

Madrid will become the focus of the debate on affordable housing in March 2022.

- The institutional committee of the International Forum on Affordable Housing, promoted by the International Union of Architects (UIA) and the Superior Council of Spanish Architects' Associations (CSCAE) has been set up.
- The Government, the Community of Madrid, the City Council, UN-Habitat and COAM are also members of the committee.
- The forum will bring together experts from around the world with the aim of identifying and analysing the barriers that prevent the right to decent and adequate housing from becoming a reality and success experiences that will enable progress to be made in achieving it.

Madrid, 16 June 2021. This morning, the Association of Architects of Madrid (COAM) hosted the act of constitution of the institutional committee of the International Forum on Affordable Housing, which will be held in the Spanish capital in March next year. Together with the International Union of Architects (UIA) and the Superior Council of Spanish Architects' Associations (CSCAE), as promoters of this international meeting, the committee is made up of the Government, through the Ministries of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda and Foreign Affairs; the Community of Madrid, the City Council of Madrid, the United Nations (UN-Habitat) and the COAM.

The establishment of this committee is the first public milestone since the CSCAE's bid beat Saudi Arabia's at the UIA General Assembly in Baku just two years ago.

Access to housing is a universal right, but it has become a global problem. The exponential population growth that has taken place in recent decades and which is expected to continue to increase, reaching 10 billion inhabitants by 2050, together with rapid and disorderly urbanisation of territories - especially in Asia and Africa - are generating new challenges, to which must be added a visible increasing of social inequalities in developed countries. In this context, and with the ambition of being useful, the International Forum on Access to Housing will bring together, in Madrid, experts from all over the world in order to identify, analyse, debate and classify, in a scientific and rigorous way, the main barriers that make it difficult for the right to decent and adequate housing to become a reality in each country and the success experiences that would allow progress, in the medium and long term, towards possible lines of action to propose solutions to a challenge of enormous complexity.

*"With this forum, architects want to contribute to providing structural responses to this challenge, promoting and making visible proposals linked to architecture and urban planning", pointed out the **president of the CSCAE**, Lluís Comerón, who underlined one of the main values of this international meeting: its capacity to create a framework for collaborative work and to generate partnerships. "From the very beginning, we have worked to achieve the involvement of relevant agents at all administrative levels: from*

the local level, starting with the Association of Architects of Madrid and the City Council; the regional level, with the Community of Madrid; the firm support of the Spanish Government and the close collaboration with UN-Habitat", he said.

The Director General of Urban Agenda and Architecture of the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, Iñiqui Carnicero, remarked: *"To face the challenge of access to housing, as well as the growing social inequality in cities, architecture and urban planning have a lot to contribute. In Europe, the key lies in working on urban regeneration and rehabilitation through quality architecture, because of its capacity to improve social cohesion, well-being and people's health, in other words, to improve their quality of life."*

Mariano Fuentes, delegate of the Madrid City Council's Urban Development Department, pointed out the importance of organising this forum for the capital, *"which recognises the city's ability to attract attention and organise relevant debates such as this one, which will have an impact on society and have consequences for improving the lives of citizens"*.

For his part, the Councillor for Housing of the Madrid City Council, Álvaro González, represented at the event by the **Director General for Housing, Rehabilitation and Regeneration**, Isabel Calzas, emphasised that: *"The importance of this International Forum, which will allow the city of Madrid to lead and host the event, because housing policy is a priority for Madrid City Council, not only because it is a recognised right, but also because it is an essential element for the growth of a modern city. And Madrid is an example in the pursuit of solutions for access to affordable and decent housing"*.

Based on institutional sustainability, avoiding duplication of efforts, the International Forum on Affordable Housing will take advantage of global networks, seeking synergies that will also help to disseminate good practices. The aim is to promote a framework for joint work that results in the usefulness of the proposals.