

To the President of France, Chairman of the European Union  
Nicholas Sarkozy

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of activists of the housing movement in St. Petersburg and Russia we would like to express our support of the participants of the European Mobilization for Housing Rights, which is taking place on November 22 in Marseilles, just before the meeting of EU ministers who are in charge of resolving housing problems and urban construction. At the Assembly of Urban Social Movements on September 20 in Malmo, Sweden, we set the goals of this campaign, and its common slogan is: “Against speculations, growth of utility tariffs, privatization of social housing, and social segregation, for a social Europe and solidarity of housing movements!”

These are our common demands, these are common problems we understand well in Russia, and this is our common understanding of the goals of settlements’ social development.

This is why we propose that you, Chairman of the European Union, give a positive answer to the Open Letter to European Ministers from Urban Social Movements on Attention to the Housing Problem and help organize a meeting with representatives of the European event on November 22 with the ministers of EU countries, who will be having their meeting in Marseilles.

We also declare our support of the appeal of international organizations for housing rights to participants of the G20 Summit in New York for development of an international program of housing and habitat funding as one of the options for overcoming the global financial crisis.

We support the proposals made in this appeal on the need to change the neoliberal economic course, which was once forced onto Russia and gave rise to financial speculations on the housing market, privatization of utilities, abandoning of government housing guarantees, and domination of share investment and mortgage housing funding plans, which under the current crisis will impair the living conditions of millions of people in Russia and all the world.

We hope that the government structures of France and EU, which you run, will be capable of a wide public dialogue for creation of a world and European public contract for establishment of fair and reliable living conditions.

Give rights to housing to everyone! Give cities back to their inhabitants!

St. Petersburg, 21.11.2008

The Movement of Civil Initiatives (DGI)