

### **Housing: a basic good left out of the 2024 State Budget**

A little over a week ago the new draft State Budget was disclosed and the Cabinet claims it is for the people and having in mind the Portuguese citizens. Once again it does not take into consideration one of the key basic goods. **Housing**

This is such a basic good that it was included in the Portuguese Constitution in 1976, specially article 65 that says: «Everybody has the right to a suitably sized home to live with the family, healthy, comfortable, that safeguards personal and family intimacy». Now this right that the Portuguese citizens have acquired back then is, for many families, hard to come by.

If we take a look at basic goods, such as nutrition, absolutely, it is certainly a basic good essential to life, but, if the Portuguese citizens cannot have decent homes to live in, they also cannot reach good quality of life, safe and sound in body and mind.

I think that, as a country, it is good that we know where we came from and where we are going to in regard to housing, and, in my opinion, it is important to analyse the subject taking the Portuguese Constitution into consideration. For, in addition to enshrine the right to housing for each Portuguese citizen, it also states that the it is up to the State to bear the burden to secure this right: «Programme and enforce a housing policy comprehended in global land management plans and supported by town management plans ensuring a suitable network of transportation and social equipment; Foster, together with the autonomous regions and local municipalities, the construction of affordable and social houses; Encourage private construction subjected to the public interest and access to own or rented residence; Foster and support initiatives from the local communities and populations, aimed at solving their own housing problems and foster housing cooperatives and self-construction». Is this what we have seen? Is this the answer brought by the next State Budget? I wonder...

With a new draft State Budget there is always time for hope and expectations. I expected the new draft State Budget to boost momentum and a bold attitude by the Cabinet. That it would be an answer to the housing problem in Portugal and above all that it would encourage economical development. Alas! We witnessed precisely the opposite. So much so the reduction of the VAT for new construction or its deduction is not provided, which, lets face it, is a serious handicap to the creation of affordable housing in Portugal.

But, turning back to housing as a basic good, I question not measures such as aid to support feed costs among families with low income, but I rather question how is it possible that housing does not benefit of such measures? It is crucial to build more and at the least possible cost. It sounds simple, but proved hard to come true. Now that the housing crisis is on the agenda, so much that originated the creation of a specific package to remedy it, at a time when many people cannot get a proper home, at this very moment we are experiencing, the cabinet wastes a good opportunity to help the Portuguese citizens to have access to more houses.

I stress what I stand by: during this crisis, we must be bold, get the most needed solutions for our country, that is, more economic growth and measures to bring more houses at affordable prices to the Portuguese citizens. If the Government does not take the lead to remedy this housing problem, how is it going to be solved?