

## COHABITATION CHARTER

**The cohabitation charter accompanies communal life in shared accommodation.**

**The aim is to foster communication from the outset and define together what is important for everyone, via cohabitation rules. Indeed, respect for the lifestyle and the life rhythm of everyone is the key to a successful cohabitation.**

Cohabitation requires making agreements on various points. It is complex to address everything right away. As such, we advise planning a weekly meeting around a coffee or a tea to make the cohabitation between host and guest progress smoothly. This will make sure that the document can be gradually taken on board. It may also evolve over time.

This document exists in 5 languages (French, Dutch, English, Ukrainian and Russian)<sup>1</sup>. It is recommended that everyone can read it in their own language in order to have the same information.

### **1. The plans of the guest**

Temporary accommodation allows the persons being housed to find accommodation despite the fact that the rental market is probably unaffordable for them. By temporarily getting away from the problem of accommodation, they can devote themselves to integrating: looking for work, sending their children to school, and gradually looking for sustainable housing when their income has stabilised.

Once the guest has settled down and the host and the guest know each other better, it is advisable to talk together about their plans, for a good mutual understanding.

### **2. Domiciliation**

For practical reasons, the guest will need to be domiciled at the host's address. The registration of the new domicile with the municipality is done using a specific code. The host's rights remain unchanged, such as retaining the amount of an unemployment benefit or integration income. This has no tax implications. The same applies to family allowances.

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<sup>1</sup> Documents available at [www.helpukraine.brussels](http://www.helpukraine.brussels).

We advise accepting this domiciliation, but the host can refuse it. The guest must then elect domicile with the PCSW as a "reference address". This will make the administrative procedures more complex for the guest.

The question of domiciliation must be discussed so that it is clear to everyone, especially since language sometimes creates misunderstandings.

### 3. Duration

The duration of the hosting must be limited in time. The Region advises against periods of less than one month, to avoid the guest spending most of their time doing administrative procedures relating to their regular change of residence.

If you are comfortable with 6 months, 9 months or even a year, these periods facilitate the children's schooling, the guest's settling in the neighbourhood, etc. A period of 3 months is however already very positive.

### 4. The keys / deposit

The host provides the guest with ..... key(s) to access .....

In the event of loss, the guest is responsible for replacing the key and the lock if necessary.

The key(s) must be returned to the host at the end of the cohabitation.

Instructions for opening and closing doors (locking) / possible control of an alarm: .....

.....

To ensure compliance, it is important that the guest knows why these instructions are in place.

### 5. Visits to the accommodation and respecting times

Everyone has a very different concept of calm, respect of times, visits, etc. We advise you to clarify the notions of calm, returning to the house late and the needs of each person, for example concerning visits by friends.

The host and the guest agree on:

- periods of calm: .....

- the possibility for the guest to receive people in the host's home and when (days / times): .....

.....

- mutual notification of presence and absence: .....

## 6. Common areas

- Apart from the private space(s) of the guest stated in the temporary occupancy agreement or the lease, the rooms that the guest can use are (kitchen, bathroom, etc. + times to be stipulated?): .....  
.....  
.....
- The use of space to store the guest's belongings (garage, cellar, etc.): .....  
.....

## 7. Meals and food

- Meal sharing (yes / no / partial + times): .....  
.....
- Taking care of:
  - o food shopping: .....  
.....
  - o food preparation: .....  
.....
  - o dishes (+ management of dishwasher, if any): .....  
.....
- The possibility to eat in the private space(s) of the guest? .....  
.....
- Possible allergies / diets: .....  
.....
- The use of the fridge / cupboards in the kitchen: .....  
.....

## 8. Use of the bathroom / shower

Everyone has their own habits: leaving the water running or turning off the tap, rinsing the bathtub, scrubbing it after each bath, taking a bath every day or every week... Everyone has their own habits.

However, all this comes at a cost. Given the rise in the price of water and energy, it is not unreasonable to insist on the necessary savings. Gas has risen very sharply in recent months, and people from Ukraine understand why.

- Times: .....
- Duration of showers: .....

## 9. Distribution of tasks

Finding a balance together in the sharing of daily tasks also helps to balance the relationship.

- Upkeep of the common areas (in turns / together / ...) and frequency: .....
- Upkeep of private areas and frequency: .....
- Waste sorting and taking out refuse? .....

The notion of cleanliness and upkeep are different from one person to another. Talk about it.

## 10. The use of equipment

Not everything that belongs to the host may be used by the guest. Be clear about what can and cannot be used. There are alternatives outside the house, such as laundry facilities or the provision of a computer for the children's schooling via the PCSW, for example.

- The provision of the washing machine / dryer: .....
- The existence of preferred times to use them (noises, dual time clock)? .....
- TV, radio, any musical instruments, books, CDs, DVDs, computer, WiFi network, fixed telephone ...: .....
- Instructions regarding the use of lighting: .....

## 11. Heating / ventilation

As already mentioned, the cost of energy has risen so much that it is normal to talk about these issues, as well as ecological considerations, without it being taboo. Similarly for ventilation, it is natural to turn off the heating if you open the windows.

- Functioning of the central heating: .....  
Adjusting it / stopping it during certain periods: .....  
.....
- Instructions for ventilation (humidity, stale air): .....  
.....

## 12. Tobacco / alcohol

The host has the right to refuse smoking in their home. The same applies for the consumption of consciousness-altering substances.

As such, avoid any misunderstanding. The use of syringes is, for example, habitual for a diabetic.

- Tobacco use (yes / no / areas): .....  
.....
- Alcohol use: .....  
.....

## 13. Doing things together

Sharing time together gives additional meaning to the hosting. Here are some suggestions:

- Do you share certain hobbies?  
For example: watching movies, playing cards, playing sports, going to the cinema, a concert, going for a walk, etc.
- Do you help each other out with favours?  
For examples: washing or hanging out the other's laundry, watering the plants, running errands, giving language lessons, etc.?

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## 14. The costs

In the event of cohabitation of more than one month, the Region recommends that a hosting allowance of €100 to 150<sup>2</sup> be paid to the first person to be housed and €50 per additional person.

In effect, the guest has an income from work or from the PCSW. They have the possibility to contribute to the costs. The host should not put him or herself in financial difficulties while it is the responsibility of the PCSW to help people without means.

It is also recommended that costs are charged for electricity, heating, water, internet and cable TV after 2 weeks of occupancy.

Depending on the agreement, accounts may also be kept for additional costs incurred: food for meals taken together, toilet paper, cleaning products, etc.

Don't hesitate to agree on a temporary occupancy agreement<sup>3</sup>. Details can be stipulated here.

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.....

If nothing has been agreed in a temporary occupancy agreement, there is still time to do this and clarify together the question of costs .....

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## 15. Dispute management

In the event of a dispute between the host and the guest, the parties agree to

- convene at the first request of either party;
- request the municipality to appoint a mediator, possibly accompanied by an interpreter;
- find an amicable solution.

If no resolution to the dispute is found, the renunciation stated in the temporary occupancy agreement may be activated.

In the absence of such a document governing the cohabitation, the guest undertakes to look for a different accommodation solution if the dispute is not resolved within 15 days from the time one party has requested a meeting with the other party.

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<sup>2</sup> Depending on the level of comfort of the accommodation.

<sup>3</sup> Sample temporary occupancy agreements are available at [www.helpukraine.brussels](http://www.helpukraine.brussels).

In order to find a new accommodation, the guest can obtain support from the PCSW of the municipality<sup>4</sup> or go to the Pacheco Centre, Boulevard Pacheco 44, 1000 Brussels.

## 16. Other

The parties can supplement with all the points they feel are necessary.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Done at .....

on (date).....

The guest

The host

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<sup>4</sup> Find their contact information at <https://www.helpukraine.brussels/en#autorites-locales>.