

The Costa of "Innocent Third Parties"
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The neighbourhood associations affected by planning irregularities have discovered the best way to be heard by town halls in the Costa del Sol: forget the word "association" and call yourself "platform" or "citizen's group".

In Marbella, the most influential is the citizen's group of those affected by the PGOU (General Plan of Urban Planning). This group includes the owners of houses considered illegal and who are threatened by demolition. These owners call themselves "innocent third party buyers who bought in good faith", in other words, that they purchased their homes without knowing that they were illegal. They also refuse to pay the costs levied by the town halls to regularise their homes.

The mayoress of Marbella, Ángeli les Muñoz (PP), has worked hard to stay on the good side of this group who have never turned against her in their public protests. In October 2007, before the provisional approval of the PGOU, the group brought some 2000 residents into the streets to protest the urban plan which they say was "imposed by Seville".

Also very active is the 29-M Neighbourhood Citizen's Group, whose name harks back to the launch date of the anti-corruption Operation Malaya campaign in the city. This group's 3000 members includes those who were seriously prejudiced by the uncontrolled planning practices of the Gil epoch... The group demands the carrying out of 40 final demolition orders. It is also considering contesting the current PGOU on the grounds that it "is a law which grants amnesty and not accountability for the planning infractions that were committed in Marbella" with its over 18,000 illegal houses.

The residents of Mijas who live in some 1700 homes with pending demolition orders...are complaining that although they managed to convene a plenary session to discuss the plight of their homes, their mayor (PSOE) has not put a stop order on the demolition orders during the discussions.

In Estepona, owners of campitos, isolated dwellings in outlying areas, are also fighting for regularisation. Those from this group say it is unfair that while their homes are receiving fines, municipal employees have illegally built an agricultural zone.

La Costa de los "terceros de buena fe"