

The tenants' network - tenants of Akelius in Berlin

We are all Akelius tenants & self-organized. Are you also an Akelius tenant? Come to one of our meetings and join the network.

Website:

stoppakelius.de

Forum:

stoppakelius.de/forum

Contact tenants:

Mail: kontakt@stoppakelius.de

Post: Vernetzung Akelius-Mieter*innen,
c/o Stadtteilladen Lunte, Weisestr. 53,
12049 Berlin

Tel.: Tuesday 4-6 pm: +49 30 - 622 32 34
(for tenants with no access to e-mail)

Contact for the press:

presse@stoppakelius.de

Twitter:

@StoppAkeliusB

The tenants network has written a dossier on Akelius in Berlin. Available online:
stoppakelius.de/material/dossier



V.i.S.d.P.:

L. Mayer c/o Lunte, Weisestr. 53, 12049 Berlin

Demands of the tenants of Akelius

Protect tenants! Remove all exceptions in tenants' legal protection!

Remove all tax exemptions in real estate trading, e.g. share Deals!

Stop cancellations and reinstate cancelled contracts if debts have been paid!

A halt on modernizations, redevelopments or upgrades for 20 years!

Instate a monitoring system for vacant apartments! Confiscate vacant apartments after two months for redistribution to homeless people!

Effective social environment protection for the entire city of Berlin!

Stop and prohibit all transformations of rental apartments into condominiums!

Extensive construction of affordable apartments, especially in the citycentre!

Protect small businesses!

The expropriation of Akelius!

Preserve all land as common property!

Consequences of Akelius for politics and society

- Gentrification. Displacement of tenants from their homes, their familiar environment and their social networks

- More poverty, more fear, more social division and segregation

- Increase in precarious living conditions:
Ex-partners are forced to remain sharing an apartment, kids of full age are forced to stay living with their parents, new berliners are unable to secure an apartment

- Destruction of long-standing social fabrics and functioning neighbourhoods of solidarity

- Cultural activities in the inner cities die

- Tax evasion and a blockade of governmental rights of intervention guaranteed by law through share deals

- Accumulated load on social security systems through the exploitation of tenants

- Misuse of natural resources and work through massive but unnecessary construction work and luxury modernizations, adding to huge stress on climate and environment

Akelius is a major actor in the gentrification of Berlin.



Akelius

Rent Inflation

Termination of contracts

Luxury Modernization

Tax Evasion



Tenants of Akelius:

Soon after they bought the house, Akelius sent 'unrestrained cancellations', wrongly citing non-existent rent arrears. (Kreuzberg)

Whenever there's a letter from Akelius in the mail, I get a bad feeling and even become afraid. It feels like at least one third, if not half of the tenants have given up and moved out since Akelius took over the house. (Lichtenberg)

During renovations, electrical cable, which had been in the wall before, were installed on the wall using cable ducts. The bottom of all doors inside the apartment were cut away, with Akelius citing ventilation improvements. (Neukölln)

Since Akelius started to make all houses into permanent construction sites, there hasn't been one single month without massive noise stemming from pneumatic hammers, going on for weeks and with no possibility to find any calm at home. (Westend)

Akelius alleges that the rent cap law (Mietpreisbremse) is unconstitutional. They have offered to lower my rent by 15%, which is already 'excessively overpriced'. Even with this reduction, I still pay 30% more than what is legally allowed regarding the rent control table (Mietspiegel). (Wedding)

The Business Model - Rent Inflation:

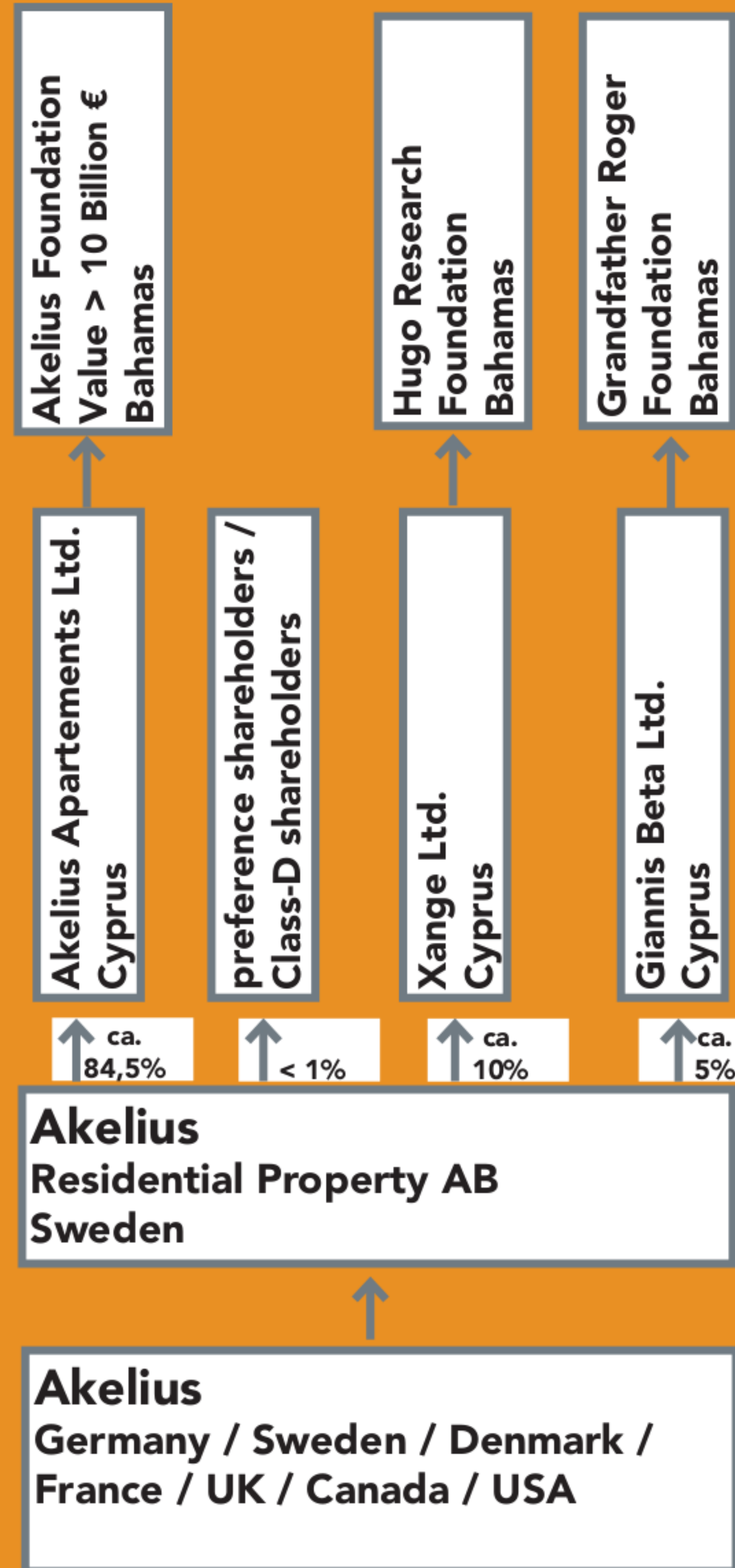
Akelius buys houses with a so-called potential for increased value. The average rent in houses that Akelius buys is between approx. 4,40 and 6 €/qm. When tenants change every apartment gets a complete and intensive upgrade. However, such 'modernisation costs', the state of apartments, buildings and service contradict the standards that were advertised. The average rent for upgraded apartments is approximately 20 €/qm, peaking at around 40 €/qm. For upgraded apartments, the rent is increased each year using the inflation index. After the increased value potential has been reached through modernizations and upgrades, apartments are sold off as condominiums, enabling the eviction of even long-time tenants with unlimited contracts through new owners citing their right of repossession.

The Consequences

Akelius destroys affordable housing through changing affordable apartments into homes for the rich and finally into condominiums. The massive rent increases add to a faster rising of the rent cap which is based on new leases, affecting all tenants in Berlin. Akelius uses the rising rent cap to increase the rent in existing leases.

Reasons for the Problem

- Accommodation and housing is being treated as a commodity.
- Akelius is about the maximization of profit above everything else.
- Rent control has loopholes and is not effective.
- Insufficient public control mechanisms and lack of sanctions.



The Business Model - Tax Evasion:

Chain of Companies

Akelius is an international company working within several international housing markets with a focus on Sweden, Canada and Germany. Akelius owns about 50,000 apartments in total. 14,000 apartments are located in Berlin, representing a value of almost 3 Billion Euros. Berlin is thus the most important market for the group. All national or local Akelius companies are part of Akelius Residential Property AB, a stock corporation located in Sweden. Less than 1% of the stock is publicly traded. The rest is owned by three parent companies located in Cyprus. Each of the parent companies is itself owned by a private foundation located on the Bahamas - a classic 'tax haven'.

Share Deals

Akelius buys houses using so called Share Deals. In a share deal, instead of being sold directly, a house is transferred to a company and then the company is sold. Through a Share Deal the property transfer tax (6% of the price) can be evaded and usual instruments for government regulation are blocked, especially the governments right to intervention in areas with social environment protection.