



Press statement

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Cities call for European reaction on illegal holiday rental

Fourteen large European Cities and regions* have met this week in Brussels with representatives of European Commissioner Elzbieta Bienkowska (Internal Market) to discuss the negative effects of (short term) holiday rental in large European cities, and the call for a common interpretation of EU regulations applicable to short term holiday rental platforms. The cities met earlier this year in Amsterdam and agreed to ask the European Commission to support their request for assistance in this matter.

The cities do not oppose holiday rental as such, but do need more effective instruments to push back on illegal and uncontrolled holiday rental, because they all experience serious negative effects from the still rapidly growing holiday rental industry. A serious disruption for residents and common areas derives from an ever-growing number of visitors finding their way into residential areas, causing disturbance and overcrowding and changing neighborhoods into (only) touristic areas. Also, the emergence of holiday rental has contributed to inflated house prices and a growing number of homes to be rented out on platforms, instead of making them available to residents. The cities have taken on the threat of short-term holiday rentals to local communities in different ways: with new (local or national) regulations, by enforcing existing rules, by seeking platform collaboration and by learning from each other and combining forces. But all cities face a lack of cooperation by platforms from an enforcement perspective since holiday rental platforms tend to claim that European regulations impede such local efforts.

The main issue is that holiday rental platforms claim that European regulations prohibit them from sharing data with (local) governments. This data, more specifically which houses are used as holiday rentals and how often, is a key instrument for local governments to enforce local or national regulations and requirements for holiday rental. Cities require a mandatory registration number to be imposed on all holiday rental platforms, so that cities can easily determine which houses are used as holiday rentals and can more effectively monitor developments and enforce local laws and regulations.

The cities have used the meeting with EC-representatives to explain the problems they face and the obstacles they have encountered in dealing with these issues. They have requested the European Commission to clearly state that European regulations are not an obstacle for cities to act against an uncontrollable growth of holiday rentals, which poses a threat to European cities, their livability and safety and the rights and well-being of their inhabitants.

The cities have requested a follow-on meeting with European Commissioner Bienkowska later this year. European cities are confident that the European Commission takes their concerns seriously. The cities and regions are committed to continue to work together on this subject.

* The fourteen cities and regions committed to these efforts are Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Bordeaux, Brussels, Krakow, Lisbon, Madrid, Paris, Reykjavik, Valencia, Vienna, Brussels region and the Association of German cities.