

Licensing: a national goal!

Did you know that lisboners pay on average more EUR1,500 - EUR2.000/m² for their house because of urban licensing delays? Because of the three to four years the licensing can take, instead of an affordable EUR2.000/m², the inhabitants of Lisbon purchase their home at EUR4.000/m², that is EUR2.000/m² more.

Because of that, this subject is not a corporate, sectoral, or local matter, **it is a national matter: it makes impossible for the Portuguese to access a fundamental right, which is having a residence.**

With many new officers in place and now with a Government capable of major and far-reaching reforms it is urgent to address the chaos in urban licensing. This should be a national goal and not just the municipal or industry motivation, considering that, due to sluggishness and complexity of these procedures, the Portuguese cannot purchase their dream house, first of all because the houses take too long to get to the market, and secondly because these are more expensive.

Thus, the fight for speed, streamlining, and transparency of the urban licensing should be one of our main battles as a country, aiming at boosting the cities competitiveness, work conditions, capability to attract more national and foreign investment and also to swiftly supply more houses, lower the prices and finally make housing affordable.

Licensing still has unacceptable high levels of red tape and response times. The urban licensing chaos is far from settled and licensing is a highly kaffian, built to fail process. During the last few decades the bureaucracy and opacity have increased, giving rise to more corruption. Also response times went up, and the unpredictability scares away any investor from those municipalities, where the licensing chaos reigns.

And the fact is that all this cripples and stalls, year after year, the start of many projects, many of which are housing projects with a heavy impact not only for those working with the town halls, but specially for the Portuguese families, who witness the delay in getting a decent home.

We must actively work to fight one of the major national cancers, the chaos in urban licensing, that drives investors away, generates corruption, decreases competitiveness and impairs the chances for the Portuguese to access a constitutional right, housing.

We want our cities to assume as "Cities of the Future", modern, with efficient administrative procedures. These cities must positively interact with their stakeholders and professionals, must be investment friendly and, finally, must be cities for everyone and of everyone. We must create investment friendly cities. We must proceed to promote higher proximity between the municipalities and the city professionals, thereby boosting the municipalities' goals, aligning them with private interests. And we must create bureaucracy free and projects streamlining administrative environments in support of the development of economic activities, investment in cities and, ultimately in support of more affordable housing and consequently of Portugal and the Portuguese.

They rely on us all, citizens, companies and associations we count on our leaders in this fight for this national goal.