Real Estate Research

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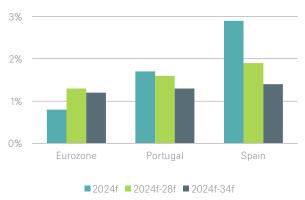
Real Estate Strategic Outlook: Iberia

What are the macroeconomic drivers?

Economic tailwinds to support short-term performance

Even with a slight slowdown in Q3 this year, Spain is likely to be one of the fastest-growing economies in the Eurozone. Growth has been boosted by tourism, immigration, and the continued deployment of European funds under the Next Generation EU programme. These tailwinds are likely to fade in the medium term, although we still expect growth to outperform the Eurozone over both a five and ten-year horizon.





Source: Oxford Economics, November 2024

Strategy: what and where?

Affordable housing a national priority

Protests in Madrid in October to demand more affordable housing underline the acute strain on households posed by rising rents in the capital and other key cities in Spain. Unfortunately, the National Housing Bill that entered into force in 2023 has had the unintended consequence of reducing investment into the residential sector, suppressing supply growth. We still see an opportunity for investment in the sector where there is some degree of public-private partnership.

We would also explore more operational residential subsectors, such as student housing and co-living. The student housing market in Spain and Portugal is still maturing and there is room for further supply growth given less than one in five domestic mobile and international students can

access a PBSA bed space. In Madrid and Barcelona, a selective investment approach is needed as these markets have more existing stock and finding a site which is well-located relative to university campuses is challenging. In Valencia, Seville, and Lisbon, supply is much more limited and entry pricing is also attractive to reflect the lower historical investment volumes in these markets, boosting potential returns.

Co-living is another emerging sector in Spain, with most schemes currently under construction located in Barcelona or Madrid. Given the increasing difficulty in securing housing in these cities, particularly for young people and relocating professionals, there is a need for accommodation that can be easily accessed and offers flexibility of tenure.

Supply-protected logistics in focus

After a period of repricing, logistics yields are starting to move in once again. The period in which yields of over 5.00% can be achieved for prime assets may even be in the past. The window of opportunity to benefit from yield compression as well as strong income growth in this sector is likely to be quite narrow. While forecasts for growth in household incomes are strongest in the Greater Madrid area, land availability is such that development activity can respond quickly to rising demand. We therefore favour locations close to or within the M50 ring road where supply poses less of a risk. Barcelona and Valencia are also targets for the logistics sector – both offering low vacancy and strong macroeconomic fundamentals to support rental growth.

Retail renaissance

Contrary to most European markets, the retail sector in Iberia has experienced an uptick in investment volumes over the past year. Investor sentiment has been boosted by evidence of in-store sales growth and low vacancy at the prime end of the market. Positive performance is also evident in large-format regional shopping centres where competition from both online and physical stores is lower than the European average. With prime yields close to 7.00%, returns for shopping centres are now looking attractive for a five-year hold. A selective approach will be required for any new acquisitions in this market as capital and rental values may still slip for shopping centres with a weak or divided catchment area.

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