



## Holapueblo holds its first national meeting to analyse the success formulas for attracting inhabitants to rural Spain

The Redeia, IKEA and AlmaNatura platform against depopulation hands out awards to the Town Council of Pradoluengo (Burgos) and to residents of Lumbrales (Salamanca), Arbancón (Guadalajara) and Tragacete for driving repopulation and reactivation in rural areas

Tragacete (Cuenca), 21 March 2025

Today and tomorrow Holapueblo is holding its first national meeting in Tragacete (Cuenca), since being set up in 2019. The meeting has brought together town councils with repopulating families -known as 'holapueblers'- who have been participating in Holapueblo over the last six years, together with other administrations, entities and individuals committed to rural development. The aim is to take stock and determine **which successful formulas are currently attracting inhabitants to a depopulated Spain.**

The platform has chosen Tragacete as the venue for the meeting as it is an example of good practices for repopulation, embodying **the three main keys: the supply of rental housing, municipal involvement and a positive reception by local residents**. Tragacete is indeed the **town with the greatest number of new incoming residents, thanks to Holapueblo**. In total, there are 14 new inhabitants (six families).

The participation of the town council has been a fundamental part of this, as it has restored the former Civil Guard barracks to provide free rental housing for the first six months, has set up workshops for entrepreneurs and a teleworking room with free access. The municipality is also a tangible example of how repopulation positively transforms rural areas, as its population has grown by more than 11%, and new businesses have opened, stimulating the local economy and diversifying the range of services available.

**Awards for town councils and people driving repopulation**

The meeting, attended today by the First Vice President of the Government of Castilla-La Mancha, José Luis Martínez Guijarro, featured the presentation of awards to individuals and entities playing a key role in attracting residents and helping them settle. To this end, awards have been given to the **Town Council of Pradoluengo (Burgos) in the category of Repopulation Drive**, for its work alongside the Local Action Group AGALSA Sierra de la Demanda in favour of rural reactivation and repopulation. Since 2022, and thanks to its involvement in Holapueblo and other initiatives, five new families have moved into the municipality which has 1,120 inhabitants.

Holapueblo has given an award to Javier González, an 'holapuebler' from Lumbrales (Salamanca), in the category of **Rural Network Builder**, for setting up and bolstering ties between players in rural locations, promoting collaboration and the exchange of resources. Through the Iniciativa Vetonia Association, Javier is responsible for getting local inhabitants involved in a working group of volunteers called Poblado Abadengo so that they can appreciate the benefits generated in the area by the arrival of new families in Lumbrales, creating a butterfly effect.

Similarly, an award was given to Mercedes Molinas, who settled in Tragacete with her husband and two children, as **Holapueblo Ambassador**, for promoting and representing the platform's values and for being a benchmark in the defence and revival of rural areas; and to David Hierro and Laura Sánchez, residents of Arbancón (Guadalajara) with their daughter Aitana, as **the most Impactful Entrepreneurs** for their triple positive contribution -economic, social and environmental- that they are generating in their local area through their rural multiservice business.

**Housing in contemporary rural areas**

The event also included the presentation of a study entitled 'The matter of housing in contemporary rural areas', published by the UOC (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya).

The research took four municipalities supported by Holapueblo as a sample, namely: Tragacete (Cuenca), Belorado (Burgos), Bot (Tarragona) and Fuentes de León (Badajoz). They have all experienced a marked and above-average process of depopulation over the last



decade, as well as an ageing population, youth emigration and issues related to reviving their economies, which leads to unemployment, social inequality and changes in their productive sectors.

The study highlights the difficulty in accessing housing in rural areas. It points out that this not only slows down the arrival of new residents but also prevents the existing young population from settling there.

The researchers at the UOC have concluded that the scarce supply of rental housing available throughout the year, together with the existence of a **pool of empty houses**, run down due to lack of use over time, the fragmentation of property and the growth of **second residences and holiday lets**, together reduce supply and push up prices. In some municipalities, empty properties and holiday residences make up 20% and 40% of the housing pool, respectively.

The 1st Holapueblo Meeting was sponsored by the Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha and the Diputación de Cuenca, together with the collaboration of the City Council of Tragacete.