Neumann, Ruth Schagemann

Campaign Manager

Alina Kolar

Concept Idea

b+ (bplus.xyz; Arno Brandhuber, Olaf Grawert, Jonas Janke, Roberta Jurčić, Jolene Lee)

Initiators

Arno Brandhuber, Olaf Grawert

Organisers

s+ (station.plus, Department for Architecture, ETH Zurich; Giacomo Ardesio, Arno Brandhuber, Olaf Grawert, Ludwig Engel, Pan Hu, Alina Kolar, Jolene Lee, Bing Liu, Meghan Rolvien)

Research Team

Franziska Gödicke, Verena Jehle, Maximilian Lewark, Josiane Schmidt, Alexander Throm

Strategists

Ludwig Engel, Quentin Walesch

Video Production

s+ (Severin Bärenbold, Anton Krebs, Pan Hu, Bing Liu)

(Web) Design and Programming

The Laboratory of Manuel Bürger and Systemantics

Contacts

Initiators

Arno Brandhuber
Olaf Grawert

grawert@arch.ethz.ch

Campaign Manager

Alina Kolar

kolar@arch.ethz.ch

Exhibition and Production support

Giacomo Ardesio

ardesio@arch.ethz.ch