

## **Property investors: not villains, are catalysts for social change**

In recent years, the property sector has been the target of widespread public criticism, often associated with the idea that investors are largely responsible for inflating housing prices, driven solely by financial interests, thus making access to housing increasingly difficult for the Portuguese. This light-hearted and unaccountable view, which frames investors as veritable 'bogeymen', needs a deeper and fairer analysis that recognises the transformative potential that private investment can and will have in developing a more social aspect of real estate in Portugal.

I argue that investment in the property sector should not be seen as a barrier to social well-being, but as an opportunity to generate innovative, inclusive and sustainable housing solutions. Our mission is precisely to create the conditions in which investors can act as agents of change, contributing to the construction of fairer and more equitable cities, where access to housing is a right for all Portuguese, with homes that they can afford.

It's important to realise that the role of investors in real estate goes far beyond simply buying and selling property. By energizing the market, investors help to rehabilitate run-down urban areas, promote the regeneration of public spaces and contribute to the creation of infrastructures that improve the quality of life of communities. This transformation has a positive impact on social cohesion by revitalising neighborhoods and creating opportunities for employment and local development.

A clear example of the positive role of investors can be seen in the promotion of affordable housing. In partnership with the state and municipalities, several investors have committed to developing affordable housing projects aimed at young people, families and middle-class workers who would otherwise not have access to a home of their own. These projects, often part of affordable rental programs, prove that it is possible to reconcile financial interests with social commitment when there are appropriate public policies and effective collaboration between the public and private sectors.

In addition, the ESG (Environmental and Social Governance) concept is gaining momentum among investors, who are increasingly adopting sustainable and ethical practices. This includes the construction of energy-efficient buildings, which reduce costs for residents, and the creation of community spaces that foster well-being and social interaction.

It's also important to remember that the property sector is one of the most important areas for the Portuguese economy, generating thousands of direct and indirect jobs, boosting various industries and making a significant contribution to the national GDP.

By attracting investment, we are fostering economic growth and creating the conditions for the country to respond more effectively to its housing needs. But for this impact to be truly

transformative, all the players in the sector - developers, investors, government and civil society - need to be aligned in the common goal of guaranteeing the right to housing.

**The future of real estate in Portugal depends largely on the ability to reconcile economic development with social inclusion. And it is in this balance that the sector's true strength lies.**