

Minutes Droevendaal meeting 12-05-09

Chairman Luc, Minute maker Harmen, present: approximately 50 Droevendalers + few outsiders

Mayor Luc opens and chairs the meeting at 19:00 o'clock, and introduces the issue at hand.

Landlord iDEALis proposes a new policy: from the 1st of July 2009, only Dutch students are allowed to rent in cooptation complexes (Droevendaal, Walstraat and a few others). This is one stubborn action in a long list of top-down measures by Idealis, and is related to the shortage of student housing in Wageningen. This lagging problem reveals the poor cooperation between WUR and landlord Idealis. WUR is actively preparing for more students in Wageningen, whereas Idealis is undermining this ambition (destruction of student housing Rijnsteeg). In short: Idealis monopolistic character seems not to be working out in the interest of (international) students and WUR and Idealis seem to be fighting like children.

Luc opens the floor to some comments of the present people

Alex: It is not just an Droevendaal issue → it is also an issue of internationalization and integration. Others comment on that: Idealis is actively segregating the student society by nationality; Dutch Bornsesteeg students supposedly were bribed to leave the corridor for 200 Euro. Other cities also cluster international students, but are they advised, obliged or prohibited to live somewhere? That's the difference

Diego: If WUR is responsible for my housing as international student, then why am I signing a Idealis contract?

Michaelis: Before some year SSHW (foundation for social housing in Wageningen (predecessor of Idealis)) had the ambition of housing 30 % international students, this seems a very strong contrast to what is happening now.

Pedro (non EU student): When coming from Brazil, Idealis was the only contact for housing in Wageningen (other than the Couch surfing community red.). They only offered the sub-optimal, expensive bungalow park option; leaving no choice since non-EU students have to subscribe to the municipality within 8 days after arrival in order to maintain the visa.

Ian: To be clear, the issue is about EU and non-EU students, one Idealis tenant (Ian) won a bureaucratic fight with Idealis last year, he found that based on the Treaty of Rome (and also EU law); it is illegal to distinguish within EU citizens in housing issues. "Distance from Wageningen (other than nationality) could be the future criteria for appointing rooms", adds Luc.

A long discussion follows on what and how to act now, several pathways are put forward. Main distinction must be made between the issue at hand (Idealis wanting to delete international students from the cooptation housing) and issues like intransparency, bureaucracy, shortage of housing and internationalization. Although they all are relevant issues to address in the future (especially the latter two), most relevant now is to prevent Idealis from succeeding in this policy change before the 4th of July. To this aim, three groups are formed: Advice-, Lobby- and Publicitygroup. At least the representatives of these groups intercommunicate about what actions will be taken.

Law-related group

Viewing the law-related issues

Contact person: Tanya.Chernega@wur.nl

Lobby group

Lobbying and networking in different policy levels

Contact person: Cor.Zenhorst@wur.nl (Droef 69)

Publicity group

Preparing and executing a petition

Preparing and executing awareness-raising activities

Contact person: Christina.Beberdick@wur.nl (Droef 67)

Meeting closes at 21:00 o'clock