

Brussels 2022

Meeting of the European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and the Right to the City

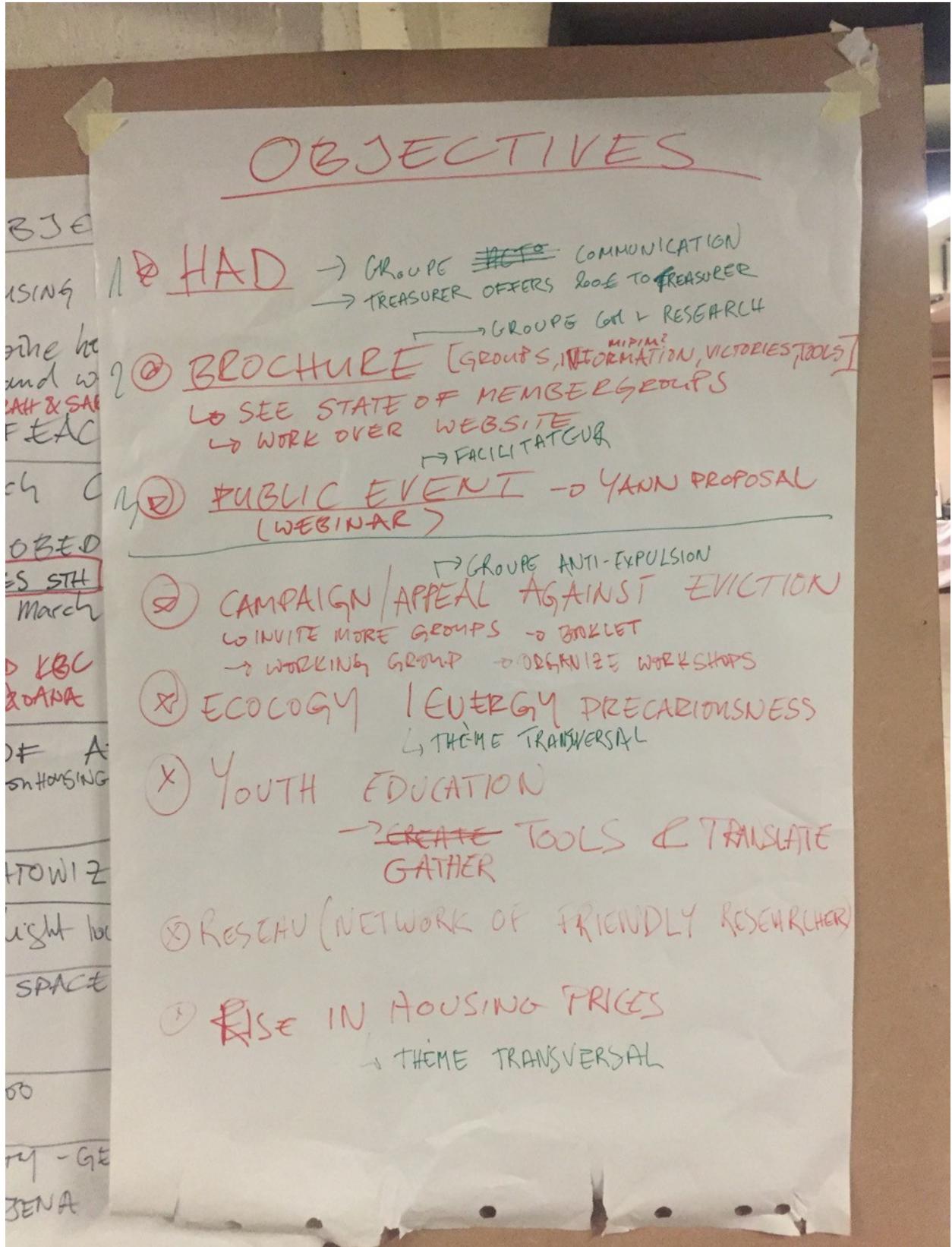
Neither the grey clouds that have been with us every day, nor Covid, have prevented the Coalition, at last!!! from meeting in Brussels between the 17th and 20th of February. Workshops and plenary, as well as a public event and an action, are usually our occupation when we meet. This was also the case this time.

There are always some details, but I must admit, as a representative of PAH on this occasion, that I leave Brussels satisfied. For the welcome at DK (DeKonnection), thank you very much. For the cooks who fed us and because there was no lack of coffee to make us feel at home. For the correct structuring of the event, the previews, the documentation and the adherence to the programme, bravo ALBXL (Action Logement Bruxelles). As well as the Facilitation and Communication team, well done. Also, of course, for having been able to meet so many colleagues who are active for the right to housing and the city. People we know and new people with whom to share experiences and strategies of struggle. People from different countries who are hard to say goodbye to at the end of this six-month trajectory.



Covid has hit us hard at the organisational level and it was obvious that we needed a face-to-face meeting. I don't know of any tool capable of measuring the effort that each person dedicates to this

type of activism. I can say that it is a considerable amount, and that the sum of each personal effort results in a collective experience unparalleled in Europe, the seeds of which are about to emerge more eloquently to the surface in terms of dissemination and awareness-raising in society. We have made a fine-tuning. A new commitment to the future. We have recognised each other and we have been able to see that each group in its own territory is doing an immense amount of work. We have thus recharged our batteries with courage to go out to the front. On many fronts.



Our work fronts are expanding because financialisation is a real global pandemic. It is particularly virulent in Europe and its ambition, profit at any cost, knows no bounds worldwide.

Every year, our land, our houses, our neighbourhoods and entire cities are traded in markets as spurious but as popular as **MIPIIM**, which, like every year, will be held in Cannes on 15 March. It is the most important international fair of the real estate market <https://www.mipim.com> in which 25.000 professionals of the sector participate. A week before, on 8 March, a council of **EU housing ministers** will be held in Nice, and you wonder where the right to housing and the city is for that meeting, where in its occupation with our taxes, is the right to housing and the city. For at the aforementioned MIPIIM, the only thing that is really important is the commodification of something that is actually communal. And that is where our elected politicians go to sell what does not belong to them.

One of our collective fronts is undoubtedly that of the "undocumented". All those people who do have papers but to whom the institutions do not give what they are entitled to by virtue of the fact that they are people. As the Action Coalition that we are, this time we have accompanied the KBC group in its occupation of the space where the Belgian bank KBC had one of its headquarters. Today it has been sold to an investment fund whose aim is to build large luxury housing blocks on the banks of the canal. An example of gentrification in the Molenbek district of Brussels. Also inspiring is the internal organisation of these occupants in a space that far from being a decent home, at least provides them with a roof over their heads. They are going to fight for their rights. They are going to defend them with an important action on the 31st of March when their expulsion is planned. We will be vigilant to give support from our places, from our own positions. We have to support them with the means at our disposal. We will work on this in the coming days.



And their defence deserves our solidarity. Until their needs are met with papers and housing to regain their dignity. Because when we come together, in the PAH, in Coalición... the earth sprouts its common home.

On the 26th and 27th of March we will take to the streets in cities all over Europe for the Housing Action Day 2022. We hope that all the PAHs will be encouraged to choose one of those days and do something that will put housing at the centre of the political agenda in their city. It will be an example of unity for Europe that we hope will grow year by year until the situation of housing commodification is reversed, until public goods are returned to their rightful owner.

YES WE CAN