

Vacant Dwellings, Deferred Lives: a paradox within the housing crisis

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Executive summary

Portugal faces a paradox between the shortage of affordable housing and the existence of more than 723,000 vacant dwellings. This policy brief shows that not all of these can be mobilised in the short term, making it essential to distinguish between different types of vacancy, with diverse causes — ranging from frictional factors to institutional constraints or investment decisions. The analysis reveals strong territorial asymmetries, with higher incidence in inland areas and distinct patterns in metropolitan regions. Electricity consumption data confirm the relevance of persistent vacancy. The legal framework allows for the adoption of various policy instruments, from incentives to penalties, provided they are properly calibrated and justified. The main challenge lies in the lack of detailed data and the limited evaluation of existing policies. We conclude that mobilising empty homes requires better information and a combination of measures tailored to both causes and territories, in order to transform this stock into an effective contribution to mitigating the housing crisis.

Recommendations

- Improve the quality, frequency, and integration of data on vacant and empty dwellings by combining census, tax, and energy consumption sources.
- Strengthen owners' reporting obligations regarding the use of their properties.
- Differentiate policy instruments according to the causes of vacancy (frictional, structural, institutional or strategic), adapting policies to local housing market dynamics.
- Reinforce incentives for the renovation and market placement of properties requiring intervention.
- Rigorously evaluate existing policies, in particular the increased Municipal Property Tax (IMI).
- Apply tax disincentives more consistently to vacant properties in usable condition, ensuring proportionality and appropriate safeguards.

Target audience of the policy brief

This policy brief is addressed to public entities (including the Institute for Housing and Urban Rehabilitation (IHRU), the Ministry of Infrastructure and Housing, the Ministry of Finance, the National Association of Municipalities, Municipal Councils and the Tax Authority), policymakers and civil society, with the aim of contributing to a broad and informed debate on housing policy.

Measuring and diagnosing the problem

The analysis of “empty homes” in Portugal should begin with a **clear distinction between concepts** which, although often used

interchangeably, correspond to different realities. This divergence complicates the quantification of the stock that can be mobilised

through housing policies and poses a significant challenge to the design of effective public policy.

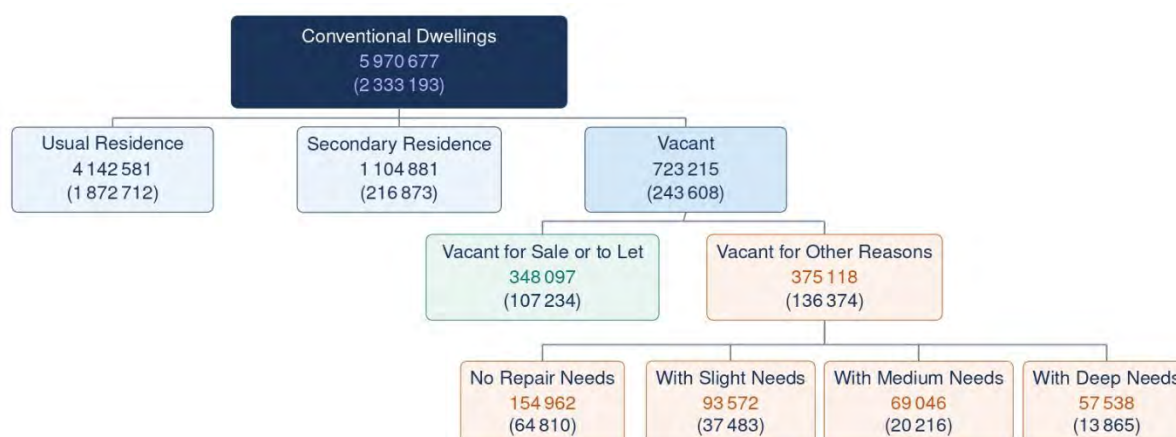
A first relevant distinction is between **public and private property**. Due to limited data availability for research purposes, this report focuses exclusively on private dwellings. As such, the analysis presented here should be interpreted as providing a **lower-bound estimate of the stock of homes** that could be mobilised for housing purposes.

Statistics Portugal (INE) defines **vacant dwellings** as those that are neither primary nor secondary residences, with this classification established through the Census. Identification relies primarily on information provided by property owners, who declare the occupancy status of their dwelling in the census questionnaire. In cases where no response is obtained, classification is carried out by census enumerators using an approach that combines direct observation (based on signs of use and

state of conservation) with information gathered from neighbours. While this process allows for some differentiation between types of non-occupancy, it has limitations: although it explicitly excludes seasonal use dwellings, it may still encompass a range of situations, such as properties left vacant due to prolonged absence of owners, inheritance processes, or difficulties in their use.

Figure 1 presents the composition of the stock of **conventional family dwellings** in Portugal. Although there are more than 723,000 vacant dwellings, a share is associated with “other reasons” and does not require repairs, indicating that only a fraction of this stock is effectively mobilizable in the short term. Notably, nearly 244,000 vacant dwellings are located in the two metropolitan areas, of which around one quarter are neither for sale nor for rent and do not require repairs. Public policy responses should therefore reflect these different realities and be territorially differentiated.

Figure 1 – Composition of the stock of Conventional Family Dwellings in Portugal



Prepared by the authors. Source: Census 2021. Note: Values for Portugal (Lisbon and Porto Metropolitan Areas).

Figure 2 further develops this analysis by highlighting **the strong territorial heterogeneity in the prevalence of vacant dwellings**, distinguishing between those available for sale or rent and those associated with other reasons, both in mainland Portugal and in the autonomous regions. A differentiated spatial pattern emerges, with relatively higher incidence in inland areas and in some parts of the south of the country, contrasting with lower

levels in metropolitan areas and more densely populated coastal zones. In addition, the distribution of dwellings vacant for “other reasons” appears more dispersed and less concentrated, suggesting dynamics distinct from those associated with the housing market. These territorial differences reinforce the need for public policies tailored to the local context, taking into account not only the number of

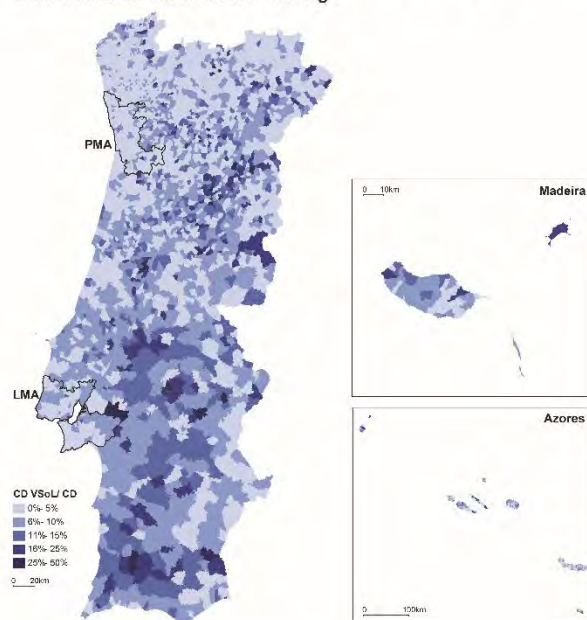
vacant dwellings but also their nature and potential for mobilisation.

Figure 3 shows that, **even in areas experiencing greater urban pressure, a significant number of dwellings remain vacant** for other reasons, albeit with distinct spatial patterns. In the Porto Metropolitan Area, greater heterogeneity is observed, with some municipalities simultaneously exhibiting a high

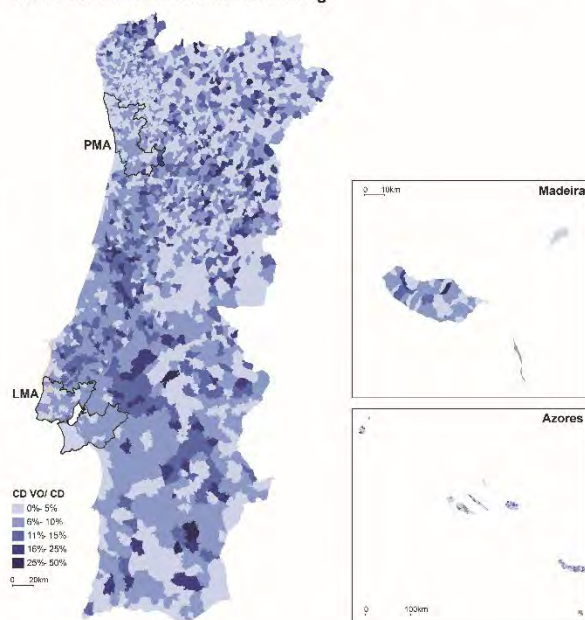
incidence of vacant dwellings and a substantial proportion in good condition, suggesting localised mobilisation potential. In contrast, in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, the phenomenon appears more territorially uniform, albeit with lower relative intensity. In both areas, the presence of a non-negligible share of dwellings in good condition reinforces the idea that part of this stock could be mobilised without the need for major structural interventions, although this would require appropriately tailored policy instruments.

Figure 2

Share of Conventional Dwellings Vacant for Sale or Let in the Total Number of Conventional Dwellings



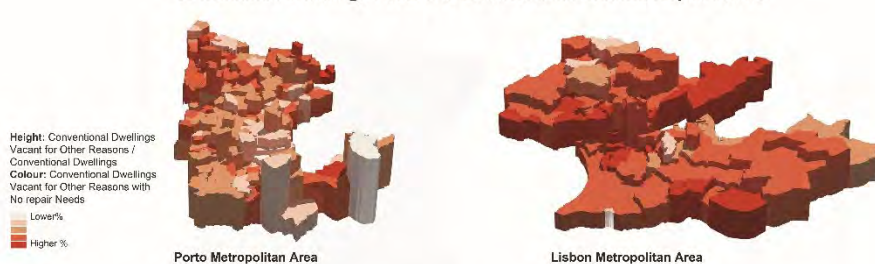
Share of Conventional Dwellings Vacant for Other Reasons in the Total Number of Conventional Dwellings



Prepared by the authors. Source: Census 2021.

Figure 3

Conventional Dwellings Vacant for Other Reasons with No Repair Needs



Prepared by the authors. Source: Census 2021.

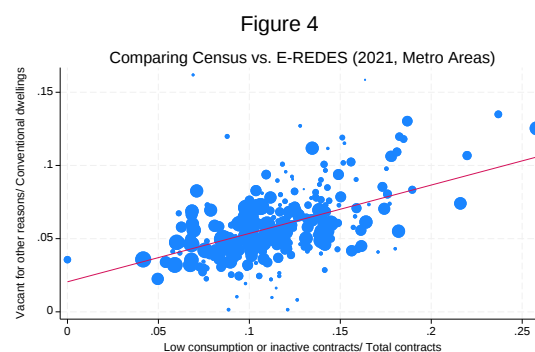
The concept of **vacant properties** (*imóveis devolutos*), as defined in the [legal framework](#), refers to dwellings that have remained unoccupied for a prolonged period (typically exceeding one year). As in other international contexts, their **identification relies primarily on the analysis of consumption of essential utilities** — such as water, electricity and gas. This measurement can be complemented by information from utility providers, the tax administration or municipalities, and is often operationalised through the cross-referencing of databases. The legal framework also provides for exceptions and justified situations (for example, properties under renovation, inheritance processes or legal disputes), which **implies a verification component**. It is therefore a concept with legal and fiscal implications, associated with persistent non-occupancy and relevant for the application of public policy instruments.

To complement the analysis based on Census data, **this project collected administrative data provided by E-REDES**, the electricity distribution network operator in mainland Portugal, relating to the number of electricity supply contracts for residential use, including inactive contracts and those with low levels of consumption, disaggregated at parish level between 2021 and 2025.

This approach presents several advantages. First, as these data are available at high temporal frequency, they allow for monitoring recent developments; by contrast, censuses are conducted every ten years and do not permit such analysis. Second, energy consumption data provide an objective and continuous proxy for the effective use of dwellings, reducing reliance on indirect or self-reported assessments. Finally, the distinction between inactive contracts and those with low consumption enables the analysis to approximate the concept of persistent non-occupancy, more closely aligned with the legal notion of vacant properties, thereby contributing to a more accurate identification of the stock potentially mobilisable through housing policies.

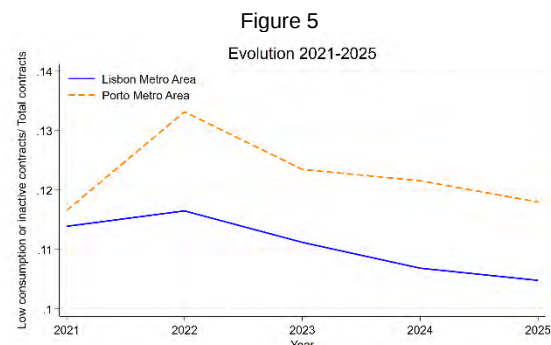
Figure 4 focuses on the 2,418,812 residential electricity supply contracts across parishes in the Lisbon and Porto Metropolitan Areas (with the diameter of each circle proportional to the resident population of the parish) and shows a positive correlation between the proportion of vacant dwellings identified in the Census (excluding those on the market for sale or rent) and the share of electricity contracts that are

inactive or have low consumption. However, the considerable dispersion around the trend line indicates that this relationship is far from perfect: for similar levels of inactive or low-consumption contracts, substantial variability is observed.



Prepared by the authors. Source: Census 2021 and E-REDES.

Figure 5 shows that, following an increase between 2021 and 2022, the proportion of inactive or low-consumption electricity contracts declined slightly but steadily until 2025 in both metropolitan areas. Despite this common trend, the Porto Metropolitan Area consistently exhibits higher average levels than the Lisbon Metropolitan Area throughout the entire period.



Prepared by the authors. Source: Census 2021 and E-REDES.
Average by parish

The distinction between vacant dwellings and vacant properties (*imóveis devolutos*) should be taken into account when interpreting the data and designing policy measures, as not all vacant dwellings are classified as vacant properties, and not all vacant properties are directly captured by census statistics. Notwithstanding these advantages, it is important to recognise that consumption data alone do not allow for the identification of all forms of non-occupancy (for example, intermittent use or second homes) and should therefore be interpreted as complementary to data provided by Statistics Portugal (INE).

Analysis

Determinants of vacant dwellings and vacant properties

To complement the descriptive analysis, we estimate a set of econometric models at parish level, combining data from the 2021 Census with estimates derived from personal income tax (IRS) microdata. The aim is to **identify systematic correlations between socio-economic and territorial characteristics and the incidence of vacant dwellings and vacant properties**, thereby contributing to a better understanding of the factors associated with their distribution. It should be emphasised that these results are to be interpreted as

statistical associations rather than causal relationships.

For the national territory as a whole (Table 1), the results indicate that parishes with lower population and housing growth tend to exhibit a higher proportion of vacant dwellings. In addition, higher levels of population ageing are consistently associated with higher vacancy rates, suggesting the importance of demographic dynamics. By contrast, median income does not show a robust relationship with the census-based indicators.

Table 1 – Determinants of vacant dwellings

	(1) Vacant dwellings/ Total housing stock	(2) Vacant dwellings (other reasons)/ Total housing stock	(3) Vacant dwellings (other reasons, in good condition)/ Total housing stock
Population growth (2011–2021)	-0.118** (0.023)	-0.056*** (0.019)	-0.042*** (0.012)
Housing stock growth (2011–2021)	-0.077** (0.030)	-0.071*** (0.024)	-0.012 (0.014)
Population aged 65+ (%)	0.048** (0.023)	0.065*** (0.022)	0.032** (0.015)
Log (average commuting time)	-0.021** (0.009)	-0.004 (0.007)	-0.004 (0.005)
Log (median household income, IRS)	-0.011 (0.012)	-0.014 (0.009)	0.008 (0.006)
Income inequality (IRS, S90/S10)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Number of observations	3085	3085	3085

Prepared by the authors. Municipality fixed effects included. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

In the metropolitan areas (Table 2), we find some notable differences in the statistical relationships identified. Median income shows a negative and statistically significant relationship with all measures considered, including the incidence of inactive or low-consumption electricity contracts, a proxy for persistent non-occupancy. In contrast to the

national pattern, income inequality is positively associated with vacancy, suggesting that more unequal urban contexts tend to concentrate a higher proportion of vacant dwellings or vacant properties. Population ageing also maintains a positive association with vacancy, while population growth does not appear to be statistically significant.



Table 2 – Determinants of vacant dwellings in Metropolitan Areas

	(1) Vacant dwellings/ Total housing stock	(2) Vacant dwellings (other reasons)/ Total housing stock	(3) Vacant dwellings (other reasons, in good condition)/ Total housing stock	(4) Low-consumption or inactive electricity contracts/ Total contracts
Population growth (2011–2021)	-0.066 (0.064)	-0.032 (0.042)	-0.000 (0.029)	-0.023 (0.045)
Housing stock growth (2011–2021)	-0.260*** (0.093)	-0.052 (0.055)	-0.023 (0.037)	-0.147** (0.060)
Population aged 65+ (%)	0.184* (0.094)	0.157*** (0.056)	0.085** (0.035)	0.130** (0.055)
Log (average commuting time)	-0.028 (0.017)	0.009 (0.012)	-0.003 (0.011)	-0.032 (0.019)
Log (median household income, IRS)	-0.061*** (0.018)	-0.030*** (0.011)	-0.018** (0.007)	-0.109*** (0.015)
Income inequality (IRS, S90/S10)	0.002* (0.001)	0.001* (0.000)	0.001** (0.000)	0.002** (0.001)
Number of observations	290	290	290	290

Prepared by the authors. Municipality fixed effects included. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Taken together, these results reinforce the idea that the determinants of empty homes vary significantly across the territory, being influenced by demographic factors, growth dynamics and local socio-economic characteristics. Moreover, median parish income is negatively associated with the prevalence of vacant dwellings in metropolitan areas, but not at the national level.

Comparative legal analysis

The legal analysis developed within the scope of this project, [available in a working paper by Teresa Violante and Maria Inês Gameiro](#), examined instruments addressing vacant dwellings across nine jurisdictions — Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Brazil, with additional reference to the German case. These **instruments were organised into six functional categories**, ranging from identification and monitoring to compulsory letting and forced transfer of ownership, and were assessed against the Portuguese constitutional framework.

The central conclusion of this work is that the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic does not, at a substantive level, preclude

the potential transposition of the main instruments identified — including progressive taxation on vacant properties, obligations to rehabilitate, administrative requisition and, subject to careful justification and calibration, expropriation for failure to comply with the social function of property. Recent case law from the Constitutional Court (Judgments Nos. 612/2019, 299/2020 and 50/2022) indicates the need for careful technical calibration, particularly with regard to the proportionality of measures, namely in balancing the burden imposed with the public interest pursued and ensuring the existence of exceptions for situations of vulnerability affecting property owners.

The Portuguese constitutional framework is not substantially different from those found in other legal systems, suggesting that the main issue lies less in constitutional constraints and more in the underuse of available instruments and the insufficient legislative development of those requiring reform. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the practical implementation of these instruments depends on robust technical justification regarding the proportionality of the intervention. In this respect, the information gaps identified in the empirical diagnosis (and detailed below) also constitute a legal

constraint, as they hinder the demonstration of the necessity and appropriateness of the instruments — requirements imposed by constitutional proportionality review.

The instruments analysed can be ordered, in terms of the intensity of intervention in property rights, into six categories. The requirements for technical and legal calibration vary according to the intensity of the instrument. Table 3 summarises the analysis undertaken.

Table 3

Category	Instrument	Constitutional risk
I – Identification	Registration systems integrating census, tax and energy consumption data	No difficulties
II – Positive incentives	Renovation subsidies, public rental guarantees, tax exemptions	Constitutionally available; require budgetary allocation
III – Tax disincentives	Increased IMI and a specific progressive tax on vacant dwellings	Available with robust technical justification and exceptions for vulnerable situations [**]
IV – Administrative obligations	Obligation of residential use, with financial penalties differentiated between individuals and legal entities [*]	Available, grounded in the social function of property [**]
V – Administrative requisition	Temporary public management of vacant dwellings, with compensation to the owner	Doctrinally supported when the State acts as requisitioning authority and manager of social allocation; requires robust technical justification [**]
VI a) – Compulsory lease	Imposition on the owner of an obligation to rent to third parties under conditions set by the State	High constitutional risk (the Constitutional Court has warned that private individuals cannot be called upon to substitute for the State in fulfilling the positive obligations arising from the right to housing, Judgments Nos. 612/2019, and 50/2022); requires enhanced justification and careful calibration [**]
VI b) – Forced transfer of ownership	Expropriation for failure to comply with the social function of property	High constitutional risk; requires robust technical justification [**]

Prepared by the authors.

[*] **Comparative models:** In Spain (Basque Country, Navarre and Andalusia), the obligation of residential use is established in regional legislation, with progressive sanctions upheld by the Spanish Constitutional Court. In Belgium, municipal regimes (Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp) combine mandatory registration, progressive taxation and management through social housing agencies, which take on rental arrangements on behalf of owners in exchange for guaranteed payment.

[**] The constitutional admissibility of these instruments depends on demonstrating their necessity — specifically, requiring evidence that less intrusive alternatives have been seriously considered, notably the effective mobilisation of available public housing assets. Without such justification, intrusive measures affecting private property owners risk being invalidated on the grounds of proportionality.

European framework: The instruments discussed are also subject to European Union law, in particular the State aid regime (Article 107 TFEU), the free movement of capital (Article 63 TFEU) and the Services Directive (2006/123/EC), whose interaction with the specific design of each instrument may require further technical analysis.

Policy Options, Recommendations, and Conclusions

1. Improving data reporting (over time and space) and the importance of distinguishing between causes

1.1 A typology of the causes of vacant dwellings

First, there is a **frictional component** associated with the normal functioning of the housing market. As documented by [Han, Stacey e Chen \(2023\)](#), part of housing vacancy reflects transitional periods between occupancies, sales or rental processes, or temporary inefficiencies in matching supply and demand. It is important to distinguish the duration of properties remaining on the sales or rental market; longer durations may indicate higher transaction costs, excessively high reservation prices set by owners, or weak demand in certain markets.

Beyond this component, **structural and institutional factors** also arise. These include **undivided inheritances and legal disputes**, which may block decision-making regarding property use; **emigration and prolonged absence of owners**, reducing incentives or management capacity; and situations related to the financial system, namely **properties held by banks** following non-performing loan processes.

Moreover, part of vacant properties may reflect **strategic investment decisions** based on expectations of price increases. In contexts of rising property values, some owners choose to keep dwellings vacant as a store of value, postponing their entry into the market. This behaviour may be reinforced by expectations of further price increases or by the costs and risks associated with renting.

Additionally, other factors should be considered, such as **legal and administrative constraints** (for example, lengthy licensing or renovation processes), high renovation costs—particularly in urban centres with degraded building stock—and regulatory uncertainty in the rental market, which may discourage properties from being placed on the market.

This diversity of causes suggests that vacant properties do not constitute a homogeneous phenomenon, requiring differentiated policy responses according to the underlying mechanisms.

1.2 Do existing data allow these realities to be measured?

Unfortunately, **the frequency of censuses does not allow** for a satisfactory distinction between frictional and structural aspects of the market. As such, the number of dwellings “for sale or rent” is a very imperfect measure of what is intended to be captured, as one cannot assume that the stock of housing on the market remains constant over time.

The **duration of vacancy** is an important variable even for dwellings that are not on the market. Therefore, this information (vacant dwellings, duration of vacancy, availability for sale and/or rent) should be collected through a high-frequency statistical instrument. For example, the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (quarterly) includes information on vacant dwellings and vacancy duration (although it does not distinguish whether they are on the market). Similarly, France's annual *Recensement de la Population* updates the characterisation of the housing stock, distinguishing between dwellings on the market and those already allocated to a buyer or tenant but not yet occupied.

A good example of annual data provision is the French government's *Zéro Logement Vacant* initiative and its associated [LOVAC database](#). This database distinguishes structurally vacant dwellings (vacant for more than two years) from others. It is constructed from multiple data sources, including tax data (annual declarations of property use by owners), geolocated data from the [Cerema platform](#), as well as the *Base Adresse Nationale* and the *Référentiel National du Bâtiment*. This platform provides an interesting example of integrating census and administrative data, survey data and non-conventional sources to support the design of local public policies in housing, environment and spatial planning.

Initiatives such as the collaborative platform devolutos.com (where users can upload photographs and geolocations of degraded public and private properties in major urban centres) also move in this direction and should be explored as complementary sources of information to produce more granular geolocated statistics. Alternatively (or complementarily), such information could be collected through partnerships with listing platforms.

With regard to **undivided inheritances**, the research team made efforts with the Tax Authority and Statistics Portugal (INE) to identify properties associated with such entities in the Municipal Property Tax microdata, accessed via the INE safe centre. However, this **dataset includes only urban and rural properties revalued in a given year**, representing only a fraction of both the stock of vacant homes and undivided inheritances. As a result, despite these efforts, it was not possible to quantify the proportion of vacant dwellings attributable to this cause.

Finally, it is important to highlight the **absence of an inventory of public property assets**, which [prevents the identification of those suitable for residential use](#) and thus limits the expansion of public housing stock—one of the lowest in the OECD. Such an inventory would also allow the quantification of vacant public properties. However, the causal analysis presented in this policy brief does not apply to public ownership, as factors such as licensing constraints, transaction costs linked to ownership structures (e.g. undivided inheritances), or the use of property as a store of value do not explain vacancy in public assets.

1.3 The required data infrastructure

We propose a set of features that this **data infrastructure should include**:

- At least annual frequency
- Short time intervals between data collection and availability
- Fine geographical scale (see below)
- Information on vacancy duration
- Information on ownership and property use
- Information on commuting patterns and public transport times

- Combination of multiple data sources — tax, census, survey and non-conventional — to achieve the most comprehensive possible characterisation.

It is also important that **data access complies with the following principles**:

- Public bodies responsible for designing public policies or implementing targeted measures, such as increased IMI, should have access to property-level data, duly identified
- Public access should be structured at a fine geographical scale—at least parish level, and finer in metropolitan areas—while respecting standard anonymity rules (minimum number of dwellings per territorial unit)
- Researchers should be granted access to anonymised microdata under standard access protocols.

2. Improving the evaluation of existing public policies

One existing public policy instrument is the **increased Municipal Property Tax (IMI *agravado*)** applied to vacant properties. In an ideal setting, we would have a comprehensive list of municipalities implementing this measure, along with the number of properties covered in each, and could then apply quasi-experimental econometric techniques to estimate its causal impact on different types of vacancy. However, despite the research team's efforts, it was **not possible to obtain systematic information on the implementation of this tax**.

Efforts were pursued along two lines. First, **attempts were made to obtain a list of municipalities applying the policy**. GPEARl, a partner in this project, was unable to secure this information in time. As a result, at the time of writing, the effective application of this policy across municipalities remains unknown. While some fragmented information exists in media reports, there is no official source enabling the construction of a longitudinal database on the application of increased IMI. Second, more detailed information was sought for Lisbon. A **formal request was submitted to Lisbon City Council regarding the number of dwellings subject to increased IMI among properties**

identified as vacant by EPAL, under Decree-Law No. 67/2019 of 21 May. Additional information was requested on possible exemptions and on the prevalence of undivided inheritances among vacant dwellings.

The opacity surrounding the implementation of this measure may partly reflect its unpopularity. However, this unpopularity is paradoxical, as increased IMI is, to some extent, a tax exported to non-resident property owners. The degree of this “export” depends on the share of vacant properties owned by non-residents. Once again, improving data quality is essential to support better decision-making by municipalities and more informed voter preferences.

Survey evidence (Azevedo, Gonçalves and Pereira dos Santos, 2025), based on data from the Housing Barometer of the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation (Azevedo and Pereira dos Santos, 2023), shows that **increasing taxes on vacant homes is among the least supported policy measures.** Support varies significantly across socio-economic groups: it is higher among tenants and lower among homeowners, and also less pronounced among individuals positioned on the political right than on the left. No substantial differences are observed by education level. These findings suggest that acceptance of this measure is strongly shaped by economic interests and ideological orientation.

Recent case law further reinforces **the need for careful calibration** of such measures. The Constitutional Court has exercised close scrutiny over the proportionality of policies that impose burdens on private property owners in pursuit of the right to housing. Any expansion of fiscal penalties requires **robust technical justification**, including a clear definition of vacancy, appropriate exemptions (such as undivided inheritances, legal disputes or justified absence), and calibration of tax rates according to the intensity of vacancy and the territorial context. Comparative analysis also suggests the relevance of distinguishing between corporate and individual property owners.

In sum, **the taxation of vacant properties is not a consensual measure and is likely to face significant political resistance.** Its effectiveness depends largely on its design—particularly the definition of vacancy, the

safeguards included and how it is communicated—as well as its articulation with other, more widely supported policies.

3. Learning from the international experience

Comparative legal analysis ([Violante and Gameiro, 2026](#)) identifies a range of instruments—from identification and monitoring to compulsory letting and forced transfer of ownership—assessed against the Portuguese constitutional framework. Complementing this, **international empirical evidence** shows that mobilising vacant housing typically requires a combination of instruments tailored to different underlying causes, often combining incentives, tax disincentives and administrative mechanisms:

- Several countries have used fiscal instruments to encourage properties onto the market. Results tend to be positive but moderate and sometimes temporary. In [France](#), the *taxe sur les logements vacants* reduced vacancy, particularly among long-term vacant properties. In Vancouver, the *Empty Homes Tax* produced stronger short-term effects (increased sales, lower prices and rents), although these effects tended to fade over time, pointing to calibration challenges and possible unintended impacts on market liquidity.
- Evidence from [India](#) shows that stronger tenant protection, when combined with weak contract enforcement, can significantly increase vacancy, as heightened uncertainty leads owners to keep properties empty.
- Evidence from [England](#) indicates that stricter planning constraints are associated with higher vacancy rates and longer commuting times.

4. Public policy options

To conclude, and building on the comparative legal analysis and the preceding discussion, the following policy measures emerge as particularly relevant:

- **Positive incentives** (*carrot*): tax benefits, regulatory simplification to

encourage renovation or reconstruction, subsidised credit and public support;

Observations: These measures are best targeted at properties actionable in the long term (requiring repair), and should be tailored to territorial characteristics (population and building density, transport accessibility, role of tourism) and to owner profiles (individuals, socio-economic characteristics, legal entities, undivided inheritances).

- **Tax disincentives** (*stick*): increased IMI and other financial penalties for vacant dwellings.

Observations: These measures are best suited to properties actionable in the short term (not requiring repair). Improving identification and ensuring effective enforcement are essential. Current opacity prevents (i) assessing the scope of implementation; (ii) determining

whether non-application reflects legal complexity (e.g. excessive exceptions) or strategic municipal choices; and (iii) ensuring political accountability.

- **Administrative obligations:** reporting requirements for property owners aimed at promoting residential use.

Observations: Strengthening reporting obligations would allow for annual mapping of the housing stock. Owners should declare the use of each dwelling (primary residence, secondary residence, rental, loan, vacant), with this information cross-checked against other data sources (consumption, rents, taxes). This could support targeted tax incentives for primary residences and financial or administrative penalties—differentiated between individuals and legal entities—for other uses.

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