

# EUROPEAN CITIES AGAINST SHORT-TERM RENTALS



With the gradual easing of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many European cities are trying to revive tourism. At the same time, there is also the goal to contain one of the phenomena that has created the most problems for them in recent years: short-term rentals, mostly offered by online platforms such as Airbnb.

## Hoteliers Are Not the Only Losers

Many tourists often resort to such solutions, because they can be cheaper or offer different experiences than, for example, hotels.

**The losers of this rise in popularity of short-term rentals are above all hoteliers**, who suffer above all due to the competition of non-professional operators who operate in the field in parallel with the various companies that deal with short rentals following all the relevant rule.

But hotels are not the only losers. According to critics, in many cities, the rise of temporary rentals has led to a shortage of housing for residents or raised the price of properties in an unjustified manner.

## European Cities Looking to Regulate

For this reason, European cities have been trying to regulate short-term rentals for some years. Recently, for example, Paris approved a new regulation to test the introduction of a maximum limit of apartments for short-term rentals in certain streets or neighborhoods considered under pressure.

These rules were requested by various city organizations and associations, which had opposed the fact that some neighborhoods of the city looked like "dormitory houses" for tourists; at the same time, they were opposed by Airbnb, which had called them "illegal".

Italian cities have also been considering similar measures. Last March the mayors of Florence and Venice presented to the government a "Decalogue of proposals for the relaunch", which in addition to measures to encourage tourism and support hoteliers, includes possible rules to regulate apartments for these kinds of rentals.

Among the proposals put forward in the Decalogue, there is the obligation that each owner cannot rent more than two real estate units within the same municipal area. Moreover, the maximum rental period for this type of rentals should be 90 days a year.

According to the administrations of Venice and Florence, in any case, the phenomenon would need "a clear and more defined national legislation", which for now does not exist.

## Barcelona, Amsterdam and Lisbon Working on Solutions

Another example is Barcelona, where discussions are underway to definitively approve the plan that would allow homeowners to rent rooms only for a period of more than 30 days. This would permanent a rule introduced last August, and which is only the most recent of the interventions

initiated by the Spanish city to limit the phenomenon.

The city administration of Amsterdam, on the other hand, is thinking about what solutions to adopt after a court in March ruled illegitimate the ban on renting houses for short periods in the historic center of the city. This ban was introduced the previous year for several reasons, including limiting disturbance to locals.

To try to resolve the issue in the longer term, the mayor of Lisbon, Fernando Medina, has proposed **a program that directly involves the local administration to favor longer rents and still guarantee an income to homeowners.**

The plan provides for the local administration to rent houses, paying up to 1000 euros per month to the owners, and then assign them to residents who need them. According to the program launched in 2019, the municipality should have identified and managed a total of one thousand homes, but only 284 applications arrived in 2020.

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