

# SHARE Awareness Plan – ZRMK

July 2006

## Introduction

There are several issues regarding the social housing situation in Slovenia worth taking a closer look at, perhaps the most obvious one being the quite low number of available housing of this category. This condition evolves from legislative changes in early 1990s, when the majority of residential building stock was privatised, i.e. tenants were given opportunity to buy the apartments they had been renting, and so to become owners. However, in the framework of the SHARE Awareness Campaign energy-related topics are being concentrated on.

## Focus

Two issues were exposed as interesting targets for Campaign activities.

*- On the social housing owner's side: **review and control***

One of the problems most often exposed by representatives of municipal housing funds is linked to a lack of control over monthly and annual running costs for individual apartments. The majority of apartments from the social (or, non-profit – a term used in Slovenia) housing sector are still located in multi-apartment buildings with mixed ownership (private versus municipal).

A building manager (usually a specialized ltd company) receives monthly bills (e.g. for consumption of electricity, gas, heating, water, ...) from suppliers, and distributes the costs among apartments according to a contractual agreement. Running costs for non-profit apartments are by the rule paid by tenants, not by owners (i.e. funds or similar).

In this way, owners of non-profit apartments do not have a regular insight in energy-related matters unless they make an extra arrangement with the building manager or directly with the supply company to receive these data. Usually they are notified by the building manager for example only when a tenant stops paying the bills. Even in case of new non-profit multi-apartment buildings, designed in an energy- and environment-conscious way, their operational costs remain more or less unknown to the owner, and the intended advantages of the design scheme are not verified.

Known consumption data would allow for at least a quick check of actual figures against predicted ones, help to identify “weak spots”, and to plan measures for improvements. But, as described below, this is not possible anyhow unless there are individual meters installed for each apartment. The question is of course, whether a particular owner really is interested and motivated for such activity or not.

*- On the tenants' side: **awareness level and attitude***

The system of cost distribution in a particular building and tenants' behavioural patterns influence maintenance costs and indoor thermal comfort. Two basic cases can be observed.

If the distribution of costs is more or less proportional (“centralised” bills with distribution according to apartment floor area or number of users), the impact of energy wasted in a particular apartment is “hidden” in the overall balance and distributed among all users. In this way the tenants in question do not feel the consequences of their inappropriate behaviour. They may even not be aware of it.

If the costs are distributed according to readings of individual meters - actual individual consumption - tenants often tend to reduce these bills by heating and ventilating the apartments less. A very common remark is that “the rent is already high enough, so why pay a lot of money additionally for running costs”.

An obvious and frequent outcome is lower thermal comfort in such apartments accompanied by problems with surface condensation and mould growth, for which then the owner (or, indirectly, even the architect or the constructing company) is blamed. This kind of behaviour can affect the maintenance and repair intervals, too. These tasks represent an expense paid by owners.

### **Target audience**

On the side of the owners of non-profit housing perhaps a more purposeful, focused, and organised action towards getting a grip on sustainability issues, and to build a better contact with tenants is needed. On the side of the tenants a lack of knowledge about (management of) energy use and a certain dose of “this is not my concern” attitude can be regarded as imminent. The position of building managers is somewhere in between, with a clear need to back-up the owners’ efforts.

The Campaign will address building owners (and building managers) on a more conceptual and strategic level, where Forums will represent an opportunity for open discussion, exchange of experience, brainstorming etc.

However, the main target audience will be tenants of non-profit housing. Tenants will be addressed through concrete targeted actions.

### **The Campaign slogan**

The slogan, which implies the theme of the Awareness Campaign, and calls for a more active involvement of tenants of non-profit housing, is wordplay about energy, investments, and efforts.

In Slovenian language:

*Vlagate veliko sredstev v neucinkovito rabo energije?  
Vložite raje veliko energije v ucinkovito zmanjsanje teh sredstev!*

The (approximate) English translation:

*Do you invest large amounts in inefficient use of energy?  
Rather invest your energy to efficiently reduce these amounts!*

## **Campaign materials**

Several ideas are currently being discussed; the final decision will be taken in late August/early September 2006.

The stress in all considered material will be on what one can do on his/her own to use energy more efficiently and to lower the bills while improving indoor comfort.

Narrower selection includes:

### *- Leaflet/brochure for tenants*

Preparation of a shorter illustrated text about adequate heating and ventilation of apartments, and about its influence on indoor comfort, energy bills, and maintenance schedules. Encouragement to use energy advisory services whenever needed. Contact details for further questions, energy advisory service contact info, short info on SHARE project ...

Distribution possibilities: via building managers (included with monthly bills), during regular tenants' meetings, on stands at trade fairs, at energy advisory offices and advice surgeries, download of an electronic version from project homepage...

### *- Postcard*

Short lines of a "did you know that ..." type about energy use in households, short info on SHARE project, invitation to visit homepage, contact details for further questions, energy advisory service contact info, ...

Distribution possibilities: on special "Feliks" stands at frequented shops, restaurants etc., via building managers (included with monthly bills), during regular tenants' meetings, on stands at trade fairs, at energy advisory offices and advice surgeries, ...

### *- Posters at bus stops*

Same content as above, ongoing investigation of possibilities of realisation.

### *- Mobile exhibition*

Preparation of hardback posters about most relevant issues and facts (energy, indoor comfort, costs, ...) – combination of text and graphics with further contact and www info.

Distribution possibilities: during regular tenants' meetings, on stands at trade fairs, at energy advisory offices and advice surgeries, download of an electronic version from project homepage...