

THE SUN WILL ALWAYS BE LIKE GOLD FOR THE BRITISH.

Kevin Roper, who has a real estate agency in Lanzarote since 1984 says that the English will continue betting on the Canary Islands.

Domingo Rivero 30.01.2020 | 23:13



Kevin Roper, at his Real Estate Office in Puerto del Carmen. **D.R.**

Second hand houses and villas

Lanzarote's real estate business will not be particularly affected by the entry of Brexit because the first-hand housing stock has not grown in recent years. "There are no cranes anywhere," says Kevin Roper, adding that the business focuses on buying second-hand homes. However, Roper considers the renovation of the oldest buildings vital, "because it also creates jobs for the people here." This real estate agent is satisfied with the entry into force of the regulations for the legalization of tourist villas, a key sector for the sector. "People invest, the government collects their taxes and jobs are created. More than anything, the Europeans want to have their businesses legalized " he says.

The British community in Lanzarote is by far the largest in number of foreign residents on the volcano island exceeding 6,000 people. Kevin Roper, who has had a real estate agency in Puerto del Carmen since 1984 specializing mainly in the British market, is convinced that his countrymen will continue to come to spend their holidays in Lanzarote and continue to acquire properties on the island with the aim of spending the winter months. **"The sun is gold for the British,"** he says, although he does not hide that in recent years there has been a great concern for 'brexit'.

"In the 80's during the tourist boom of Lanzarote, houses were selling like hotcakes." Kevin Roper knows the real estate market of Lanzarote very well as he has had a real estate agency in Puerto del Carmen (Tías) since 1984 after having arrived on the island a few years before to handle the sale of properties of a group of British builders in Lanzarote. Roper is convinced that the entry into force of Brexit is not going to mean a change in the trend both in the sale of properties to his countrymen and in the visit of thousands of Britons to continue spending their holidays on the island. **"The sun is gold for the British,"** he says.

Roper sighs with relief after the principle of agreement reached between the European Union (EU) and the Parliament of the United Kingdom. "I recognize that in the last three and a half years we have been very worried about the uncertainty although now after the agreement I believe that we will see greater confidence," he adds.

"For me the worrying is a lot less now," Roper admits as there are already clear rules between the EU and the English Government. "In the last three years there has been great uncertainty not only for the British but for all Europeans.

It is clear that when there are doubts and fear, it affects the market. But now from my point of view, from the entry into force of Brexit, there will be greater confidence, "says Roper.

For this real estate agent, the situation is better than before the agreement, although he is aware that the final agreement must now materialize before the end of this year. "Until December 31, 2020 there will be negotiations that I think will not affect citizens but the general agreements between the two countries."

"I have been in Spain for more than 40 years and there has always been a good relationship between the two countries. And that will not change with the entry of Brexit," he says.

One of the concerns of the British who share their residence between Lanzarote and the United Kingdom is obtaining residence permits, especially since many of them choose the island to spend the winter months away from the British cold. "I think that the Canary Islands Government will also be interested in providing residence permits to those British who want to spend more time on the islands, especially for those who want to spend the winter months on the Archipelago. Because otherwise it would harm the economy of the islands".

"A week ago there was a meeting with the ambassador of the United Kingdom in Spain and he told us that the different Spanish administrations are very open to negotiations with the United Kingdom to reach an agreement that favors citizens of both countries with residence," says Roper.

*Regarding the arrival of the British tourists to Lanzarote, Roper is convinced that the Spanish administrations "are not going to penalize their source of income" by making access difficult to their visitors. In fact in Lanzarote almost half of all tourists choose the island to spend their vacations coming from the United Kingdom. Around 1.4 million British tourists stayed in Lanzarote last year. "Logic tells us that Spain and the Canary Islands are going to want to solve the problems that may arise. Lanzarote lives off the planes that arrive with tourists."
"From my point of view people want to continue enjoying their vacations anyway. And in Lanzarote, we have the sun all year round," he adds. For this reason, he is convinced that the Brexit agreement will give greater security.*

For this real estate agent, the entry of Brexit will not retract British investments on the islands. "Right now, house prices are reaching levels from before the 2008 crisis." In Roper's opinion there are several reasons that lead the British to invest in a second residence on the Islands: "Fundamentally to escape the Winter and enjoy a family holiday in the Summer. Also for investment reasons because most properties can be rented the whole year thanks to the mild climate of the island and unlike other Spanish regions. " The sun, the gold mine of Lanzarote".