

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM NEEDED TO PREVENT STANDARDIZED PORTO



The future of the historic center of Porto in Portugal should undergo a sustainable tourism development, an expert suggests. The aim is to prevent the city from becoming a "standardized city", like many others.

"We are not against tourism. Tourism is the engine of the economy. What we think is that there should be multidisciplinary teams so that the sector's development is in a sustainable manner, **preventing Porto from becoming a plasticized city, standardized, without population and with large chain services, like everywhere in the world,**" noted Isabel Freitas, professor of the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture of the Portucalense University.

For the professor, to find other tourist attractions in the city, particularly in the area of Foz, is one way to avoid pressure on the historic center and help the Chamber of Porto and Porto Vivo - Urban Rehabilitation Society (SRU) in the work that has been developed in order to avoid the risks of overcrowding. Sustainable tourism is the solution.

"Public authorities of the city are concerned. The City Council and the SRU are working, but the city has had more results in the tourism attraction than in fixing the decreasing population. We know that the effort of the city is great, but people continue to leave," noted Isabel Freitas. The problem, as she pointed out, is that "the soul of the place that people carry with their presence is disappearing" from the historic center of Porto, classified as World Heritage.

Moreover, this place starts having services and commerce that are seen everywhere, while more traditional confectionery is disappearing. "The big question is how public authorities can avoid depopulation and deployment of large chains in private buildings," said the professor.

One of the options, for the professor, in the sustainable tourism manner, is trying to find other spaces in Porto that can absorb visitors diverting pressure from the historic center.

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