



The Center for the Comparative Study
of Metropolitan Growth

Behavioural Inputs and Housing: Designing a Nudge to Mobilise Empty Housing in Spain in Line with Existing European Experiences.

**(Executive Summary and Link to the Report
Available Online in Spanish)**

Juli Ponce

Barcelona Chair of Housing Studies

Executive Summary.

This study considers how behavioural insights can help to improve the effectiveness of public policies and administrative activity, in particular regarding the mobilisation of existing private empty housing with a special focus on rural areas.

To this end, after analysing the phenomenon of empty housing and its impact on the urban environment and on the rights that are developed in it (including the sum of all of them, the right to the city and to an adequate rural environment), the developments of behavioral contributions in recent decades and their use in various fields, with special attention to urban planning and housing, are presented.

Finally, the paper applies existing experiences in other European countries, such as the United Kingdom and France, to encourage private owners of vacant housing to reintroduce them into the housing market, without the use of public money but through nudges. The possibility of developing a specific pilot project using nudges in letters to be sent to these owners, using framing techniques in relation to loss aversion and social comparison biases, is presented.

This last proposal has been previously formulated in the Report elaborated by Vivaces and Future Policy Lab and published in December 2024, together with three other quasi-experimental pilots, with different scopes and approaches, aimed at reducing empty housing in one of the areas of Spain at severe risk of depopulation, the region of Tierras del Cid in Soria. The report was co-funded by the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) and [is available online in Spanish](#).