



INTERVIEW WITH CEPI'S PRESIDENT

Questions for CEPI's President:

1. Please tell us more about CEPI's affiliation with national Real Estate Professionals such as their nations, numbers etc.

Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, CEPI President:

CEPI aisbl (European Association of Real Estate Professions) is the European umbrella association grouping 25 national associations in the EU and EFTA countries that represent both real estate agents and property managers. Headquartered in Brussels, it is a non-profit organisation with a full-time Secretariat. The association aims to raise standards in the real estate professions, promoting that real estate brokerage and property management be conducted by qualified professionals with high ethical standards. Its current members are: FIV, OVI (Austria), FIB (Belgium), NREA (Bulgaria), ARK CR (Czech Republic), FREMF (Finland), UNIS (France), IVD (Germany), EPPA, ATTICA (Greece), IPAV, SCSI (Ireland), ANACI, FIAIP (Italy), CIGDL (Luxemburg), NVM, VBO (the Netherlands), PREF, PFSZN (Poland), UNAI (Romania), NARKS (Slovakia), CGCAFE, GIPE (Spain), NAEA (United Kingdom), SVIT Schweiz (Switzerland).

2. How does CEPI deal, as an organisation, with all the different cultural aspects of each country's market/each affiliate association?

Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, CEPI President:

The real estate professions are not regulated at EU level. Regulation for our sector remains at national level with some countries having adopted regulation in the field, others only partial regulation and others reverting to self-regulation by e.g. responsible trade associations. These national regulations reflect the often culturally and economically different situations in markets. One of the advantages of CEPI ...

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME STAGING PROFESSIONALS



... membership is the opportunity offered to those wanting to operate trans-nationally to get to know these specific aspects of the various European markets and to take these into account before getting involved in trans-European business.

3. IAHSP® EU is CEPI'S exclusive knowledge partner for Home Staging. What are your expectations/what are you hoping to obtain with this partnership?

Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, CEPI President:

The CEPI-IAHSP partnership should lead to a mutually better understanding of our professional categories and a joint learning on how we can strengthen each other's specialisations. CEPI members will be able to offer more value to their clients with a better understanding of the specifics of home staging. We hope IAHSP will experience CEPI as a responsible and professional partner aiming to defend values such as education, consumer confidence, expertise and business ethics.

4. Why is it important for an association such as the IAHSP® EU to be connected to CEPI?

Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, CEPI President:

CEPI guarantees a broad spread of information amongst European real estate agents and property managers about the principles of good home staging and should provide interesting business leads as our members get more acquainted with the IAHSP's activities and specialization.



5. How did the global pandemic affect the European Real Estate Market?

Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, CEPI President:

The public health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is now impacting on the real estate sector. This situation calls for careful management to avoid damaging consequences for the European real estate market. Lockdown measures introduced in different countries restrict the ability of real estate professionals to carry out their professional activities. Estate agents are unable to conduct viewings (or these are severely restricted) or meet with clients and help them with moves. Existing transactions face uncertainty due to difficulties in completing and handover of keys while accepting new instructions is very difficult. This is likely to result in a substantial fall in the number of transactions. Property managers are faced with difficulties in ensuring the safe upkeep and maintenance of buildings. It is difficult to arrange for necessary works to be done whilst respecting rules on social-distancing. Property managers of multi-dwelling units are also experiencing difficulties as general meetings of co-owners have been halted and decisions cannot be taken. Real estate and the built environment in general provide places of shelter for all in the current difficult circumstances. The real estate market needs to continue to function in the interests of all EU citizens who need to be able to find decent housing and shelter, as well as for investors in these uncertain times. Hence our national associations are in permanent contact with the local decision-makers to ensure activities can be continued (be it under strict scrutiny) or can be restarted as soon as possible.



6. The multi-cultural aspect of Europe reflects not only in our economy and politics but especially in industries such as Real Estate. As much as there are more differences than we can mention, what would you say are the main similarities when it comes to the property market in our continent?

Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, CEPI President:

There is not one property market in Europe, it remains made up of many different markets that operate and perform differently. As already mentioned, this reflects ongoing cultural and economic differences as well as differences in the legal environment. However, there are of course similarities and all CEPI members share both joint concerns about the stability and performance of the market reflected in the recognised need for the quality provision of services in the sector. They are also reflected in CEPI's defined priority issues including in particular the impact of increased digitalisation and the challenges of improving the energy efficiency in buildings to meet the EU's targets for addressing climate change. The growing influence of the EU in these and other areas has an impact on all property markets directly and indirectly.

7. Is CEPI looking into establishing collaborations with other trade association such as NAR GLOBAL, FIABCI ?

Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, CEPI President:

Following good meetings with FIABCI in Vienna just before the outbreak of the COVID-19 in Europe, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was established between our two organisations. The MoU foresees an exchange of information pertaining to the professions of property broker and property manager. Special ...



... attention will be given to sustainability and green development and the participation of the various academic members of the FIABCI chapters in Europe in the EUREDUC programme established by CEPI together with an important number of educational institutes in Europe. During the period of this agreement (3 years initially), the parties can invite each other to their respective events and so introduce the other party to their constituency. The parties will also evaluate opportunities to jointly organize an international event to raise attention for European wide policy and education challenges, and to support cross border contacts and business.

Also in Vienna the links with US organisation NAR were re-enforced and we look forward to a more intense and closer cooperation once the COVID-19 crisis seems more under control.

8. In a post-Covid world, Home Staging professionals everywhere have noticed the introduction or strengthening of services such as remote staging or virtual staging. What do you think are the main changes that came to stay within Real Estate in Europe?

Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, CEPI President:

Digitalisation is definitely a key topic for the future. It is an agreed priority in our management plan 2020-2023 and the pandemic has certainly put a boost behind this. I am glad to announce that we will be organising a CEPI Digital Day on 30 November 2020. On the agenda are European Parliament and EU Commission speakers on topics such as the Digital Services Act and the Smart Readiness Indicator and we will also be presenting new additions to the CEPI Digital Tool Box for our members.

...



... What the crisis has also taught us is the importance of an international network where members can exchange experiences and solutions on some of the most important challenges we faced during this complex year.

Thank you, Ms. Karen Van De Woestyne, for this extensive interview!