

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Aareal Trend barometer: tenants call for cutting bureaucracy and targeted housing subsidies – 80% cannot afford property ownership**

- **Nine out of 10 tenants think that rents in conurbations are no longer affordable**
- **Exploding running costs have often become a second rent: 57% of tenants are already deliberately saving on energy and water**
- **The law on rent control divides people: with three-quarters of tenants thinking it sensible, the same proportion of decision-makers see it as braking new construction**
- **Property ownership is becoming a luxury: unaffordable for 82% of tenants**
- **The shortage in skilled staff is impacting the sector ever more strongly**
- **Lars Ernst, Managing Director Banking & Digital Solutions, Aareal Bank AG: "Building new apartments needs creative courage. We have to reduce red tape, make better use of existing leeway, and boost investment through clear, pragmatic rules."**

Wiesbaden, 21 January 2026 – Aareal Bank is publishing its Trend barometer for 2025, a comprehensive overview\* of the situation on the German rental market. The results of a survey of more than 5000 tenants and about 110 decision-makers in the property sector show that pressure on the rental market remains high and both politicians and the housing sector are faced with the challenge of mastering affordable accommodation, the energy transition and digitalisation.

### **The tenants' perspective: high rents endanger social stability**

Accommodation is becoming more and more of a socially explosive issue: the great majority of tenants (91%) think that the average earner in conurbations can no longer pay the rent. 87% of tenants see high rents as a serious danger for social stability, with that figure rising by 3% from the previous year.

### **Running costs are becoming a stress test – buying property is not an option**

Energy-efficient renovation remains a sensitive topic: 70% of tenants are afraid that energy retrofits will further worsen the situation on the rental market. For every second respondent, (53%) a sustainable building is important when looking for an apartment because one is afraid of exploding running costs. The answer to the rise in these operating costs: 57% are already deliberately trying to save energy and water, particularly the older generation (72%) Property is increasingly becoming a luxury good and 82% of those surveyed do not see it as an option.

### **Only moderate satisfaction with interior fittings, digital services and security of the apartment**

Only a good half (53%) of tenants are currently satisfied with the quality and fixtures in their apartment. And in fact only a quarter is satisfied with the digital service provided by the lessor. A fast Internet (48%) and digital communication are central criteria in choosing an apartment. The topic of security is becoming ever more important: only one in three of those surveyed (31%) feels very secure at home, with a marked difference between urban and rural environments. Modernised door and window security (46%) as well as video surveillance (35%) would increase tenants' sense of security.

### **Calls for targeted support from policymakers are becoming louder**

82% of tenants think that housing cannot be oriented purely towards profit-making. 69% expect the housing sector to provide more social housing especially. 72% expect politicians to cut red tape and 65% expect needs-based funding instead of the scattergun approach. 74% of tenants view the rent control law as a sensible instrument for reducing social tensions.

The message from tenants is unmistakable: housing should be reliable, affordable and fair. They expect the sector to take on responsibility.

### **Housing sector: regulatory framework conditions are a burden**

The survey of housing sector decision-makers reveals a similar picture to that of the tenants: 80% of them see conurbation rentals as well-nigh unaffordable for the typical wage-earner. 94% expect that energy retrofits will continue to burden the market. Decision-makers call on the politicians to create affordable housing principally by lowering ancillary construction costs (98%) and by reducing red tape (94%) and targeted housing support (82%). Opinions differ on the rent control law: three-quarters of decision-makers think it an obstacle for new construction whereas tenants greatly support it.

### **Specialist trade shortages as a structural problem – digitalisation is a question of survival**

Specialist trade shortages remain a structural problem: 88% think there will be a further worsening of the situation which will have a largely negative effect on new construction, maintenance and technical building systems. Two-thirds of decision-makers see digitisation of routine tasks as a solution: they see the biggest potential in booking and payment transactions (84%), tenant services (81%) and internal administration (69%)

### **Conclusion: Quick action and pragmatic solutions are needed**

Affordability, sustainability and digitisation will decide the future of accommodation. Both tenants and housing sector are calling for the courage to clear away bureaucratic hurdles

systematically, arrive at pragmatic building decisions and design the socially acceptable implementation of energy retrofits. There is need for greater investment in digitisation so as to kick-start the rate of new construction that has been impacted by shortages in specialist trades.

"The new "Bau-Turbo" law of October 2025 speeding up planning and approval processes promises some relief, but alone it is not enough to create new, affordable housing. Building must become cheaper and more profitable to attract private investment. That includes particularly simplifying construction standards and the significant acceleration of building approvals", Lars Ernst sums up.

The results of the survey on the future of housing are contained in the Aareal Trend barometer and can be downloaded [here](#).

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**About Aareal Bank**

Aareal Bank AG, headquartered in Wiesbaden, is a leading international property specialist. The Bank uses its expertise to identify trends, challenges and opportunities at an early stage, and to exploit them for the benefit of its stakeholders. It provides financing, banking and payment solutions for the property sector and related industries, and is present on the three continents of Europe, North America and Asia. Its business strategy focuses on sustainable business success, with ESG (environmental, social and governance) aspects being integral parts of this strategy.

Aareal Bank comprises the business segments Structured Property Financing and Banking & Digital Solutions. The Structured Property Financing segment includes the property financing and refinancing activities. Here, the Bank supports its clients in making large-volume commercial property investments. The investment properties mostly comprise office buildings, hotels, shopping centres, logistics and residential property, as well as student apartments. In the Banking & Digital Solutions segment, Aareal Bank supports businesses from the housing, property management and energy industries as a digitalisation partner – combining extensive advisory services and product solutions with traditional corporate banking services and deposit-taking.

**\*Information on methods**

On behalf of Aareal Bank, YouGov surveyed 5046 tenants across Germany on the rental market situation during the period between 01 and 13 October 2025. The survey was conducted in the form of online interviews with members of the YouGov Panel Germany. Responses were weighted according to gender and generational affiliation. The results are representative for tenants in Germany aged 18 and over. In some cases, the two highest response categories to a question were aggregated for the presentation of results.

The decision-makers' survey was conducted with Aareal Bank's housing industry clients during the period 10-21 November 2025. This part of the survey is an opinion poll, and does not purport to be representative.