

# **WHAT CONTENT WILL THE LAW OF QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT HAVE?**

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The Secretary of State for Housing and Urban Actions has < a href="http://www.fomento.es/MFOM/LANG\_CASTELLANO/GABINETE\_COMUNICACION/OFICINA\_DE\_PRENSA/NOTICIAS1/2010/Noviembre/101124-02.htm" target="\_blank" rel="noopener">announced who are working on the elaboration of the **Law on Quality and Sustainability of the Urban Environment**, scheduled for the coming months. This law, about which not much is known, is in the **preliminary draft phase** and, in principle, seems to be aimed at establishing a regulatory framework to sustain the effort that

wants to be made in the coming years in terms of **rehabilitation of housing and urban regeneration**. Not even on the website of [La Moncloa](#) nor in the [Congreso de los Diputados](#) I have been able to find some type of additional information, it will be that I cannot find the way. On the website of the [Secretary of Housing and Urban Actions](#) I have not had any luck, even though it seems to be the body responsible for its preparation.

The truth is that when this secretariat was at the level of the Ministry of Housing, the constitution of the [Urban Vulnerability Observatory](#) and the [Urban Information System](#), while approving the [White paper on sustainability in Spanish urban planning](#). We will see what specific content this law develops and, above all, if it is able to **exceed the building rehabilitation approach** and provide a broader framework to promote comprehensive regeneration of neighborhoods. Obviously, taking into account the division of powers that, in this aspect, assigns most of the regulatory and incentive weight to the Autonomous Communities. If anyone has any more information...

Being that it is a great unknown, we can speculate without fear. As I mentioned before, if your focus is rehabilitation, we already have two paths: the rehabilitation of buildings, on a small scale and with a physical key, or the integral regeneration of neighborhoods on a large scale and considering social keys. If you go the first way, let's bet that the justification will be, once again, **to save the construction sector**. I have already commented once that this would be better than nothing, even if we only remember the [rehabilitation of the built city](#) now that the new housing is not enough. The second way, they will say, is more complicated, precisely because, being more comprehensive, it runs the obvious risk of entering the powers of other Ministries and, to a greater extent, of other administrative levels. Possibly, but even so, it would be worth it if this government had the leadership capacity to build an alternative model of economic and social development for this country, a challenge in which a **state strategy for comprehensive neighborhood regeneration**, Even if it is very declarative so that the rest of the administrative levels can develop it later, it would be very opportune.

On the other hand, if we pay attention to the title (quality and sustainability of the urban environment), its contents should go far **beyond mere rehabilitation**, since this would only be one of the forms of intervention to achieve that quality and sustainability of the urban environment. Will this law touch, for example, mobility issues? The consumption of natural resources or the generation and management of waste? Let's bet that the shots don't go that way. The [Spanish Strategy for Urban and Local Sustainability](#) has been there for a long time as mere guidelines and with less incidence, albeit political, than initially expected. This being the case, it would be better to give the law another name before creating confusion, since we already know that the government has not been especially skillful when it comes to legislating sustainable things and mixing them with additional provisions, throwing a name of law to the ground.

It is not the only state law currently under preparation that will affect municipalities. The new [Local Government Law](#) already in place in preparation and will update the definition of municipal powers and the model of [local financing](#) for the coming years. But that is another topic, and one of the fat ones.

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