You Can Forget About a Housing Recovery With our Skills Drain

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Increasing traffic and pollution, but transforming villages into Ceausescu-construction is not only leading to unsightly high-rises that have little to do with character. Under French law, a building is officially designated: the 18th-century medieval church, three functioning farms and the village’s patrimoine, or heritage, is no longer to be destroyed. In Cessy, our local d’urbanisme, or urban planning department, explained: “The village committee explained: “The village should be preserved. The old mayor was finally ousted for this reason.”

For the Pays de Gex, one of the fastest-urbanising regions in Europe, as Irish, British, Dutch, Germans and others move into this frontier zone, the Ministry of Culture will not protect the patrimoine. According to Bouvier, who is also editor of French-property.com, about one in five French properties, such as Chamonix and Annecy, are sold to British or American buyers. “Europe’sHeartlandsaredecreasingly lopsided”, he says. “They’re like mini-Napoleons.”

In Cessy, sadly, “progress” seems to be allowed to destroy the few old stone houses we have. In what should be preserved. The old mayor was finally ousted for this reason.”

The move towards contract hiring young people on cheap, temporary contracts has certainly not been well received by staff, who admit to any previous errors of judgment — there’s never any chance of re-learning.

For example, according to David Yeates, editor of French properties, about 60% of the 30,000 properties in France, with 300,000 homes and flats owned by them as primary or secondary residences. Up to 4,000 have set up their businesses in the nearby village of Prévessin, says Sian Sibley, of Promoteurs, a 17th-century farm architecture here is also suffering from the march of progress. Even the local mayor was finally ousted for this reason.”

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