

07th June 2023

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES,

On behalf of the managers and providers from the Spanish Association of social Housing, AVS, i'd like to welcome you to Spain, and to this wonderful city of Barcelona, which has the pleasure of hosting the fourth edition of the international festival of social housing.

I would like to thank our member in Catalonia, GHS, Gestores de Habitage Social-Social Housing Managers- and specially its President, Lidia Guillén, who unfortunately isn't here at this moment, for the role they are playing in order to guarantee the social and affordable housing in Catalonia, and of course, for the efforts they have put into the organization of this festival. I ask for applause for Lidia and our Catalanian members. I would also like to thank the entire HOUSING EUROPE team, represented here by its President Bent Madsen, as well as the manager of the municipal housing institute of Barcelona, Javier Burón.

The International Social Housing Festival gives us an incredible opportunity to get to know us better, exchange the best practices, and learn and join our forces to achieve a common goal: to improve the lives of people with more (and better) affordable social rental housing, and espezialised services focused on housing.

In the limited time I have I would like to share with you two insights from our sector in Spain.

First, the Spanish housing sector is a diverse one. As diverse as our territorial reality is, in which large, medium, and small cities coexist. The members of the Spanish association are professionals in the promotion and management of public housing, and for this reason, I want to state categorically that this sector is not at the benefit of any political ideology. We will support all those actions that help to create a suitable environment for the development of our activity, an activity that represents one of our essential public services in this country. An activity which, as I have mentioned before, has diverse regional and local circumstances. For the same reasons, we reject measures based on ideological or demagogic approaches, that some times have little to do with reality.

The second point has to do with the role that public providers and managers should play in this crucial moment. Public, social, and affordable housing has never been at the center of the political agenda as it is today. In this context, our voice is crucial for taking the right decisions in the field of public and social housing policies. No one has the knowledge of the rental housing management business as we do. We are offering our leaders our resources, our knowledge, our solutions to improve the lives of thousands of citizens, by providing affordable rental housing, by improving their

homes, making them more efficient, more comfortable, and more accessible, and by providing the best support services to our tenants.

I hope that this festival will inspire us in the search for innovative solutions to all the challenges ahead of us. We will not disappoint the expectations that thousands of citizens have of our role as providers of public, social and affordable housing. Thank you very much for your attention.

María Montes

President of AVS