

## ***For the right to housing***

Access to housing is a basic right in any democratic society. As such, public administrations are obligated to ensure that this constitutional right is fulfilled through policies that favor equal opportunities and protect the most vulnerable populations in order to avoid urban inequality.

Fulfilling this constitutional provision is hampered by a real estate market that produces an uncontrolled increase in the sale and rental prices of homes while, in addition, discrimination impedes access to them.

In this context, it is imperative that public regulations for housing do the following: favor increases in the stock of municipal and autonomous housing; control increases in purchase and rental prices; reduce social inequalities; and mitigate the social and residential vulnerability in which a good part of the population is currently immersed.

We, the Spanish Geographers Association (*Asociación Española de Geografía*) and Spain's College of Geographers (*Colegio de Geógrafos de España*), denounce the abusive practices that impede the right of all citizens to normal access to housing, whether owned or rented.

It is our opinion that – in order to solve the problem of abusive rents and, ultimately, guarantee the right to housing – the following proposals must be approved:

- 1. Give visibility to the problems that affect residential housing and the impacts generated by its touristic use:** by carefully monitoring the needs of each city; analyzing the potential to meet the urgent demands of built housing stock; and evaluating how tourist rentals impact the real estate market as well as neighborhoods with high VUT densities.
- 2. Combat deregulation and endorse reinforcing public access:** by advocating not only for planning and management by public administrations, but also for the transversality of urban policies in the face of prevailing proposals that are at once ad hoc and sectorial.
- 3. Control the market of residential rental housing:** by imposing price ceilings and zoning based on social indicators.

4. **Monitor the tourist rental housing market:** by zoning and limiting the number of licenses through urban planning and tourism management regulations; sanctioning non-legal tourist rentals; and providing the necessary means (financial and human resources) for compliance.
5. **Promote the creation of Housing Observatories:** by generating and making public official statistics on housing at every level, including those for legal or illegal tourist use; and conducting censuses of houses that are actually empty.
6. **Plan new city models:** by promoting bottom-up governance and assessing the ideas and needs of social as well as neighborhood groups.
7. **Develop housing transfer programs for the residential rental market:** by offering tax incentives to new owners.
8. **Promote initiatives that favor increases in subsidized and social housing:** by urging that the social housing stock in terms of both ownership – by maintaining a 30% minimum stock for subsidized housing (*vivienda protegida*, VPO) – and social housing when planning new real estate developments and comprehensive refurbishment of existing homes; and by public administrations purchasing consolidated urban land and housing, especially in the areas most affected by gentrification and touristification.
9. **Reform the abusive regulatory aspects of taxes and housing:** by introducing mechanisms that protect the tenant and prevent excessive increases in rental prices upon contract renewal.
10. **Review legislative practices that give greater control to real estate hedge funds:** by making it difficult to sell property to investment funds; and requiring empty housing to be registered in the censuses conducted by autonomous regions in order to enter them in the rental and/or sales market.

[1] This declaration has been promoted by the following working groups: Urban Geography and the Geography of Tourism, Leisure and Recreation (*Geografía Urbana y Geografía del Turismo, Ocio y Recreación*), at the Spanish Geographers Association (*Asociación Geógrafos Españoles*, AGE).

In addition, the following people have participated directly in its development:

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