

The EU STR Regulation: Strengthening Data Availability for More Informed Housing and Short-Term Rental Policymaking

Housing is a challenge across the EU, more acute in some places than others, and it directly affects the quality of life of millions of Europeans. It shows up in very concrete ways: searching for a student flat in Berlin, competing with dozens of applicants for a rental in Amsterdam, or facing rising monthly costs in cities like Barcelona. Experiences like these shape a simple expectation: decisions that affect housing should be based on a solid understanding of how the market actually works.

Short-Term Rentals (STRs), when discussed in the context of housing, raise a recurring question: how do we ensure that decisions are based on a complete and reliable picture of the market, and what should those decisions look like once that picture is available? Over the last several years, platforms have been working to help fill this need for data. Part of the work was a landmark agreement with Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia Group and Tripadvisor, signed between each platform and Eurostat on behalf of the European Commission, allowing Eurostat to obtain key data and publish key statistics on short-term accommodation rentals concluded through these platforms on its website.¹ However, the work could not stop there.

The EU STR Regulation: building a shared data framework

In 2024, the EU took the next significant step and adopted the STR Regulation (2024/1028), with broad support from policymakers, platforms,

¹ In March 2020, the Commission reached a landmark agreement with Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia Group and Tripadvisor on data sharing. The agreement, signed between each platform and Eurostat on behalf of the European Commission, allows Eurostat to obtain key data and publish key statistics on short-term accommodation rentals concluded through these platforms on its website. Platforms agreed to share, on a continuous basis, data on the number of nights booked and the number of guests. In its inception, the agreement allowed, for the first time, access to reliable data about holiday and other short-stay accommodations offered via these platforms at EU level.

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and other stakeholders. Its objective is straightforward: to create a harmonized, privacy-compliant system for sharing data on short-term rentals across the EU.

Under this framework, which is set to apply as of today (20 May, 2026), platforms facilitating STR activity, including Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia Group, Awaze and others, must periodically share data with public authorities in a standardized way. Each property will be linked to a unique identifier (registration number), allowing activity data to be aggregated across platforms. The same regulation states that, “The lack of such information makes it difficult for authorities to assess the actual impact of short-term accommodation rental services and develop and enforce appropriate and proportionate policy responses”. Thus, with the EU STR Regulation, authorities will be able to design balanced, proportionate and evidence-based policies in the sphere of urban planning and tourism as well as get a more informed overview of the impact, or lack thereof, this sector has on housing.

What does the EU STR Regulation mean in practice?

Very simply, if an apartment in Vienna is rented for 10 nights a month on platform A, 5 on platform B and 9 on platform C, local authorities will be able to see the full picture. They will no longer rely on partial snapshots or estimates. Instead, they will have a clearer and more complete overview of short-term rental activity within their jurisdiction, provided they have an online, automatic registration system that is free or reasonably priced.

Applied at local or regional level, this provides a much clearer view of who is renting, what is being rented, how often, and for how long. This kind of visibility is not just useful for understanding the market.

It also strengthens the enforcement of local STR rules. With unique identifiers and aggregated data, authorities will be better equipped to identify listings that do not comply with those rules. If the Regulation is implemented as intended, with its application starting today (20 May), this level of transparency should progressively become the norm.

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However, implementation, as well as reaching the full potential of the EU STR Regulation, will depend heavily on cooperation and continued dialogue between all stakeholders (European Commission, Member States and platforms), as well as ensuring that technical systems are interoperable and data-sharing standardized across all Member States.² On the application day, only a handful of Member States will have the right IT infrastructure to receive data from platforms, with many others still in the phase of technical development, with deployment foreseen for end of 2026 or beginning of 2027. However, productive dialogue between platforms and Member States is continuing to ensure proper implementation and data-flows as soon as possible.

Platforms have strongly supported this initiative from the outset.³ They see data sharing as a way to contribute to a more informed discussion, and as the only way to ensure harmonised and GDPR-compliant data. When the systems are fully developed, platform will be ready to comply and share data.

Enabling informed policy through harmonized STR data

Today, most local authorities, with a few exceptions, have very limited tools to collect and analyze comprehensive data on STR activity across platforms. In that context, and in response to real concerns from their constituents concerning housing shortage, many have introduced measures such as night caps, licensing systems or other restrictions without data evidence of the effect of STRs in housing.

These efforts reflect a clear intention to act and to respond to housing challenges that are tangible at local level. At the same time, in most cases, the absence of consistent and comparable data has made it difficult to build a full picture of the STR market, how it operates across platforms, and what its actual impact is, or is not, on housing more broadly. This calls into question the rationale for introducing interventions designed to restrict

² Please see: <https://www.mlex.com/mlex/articles/2472079/booking-airbnb-concerned-about-eu-short-term-rental-rules-implementation>

³ Please see: <https://eutravelttech.eu/eu-str-regulation-close-collaboration-between-all-stakeholders-and-common-technical-solutions-key-to-the-success-of-the-new-rules/>

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STRs in the name of improving housing access and / or availability until the data that would allow to understand their relationship is not yet fully available.

The new EU framework changes that starting point. By providing harmonized, cross-platform data, it will allow for a more complete, consistent and reliable overview of the STR market over time, making it possible to assess where challenges actually exist and how best to address them.

Beyond providing information, this access will make it possible for local authorities to design measures that respond to actual market dynamics and to evaluate their impact over time.

It also helps ensure that discussions around STRs are grounded in evidence rather than assumptions. Put simply, the EU STR Regulation will provide data to facilitate evidence-based discussions within the broader housing debate.

This is particularly important as discussions around STRs are often complex and, at times, highly polarised, largely due to the lack of comprehensive, comparable data across markets.

With the upcoming discussions on the Affordable Housing Act, it is now more important than ever to have a clear, data-driven picture of the STR market. This is the only way to ensure that any further action is justified, proportionate to its objectives, and ultimately effective.

If we are serious about addressing housing challenges and understanding the role of STRs, ensuring access to better data is not a side issue. It is a necessary starting point. The EU STR Regulation's potential will only materialize once the regulation is fully implemented in all Member States, data is consistently collected, and sufficient time has elapsed to allow for meaningful analysis.