

## **Ábalos reiterates the Government's commitment to boosting Spain's modernisation, prosperity and structural organisation.**

- **At the opening of the "Earth, Water, Air" exhibition: Infrastructure, transport and housing at the service of Spanish society".**
- **Ábalos: "Public investment makes full sense as long as it meets the real needs of our citizens, industrial fabric and common interests".**
- **The Ministry of Public Works " is not just about investment; above all, it is also about social rights, starting with the right to decent housing," he said.**
- **The minister reiterated his commitment to continue working towards a user-friendly transport system based on the right to safe mobility.**

Madrid, 13 November 2018 (Ministry of Public Works).

The Spanish Public Works Minister, José Luis Ábalos, has reiterated the National Government's and the Ministry of Public Works' commitment to boosting Spain's modernisation, prosperity, and its regional and social organisational structure.

This is what he pointed out this afternoon at the opening of the exhibition 'Earth, Water, Air: Infrastructure, transport and housing at the service of the Spanish society', which, held by the Public Works Ministry and organised by the ENAIRE Foundation, is part of the events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Spanish Constitution.

The exhibition aims to acquaint the public with the work that has been carried out by the Ministry of Public Works and its subsidiary institutions and companies from the arrival of democracy to the present day. With this in mind, the minister described this task as objectively praiseworthy, bearing in mind the situation in our country after 40 years of dictatorship.

Ábalos pointed out the new challenges that Spain has ahead of it: to strengthen our democracy, perfect and guarantee the Welfare State and prepare for digital transformation and industry 4.0. Hence the need to give a new impulse to " modernity, fraternity and freedom ", which requires "defending good politics every day, neither new nor old; simply good ones", he stated.

The Department's minister highlighted the important role of road, rail, port and aeronautical infrastructure in Spain's progress and modernisation, with regard to territorial structuring, social cohesion, mobility, connectivity, solidarity, inclusive growth and sustainable development.

As an example of "a job well done", Ábalos gave as an example, among others, that Spain ranks tenth in the world in terms of infrastructure, that it has the first European network of dual carriageways and motorways, that our high-speed railway model is an international benchmark, and that we have the world's leading airport operator in terms of passenger numbers.

### **Spanish society, a priority**

For the minister, however, "Public investment makes full sense as long as it meets the real needs of our citizens, industrial fabric and common interests." Hence the exhibition's title: "40 years of infrastructure, transport and housing at the service of Spanish society". "That is," said Ábalos, "the first of our priorities and the first and ultimate reason for a public servant's meaningful work".

The Public Works minister stressed that the Public Works Group is one of the economy's major powerhouses, which "compels us to responsibly administer the available budget, trying to make the most of each euro, taking into account the principles of efficiency, territorial balance and equal opportunities for all, regardless of where we live".

The minister went on to highlight the role of our Spanish companies, which are internationally recognised for construction and concessions and whose most outstanding projects, among others, include the Mecca-Medina AVE, the enlargement of the Panama Canal, and the Panama, Riyadh, Lima and Doha Undergrounds.

Ábalos said the Public Works Ministry "is not just about investments; above all, it is also about social rights, starting with the right to decent housing; as well as the right to live in cities tailored to human beings, environmentally friendly and designed with the well-being and quality of life of those who inhabit them in mind".

### **Sustainable growth model**

In addition, he restated his commitment to continue working towards a user-friendly transport system based on the right to safe mobility; for an efficient, modern network infrastructure and a cohesive, integrated European transport area; for an intermodal system that boosts supply chain logistics, enhances freight transport, contributes to company competitiveness and international renown, and for a housing policy that is conceived as a basic social right on a par with health, education or pensions.

The minister went on to say that all of this must fall within the context of a sustainable growth model that is environmentally friendly and highly innovative, whose growth pattern is based on technological innovation.

"Infrastructure must continue to leverage growth," he stressed, "but it is now time to conceptualize emerging rights, such as mobility, equal opportunities and citizens' independence in the pursuit of their personal, vital core projects".