



Brussels, 23 March 2021

For the attention of: **José Luis Ábalos, Minister of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda**

Subject: **Rent control measures in the New Spanish Housing Law**

Dear Mr Ábalos,

As Members of the European Parliament, we would like to express our concerns regarding the New Spanish Housing Law.

As you know, Spain has one of the highest overburden rates in Europe, while 36.1% of the tenant population allocate more than 40% of their income to housing and basic supplies, and over 2 million tenants are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In 2020 the number of evictions reached 29.406 cases despite the measures addressed to alleviate the impact of the pandemic. More than one million evictions have taken place since 2008, and the majority of them are a result of the current rental law and housing speculation.

We are also aware of the agreement reached between the two coalition partners the Spanish government to set rental price benchmarks both in the coalition agreement and in the negotiation of the last General Budget. However, we see with concern new developments that might indicate that this crucial measure could be dropped.

In this context, we want to recall the European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all. By a wide majority in the plenary, the European Parliament underlined that the right to housing is a fundamental right enshrined in the EU Treaties and calls on the Member States to put in place legal provisions, including clear rental regulations, to protect the rights of tenants and owner-occupiers. Moreover, the resolution reminds the Commission and Member States that failing to regulate the real estate market and the financial actors operating on that market in order to ensure access to affordable and adequate housing for all, would mean non-compliance with their obligations with respect to the right to housing.

We therefore encourage the New Housing Law (Ley de Vivienda) to contribute to end to severe violations of the right to housing in Spain, and fully reflect the spirit of the European Parliament resolution. In this regard, it is paramount that Spain implements measures of rent control as soon as possible. This kind of regulation is aligned with what many EU countries already do, they are becoming more and more popular and Europe is setting the path towards these types



of measures. In addition, we can observe the case of Catalonia where this measure is already in place with a positive impact in the reduction of rental prices.

We also consider it is crucial to increase the public efforts to expand the social and affordable housing system, by all means necessary. However, it will take many decades for Spain to have a public housing system that can start to solve this gigantic problem (currently it is below 2% of the total housing stock, far from the European average, at 15%). Meanwhile other urgent and bold measures need to be taken in order to start alleviating the population.

Other measures are needed to promote decent and affordable housing: Rental contracts should be either indefinite or long-term leases; tenants' unions should be recognized by the law; real estate agent's fees which are currently being paid by renters, should be paid by landlords; and touristic apartments should be recovered, while empty houses should be converted into stable rents.

To summarize, we would like your government to seize this historic opportunity to reduce the gap with the rest of the EU, fully implement the measures agreed in the EP resolution and ensure the realisation of housing as a human right.

Yours sincerely,

Kostas Arvanitis, Manon Aubry, Malin Björk, Manuel Bompard, Damien Carême, Leïla Chaibi, Oëzlem Demirel, Cornelia Ernst, Claude Gruffat, José Gusmão, Philippe Lamberts, Marisa Matias, Emmanuel Maurel, Martina Michels, Silvia Modig, Younous Omarjee, Anne-Sophie Pelletier, Manu Pineda, Sira Rego, Terry Reintke, Diana Riba, María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, Mounir Satouri, Martin Schirdewan, Jordi Solé, Marie Toussaint, Ernest Urtasun, Kim van Sparrentak, Idoia Villanueva, Nikolaj Villumsen

Members of the European Parliament