

## ***Open Letter from Michael Cashman MEP to the President of Spain***

**AUAN, 15th January 2010**

Dear Prime Minister Zapatero,

Recent events have compelled me to write to you again to raise the issue of widespread urban abuse in Spain , particularly in the Valencia , Murcia and Andalucía autonomous communities. Tens of thousands of people from all EU Member States have now been affected by irregularities in regional land law. At the last count the European Parliament's Petitions Committee has handled over 15,000 petitions and letters flood into my office on a daily basis. Several fact-finding missions have taken place, in which we have spoken to people on the ground and gathered evidence which has formed the basis of Parliamentary Reports. Inaction can no longer be excused.

Sadly, the new year has begun in the worst possible way for one community in Andalucía where eight properties in the village of Albox have been served with demolition notices. In 2002 Albox Town Hall granted building licenses for all of the properties in question. However late in the same year The Junta de Andalusia reversed this decision and after lengthy court proceedings succeeded in having the building licenses nullified. The homes many bought in good faith and in conformity with the regional property law, with the hope of enjoying a new life or peaceful retirement, now face imminent demolition.

Ultimately it is the Spanish Government alone who can bring an end to these abuses. In this way the Spanish Presidency of the European Council represents an opportunity to decisively tackle these long-standing problems once and for all, especially in the autonomous communities of Valencia , Andalusia and Murcia . I urge you to intervene and ask the regional governments to resolve this so the people who acted in conformity with legal practice and the law are not left as the victims.

Yours Sincerely,

MICHAEL CASHMAN MEP