

Spain Targets Airbnbs to Protect Affordable Housing

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Spain is taking big steps to solve its housing crisis. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has announced a high tax on property purchases by people from outside the European Union (EU). This tax could be as high as 100%, making it much more expensive for non-EU buyers, like those from the United States and the United Kingdom, to purchase homes in Spain. The goal is to free up housing for Spanish residents who are struggling to find affordable places to live.

Prime Minister Sánchez also plans to increase taxes on people who rent out apartments to tourists for short stays, such as those listed on platforms like Airbnb. These taxes aim to discourage foreign investors from buying homes as investment properties.



Tourism plays a big role in Spain's economy, but it has also made housing more expensive for locals. Cities like Barcelona and Madrid, as well as popular coastal areas, have seen a rise in short-term rentals. This has caused protests and growing frustration among Spanish residents.

Not everyone agrees with these plans. One real estate company criticized the proposed tax on non-EU buyers, saying it wouldn't solve the housing crisis because the types of properties bought by foreign investors are different from those needed by Spanish families. Others think the proposals are a good start but want even more action.

Housing prices in Spain have skyrocketed, and many people find it hard to afford a place to live. Prime Minister Sánchez believes bold actions are needed to ensure Spain does not become a country divided between wealthy landlords and struggling renters.

Comprehension Questions:

- Which of these statements is false?
 - Spain plans to tax non-EU property buyers up to 100%.
 - Some people think the new taxes won't solve the housing crisis.
 - Housing prices in Spain are very affordable for locals.
 - Tourism has made housing more expensive in Spain.
- What conclusion can we make about the role of tourism in Spain?
 - It only benefits locals.
 - It has made housing less affordable for residents.
 - It has reduced real estate prices.
 - It is unrelated to housing issues.
- What is one likely effect of increasing taxes on tourist rentals?
 - More people will visit Spain
 - There will be fewer short-term rental properties.
 - Housing will become more expensive for locals.
 - Tourism will stop completely.

4. Why are cities like Barcelona and Madrid mentioned in the article?
- a) They are unaffected by the housing crisis.
 - b) They are less popular with tourists.
 - c) They have many short-term rentals.
 - d) They have low housing costs.
5. Who will have to pay the new tax?
- a) Buyers from Spain.
 - b) Buyers from France.
 - c) Buyers from Germany.
 - d) Buyers from the United Kingdom.
6. What is one criticism about the new policies mentioned in the article?
- a) They will discourage tourism entirely.
 - b) They may not address the real housing needs of locals.
 - c) They are not bold enough to reduce housing prices.
 - d) Investors will not get rich fast enough.
7. What problem has tourism caused in Spain?
- a) Decreased foreign investment.
 - b) Fewer Airbnbs in major cities.
 - c) Higher housing costs for locals.
 - d) A decline in real estate development.
8. Housing prices in Spain have skyrocketed. What does "skyrocketed" mean?
- a) Moved steadily up.
 - b) Stayed the same.
 - c) Gone down quickly.
 - d) Gone up quickly.
9. What could be an unintended consequence of taxing tourist rentals?
- a) Tourists might stay in hotels instead of Airbnbs.
 - b) More tourists will buy homes in Spain.
 - c) Housing prices will increase for locals.
 - d) Short-term rentals will become easier to find.
10. What is the main idea of the article?
- a) Spain wants to increase tourism.
 - b) Spain is introducing taxes to address its housing crisis.
 - c) Spain is encouraging non-EU investors to buy property.
 - d) Spain is building more houses for locals.

Speaking and Writing Activities:

- Discuss these questions with a partner or a small group.
- Choose one topic and write a response to it. Show your writing to a classmate or teacher.

1. What would you do if your city became too expensive to live in because of tourism?
2. Have you ever stayed in an Airbnb or a similar rental? How was your experience?
3. What are some of the most famous things in Spain? Do you want to visit the country?