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International Instruments on Housing Rights

Padraic Kenna

Abstract: Housing rights can act to guarantee minimum housing provision for poor and deprived persons, based on respect for human dignity. These rights are now established within many international public law instruments and treaties, as well as national constitutions, laws and curial jurisprudence. There is a growing corpus of law giving greater definition and clarification to state obligations, and the nature and extent of housing rights. Housing rights discourse is expanding from shelter and social housing toward embracing all elements of housing systems, including housing as property, housing finance, infrastructure, environmental, and regulation systems. But beyond regulation of these elements, can these housing rights be integrated into a template for the governance of overall housing systems in the new era of regulation of housing and finance markets?


CE Database subject headings: Housing; Legal issues; Social factors; Financial factors; Regulations; United States.

Housing Rights: Why We Need Them

Housing rights have taken on a new relevance in the context of financial globalization, migration, privatization of social housing and marketization of housing as a commodity. Yet their absence is striking in responses to international disasters involving mass homelessness, such as the Hurricane Katrina in the United States, losses of over $500 billion in the subprime crisis, and the collapse of global investment banks Bear-Sterns, Lehmann Brothers, Merrill Lynch, and others. The global growth of slums in rapidly growing cities, 1 billion people without adequate housing, growing homelessness and affordability problems in urban areas, and the impact of housing on health and on women and children on the environment and cities have also highlighted the need for a modern rights-based approach to housing.

Housing has always been seen as a necessity of life alongside food and clothing. But in many industrialized and urbanized societies it is produced, exchanged, and mortgaged as a market commodity and as an asset. The tension between these two functions underlies the variations of State housing policies everywhere. All states promote housing development and regulation to some extent. Today, home owners across the world are encouraged to view their home as an asset, a store of future and hereditary wealth and mortgage equity. Yet, housing markets are like any other asset markets, prone to booms and busts, and this has important consequences for States approaches to housing rights.

Neoliberal and social democratic governments accept the market as the primary provider of housing, with government intervention to regulate the excesses of the market and to intervene when the market fails. Marcuse and Keating point out that the only disagreement between these two dominant political perspectives is on how serious that failure is, and just what government should do about it. These approaches to housing can be contrasted with a right-to-housing position “in which government’s first obligation is to see that all are decently housed, and the for-profit market is managed and regulated in a way subservient to that goal.” The for-profit market is the default position for neoliberal and social democratic policies, with public action limited to countering its failure. Government support for decent and affordable housing for all who need it is the default position of the right-to-housing approach, with the for-profit market functioning where it does not interfere or frustrate that provision. However, the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Raquel Rolnik pointed out on October 2008 that markets alone cannot ensure housing for all.

The belief that markets will provide housing for all has failed. The current crisis is a stark reminder of this reality. A home is not a commodity—four walls and a roof. It is a place to live in security, peace and dignity, and a right for every human being.

Housing Rights Are Already Established

The historical role of law has been to protect private property and buttress market systems, including housing market systems. Yet, governments across the world have developed housing rights through international, regional, constitutional, and national law. At an international level housing rights instruments, now adopted by almost all the States of the world, can offer a legal discourse based on human dignity, advancing person-centered and other values. These can temper and refocus the commercial and commodity based interpretations of housing law, and indeed provide a feminist critique of housing systems. Housing rights are viewed as an integral part of economic, social, and cultural rights within the UN, European, inter-American, and African human rights
instruments, such as the American Declaration on the Rights of Man (1948).

At a national level, at least 40% of the world’s Constitutions refer to housing or housing rights, while some states have introduced legislation granting housing. The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended) provides a right to accommodation for homeless persons, including a right to temporary accommodation for all homeless persons, and a right to long-term accommodation for broadly defined categories, encompassing the majority of homeless applicants. By 2012, the right to long-term accommodation will be extended to all. This right is enforceable in the civil courts and courts may order in appropriate cases that accommodation be provided to homeless persons. In France, an enforceable right to housing has also been established through the DALO (Droit au Logement Opposable) Act of March 5, 2007. The Act provides for a two-tier remedial mechanism with regional mediation committees and the possibility to take a case before administrative courts. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) guaranteed a right to housing for all and many cases have led to court orders specifying State action to meet this obligation.

The use of planning law to achieve integration of social/affordable and private housing, control of land use, and quality of infrastructure and amenities, is now becoming widely recognized as a somewhat lateral, but practical, means of realizing some housing rights. Courts across the world have developed housing rights in areas of security of tenure, respect for home, nondiscrimination, decent physical standards, and fair procedures in evictions.

This short article focuses on the public international law housing rights approach. It seeks to evaluate what if anything, this jurisprudence can add to effective advancement of housing rights at local level, in the complex and legally contested arena of housing systems. First, the descriptive nature of the article is intended to highlight hitherto nascent legal discourses which can be applied to all legal aspects of housing systems, such as finance, planning, standards, etc. Second, while valuable precedents are being established at local level across the world, particularly in Australia, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and in the Russian Federation, the analysis of the writer is confined to key developments within international law, and within Europe. This is viewed, rightly or wrongly, as a key location where the two functions of housing as a necessity and as a commodity or asset, grapple for hegemony against a backdrop of growing human rights jurisprudence.

Frameworks for Housing Rights

United Nations

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights(17) (1948), adopted by almost all States, recognizing rights to housing in Article 25 which states that:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1976) adopted by all States including the United States, states at Article 17:

1. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his [or her] privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his [or her] honor and reputation.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Similarly, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), of 1966, now ratified by almost 150 States recognizes the right to housing:

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international cooperation based on free consent.

While these instruments do not prescribe the nature of housing systems adopted by ratifying States, they are required to recognize, respect, and protect these housing rights, meet “minimum core” obligations, ensure nondiscrimination and direct legislative measures, appropriate policies, and the maximum of available resources toward a progressive realization of these rights. General Comment No. 4. on the Right to Adequate Housing sets out the minimum core guarantees which, under public international law, are legally vested in all persons. These are legal security of tenure, availability of services, materials and infrastructure, affordable housing, habitable housing, accessible housing, housing in a suitable location, and housing constructed and sited in a way which is culturally adequate.

Further relevant UN instruments include the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, and the UN Convention Related to the Status of Refugees (1951), and its Protocol. Further UN international instruments set out rights to housing for migrants, people with disabilities and others.

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe, established in 1949 and now with 47 Member States promotes housing rights through the European Social Charter and Revised Charter, and in an oblique way through its European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). Its Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, has recently clarified the legal protection of housing rights, obstacles and gaps in implementation, with recommendations on how these rights are to be realized.

States that adopt the European Social Charter and Revised Charter (RESC) accept as the aim of their policies, to be pursued by all appropriate means, both national and international in character, the attainment of conditions in which the rights and principles within the Charters may be effectively realized without discrimination. The Charters contain important rights to social and medical assistance for those without adequate resources, establishing housing obligations in relation to physically and mentally disabled persons, children and young persons, and rights to social, legal, and economic protection for families, in-
cluding a State obligation to provide family housing. The Social Charter grants migrant workers an explicit right to be treated equally in relation to access to housing, and sets out the right of elderly persons to provision of housing suited to their needs and their state of health. Article 30 of the RESC, on rights to protection against poverty and social exclusion, includes an obligation on Contracting States to promote effective access to a range of services, including housing.

Article 31 of the RESC establishes an apparently comprehensive right to housing which addresses three elements of housing. With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to housing, the Parties undertake to take measures designed:

1. To promote access to housing of an adequate standard.
2. To prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination.
3. To make the price of housing accessible to those without adequate resources.

The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) monitors States’ compliance with the Charters through regular reports from States and the Collective Complaints system, which permits approved organizations to submit complaints against States. It has established clear legal housing rights standards on contractual safety, availability, allocation, standards of adequacy, habitability, affordability, and suitability of housing.

A significant clarification of the obligations under Article 31 arose from the Collective Complaint of FEANTSA v. France, which established, among other things, that recognition of the obligations under Article 31, while not imposing an obligation of “results,” must take “a practical and effective, rather than purely theoretical form.” This case created a significant precedent by critically evaluating the plethora of social provisions tacked onto the French housing market system, in terms of their progressively realized housing rights for all in housing need. While France could demonstrate significant housing activity, such as 100,000 new social units annually, major expenditure on homelessness, legislation on housing rights (this was pre-DALO), enforceable housing codes on standards and eviction procedures, security of tenure and other measures, the ESCR found a violation of housing rights under Article 31. The ESCR divined through the administrative, budgetary, legal, statistical and other data, challenging their effectiveness in achieving the required result—the prevention of homelessness and a continued reduction in housing need, with progress toward housing for all.

The ECHR creates a supra national human rights appeals mechanism through the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), and many States have integrated the Convention into national law as well. Positive obligations on States in relation to housing rights are being established through the ECHR, especially in relation to vulnerable persons who cannot assert rights themselves, although many appeals from domestic courts fail to reach the ECHR. While there is no ECHR obligation for a universal provision of housing by the State, a combination of obligations under Articles 3 on State obligations to prevent of inhuman and degrading treatment, and Article 8, on State respect for privacy, home, and family life, are creating some legally defined minimum State obligations. For instance, in Marzari v. Italy, the obligation for public authorities to provide housing assistance to an individual suffering from a severe disability, because of the impact of such refusal on the private life of the individual, was established. Furthermore, positive obligations under Article 8 have ordered State action in relation to protection from smells and nuisance from a waste treatment plant, toxic emissions emanating from a chemical factory, environmental pollution from a steel plant, and noise from bars and nightclubs.

Some housing rights available in national laws, such as entitlements to State housing, have been held to amount to a property right, thereby benefiting from the protection of ECHR Article 1 of Protocol 1, on the prevention of State interference with that right. This has led to a further elaboration of such housing rights, with State obligations in respect to fair procedures and speedy implementation (Article 6) and nondiscrimination in their implementation (Article 14). Of course, this jurisprudence builds on preexisting domestic rights or entitlements, rather than any creation of new rights.

European Union (E.U.)

While the 1957 Treaty of Rome and subsequent E.U. Treaties do not refer directly to a right to housing, much E.U. social policy, particularly the drive toward a single market in goods and services, has a bearing on housing rights and housing policy. To avoid a “race to the bottom” and in the absence of E.U. institutional competence (outside labor legislation) to introduce minimum standards in areas of social policy, the Community developed an alternative approach based on “fundamental social rights” in the 1990s. E.U. law, which overrides national law, provides housing rights protection through nondiscrimination in public or private access on grounds of migrant workers status, race or ethnicity, or gender. Unfair contract terms in housing contracts are prohibited across Europe under the 1993 Directive on Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts.

The E.U. Charter of Fundamental Rights, does not include a specific right to housing, but Article 34(3) on social security and social assistance states:

In order to combat social exclusion and poverty, the Union recognizes and respects the right to social and housing assistance so as to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources, in accordance with the Rules laid down by Community law and national laws and practices.

The Treaty of Lisbon has adopted this measure as part of E.U. law, integrating human and housing rights within the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice and the actions of the European Commission in its creation of E.U. legislative measures, with direct application overriding incompatible domestic law.

Defining and Implementing the Obligations

There have been many attempts to clarify the contents and obligations of international public law housing rights, including the concepts of minimum core obligations and progressive realization of rights according to available resources. Legal liberal models of individually enforceable rights surpass programmatic approaches have contributed little, aside from complex legal arguments juxtaposing the role of politicians and courts in allocating resources in society. In order to be effectively incorporated into domestic laws and precedents, it is critical that objective, universal, quantifiable standards, based on legal definitions and contemporaray norms are developed within the international monitoring systems. Defining housing rights instruments in terms of usable specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time limited mea-
sures (SMART) has proven elusive. At UN level there has been extensive analysis of transposing legally defined standards for housing rights on national housing systems and standards, through indicators and benchmarks. This has exposed the propensity of States to highlight the benefits and complexities of their administrative and legal measures, affordability measurements, definitions of housing adequacy, enormous expenditure levels, detailed policies, and strategies, etc. However, the role of law as the ultimate authority of compliance in the face of varying national standards, statistical information and policies was emphasized by a UN Committee in 1991:

... human rights indicators should be based on respect for human dignity, equity, social justice, non-discrimination, freedom of choice and empowerment, victims of human rights violations as well as others excluded from human dignity... in the end the results of evaluation of compliance with human rights standards was a balanced assessment and largely a matter of legal analysis.

Yet, Robertson pointed out that such words as “maximum” in relation to the level of resources to be devoted to realizing rights, form the sword of human rights rhetoric, while words like “available” facilitate “wriggle room” for the State. Hunt has highlighted the variable and elusive nature of such terms as “progressive realization,” and “maximum of their available resources.” These imply that some State obligations could vary over time; “These variable elements of States parties’ obligations under ICESCR contribute to the sense of uncertainty which remain a feature of international economic, social and cultural rights.

Some housing rights advocates entirely promote a “violations approach,” based on “naming, shaming, and blaming,” rather than detailed arms length monitoring of programs and compliance based on regular reports. The Limburg Principles and The Maastricht Guidelines have been developed within international human rights law, establishing the nature of violations of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as defining appropriate penalties and sanctions for such violations, which should be available to people at local level through domestic laws. For instance, the Maastricht Guidelines suggest that “all victims of violations of economic, social and cultural rights are entitled to adequate reparation, which may take the form of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation and satisfaction or guarantees of non-repetition” (para 23). However, effective development of violations approaches requires authoritative sanctions against States for breaches of defined rights, but it unclear whether organizations such as the UN could achieve this in relation to housing rights.

Housing Rights Apply to All the Elements of the Housing System

Housing rights principles provide an essential philosophical, social and political base for social and subsidized housing. Indeed, it is an essential characteristic of effective housing rights implementation that provision for those who are vulnerable and most in need takes priority, although these do not always benefit from social housing. However, there is a general tendency to equate housing rights with shelter and social housing, alongside a perception that housing rights involve creating an obligation on the State to provide a minimum level of shelter and housing for all. Housing rights advocates have not yet been successful in the integration of these rights into economic and market discourses. There can be a tendency to shun the structures and dynamics of the housing systems, in favor of more complex definitions and descriptions of failures of housing rights implementation. Of course, the basic right to shelter is a minimum core requirement of the implementation of housing rights. Yet, while the right to housing is regularly seen as the hope for the universal housing of the poor, Angel points out that:

"... there is little merit in a housing policy that solely focuses on the poor, hoping against hope that “the market” will take care of the rest, without paying any attention to whether the market is functioning properly. When the market is not functioning properly, the poor are squeezed as well."

Angel identifies the components of the contemporary “enabling policy” model of housing markets systems, as promoted by the World Bank and others, and widely accepted by policy makers and governments. Functioning housing market systems require legal instruments and State involvement to create five essential elements:

- Property rights regime;
- Housing finance regime;
- Residential infrastructure regime;
- Regulatory regime;
- Housing subsidies/public housing regime.

The establishment of individual and enforceable property rights in land and housing are seen as the cornerstone of this enabling housing policy regime. A functional and effective property rights regime must evolve a set of transparent, predictable, nondiscriminatory, and stable rules that preserve the rights of individuals to use, invest, maintain, rent, mortgage and sell their land and housing properties without hindrance, and with the full protection against arbitrary action by the authorities.

Contemporary writers on global development, such as Hernando De Soto, claim that one of the principal reasons for the underdevelopment of nations is the absence of a property registration system to facilitate mortgage lending, consequently prohibiting the development of personal capital and equity growth in land and housing. The formal and informal rules governing property acquisition, sale, development, and use are of critical importance. Housing is by far the most widely distributed form of private wealth, and investment in housing requires law facilitating certainty, exclusivity, transferability, and constitutional protection. Complex legal ownership arrangements involving family law systems, with rules on ownership and division of property on marriage, separation, divorce, death, and cohabitation are required. Innovative legal mechanisms have also been developed to deal with unregistered land, transfer and conveyancing procedures, disputes, and the regulation of actors involved in housing markets.

The housing finance regime requires the creation and maintenance of an effective, enforceable lending and regulatory regime for housing finance, as well as the development of housing finance institutions and sustainable mortgage markets. This regime involves legal measures relating to mortgages, equity release, charges, consumer credit legislation, regulation of lenders, as well as market liberalization and competition. Housing finance is now a global issue, and its impact in the collapse of major financial institutions demonstrates the failure of policies which ignore housing systems.

The third requirement for the enabling market approach is an effective residential infrastructure regime. This requires legisla-
tion and regulation in relation to zoning, planning, public health, control of nuisance and sanitation measures, and planning controls on urban land development and supply. Detailed legislation and case law have developed in relation to roads and walkways, water, sewage, drainage, transport, public facilities, and other services, which contribute to housing quality.

The fourth and most important element of this approach for industrialized countries is the regulatory regime for quality in housing systems. Building control measures exercised by the State are critical elements in the development of housing markets. Indeed, these markets actually require a legal and regulatory framework that only governments can provide.

Housing subsidies are also a central element of housing enablement policies. World Bank recommendations are that subsidy programs should be on appropriate and affordable scales, well targeted, measurable, transparent, and not distorting of the housing market. The presence or absence of housing subsidies (and tax incentives) cannot be understood outside the broader framework of overall fiscal policy. Similarly, investment of capital in housing is part of overall government investment policy [percentage of gross domestic product (GDP)]. Other State legal measures will include control of interest rates, curbs on public expenditure, and stimulation of demand through public spending on housing, tax reliefs, etc. These can be either supply side (subsidizing producers), or demand side (supporting purchasers), such as through grants for new homes. Social housing is part of a market support system and an integral part of political largesse.

This enabling policy model must also consider the role of rented housing and its impact on other parts of the system, such as first-time buyers and social housing. Indeed, rent control and regulation measures have been imposed by governments of all hues since the 1800s. Kemeny argues that genuine market competition can be fostered by encouraging cost rental housing to compete directly with profit renting, thereby dampening rents, raising housing standards and increasing security of tenure. Segregating cost renting into a state-run public rental (or social housing) sector shelters private renting from competition.

Some legal measures may involve controls on prices or rents, deemed necessary when the market fails to meet a social norm and the State should intervene. Statutory provision of social and affordable housing, with elaborate legal precedents and legislation on allocation, management, control, sale, and inheritance also play a significant role. However, the neoliberalist inspired contemporary “enabling housing subsidy regime” involves a retreat from public housing production, toward privatisation of such stock and abolition of subsidies. While this approach generates a fundamental threat to the implementation of States international housing rights obligations, it may yet be possible to transpose such obligations onto its framework.

### Regulation

There is a powerful interdependency between rights and regulation. Regulatory norms that establish minimum standards and equality of access to goods and services are widespread. In relation to housing, there are detailed legal regulations and regulatory systems on land use, housing occupancy and maintenance, building standards, housing costs, eviction procedures, and facilities and equipment, and almost all have legally enforceable sanctions for violations, and compensation for breaches. This regulation machinery seeks to protect, preserve, and promote the physical and mental health and social well being of people, control nuisances, prevent and control communicable diseases, and regulate privately and publicly owned dwellings in order to maintain adequate sanitation and public health. Indeed, it can go so far as delimit and deny property rights, in some circumstances, such as extended rights of occupancy for tenants overriding the legal owners powers to sell. McCrudden has outlined the extent of measures and regulatory mechanisms across the contemporary world which act to achieve socially desirable outcomes, and in many cases override civil and property rights.

The integration of international housing rights norms and jurisprudence into national housing regulatory systems represents the next step in the realization of these rights. Thus, all draft legislation on housing systems must be housing rights proofed. House planning and building regulatory agencies, such as local authority and institutional housing finance regulators can incorporate housing rights objectives into their regulatory systems. Equally, all development plans and zoning approvals could be required to demonstrate how they address housing rights criteria. Regulatory agencies could refer violations, as set out in the Limburg Principles and Maastricht Guidelines, to the courts to be adjudicated and appropriate sanctions enforced for violations of housing rights across all elements of housing systems.

### Governance

Of course, the possibility of using command based techniques of regulation and control runs into an obvious hurdle once we move to the supranational level of public international law housing rights. Enforcement legitimacy still requires locally accepted institutions and norms. Some new approaches such as the Open Method of Coordination of the E.U. have sought to overcome this problem, where internationally accepted guidelines are consolidated into agreed national plans, in areas of employment, pensions, and social inclusion.

But there is an established international consensus on the adoption of housing rights and the internalization of associated supranational standards into domestic law and policy. The current monitoring and enforcement systems rely on cooperation and persuasion, as the use of sanctions on noncompliant States might lead to political conflict. However, States responses to existing monitoring, in terms of lists of individual measures adopted, obscure policy claims and creative compliance statements in UN and other monitoring reports, fail to address the nature of the holistic obligation in advancing housing rights. The opportunity for individual complaints directly to the UN monitoring agency could be valuable.

Effective monitoring of national housing systems, with their diverse elements requires a type of “governance” approach. The idea of governance was developed by the World Bank to describe the “process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development, and the capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions.” It involves taking a perspective from outside the State, to effectively observe and evaluate progress. Governance “describes the hybridity of legal interferences within a society.” It accepts a fusion of public and private institutions and brings an approach to public institutions which are oriented toward efficiency and output in achieving goals.

In many ways this model of supranational governance, evaluating the outcomes of institutions, laws and other measures of
States in terms of results is appropriate to the monitoring and development of housing rights. The template for this approach, being results oriented, is less concerned with actual laws and measures, but how they ensure that the objectives of housing rights, the provision of decent and affordable housing for all, is achieved. An obligation of results, rather than obligation of conduct in the implementation of housing rights is required. The recent jurisprudence from the Council of Europe in the FEANTA SA v. France55 case, outlined earlier, is developing this approach in relation to laws, policies, and measures applying to all aspects of housing systems. Housing rights can provide a basis for the evaluation and restructuring of construction, planning, land use, engineering infrastructure, housing finance, housing standards, nondiscrimination, affordability, subsidies and social housing provision, within the national and local housing regulatory systems.

Conclusions

In modern societies housing rights jurisprudence is growing in its content, relevance and sophistication, as reflecting new principles of personal and social development, as well as the influences of public international human rights law. State action is transcending traditional civil and political rights guarantees toward giving effect to contemporary expectations, through legal and other intervention in housing systems.66 Housing rights now need to be integrated, not just into political policies and laws, with their traditional emphasis on social housing, but into the regulation frameworks of all elements of housing systems. This may provide an appropriate basis for the evolution of an effective governance model for the advancement of these rights.

List of Cases

Cases of the European Court of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Geurra v. Italy (1998) ECHR 357.
Koua Poirre v. France (2005) 40 ECHR 34.
Marzari v. Italy (1999) 28 ECHR CD 175.
Muller v. Austria (1975) 3 DR 25.
Telyatyeva v. Russia, App. No. 18762/06.

Collective Complaint before the European Social Committee


European Union Cases


See Woods and Lewis (2005) and Kenna (2008a).

See Pierre and Stephenson (2008), describing how 200,000 people were displaced and evacuated to distant, unfamiliar regions without housing assistance, or the means to return to their communities or reunite with their families.

See http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=ap42s_XtP58Q&refer=home

Davis (2004, 2006).


Ibid., p. 139.


UN CEDAW adopted by the UN General Assembly (Resolution 34/180 of December 18, 1979) entered into force on September 3, 1981. See website: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm


Adopted by the UN General Assembly in resolution 43/181 on December 20, 1988.


For a fuller compilation of these instruments see for instance: Leckie (2000); UNCHS, Housing rights legislation: Review of international and national legal instruments: available at www.unhabitat.org/programmes/housingrights/; Kenna (2005): For details of the international standards on housing rights see UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to nondiscrimination at http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/housing/standards.htm

This is not the same organization as the European Union. See Council of Europe, About the Council of Europe, http://www.coe.int/T/en/Com/about_coe/-/giving a brief summary of the Council, its history, and its aims.

Turin, 18.X.1961, Council of Europe, European Treaty Series—No. 35; European Social Charter (Revised), Council of Europe, Strasbourg 3/5/1996. The binding nature at national level of the Charters depends on whether a dualist system pertains, but many dualist States have incorporated the Charter (or parts of it) into national law. See Harris and Darcy (2001), Samuel (1997), and De Burca and De Witte (2005).

See website: http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm


Part V of Article E of the Charter states: “The enjoyment of the rights set forth in this Charter shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national extraction or social origin, health, association with a national minority, birth or other status.”

Article 13.

Article 15.

Article 17.

Article 16.

Article 19.

Article 23.

For a detailed examination of these obligations see Council of Europe, European Committee on Social Rights, European Social Charter (2003) (revised) Conclusions 2003—Volume 1 (Bulgaria, France, Italy); Conclusions 2003—Volume 2 (Romania, Slovenia, Sweden), Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, October 2003.

States which had accepted Article 31 in full or in part at October 2007 were Andorra, Finland, France, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, and Ukraine. See website:
Much work has been carried out on defining the specific rights contained in the Covenant especially by the U.N. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its Conclusions and Reports. See generally Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/b/cerscr.htm (listing examples of Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights document); Donnelly and Howard (1988); Gupta et al. (1994).

61Government of South Africa and others v. Grootboom and others, CCT11/00 2001 (1) SA 46 (CC), October 4, 2000, 2000 (11) BCLR 1169 (CC); Occupiers of 51 Olivia Road, Berea Township and 197 Main Street Johannesburg v. City of Johannesburg and Others (24/07) [2008] ZACC 1; 2008 (3) SA 208 (CC) (February 19, 2008).

62For a discussion on the role of law vit-a vis other systems see Luhmann (2004).

63This acronym is widely used as a management tool to evaluate objectives for a project or plan.


66Ibid., para 150.


73See Woods and Lewis (2005).

74See Angel (1997), at p. 74.

75See Angel (1997), at p 19.

76Ibid, p. 95.

77De Soto (2000).


Robertson, E. (1994). “Measuring state compliance with the obligation to devote the maximum resources to realizing economic, social and cultural rights.” *HRQ*, 16, 693–714.


