

### What can we demand from Porto?

One more week dedicated to Porto's urban rehabilitation is near, an event in the north that has increasingly growing in importance throughout the these past years and that became a meeting point for the real estate industry, gathering in the "Invicta" the Portuguese urban rehabilitation professionals, as well as several other players in this market and some investors, who take the opportunity to get to know this investment destination, Porto.

I believe one can now request from Porto, which has attracted the attention of real estate investors, **to establish itself as a good investment destination**, where there are still opportunities, both in excellent locations and prices. We shall always be competitive with other European towns and capitals as long as we know how to keep within normal and expectable prices for a growing and asserting country and a town.

Afterwards, one requests Porto do consolidate itself as a **solid and safe investment destination**, allowing investors to extract for many years the expected income or return on assets. It is very important not disappoint the expectations and anticipated investment ratios, at the risk of a knock-on effect due to some eventual poor image spreading to many other investors "at the door".

Finally, I would say that Porto should prove the world that it is more than a trendy city, and, because of that, must establish itself as a **competitive destination at a European and global scale**, and, because of that, if we want to keep competing with towns such as Barcelona, or even (why not) Madrid, Paris, or London, it is urgent to turn Porto into what the other towns are already, that is, **well-established investment and also tourism destinations**.

Just one word about urban planning and licensing. Porto and its town hall have been a good example of openness, proximity, and availability of its local councillors to investors, the "Town Makers" (real estate developers) and designers. However it is necessary to keep on fighting for swiftness and simplification of urban licensing by our town halls.

Porto has already initiated this task and APPII has been working together with the Urban Planning Department to jointly study, analyze, rethink, and execute the new strategies to fight bureaucracy, slowness, and the complexity of the municipality procedures. **We want Porto to establish itself as a "City of the Future", modern, with efficient administrative procedures, where working is pleasant and possible, that positively interact with their stakeholders and professionals, investment friendly and, finally, a city for everyone and of everyone.**

With regard to measures, Porto already took an important step by digitalizing urban planning procedures. And this is a good thing. Now we must hone the system, check for weaknesses and improve. Among other measures that we also stand for, for a long time we have been calling on the creation of the single point of contact, as a case manager responsible for following up each project, from start to finish, capable of unlocking impasses and allowing to overcome the complexity of the contact with a whole squad of technicians and entities. On the other hand, we must continue improving communication with municipal technicians, that should be fully available. It is important to implement in the major cities an online scheduling system for meetings with technicians, which will allow solving one of the oldest problems detected, which is the difficulty of contacting and scheduling meetings with the lower and medium decision-making levels. It would also be efficient to implement, as quality control for the provided service and following (form widely used by the business community the "satisfaction surveys", so that the good technicians (which indeed exist) might be rewarded and pinpoint the bad ones. Finally, one must generate a better articulation between the involved entities: CCDRs, APA, DGPC, AT, water, waste water, etc.

Another issue that cannot be forgot is the affordable housing issue. This depends more and more of the pairing real estate developers and municipalities. Because of that, the APPII and the Porto Vivo SRU have been cooperating to develop the program "Porto com Sentido", a facility of the so called "safe rents" that the industry professionals must know; and work together with the Sociedade de Reabilitação Urbana (Urban Rehabilitation Society), to make a success in Portugal out of this program. The families from Porto win, Porto wins, the real estate industry, which is responsible, attentive and supportive, wins, Portugal wins.