

Overseas Property

Advertising Feature

Interested in Property abroad?

EU gives a boost to overseas property

THE European Union has had a major effect on the continent's housing market and brought benefits to its residents as legislation makes it easier to invest in property abroad.

Although much-maligned, EU regulations have helped make it even easier for Britons and other Europeans to invest across the continent as legislation ensures that markets are opened up and better protection offered.

Thanks to the requirement of a common market, both member states and prospective members, including Turkey, are required to ensure that their property markets are opened up to non-nationals. With the resulting influx of foreign demand, this has both helped drive up demand and therefore homes, particularly in Mediterranean countries that offer sunny climates attractive to those from the colder parts of the EU.

While nations such as Spain and France have been selling properties to foreigners for many years and markets are reaching a plateau, those from formerly closed markets have given early investors the biggest returns as prices rise up to meet European averages. In fact, with Britain leading

European house price increases, most commentators believe that prices will eventually rise to match its remarkable growth.

For example, when new EU members Bulgaria and Romania joined, property prices shot up, with Channel 4 programme *A Place In The Sun* predicting a four-fold increase over the next decade owing to its membership. Yet the biggest bargains are likely to come from countries still negotiating their entry into the common market. Turkey is set to benefit from this as membership negotiations have been under way since 2005 and it recently reformed its mortgage laws to comply with ascension requirements. This has led to its property market receiving favourable comparisons to Spain's in the 1970s owing to it being tipped as a hotspot, with many analysts placing it in their top 10 lists of places to invest.

Membership of the European Union has had more effect than simply the harmonisation of property laws and increased ease of buying and travelling to different markets. Joining the EU makes it easier to enter a country and also encourages cheaper flights to travel to the property or to rented villas. Other regulations have helped improve

everything from energy and utility supplies to properties while EU standards have helped raise the quality of work – and legal protection – offered by nations. Free trade has seen prices drop, making it cheaper to stock up on white goods and luxuries for a new home.

Joining the EU and proposed ascension to it has also helped property markets across the continent as Brussels gives financial aid to ensure that countries can comply with its code. Through this, nations have improved their infrastructure and institutions to help ensure that standards are high across the union.

With the latest EU members Bulgaria and Romania enjoying the benefits of membership and hotly tipped by investors, citizens of older EU members are looking to the latest while the growth potential is there.

As more investors become more aware of the benefits that joining the EU will have on property and its prices, more people are flocking to countries that have just joined and particularly to those that will join soon. With Turkey beginning to comply with EU standards, prices are set to rise as more investors buy property there for secure returns.

Jonathan Richardson **ATTRACTION** – Weather and the lifestyle are key factors when buying abroad



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