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European Competition Policy and National Housing Policies: International Implications of the Dutch Case

Vincent Gruis  & Hugo Priemus

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Abstract

This contribution explores the relationship between housing policy, which is the responsibility of national governments, and competition policy, including the decision on the legitimacy of state support, which is the responsibility of the European Commission (EC). The paper paints a general picture of EU policy on competition and state support and describes the Dutch social housing system. Attention then turns to the recent intervention by the European Commission in the governance of Dutch social housing and it is asked whether the factors that prompted the intervention exist in other EU member states as well. The analysis shows that this is indeed the case. It is concluded that the intervention of the EC in the Netherlands could become a precedent for other European countries, particularly for those countries that opt against a

residualised social rented sector and for a competitive role of social housing providers on the housing market.

Keywords:

European competition policy social housing housing associations level playing field the Netherlands

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