

SPANISH PUBLIC HOUSING PROVIDERS LOOK TO EUROPE FOR FINANCE



J. Francesc Villanueva Margalef
Presidente de AVS

“Given the difficult economic situation in our country, members of the Spanish Association of Public Housing and Land (AVS) thought it would be a good idea to bring together at one table the key players behind EU policies and financial instruments .

The workshop held on Tuesday October 5th in Madrid, aimed to inform our members

on the complex, but effective EU Public Sector financing structures, contrasting any possibility to carry out what we consider to be our commitments to society.

During the Europe Year against poverty and social exclusion our organization wants to rise to the occasion. These meetings and exchanges of information on how to obtain sources of financing for our social projects are crucial for this.

It seems clear to the public housing promoters that in times of crisis, when poorest people of our society are faring worse, the public sector has to be an instrument of social cohesion and must stand up for them unconditionally. As always.

In addition, we must assist a Spanish middle class who is now considered too rich to be eligible for aid but, paradoxical as it seems, has actually lost the necessary purchasing power to obtain decent housing.

But our concerns encompass more than the promotion of social housing and social. Our commitment, and that of the institutions to which we belong, is to assume also the challenge that the European Commission established in the Lisbon Treaty: the fight against climate change.

20-20-20

The message of 20-20-20, (ie, by 2020, Europe will have to reduce by 20% and CO2 emissions will have increased by 20% renewable energy production), led

us in time, to seek and obtain support for the implementation of the Intelligent Energy Programme, integrating it into the platform and Power House Europe, whose subsidiary in Spain was established by and presided over by AVS.

Reconciling Social and Environmental Objectives

The key issue for the public sector in relation to these two aspects of our commitments is to understand how to get funding for both.

As a member of The Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing (CECODHAS Housing Europe), AVS was able to establish relationships with highly qualified experts from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Council of Europe Development Bank and to ensure their presence at our workshop this week, along with several energy policy consultants, belonging to the French BURGEAP Group.

As correctly pointed out by Karima Delli, Vice President of Urban-Intergroup of the European Parliament, we believe it is perfectly possible and reasonable to reconcile social needs with the best and most efficient use of financial resources. We must define what really needs to be done, at what cost and how?

Conclusions

Conclusions of the experts who joined us in this discussion are clear and evident: there is the potential for the development of energy saving measures, there is a need to encourage responsible behaviour among citizens; cities can and must grow but must respect the principles of urban cohesion.

European public banks can support efforts by Member States to introduce policies which address the indiscriminate use of resources.

In fact, they have the capacity to build bridges and to ensure that public institutions in Spain take the lead in meeting existing demands.

Therefore, the public housing providers, members of AVS, will continue to ask for help and urge our institutions to assume the role of intermediary which the European public banking needs, to support the social housing sector.

J. Francisco Villanueva Margalef
AVS President
Thursday, October 7, 2010

NATIONAL CONTEXT

In Spain, energy saving policies are based on the 2008-2012 Action Plan. The Plan will result in savings of 87.9 million tonnes of oil (equivalent to 60% of primary energy consumption in Spain in 2006) and provides for the reduction of 238 million tons in CO2 emissions to the atmosphere.

The Plan concentrates its efforts in 7 sectors (Industry, Transport, Construction, Utilities, residential and office facilities, Agriculture and Energy Transformation) and specifies concrete measures for each of them. A total of 2,367 million euros of public money has been allocated to the plan, 20.2% more than planned in the E4 (Strategy and Efficiency Savings in Spain) for the period 2008-2012.

ACTIVITIES OF POWER HOUSE ESPANA

Taking advantage of the impact of holding the Annual General Assembly CECODHAS in Mallorca on May 26, 2009, AVS organized a Conference on "Social and Cooperative Housing Fighting Against the Climate Change", which became the official launch of the Platform Power House Spain.



Karima Delli, Europarlamentaria y J. Francesc Villanueva Margalef, Presidente de AVS

Since its inception, the Platform has organized two seminars and four expert meetings. The first seminar was held in Sant Cugat del Vallés (Barcelona) on efficient design and maintenance. 127 people attended.

The second seminar was held on 5 October in Madrid, on "Financing of energy efficiency." Karima Delli from European Parliament, Jose Martinez and Christophe Milin, from the Research Bureau of the International Energy Council, Mario Aymerich from the EIB, Sebastien Relland from the CEB, and Cristina Cañada

from IDEA participated as speakers . 67 people attended.

In Spain we are experiencing a serious financial crisis, which coincides with the crash of the housing sector. This has resulted in a lack of funding and incentives for the adoption of new energy saving measures in homes. For this reason, and because of the increase in "energy poverty", there is an emphasis on informing and training end-users.

NETWORKING

Our main partners are AVS members who are public housing companies in Spain, belonging to municipal corporations, regional and national, secondly, a political level, representatives of the Ministry of Housing, Generalitat de Catalunya and Generalitat Valenciana.



We are also supported by technical institutes such as CENER (Spanish Center for Renewable Energy), IDEA (Institute for Energy Diversification) and the Valencian Institute of Building (Generalitat de Valencia).



POWER HOUSE Espana, platform meeting, May 2009, Madrid

We cooperate in the organization of seminars, regulation etc. Our activities are disseminated through the news and monthly circulars issued by AVS. We also have national press coverage of the seminars that we organize.

EXCHANGE

We conducted a nationwide collection of best practices on energy efficiency in new construction and rehabilitation of social housing. These publications have been widely distributed. We are currently developing a guide for financing energy efficiency activities in households. AVS members have decided to compensate and discharge of CO2 into the atmosphere due to transport to our meetings by planting trees equivalent.

LEARNING FROM EUROPE

Our members would like to learn about the relationships and the training of residents in saving energy and energy management. There is also interest in exchange on optimal maintenance by users.

Hearing about how other CECODHAS Housing Europe Members are using funds and grants from is also strategically very interesting for us.

TOOLKIT

After reviewing the outputs of EU funded projects we have selected case studies from Niersepes SAVE project, because they include a comprehensive analysis of four models of social housing in Europe and provides technical solutions for the rehabilitation of housing, defining a global strategy of the role of each of the actors involved in housing renovation.



Every country does its own survey of prevailing models of social housing. In the Spanish case, we choose a project of Navarra. At the same time the participants propose at least one case study on energy rehabilitation with an interest in overcoming barriers and for the

transfer of experience.

The results that we found interesting are:
 1.- A preliminary analysis of models of social housing
 2.- A technical and financial guide
 3.- Information and Qualification

FINANCE

In Catalonia, EIB has invested 100 million euros in a project of the Catalan government for construction and rehabilitation of housing, following the guidelines of the National Rehabilitation Plan 2009-2012.



Moreover the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Junta de Andalucía has concluded a financing agreement to launch a Fund Portfolio Jessica in Andalusia. The Agreement sets out the mechanisms of the Fund and its initial capital amounting to 85.7 million euros from the Structural Funds.

To be funded, projects must be part of integrated urban development programs, ensuring consistency and quality investments from the environmental point of view.

THE BIG PICTURE

The efficient rehabilitation of housing has proven to be a good tool for job creation and in the meanwhile it reduces energy consumption contributing to reduce fuel poverty in our country, which is estimated at more than 10% of households.

The use of alternatives energies in new construction has declined due to economic crisis and new short-ages.

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POWER HOUSE Spain

THE PROJECT

With the support of the European Commission's "Intelligent Energy - Europe" programme, POWER HOUSE EUROPE will serve to accelerate empowerment of residents and up-skilling of professionals working to reduce the carbon footprint of the social housing sector. This will be done by drawing on the existing European pool of know-how and resources and facilitating the exchange of success stories and lessons learned.

POWER HOUSE EUROPE is a gateway to:

- Resources for social and cooperative housing professionals to support the develop their energy efficiency strategies;
- An on-line forum for information and knowledge exchange between professionals in the social housing sector;
- Information on strategies, legal, institutional and financial measures which have proved successful around the EU and the CECODHAS-Housing Europe Energy Policy work;
- Examples of both retrofitting of older properties and low energy new construction, effective partnerships with residents, ICT applications for empowering residents and more;
- Updates on development and policy discussions on EU legislation related to energy efficiency and renewables in housing;
- Updates on EU project funding and structural funds;
- Partnerships between local social and cooperative housing providers;

POWER HOUSE National/Regional platforms which gather enablers of the energy transition from all sectors to work in partnership

AVS – Asociación Española de Promotores Públicos de Vivienda y Suelo

AVS – Asociación Española de Promotores Públicos de Vivienda y Suelo is a national body representing 164 public housing companies which provide social housing for owner occupation and manage a total rental housing stock of about 250.000 units. AVS aims are to urge the public authorities to provide the necessary condition to increase the productive public housing to help implement the right to housing as listed in the constitution, to boost sustainable development through sustainable urban policies such as the regeneration of historic neighbourhoods and city centres, and to promote sustainable construction and the reduction of poverty and social exclusion.

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