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**Cities for growth,
jobs and cohesion**

The urban action of the Structural Funds

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Europe strengthening cities, cities strengthening Europe



This is a crucial time for Europe's Cohesion Policy. We are already working on the growth, jobs and competitiveness agenda set by the Member States in Lisbon. We also face the continual challenges of promoting social cohesion and environmental quality, not to mention the historic opportunity of extending the highest standards of living to the new Member States.

The new Structural Funds regulations and guidelines, due to be approved by the summer, seek to meet these challenges in the new programming period (2007-2013). Europe's towns and cities have a vital role to play. They are the motors of

growth and jobs and the centres of innovation and the knowledge economy. At the same time, urban areas are the frontline in the battle for social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

There is much that Europe's towns and cities can do to help themselves. The forthcoming Commission communication on the contribution of cities to jobs and growth⁽¹⁾ makes this clear.

For example, cities can promote their attractiveness, or 'investment readiness', in terms of transport, environment, services and culture. They can take action to promote entrepreneurship, employability and the growth of the knowledge economy. They can build local partnerships, including planners, businesses, universities and the local community. They can mediate between different communities and reduce disparities between neighbourhoods and social groups, improving local security and "planning out" crime. The list goes on.

In addition, European Cohesion policy has been providing support to cities on a stable and consistent basis for many years now. I am pleased to be able to use this issue of *Inforegio Panorama* to give a small flavour of some of the encouraging results so far, with ordinary citizens and local actors giving a view from the ground, whilst projects tackle key urban issues, such as entrepreneurship, employment, social inclusion, sustainable communities and the natural and physical environment.

I am also proud to use this opportunity to further publicise some of the interesting new opportunities we are offering cities in the coming programming period. For example, we are broadening and deepening the exchange of experience through the URBACT network. Better knowledge of best practice is an essential tool for intelligent urban development. Moreover, we are offering innovative financial tools – notably the JEREMIE and JESSICA initiatives – which should help to provide improved access to finance, including micro-credit provision. This is a key to developing business activity in the most difficult social circumstances.

My hope is that this issue of *Inforegio Panorama* will encourage, inform and inspire those who, like me, believe that cities are the key to Europe's success and Europe is the key to cities' success.

Danuta Hübner,

Member of the European Commission responsible for regional policy.

⁽¹⁾ Cohesion policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions. European Commission, 2006.

Cohesion and the Lisbon rendezvous

Countdown to the launch of the 2007-13 programmes

2005 was an excellent year – the best yet – in terms of executing the Structural and Cohesion Funds budget⁽¹⁾. It is a result that highlights once again the dynamism of cohesion policy, with less than a year to go before the start of the next programming period. Following intense inter-institutional dialogue in 2006, the partners implementing this policy will have by January 2007 the necessary legislative and financial framework with which to complete preparations for the new development programmes. Driving their efforts will be the Partnership for Growth and Jobs set up to re-launch the 'Lisbon strategy'. Two Commission reports help take stock of the situation: the General Report on the Activities of the European Union ⁽²⁾ and the Annual Progress Report on the Lisbon Strategy ⁽³⁾.



Ever on time for excellence: training course in clock restoration techniques in Innsbruck (Austria).

"During 2005, we managed to commit almost 100% of the funds allocated to structural actions and ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession). Clearly this was the best executed budget ever (...). The use of the Structural and Cohesion Funds by the European regions in 2005 shows once again that cohesion policy is a powerful tool in creating quality jobs and promoting growth on the ground. (...) Our major challenge is now to put into place all the necessary mechanisms to enable cohesion policy to contribute even more to the economic modernisation of European regions during the 2007-13 period," declared Danuta Hübner, European Commissioner responsible for regional policy, on 26 January (1). She also pointed out that the level of payments was very satisfactory in 2005 and remains high at the beginning of 2006, confirming that this is the result of sustained effort and sound programming.

In 2005, EUR 27.1 billion was committed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund and the pre-accession instrument for candidate countries (ISPA). In terms of commitments, this is the highest amount ever recorded for a single year in the field of regional policy. For the four Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and ISPA combined, payments made in 2005 totalled EUR 33.1 billion. For the 10 new Member States, the reimbursement of expenditure in the field by the Commission was similar, at the end of 2005, to the amount paid to the Member States of the EU-15 after two years of programming. Funds destined for pre-accession actions were also used so well that additional funds had to be found in other fields of action.

Commissioner Hübner stressed that the Commission is determined to benefit from the dynamic generated to guarantee, in close cooperation with the Member States and the regions, optimal implementation of cohesion policy in terms of growth and jobs.



When quality creates jobs: air and water analysis in the laboratory of hygiene in Teplice (Czech Republic).

2005, the relaunch of 'Lisbon': a key year for a new beginning

Published on 15 February, the 2005 General Report on the Activities of the European Union (2) sets out, in 200 pages, the principal legislative and other actions of the preceding year coupled with documentary references. This overview of developments consists of four chapters corresponding to the four fundamental objectives the Commission has set itself through to 2009, namely prosperity, solidarity, security and affirmation of the EU's role on the international stage.

The background to developments in 2005 was the relaunch of the 'Lisbon strategy' (March 2005) that aims to make the EU's economy 'the most competitive and dynamic in the world' by 2010, based on knowledge and oriented towards sustainable growth, employment and social cohesion. With mixed results at mid-term, there was a need to refocus priorities on growth and jobs and to make these priorities central to all national and Community policy, especially regional policy. On the basis of the Commission's proposals, the European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005 lent political impetus to this relaunch by identifying three principal action lines: placing knowledge and innovation at the heart of growth; rendering Europe more attractive for investment and jobs; creating more and better jobs.

The new strategy will be implemented on the basis of a strengthened partnership between the Community institutions and the Member States. On 12 July 2005, the Council adopted a decision on the 'Employment Guidelines for the Member States' and a recommendation on the 'Broad Economic Policy Guidelines for the Member States and the Community'. Together, these form the 'Integrated Guidelines' for the period 2005-08, for which the Commission had presented a proposal. The Commission subsequently published, on 20 July, a *Community Lisbon Programme* covering all the actions at Community level to supplement the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) announced by the Member States in October.

The regional dimension. Under the 'Solidarity' chapter, the 2005 General Report evokes the necessary role of a cohesion policy that is in line with the Lisbon objectives. In this respect, and in the context of an enlarged Union, in 2004 the Commission presented its legislative proposals for the 2007-13 programming period of the Structural and Cohesion Funds, setting three priority objectives for future development programmes: *Convergence* for the most disadvantaged regions, *Regional competitiveness and employment* in the other regions and, finally, *European territorial cooperation*. There was also a need to provide more strategic programming, greater decentralisation of responsibilities, a strengthened partnership coupled with greater transparency, and a simplified management system. These proposals were modified in October 2005 in the light of opinions expressed by the various Community institutions.

A major step was taken on 5 July 2005 with the publication of the draft *Community Strategic Guidelines for 2007-13* in which the Commission identified the cohesion policy priorities with a view to strengthening synergies with the Lisbon strategy, in line with the Integrated Guidelines for growth and jobs. These guidelines will help the Member States to draw up their *National strategic reference frameworks* on the basis of which the new generation of operational programmes will in turn be drawn up.

The fact remains that the Community project, and cohesion policy within that project, needs stable resources on a scale to match the challenges and its ambitions. 2005 saw difficult negotiations on the financial framework for the 2007-13 period. After the consensus reached at the European Council on 17 December, the inter-institutional agreement that will hopefully be achieved in April 2006 must give the green light to the adoption of new legislative texts and finalisation of the Strategic Guidelines for cohesion. It will then be up to the various regional development actors to increase their efforts to successfully complete programme preparations by next January.



Knowledge without frontiers: the Collegium Polonicum, in Slubice (Poland), cooperates with the Viadrina University, Frankfurt an der Oder (Germany).

“Moving up a gear”

“It is time to move up a gear. (...) There has been a step change in our activities. (...). Member States must now get in the driving seat and speed up reforms. (...) We are aiming for top-class universities, highly trained and educated workforces, strong social security and pension systems, the most competitive industries and the cleanest environment. To those who say that it cannot be done I reply: a decade or so ago who would have thought that Ireland would have become one of the most prosperous countries of the European Union, or that productivity in Poland would be higher than in South Korea?” declared Commission President José Manuel Barroso on presenting, on 25 January, the 2006 Annual Report on the Lisbon Strategy (3).

In this document the Commission analyses the 25 National Reform Programmes presented by the Member States from a threefold perspective: the macroeconomic dimension, the microeconomic dimension and employment. It highlights their strengths with a view to encouraging the exchange of good ideas and identifies their shortcomings whilst proposing solutions. In particular, it stresses the need to quickly develop the coordination mechanisms between the bodies responsible for the NRPs and the manag-

Four actions for more growth and jobs

The 2006 Annual Report on the Lisbon Strategy (3) defines four priority actions for ‘moving up a gear’ in the drive for growth and job creation. Here is a summary of some of the key points.

1. Investing in knowledge and innovation. By 2010, to increase investment in higher education from 1.28% to 2%, in particular by making it easier to secure complementary private funding. To set a clear goal in each Member State for R&D expenditure by 2010. To increase the share of State aid (25% rather than 12%) and Structural Funds allocated to R&D and innovation. There should be a European Institute for Technology by the end of 2007.

2. Unlocking business potential. By the end of 2007, a ‘one-stop shop’ in each Member State for all the administrative requirements incumbent on businesses, especially SMEs. Reduction in average time needed to set up a business by one half by the same deadline (reduced to one week after 2007). Promotion of education in entrepreneurship. To set up systems for assessing administrative burdens. The Commission will abolish the obligation to declare certain State aid of low amounts.

3. Getting people into work. To respond to globalisation and population ageing through a lifecycle approach whereby people of all ages receive the support they need. To guarantee, by the end of 2007, a job, apprenticeship or additional training for all school-leavers, initially within six months and subsequently within 100 days. To encourage gender equality, a balance between work and private life and measures to make an extended working life more attractive. The Commission will organise a special social summit.

ing authorities of the new Structural Fund operational programmes. The report also highlights the importance of a communication policy that is able to demonstrate how ‘Lisbon’ can be of genuine benefit to citizens.

Governments are invited to draw up their NRPs in full within the stated period, correcting deficiencies and developing synergies. The Commission notes that, when faced with a particular problem, in many cases the Member States have come up with solutions that if applied elsewhere could bring considerable benefits to the Union as a whole. There are also some problems that the Member States cannot hope to resolve alone and that therefore require coordinated action at European level. In its conclusions, the Commission defines four priority actions (see box) that require firm support and rapid commitment on the part of the most senior political authorities.

After presenting the report at the spring European Council, on 23 and 24 March 2006, the Commission will cooperate with the Member States with a view to implementing the NRPs, examining ways of strengthening them, and ensuring that all the Community instruments – including the Structural and Cohesion Funds – act effectively for growth and jobs.

4. Promoting efficient and sustainable energy. To achieve a better coordination of European energy networks, better regulated energy markets and increased competition. To introduce incentive measures for a sustainable use of energy and boost research into energy efficiency, clean energy and renewable energy. The Commission will publish a Green Paper in spring 2006.

Regional developers: when preparing the 2007-13 programmes do not hesitate to address your questions and contributions to the Regional Policy Directorate-General: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/debate/forum_en.htm

(¹) Press release:
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/84&format=HTML&aged=0&language=FR&guiLanguage=en>
The annual reports on the Structural, Cohesion and Pre-Accession Funds are published in the following section of the Europa site:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/repot_en.htm

(²) *General Report on the Activities of the European Union (2005):*
<http://europa.eu.int/abc/doc/off/rg/en/welcome.htm>

(³) *Communication from the Commission to the Spring European Council (2006): ‘Time to move up a gear – The new partnership for growth and jobs’ – The European Commission’s Annual Progress Report on growth and jobs.* Full text: http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/index_en.htm
Press release:
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/71&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
Frequently asked questions:
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/23&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Cities matter to Europe

Cohesion policy and cities in Europe

By Michael Parkinson ⁽¹⁾

Cities are increasingly seen as the dynamos of national and regional economies rather than as economic liabilities – ‘the wealth of nations’. But cities are not only economic assets – not merely marketplaces. They have great capacity to promote community development, social cohesion and civic and cultural identity.



Zschochersche Straße in Leipzig, one of the main routes revitalised under the URBAN programme.

These are exciting times for cities. A great debate is taking place about how much they matter to national and European success. During the past decade many cities have emerged from a period of transition to develop new economic, social, political and cultural roles. Many have assets that make them more – not less – significant in an increasingly globalised world. Some are centres of strategic decision-making, exchange and communication. Many have concentrations of intellectual resources in universities and research institutions, which encourage high levels of innovation. Many cities have achieved substantial physical regeneration especially of their centres, which offer impressive commercial, residential and retail facilities. Many have substantial cultural resources, which are increasingly the source of economic growth and job creation. However, despite this potential, many communities and individuals within many cities remain excluded from the economic and social mainstream. Developing economically competitive, socially cohesive and sustainable cities remains a challenge to all of us in Europe.

The wider debate about the future of cities is echoed in the debate that is currently taking place about the future of Cohesion policy in the European Union. The importance attached to cities in EU regional policy has waxed and

waned during the past decade. Sometimes they have been very high profile; sometimes they have been rather neglected. However, it is absolutely clear that they have recently risen to the top of the European political agenda. This is underlined by, for example, the European Council decision in 2005 on competitiveness and cohesion, the conclusions of the informal EU Ministerial meetings in Rotterdam in 2004 and Bristol in 2005, and key policy statements from the European Parliament in 2005. It has also been underlined by policy documents from the Committee of the Regions, the EUROCITIES network and a range of EU conferences, most notably in 2004 in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. In their different ways, all have embraced the importance of cities to national and European success, raising their profile and political significance.

However, the key document guaranteeing cities will remain at the top of the policy agenda in the coming months is the recent European Commission paper on Cohesion Policy and Cities⁽²⁾. This is a crucial statement of intent, which could shape the future of Structural Funds and the future of cities across Europe in the next decade. It is critical that its contents are fully discussed and, I believe, widely endorsed. The remainder of this article outlines the key ideas and proposals in the document.

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⁽²⁾ Cohesion policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions. European Commission, 2006.



The new FH JOANNEUM institute of technology in Graz West (Austria), in a former industrial area converted into a high-tech complex with URBAN funding.

Cohesion policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions

This important paper is designed to do two things - complete the Community Strategic Guidelines for 2007-13 by strengthening the urban dimension in them, and make key suggestions to help the preparation of Structural Funds. The Commission wants Member States to use the document to prepare the new Cohesion Policy and is particularly anxious that local authority partners should be heavily involved in that preparation. The paper is a mix of broad policy ambitions, key delivery principles and specific policy actions. It covers three main areas. First it explains why cities matter to Europe, underlining the importance of sustainable urban development for European regional policy. Second it outlines four key policy ambitions for cities in Europe. Third it identifies specific means of reaching those broad objectives in two areas – finance and governance. This article considers each in turn.

Sustainable urban development matters to European regional policy

Cities have many of the qualities that underpin successful modern knowledge based economies – creativity, innovation, culture, and entrepreneurship. For example, successful cities are critical to attracting a skilled workforce, which is key in a competitive global economy. Cities are also critical to improving regional performance. There are no successful regions in Europe that have unsuccessful cities at their core. If managed properly, cities can contribute to more sustainable growth and environments. And if they collaborate more and create strategic alliances with their surrounding regions and other cities, they can reduce unhelpful competition and contribute to a more balanced pattern of development across Europe.

What kind of cities should Europe be trying to create?

The paper argues that there should be four broad policy goals for cities - to make them more attractive, to increase their contribution to innovation, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy, to produce more and better jobs and to reduce social disparities within them.

Creating attractive Cities

The paper underlines that we need to focus on four issues to make cities attractive – transport access and mobility; quality of services; quality of environment; and cultural provision.

Transport, accessibility and mobility

The key challenge is to help cities improve their accessibility to wider markets in Europe and beyond, and to increase their internal mobility. So the paper argues that national, regional and local partners must encourage: good links to major airports and transport axes; greater cooperation across municipal boundaries; more affordable, efficient and effective and integrated public transport; the promotion of alternatives or softer forms of transportation; improved mobility and access for people who do not own cars.

Fair access to quality services and amenities

High quality services make cities more attractive and liveable, provide employment and increase the competitiveness of the workforce. So cities must provide: efficient, affordable services in healthcare, social services, training and administration; childcare provision to promote gender equality; good services across the whole urban area; access for immigrant and culturally disadvantaged groups.

Good natural and physical environments

Cities must address the challenges of environmental degradation encouraged by urban sprawl. They must: pursue the regeneration of brownfield sites and the protection of greenfield sites; coordinate land use and other policies across different levels of government; invest in physical infrastructure and active management of transport; promote energy efficiency.

Improve their cultural offer

Soft location factors are increasingly important to private sector investment decisions as well as to the location decisions of a highly skilled, potentially mobile workforce. Cultural services and tourism are also important potential sources of jobs. And cultural facilities are important ways of helping to build civic and cultural identity. Cities must therefore promote a vibrant cultural life incorporating the provision of facilities and cultural and community events to build bridges within and across communities.

Support innovation, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy

Cities have a crucial role in this area of economic competitiveness. They must: provide a stimulating environment for innovation and business, simplify public administration and encourage networking between universities, research institutes and the private sector.

Helping SMEs

To do this cities need to: improve the overall economic infrastructure of the area; provide advice and support services to business; promote networking between economic partners; improve access to finance; address the challenges faced by young and female entrepreneurs and ethnic minority communities.

Innovation and the knowledge economy

Cities need to: attract a potentially mobile workforce by improving the quality of life in the area; lead in preparing innovative strategies for the whole region; make RTD and education supply more efficient and accessible to SMEs; encourage networking between universities, government and the private sector; develop an integrated information strategy and adopt eco-innovations and environmental management systems.

Creating more and better jobs

Cities create huge economic opportunities but also huge social challenges. They have more people than average with high skills and qualifications but also more with less of both. Cities are affected by structural forces and macro economic policies over which they do not have great control. But they must still exploit what advantages they have. All partners at all levels of government must collaborate in anticipating and responding to economic change. Cities should build partnerships between key economic and social actors. And they must do all they can to boost the employability of their most vulnerable groups.

Improving employability by education and training

The challenge here for cities is to: support the development of life long learning systems; provide high quality training and increased investment in the learning infrastructure; support disadvantaged groups in the labour market; attract skilled workers and those in support services; develop training and integration programmes to get excluded people into employment and entrepreneurship.

Reducing disparities within cities

Despite their huge economic potential most European cities have areas and communities which are excluded from the economic mainstream. This especially affects ethnic minority community, women and young people as the recent Urban Audit demonstrated. To tackle these challenges cities need to both promote social inclusion and equal opportunities and to increase the security of citizens.

Promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities

Here the Commission argues that the challenge for cities and partners is to: encourage the integration of immigrant groups with language and more general training; encourage co-operation between city authorities, schools and the local community in providing training for young people; improve social services to meet the challenge of child poverty and prevent the emergence of street children; improve women's skills and qualifications, encouraging them into the labour market and into entrepreneurship; provide childcare facilities for women returning to the labour market.

Increased security for citizens

The Urban Audit demonstrated that rates of crime and fear of crime is higher in cities than elsewhere. The Audit's survey of public perceptions also underlined that improved safety was a key determinant of the attractiveness of a city for investors and residents. In this field the Commission argues that cities need to: adopt a 'joined up', proactive approach to crime reduction, including planning designing and maintaining public places to eliminate crime; focus on youth who are at risk and especially catch potential criminals at the beginning of their careers; create and professionalise local safety related jobs, involving local residents. This could include the creation of local mediators, community safety officers, street wardens and neighbourhood watch schemes.



In Guimarães (Portugal), a town centre renovated with URBAN support to promote tourism, culture and SMEs.

How will we create successful cities?

It is obviously not enough to will the ends of successful cities. We have to find the means of delivering them. Money and decision-making matter. What does the Commission advocate?

Financing urban renewal

The paper has much to say about methods of financing urban development. EU funds have already supported much hard and soft infrastructure through investment in transport, waste management, education, training, information technology and communication networks. The European Investment Bank in 2004 made substantial loans of 3.2 billion euro for urban renewal including social housing and 2.3 billion euro for urban transport projects.

Developing financial engineering

However, the absence of risk capital is a key constraint on business growth and innovation. So the Commission and the EIB are introducing a new instrument 2007-13 -JERE-MIE - which will permit financial intermediaries experienced in business development and micro credit to lend the capital to businesses.

Public private partnerships

The scope for public private partnerships to finance major projects in urban renewal is very wide. Despite some challenges involved in such partnerships, the paper argues that cities should explore them because: private finance is necessary to complement public resources and the private sector brings skills as well as resources, although to be effective they must be part of a wider local authority vision for the area.

Improving the governance of cities

Perhaps the most important principles contained in the Commission's paper concern the governance of urban areas - in particular encouraging city-regional collaboration, an integrated approach to urban development, engaging citizens and learning from experience.

Promoting city regional collaboration

Many different governments operate in urban areas. They have different and legitimate purposes – transportation, economic development, environmental services, marketing, education and training, social services healthcare. It is critical they collaborate effectively to maximise the development of the wider urban region rather than to compete or conflict. The paper stresses that in a global economy, European cities need critical mass and must collaborate as much as possible. The urban/suburban/rural interface must be better managed so that users pay for the services provided wherever they live and rural and suburban users do not exploit urban providers. The skill levels of urban professionals need to be improved.

Most importantly, the Commission argues that Member states and regions must delegate greater control over Structural Funds to cities for urban issues and involve cities in designing, implementing and evaluating programmes.

Adopting an integrated approach to sustainable urban development

The paper underlines that urban development is a long-term complex process, which needs the integration of different policy sectors as well as the continuous involvement of a wide range of partners from the public, private and community sectors. This was, for example, one of the key lessons about success, which came out of the URBAN initiative during the past decade.

Cities must ensure that they have a consistent long-term plan for their area, which integrates economic, social and environmental policy goals. They must be effectively monitored, and all the key partners must be fully engaged in the planning, delivery and evaluation of urban programmes.

Citizen participation

If partnerships in general are encouraged, it is critical that cities engage local community groups and other NGOs in promoting environmentally and socially sustainable

growth and jobs in cities. Cities must encourage capacity building amongst such groups especially drawing upon e-government. And cities must try to bridge the cultural gap that often exists and prevents collaboration between politicians and bureaucracies and citizen groups

Networks and exchange of experience

There is much good practice to build on in European cities. It is crucial that cities do not waste scarce resource reinventing wheels. Cities must maximise their use of the experience built up in the URBACT programme and other European and national networks. It is also helpful that the Commission plans expand the exchange of experience beyond the cities in the URBAN programme alone to cities all across Europe.



University of Cadiz (Spain), Department of Marine Sciences: a campus open to the vast horizons of research.

What should happen next?

We are at a critical time in the debate about the future of European cities. They have rapidly risen up national and European policy agendas in recent years. Their potential contribution to increased economic competitiveness and social cohesion has been clearly recognised by many national governments, the European Parliament and urban and regional interest groups across Europe. The Commission's paper makes a critical contribution to this debate. It has identified some key policy ambitions, some key operating principles and a set of specific action that should shape the future of cohesion policy in Europe. They are flexible enough to allow national, regional and local diversity. But they are specific enough to guide the choice of strategies and mechanisms in future. They are already better known and practiced in some countries and cities than in others. It is crucial that they are explored - and I believe endorsed - by all partners in all member states. Once that happens we can move from discussion to action in our cities. That is the important bit.



'Urban issues: They affect us all, but who is in the driving seat?'

Jean-Marie Beaupuy, Member of the European Parliament, Member of the Committee on Regional Development (REGI), Chairperson of the Urban-Housing Intergroup at the European Parliament

80% of our populations live in or on the outskirts of towns and cities. This human concentration naturally results in a crystallisation of every need (transport, housing, leisure, culture, etc.) and of every difficulty (security, unemployment, pollution, etc.) A number of decision-makers and actors bear responsibility for managing these many and diverse issues. However it is the individual citizen who throughout the day encounters all the difficulties of moving around in his or her neighbourhood, travelling to and from work, and coping with pollution and insecurity. In day-to-day life these are interconnected and overlapping problems. Any attempt to solve them individually and without cooperation is doomed to failure. This is why I suggest that urban issues would benefit from an integrated approach.

In our democratic Europe, the public actors have a duty to their fellow citizens to ensure that the public actions taken on their behalf are coherent. Above and beyond the directives and the subsidies, it is therefore necessary for these 'decision-makers' to work together. In order to bring this coordination to different issues, I and my fellow Members of the European Parliament call for:

- > the sharing and promoting of 'good practices'
- > the systematic appointment of project leaders / coordinators. We also believe that the municipal authority is often if not always best placed to take on this role.

In this way we will be able to achieve the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives by creating sustainable communities.

The European Parliament, promoting the 'urban' dimension in the European institutions

Many of us in the European Parliament have assumed responsibilities in our municipalities or our regions, an experience that has given us a practical knowledge of the realities. It was therefore only natural that, as Members of the European Parliament:

- > We enriched, at the urban level, the regulations of the future Structural Funds (2007-13) at the time of the vote on the first reading (July 2005), in particular:
 - by rendering housing eligible (article 59);
 - by strengthening the 'urban development' theme (article 36);
 - by strengthening the principle of partnership (article 10).

- > We set up an Urban-Housing Intergroup (see facing page).
- > We adopted my report, entitled '*The urban dimension in the context of enlargement*' that calls for concrete actions and aid for their implementation. For this, the Parliament is calling for:
 - better coordination between the different services within each European institution;
 - operational territorial dialogue between the European Union and the towns, between governments and the towns, with the citizens;
 - a development of European Union tools to speed up the implementation of good practices;
 - implementation of an integrated urban policy at spatial and at thematic level;
 - monitoring and following-up actions to learn of the results obtained;
 - special attention to young people, to women.
- > We aim to ensure that an optimal treatment of the urban dimension is provided in the framework of the future Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy, 2007-13.

The Urban-Housing Intergroup

The Urban-Housing Intergroup consists of 68 MEPs of all political persuasions, has 73 partner organisations and is assisted by urban policy professionals. It has initiated many amendments to the future Structural Funds regulations for the 2007-13 period. It is active as an association and lobby. It has two main aims:

- > To encourage and assist European and national officials in implementing more effective action favouring cities.
- > To legislate better in the interests of the cities.

Since it was founded in 2004, this group has been very active in bringing urban issues to the attention of the partners concerned, namely elected representatives, decision-makers, associations and citizens.

Contact: http://www.udf-europe.net/main/deputes_page.jsp?path=/deputes/beaupuy/&type=aparlament/070905

Perspectives on urban development



By improving access to Riga's airport (Latvia), this PHARE project has enabled urban development to take flight.

The new programming period (2007-2013) will include a strong urban element.

Urban development has been one of the issues at the heart of European Cohesion Policy for some time now. Within the current programming period (2000-2006), the URBAN Community Initiative is a specific instrument for developing entrepreneurship, employment, social inclusion and the quality of the physical and natural environment in urban areas.

Moreover, towns and cities have long been essential motors for growth and jobs in most of the Structural Funds programmes. And the URBACT programme for exchange of experience is proving an important instrument for broadening and deepening our knowledge on best practice in urban development.

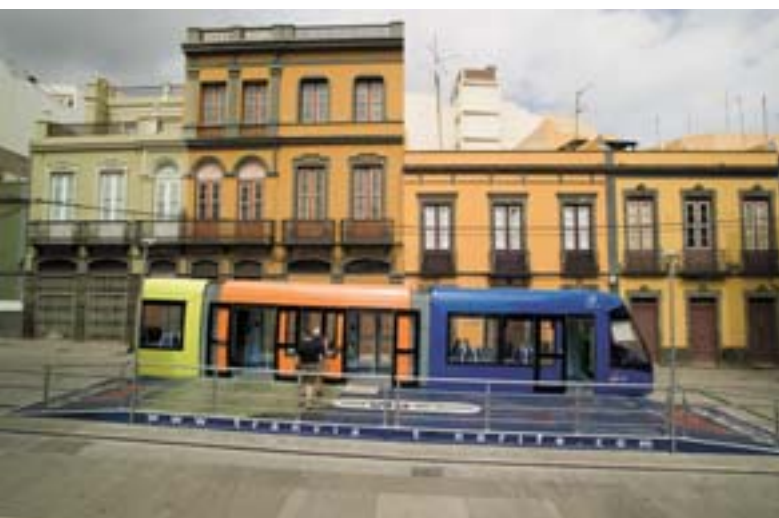
The challenge is now to take this forward into the new programming period (2007-2013). Negotiations on the new Structural Funds regulations and guidelines are being finalised in time for adoption by the summer. This will include a strong urban element, based in part on an urban communication resulting from a public consultation in early 2006⁽¹⁾.

Current challenges remain – from social and environmental sustainability to improving the standard of living in new Member States. However, in addition it is clear that Cohesion Policy must further already impressive efforts in terms of (1) promoting the Lisbon agenda of growth and jobs and (2) forging strong partnerships with local actors.

To rise to these challenges, the Commission proposals include:

- The full integration of urban programmes into the mainstream programmes, with the possibility of subdelegation to local actors.
- A strengthening and extension of the URBACT programme for exchange of experience and best practice.
- Innovative financial instruments, with a particular focus on improving credit for micro-enterprises.

⁽¹⁾ Cohesion Policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions. European Commission, 2006.



In Santa Cruz (Canary Islands, Spain), this vehicle acts as a promotion centre for the new urban transport system.

Urban actions in the mainstream

The Commission intends to reinforce the place of urban issues by fully integrating actions in this field into the regional programmes (General Regulation, p.7). Firstly, this means that national strategic reference frameworks should include priorities related to sustainable urban development among the thematic and territorial priorities, where appropriate (Gen. Reg. Article 25.4.b).

Similarly (and again, where appropriate), operational programmes should include an integrated plan for sustainable urban development (Gen. Reg. Article 36.4 and 5). This plan should include a clear description of urban development priorities. In practice, this is likely to mean a priority dedicated to urban issues, with a list of cities/urban areas covered.

Ideally the implementation of such measures would be delegated to local authorities and local partners. At the very least, they should be full partners throughout the design and implementation of such actions.

In terms of the nature of urban actions in the mainstream, they would continue the “URBAN method” whereby the various issues facing an area are tackled in an integrated and holistic manner (ERDF. Reg article 8). This means for example, that they could include actions such as:

- improving the physical environment, including brown-field
- preserving historical and cultural heritage
- promoting entrepreneurship and local employment
- community development,
- providing services to specific demographic groups

Up to 15% of funds can be set aside for ESF type projects.

Innovative financing: JEREMIE and JESSICA

Promoting business growth and innovation requires risk-taking. The EU has a particular gap in the availability of risk capital, as well as in loan guarantees for deprived areas. To rise to the challenge, a new joint initiative “JEREMIE” between the European Commission and the EIB Group seeks to improve access to finance for start-ups, for the development of SMEs and for micro-enterprises.

JEREMIE will be a facility available to the programme authorities. By committing programme resources to JEREMIE they will benefit from a “turn-key” system which accredits financial intermediaries experienced in business development and micro-credit. These accredited financial intermediaries will on-lend the capital of JEREMIE to businesses and other final beneficiaries.

JEREMIE will strengthen growth, employment and social inclusion in the cities of the European Union covered by the Structural Funds programmes. It is expected that additional loan capital will be levered into the region or city from the EIB group as well as from the other financial institutions.

JESSICA is a joint initiative for financing sustainable urban development between the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank. Its objective is to provide ready-made financing for urban renewal and development using a combination of grants and loans.

Under the JESSICA initiative, the managing authorities would be able to:

- provide funding for a wide variety of public-private partnership, or other urban development, projects that are capable of repaying in the long-term the resources invested in it, in total or in part;
- avail of a more simple and more flexible management of funds for urban development;
- achieve greater leverage from scarce grant resources for urban development, by attracting contributions from international financial institutions, banks, the private sector, etc.



Support for SMEs in Svaneke, Bornholm (Denmark): a hand-made glass production workshop making export goods.

The URBACT programme: the benefits of networking European cities

URBACT I (2003-2006), the programme for the exchange of experiences between urban development actors, meets very real needs on the part of the cities. The results achieved to date are reason for its work to continue after 2006.

Over the past 15 years, the European Union has progressively laid the foundations of an urban policy as summarised in the Commission's working document: *'Sustainable urban development integrates economic, social and environmental goals with good public services. Local partnerships including public, private, voluntary and community interests are essential to deliver these "sustainable communities" as referred to in the Bristol accord.'*⁽²⁾

The Urban Pilot Projects (1990-1993 and 1997-1999), URBAN I (1994-2000) and URBAN II (2000-2006) programmes financed by cohesion policy made it possible to develop full-scale (216 sites in Europe) integrated urban development policies. The positive results of these experiences, especially URBAN II, and the acknowledgement that the cities play a vital role in generating productivity and jobs, caused the European Commission to propose that sustainable urban development policies should be integrated in the mainstream of cohesion policy for the 2007-13 period.

179 cities, 375 partners

Set up at the beginning of 2003 to organise exchanges between cities benefiting from the URBAN Community Initiative, to learn the lessons from these experiences and to disseminate the know-how as widely as possible, URBACT met a clear demand: 179 cities participate in the programme, 40% of them with populations of over 200,000 inhabitants and 33% with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants. Since 1 May 2004, the cities in the 10 new Member States have also been eligible to join URBACT and today these represent a third of the programme participants. As well as the cities, which are the programme's principal actors, the regional authorities, universities and even Member States also participate in URBACT's activities. URBACT has 375 partners active in 20 networks and six thematic working groups as well as working groups that bring together networks around a single theme.



Making way for bicycles in Vienna's city centre (Austria), renovated with URBAN assistance.

In 2005, URBACT organised more than 10 working seminars, each of them bringing together between 20 and 30 individuals, including elected representatives, technicians and experts. More than 3,000 people throughout Europe are directly and personally involved in URBACT's work.

The programme's website (www.urbact.org) contains almost 5,000 documents, case studies, examples of good practice, study reports, etc. In February 2006 the website received 8,000 visitors, each one consulting an average of 36 pages, indicating that many documents were downloaded.

EUKN: European urban knowledge exchange

The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) supports Member States in creating national knowledge networks for urban development.

These interconnected national networks facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise on urban issues within Europe. By doing so, the EUKN helps politicians and policymakers to learn from each other's experiences. The EUKN strengthens European cities as engines for growth and jobs while maintaining high standards of sustainability and inclusiveness.

⁽²⁾ *Cohesion Policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions. European Commission, 2006.*

The EUKN is a European initiative launched during the 2004 Dutch EU presidency. Currently, 15 Member States, the URBACT programme, the European Commission and EUROCITIES have joined forces in this network.

Starting in April 2005, the EUKN has established a decentralised knowledge structure based on a central Search Portal and national networks in all participating Member States. European, national, regional and local partners provide case studies, policy documents and research reports on all major themes related to urban policy. The EUKN has received the Dutch XML Award for the most innovative network.

Since the launch of the website, in October 2005, the number of case studies and research reports has increased rapidly. By this summer, thousands of documents will be available online.

The EUKN secretariat is based in The Hague, the Netherlands.

More information: www.eukn.org.

What are the lessons and added-value for the cities?

Amongst the many and diverse activities of the different networks and working groups, seven main thematic lines can be distinguished: cities and young people; urban regeneration; immigrants; development of the local economy; citizens' participation; insecurity; and an integrated approach to urban development.

Integrating sustainable urban development within the mainstream of cohesion policy renders absolutely essential the existence of an exchange and reflection programme that disseminates the concept of sustainable integrated urban development as elaborated by the European Union during the past 20 years.

- > The URBACT approach is attractive to many towns and cities because, as a result of the analysis of experiences undertaken elsewhere and the exchange of their concerns and responses to them, they are able to acquire elements for reflection and comparison in deciding policy.
- > URBACT enables towns and cities in the 25 and soon 27 Member States to engage in dialogue and to help one another, and permits medium-sized towns to join European exchange networks.
- > URBACT is a formidable tool for mutual learning for the benefit of policy-makers, technicians, and urban development actors in general.
- > In the space of three years, URBACT has become a framework for exchanges and reflection on urban issues, not only between decision-makers in the cities but also between regional authorities, Member States, universities and researchers. As such, the programme encourages a territorial, sectoral and disciplinary opening up between cities and within cities.

- > Finally, the programme has permitted the creation of a European network of resource centres in the field of urban policies (EUKN, see box) and the launch of a working group on the strengthening of competences for the application of an approach based on the concept of sustainable communities (SKILLS, see box).

The resources and the efforts deployed to learn the lessons of policy and to disseminate conclusions and recommendations will be maintained and developed during the 2007-13 period under URBACT II, the future exchange programme between towns and cities.

Contact: info@urbact.org

Sustainable Communities: skills that turn vision into reality

Coordination and cooperation at a European level on skills development is central to delivering sustainable communities.

At the Ministerial Informal on Sustainable Communities in Bristol (6-7 December 2005), ministers agreed that generic skills are increasingly in demand but in short supply. Generic skills include: cross occupational working; leading and implementing a vision; partnership working; project management; negotiation and social mediation; organisational change management; effective community governance.

The 'Bristol Accord' was developed, with Member States committing to sharing best practice. The meeting also agreed to hold a European 'Skills for Sustainable Communities Symposium', to be held in late 2006 in Leeds, UK, to support investment in skills development and knowledge exchange.

An organisation created and supported by the British Government, the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC), in partnership with the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN), has established an URBACT Working Group. The Working Group will advise on the development, coordination and evaluation of the Symposium and recommend future European cooperation on skills for the 2007-13 period.

The Working Group Secretariat is based in the UK and will support the Group in providing advice and expertise on the content of the Symposium. This will ensure the Symposium meets the needs of Member States individually and European needs collectively. The Symposium conclusions will aim to have local and regional organisations affiliated to a European 'Skills Commitment'.

More information:

<http://www.ascskills.org.uk/euskills/en/home.cfm>



Belgique/België	33 Hamburg	66 Madrid	103 Poitiers	138 Trento	163 Tilburg	196 Ponto Delgada	225 Gravesham
1 Antwerpen	34 Hannover	67 Málaga	104 Reims	139 Trieste	164 Utrecht	197 Porto	226 Leeds
2 Brugge	35 Karlsruhe	68 Murcia	105 Rennes	140 Venezia		198 Setúbal	227 Leicester
3 Bruxelles/Brussel	36 Köln	69 Oviedo	106 Rouen	141 Verona	Österreich		228 Lincoln
4 Charleroi	37 Leipzig	70 Palma de Mallorca	107 Saint-Denis	165 Graz	166 Linz	Slovenija	229 Liverpool
5 Gent	38 Magdeburg	71 Pamplona/Iruña	108 Saint-Étienne	166 Linz	167 Wien	199 Ljubljana	230 London
6 Liège	39 Mainz	72 Santander	109 Strasbourg			200 Maribor	231 Manchester
	40 Moers	73 Santiago de Compostela	110 Toulouse	Κύπρος/Cypros			232 Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Česká Republika	41 Mönchengladbach	74 Sevilla		142 Lefkosia	Latvija	Slovenská Republika	233 Portsmouth
7 Brno	42 Mülheim an der Ruhr	75 Toledo	Ireland	143 Liepāja	168 Białystok	201 Banská Bystrica	234 Sheffield
8 Ostrava	43 München	76 Valencia	111 Cork	144 Rīga	169 Bydgoszcz	202 Bratislava	235 Stevenage
9 Plzeň	44 Nürnberg	77 Valladolid	112 Dublin		170 Gdańsk	203 Košice	236 Worcester
10 Praha	45 Regensburg	78 Vitoria/Gasteiz	113 Galway	Lietuva	171 Gorzów Wielkopolski	204 Nitra	237 Wrexham
11 Ústí nad Labem	46 Schwerin	79 Zaragoza	114 Limerick	145 Kaunas	172 Jelenia Góra		
	47 Trier			146 Panevėžys	173 Katowice	Suomi/Finland	България/Bulgaria
Danemark	48 Weimar	France	Italia	147 Vilnius	174 Kielce	205 Helsinki/Helsingfors	238 Burgas
12 Aalborg	49 Wiesbaden	80 Ajaccio	115 Ancona		175 Konin	206 Oulu/Uleåborg	239 Pleven
13 Århus	50 Wuppertal	81 Amiens	116 Bari	Luxembourg (G.D.)	176 Kraków	207 Tampere/Tammerfors	240 Plovdiv
14 København		82 Besançon	117 Bologna	148 Luxembourg	177 Łódź	208 Turku/Åbo	241 Ruse
15 Odense		83 Bordeaux	118 Cagliari		178 Lublin		242 Sofia
Deutschland	Eesti	84 Caen	119 Campobasso	Magyarország	179 Nowy Sącz	Sverige	243 Varna
16 Augsburg	51 Tallinn	85 Cayenne	120 Caserta	149 Budapest	180 Olštyn	209 Göteborg	244 Vidin
17 Berlin	52 Tartu	86 Clermont-Ferrand	121 Catania	150 Miskolc	181 Opole	210 Jönköping	
18 Bielefeld	Ελλάδα/Ελλάδα	87 Dijon	122 Catanzaro	151 Nyíregyháza	182 Poznań	211 Malmö	România
19 Bochum	53 Athina	88 Fort-de-France	123 Cremona	152 Pécs	183 Rzeszów	212 Stockholm	245 Alba Iulia
20 Bonn	54 Ioannina	89 Grenoble	124 Firenze		184 Suwalki	213 Umeå	246 Arad
21 Bremen	55 Iraklio	90 Le Havre	125 Genova	Malta	185 Szczecin		247 Bacău
22 Darmstadt	56 Kalamata	91 Lille	126 L'Aquila	153 Gozo	186 Toruń	United Kingdom	248 Braila
23 Dortmund	57 Kavala	92 Limoges	127 Milano	154 Valletta	187 Warszawa	214 Aberdeen	249 București
24 Dresden	58 Larissa	93 Lyon	128 Napoli		188 Wrocław	215 Belfast	250 Clărași
25 Düsseldorf	59 Patra	94 Marseille	129 Palermo	Nederland	189 Zielona Góra	216 Birmingham	251 Cluj-Napoca
26 Erfurt	60 Thessaloniki	95 Metz	130 Perugia	155 Amsterdam	190 Zory	217 Bradford	252 Craiova
27 Essen	61 Volos	96 Montpellier	131 Pescara	156 Arnhem		218 Bristol	253 Giurgiu
28 Frankfurt am Main	Espana	97 Nancy	132 Potenza	157 Eindhoven	Portugal	219 Cambridge	254 Oradea
29 Frankfurt an der Oder	62 Badajoz	98 Nantes	133 Reggio di Calabria	158 Enschede	191 Aveiro	220 Cardiff	255 Piatra Neamt
30 Freiburg im Breisgau	63 Barcelona	99 Nice	134 Roma	159 's Gravenhage	192 Braga	221 Derry	256 Sibiu
31 Göttingen	64 Las Palmas	100 Orléans	135 Sassari	160 Groningen	193 Coimbra	222 Edinburgh	257 Tirgu Mures
32 Halle an der Saale	65 Logroño	101 Paris	136 Taranto	161 Heerlen	194 Funchal	223 Exeter	258 Timisoara
		102 Pointe-à-Pitre	137 Torino	162 Rotterdam		224 Glasgow	

BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

Better waste water management



Total cost: EUR 529 107 000
EU contribution: EUR 304 661 500

'Our aim is to treat biologically 95% of the waste water produced by Budapest (pop. 1.8 million). This will be possible once we have built the new sewer system and the Budapest central municipal treatment plant, with a treatment capacity of 350 000 m³/day. A population of 850 000 live in the catchment area. The project, which will considerably improve the quality of water in the Danube, covers five aspects: the construction, on Csepel Island, of a wastewater treatment plant using the most advanced water treatment and energy-saving technologies (biogas); the creation of a composting infrastructure to process the sludge that results from the water treatment (capacity 100 000 tonnes/year); installation of a main sewer system running for 6.9 km along the banks of the Buda; construction of a network of pressure pipes linking the principal pumping stations to the plant; upgrading and extension of the pumping stations. The Cohesion Fund is financing 65% of the total eligible cost (EUR 468 710 000). Completion of the works is scheduled for 2009.'

Gyula Somlai, Head of the Department of Public Utility Works, Budapest Mayor's Office.
somlaigy@budapest.hu

VALENÇA (PORTUGAL)

Restoring urban heritage



Total cost: EUR 2 600 000
EU contribution: EUR 1 900 000

'Situated on the Spain/Portugal border, Valença has a rich cultural heritage reflecting the many links between the far north of Portugal and Galicia. With the support of the ERDF and the Norte region operational programme, the municipal authorities have launched a series of projects to restore and renovate the town's historic centre. By improving the urban environment and modernising basic infrastructure (sewage system, roads, etc.) the aim is to promote cultural tourism and halt the demographic decline by creating activities and a better quality of life.'

Jorge Sobrado, CCDR-Norte
vitor.devesa@ccdr-n.pt

CERNIKA (SLOVENIA)

Conversion of a former military site into a business zone



Total cost: EUR 3 951 000
EU contribution: EUR 2 598 573

'With the help of the ERDF, the municipality of Cernika is developing a business zone on a former Yugoslav Army military site. The first phase of the project was completed in November 2005. This involved demolishing the barracks, levelling the ground and providing both basic infrastructure (access road, water supply, drains, lighting, etc.) and the particular infrastructure needed for companies (high-voltage networks, cables for rapid Internet connection, etc.). The 11 000 m² site is now ready to welcome, at a reasonable cost, offices, workshops and other buildings that have still to be constructed. The project is part of the development strategy of the Notranjsko Kraška region.'

Franc Lenarcic, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning
Franc.Lenarcic@gov.si

AMSTERDAM (THE NETHERLANDS)

ArenaA, a partnership for employment



Total cost: EUR 650 000
EU contribution: EUR 325 000

'The opening of the Araena Stadium in 1996 failed to produce the permanent jobs we were hoping for in the Zuid-Oost district of south-east Amsterdam. As a result, the City of Amsterdam decided to set up a partnership for employment bringing together all the local players: public authorities, entrepreneurs, professional organisations, educational institutions, associations, etc. A total of 80 bodies are represented within the ArenaA Initiative that networks all the local socio-economic actors in the service of jobs and training. Psychologically, there was also a need to bridge the divide that separates the east of the city (where people live) and the west of the city (where people work). The formula proved a success: ArenaA helped achieve a very significant fall in unemployment in the Zuidooost district. Between 1996 and 2003 the number of job-seekers fell from 15 000 to 5 000.'

Peter Aben, Economic Affairs, Amsterdam Zuidooost
p.aben@zuidoost.amsterdam.nl

Spain

'Integration is the strength of the URBAN project in Gijón'*Blanca Cañal García, Director of the URBAN II programme Gijón (Asturias)*

'Outlying industrial sector in crisis' is the label perhaps best applied to the URBAN action zone in Gijón. With a population of 26 519 at the time of drawing up the programme, which is 10% of the population of Gijón, the URBAN zone lies in the west of the city and includes a number of areas: Jove (where some neighbourhoods such as El Muselín, Portuarios and Pescadores extend to the sea), Tremañes (industrial zone) and a part of the neighbourhoods of Calzada and Natahoyo, which are densely populated and include many abandoned industrial sites due to the closure of a number of large companies. Throughout the URBAN zone, residential areas lie in close proximity to an intensive industrial activity and major transport infrastructures, such as the port of Musel and a number of railway lines running through these areas. Unemployment and social problems are much more serious in the URBAN zone than in other parts of the city.

Managed by the City of Gijón, the URBAN project receives 75% of its funding from the ERDF. The total eligible cost is EUR 14.2 million, spread over five main actions: the renovation of abandoned sites and the creation of plots to be offered for sale; improvements to the economic fabric; the integration of disadvantaged populations; waste processing; the promotion of new technologies.



The "Clean Point" in Gijón.

In transforming these priorities into action, certain major principles have been respected that create a leverage effect and generate added value, in particular an integrated approach and the search for synergies with other public and private actions. Two examples serve as a useful illustration of this.

The 'Clean Point'

The original idea was to set up a 'Clean Point' (container park for the selective collection of household waste) on an area of wasteland behind the railway

line. Unfortunately, local residents opposed siting this in their neighbourhood. By placing the action in the URBAN context, however, it was not difficult to generate an awareness of the issue among a large section of the population by holding about 100 information meetings on selective waste collection at learning centres, youth clubs, senior citizens clubs, telecentres, etc. Fourteen local associations also helped organise an exhibition on the subject. An estimated 800 persons attended this event over a five-day period. Today, the Clean Point is an attractive facility that residents are proud of. It is located in the most working class neighbourhood in the URBAN zone, close to schools, health centres and a major sports complex where instruction on good environmental practices continues to be made available. Also significant is that all the URBAN actions are accompanied by information campaigns to increase awareness of energy savings, household waste management, etc.

The partnership with business

The URBAN zone is home to some of the city's oldest and most poorly equipped industrial sites. The job of improving rundown sites has mobilised associations of companies situated in three business zones. Industrial wasteland and abandoned sites, which were often used illegally, have been converted into car parks or have now been built on. The involvement of the two companies (ADIF and FEVE) that have railway lines running through these sites was particularly significant. Following the positive results of this action, it was much easier to present to companies – most of them small businesses – other possible actions to improve the environment or encourage new technologies. Thus, one of the associations of companies has planted 100 trees in its business zone. Elsewhere, a company recently concluded an agreement to develop websites for 150 companies in the URBAN zone. To this end, the company is training young people in the area and at least six of them have been hired already.

With 10 years' experience of developing projects of this kind, I think I can confirm that these integrated programmes concentrated in very precise areas and involving actors in the field, go far beyond a simple budget execution: they have an added value and visibility for citizens far superior than would be the case if they were implemented by the various services individually without any genuine coordination or integration.

To find out more: www.gijon.es

URBAN II in action in Leipzig and Dortmund (Germany)

Neighbourhoods on the up

The twelve German URBAN II programmes are financed by a mix of European funds and development aid from the federal state, the Länder and the cities. Their participatory, integrated and innovative approach is helping make the neighbourhoods in question more attractive and dynamic, whilst restoring pride and hope to residents. Leipzig and Dortmund are proof of the fact.



This giant earthworm, symbol of vitality, winds its way up the side of the building which houses the offices of Wege e.V, an association for parents of children with psychological difficulties, supported by URBAN in Leipzig.

Karsten Gerken, head of town planning with the City of Leipzig, shows the photo of a little girl dressed in a coat that is clearly much too big for her: *'For us, urban development is about trying to adjust a coat that is very expensive but too big so that it can fit a growing body'*.

It is an effective image: Leipzig is in effect a perfect example of the 'shrinking city'.⁽¹⁾ From being the largest city in the former GDR after Berlin, it saw its population fall from 750 000 inhabitants in the 1930s to 493 000 in 2000, before rising again to reach the 500 000 mark today. In the 1990s alone, Leipzig lost 100 000 inhabitants. The causes were many: the very low birth rate accounted for a population decline of 25 000, whilst reunification led to the loss of 60 000 industrial jobs, prompting 25 000 inhabitants to move to Western Germany. At the same time, 50 000 'Leipzigers' abandoned the city centre in favour of the suburbs or neighbouring countryside. Suburban living had been an

almost impossible dream under the East German regime.

The net result was empty buildings, 60 000 vacant homes and a punctured urban fabric. On certain major streets in some neighbourhoods as many as one building in four is empty. But the overall impression is not the same as in an industrial city in crisis where one usually finds whole neighbourhoods that have become rundown and dilapidated. In Leipzig, smart newly refurbished houses are found alongside abandoned buildings with their faded facades. This can be very sad to see as many of them are beautiful buildings in the 'Gründerzeit' style of the period of intense growth and urbanisation witnessed in Germany between 1870 and 1914. The ultimate aim of the URBAN II 'Leipziger Westen' programme implemented in the four western areas of the city (8 km², 32 000 inhabitants) is therefore very simple: *'To keep the people who are already in the city and attract others'*, explains programme manager Norbert Raschke.

⁽¹⁾ Leipzig and the neighbouring Halle are members of the 'Shrinking Cities' network (<http://www.shrinkingcities.com/>), a project managed between 2002 and 2006 by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation) and involving architects, scientists and artists in studies that also relate to Detroit (USA), Ivanovo (Russia), Manchester and Liverpool (United Kingdom).

Access to ownership... and to jobs

'In the east, people have very limited assets. Although a lot of them would like to own their own homes, few of them have the means to buy and renovate a house,' explains Christoph Scheffen, coordinator of the Immothek social housing agency that is supported by URBAN and the City of Leipzig. *'Our role, with the aid of architects who provide their services free of charge, is to seek available buildings that can be renovated at a reasonable cost and propose them to families who are seeking to buy. We then bring together these potential buyers – an average of six households per building – so they can get to know one another and see whether they think they get on well enough to buy the building together on a joint ownership basis.'* Between 2002 and 2005, 212 houses found buyers in this way. Leipzig is the first city in Germany to support this type of operation, the model for which was developed thanks to an URBAN grant of €500 000 euros. The operation is believed to have generated €40 million in investments and about 200 new jobs.



A green brigade in action in Henriettepark, in the centre of the URBAN area in Leipzig.

With neighbourhoods where unemployment is running at over 20%, jobs are clearly the big priority for the URBAN programme in Leipzig. EUR 8 million, or 40% of the budget, is allocated to an 'Economy and Employment' measure that combines traditional methods for assisting entrepreneurs (advice, provision of equipment, networking, etc.) with targeted training (for young people, women, immigrants, etc.) and more innovative measures (school enterprises, idea grants, etc.). During the 2001-2004 period, URBAN Leipziger Westen created or saved 430 jobs, gave 80 trainees the chance to acquire new skills and enabled more than 800 young people to attend an intensive course on how to start up a company. *'We started with nothing back in May 2002,'* explains Frank Basten, adviser at the 'Freie Wirtschaftsförderung' (Support for free enterprise) Enterprise and Innovation Centre. *'Today, in February 2006, we have assisted 147 small businesses representing 353 jobs. The breakdown per sector reflects the URBAN zone's economic fabric as well as our own priorities: 69 businesses providing services to companies, 28 craft enterprises, 23 shops, 14 hotels and 13 companies providing services to individuals. In our support we give priority to activities linked to Leipzig's clusters and specialities, namely cars and computers.'*

Attracting new residents to a city clearly involves cleaning up the neighbourhoods. This is why URBAN allocated

around EUR 7.3 million to the 'Quality of the urban area' measure. Various sources of funding made it possible to improve the Karl-Heine canal and convert former industrial sites into green areas and also permitted less material measures such as an innovative system of letting out land. Even more than the largest areas of abandoned industrial sites, Leipzig has many small areas of wasteland that need no more than a cleaning and planting operation to become gardens or play areas. *'We bring together and help establish trust between the site owners and the individual or organisation that wants to use the site and try to get them to enter into a free loan agreement or a temporary leasing contract,'* explains Tobias Habermann, one of the two 'neighbourhood managers' in the URBAN zone. *'Everybody benefits and we get rid of many urban eyesores. We apply the same principle to certain empty shops on major roads. When loaned out by the owners these can be used for one-off cultural events, such as fairs or exhibitions, or become permanent meeting places for young people, associations, etc.'*

Enthusiasm

A study carried out by The German Planning Institute (Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik / DIFU) found that the budget of around EUR 20 million available to URBAN Leipziger Westen generated EUR 280 million in private capital. *'This is certainly an excellent result,'* confirms Bertram Plate, coordinator of the programme's social projects, *'but what I find even more impressive is that we found in our neighbourhoods the same enthusiasm that prevailed in the early days of reunification but that had evaporated in the face of the harsh realities of restructuring.'*

The same regained enthusiasm and pride is also found in a region far from Leipzig that does not share the experiences of its recent past because it is in Western Germany. Lying to the east of the Ruhr Basin, Dortmund (pop. 590 000) is continuing the process of conversion from a steel town to a high-tech metropolis. The process is well under way but not all areas of the city are reaping the benefits: Nordstadt, an area lying north of Dortmund city centre, has lost a great many jobs and in particular two thousand at a stroke when a major steelworks closed. In addition, 40% of Nordstadt's 54 000 inhabitants are of immigrant origin, a population that is particularly vulnerable to the loss of industrial jobs. For these reasons, this neighbourhood was chosen as the beneficiary of an URBAN II programme with funds of EUR 28.8 million, including EUR 10 million from the EU. So what is the situation as the 29 selected projects arrive at mid-term? *'Sixteen new businesses started up, 200 new jobs created, 2 300 training places provided, 2 500 contacts with local firms and a significant fall in crime,'* declares Ralf Appel, programme manager, who also stresses that *'URBAN has generated an irreversible neighbourhood dynamic.'*

Whilst the visitor may be impressed by the sight of the world's largest tepee standing in the Fredebaumpark, the Nordmarkt is perhaps the area of Nordstadt that is most emblematic of the strategy implemented and results obtained by URBAN in Dortmund. As recently as 2002 what is today a beautiful marketplace and pleasant green area at the heart of a densely populated area was a derelict site frequented by alcoholics, heroin addicts and prostitutes. Just over EUR 1.1 million in URBAN funds made it possible to improve the site as well as to maintain it and ensure it remains a safe place by employing 'urban stewards' or 'atmosphere agents'. Eighteen of the staff have been hired under a federal

programme to get people back into work and ensure that the streets and square of the Nordmarkt remain clean, safe and generally a pleasant place to be. *'The tasks involved are simple but highly symbolic, such as asking people to put their rubbish in the bins or helping children to cross the road, all of which helps these former excluded members of society to regain self esteem and renew social contacts,'* explains Baernd Axmann, project leader at the Grünbau GmbH social insertion enterprise that operates the scheme.



A view of the façade painting operation under the URBAN district renovation campaign, in Dortmund.

Social Town

'We are trying to give people a boost,' explains Helga Beckmann. *'To improve their self-image as well as the way they see their neighbourhood, to convince them that the glass is not half empty but half full and that there is no reason why it cannot be completely full. We organise all kinds of events, parties and competitions for the best ideas. This all helps generate projects and gives the neighbourhood a higher and more attractive profile without costing a lot of money.'*

Helga and her colleague Martin Gansau are the joint managers of the Nordmarkt 'Neighbourhood Office'. There are three such offices in Nordstadt and they are the interface between the population and the public authorities. *'They have a mediating, facilitating and organisational role,'* explains Martin. *'We do not solve problems directly, we do not replace the administration, we simply help people who contact us to address their questions to the right person.'*

This 'Quartiersmanagement', or 'neighbourhood management' is an essential tool of urban development in Germany. It is central to the concept of the 'Soziale Stadt' (Social Town) of which North Rhineland-Westphalia – the Land in which Dortmund lies – was a pioneer. Launched in 1993, the regional programme 'Stadtteile mit besonderem Erneuerungsbedarf' (Neighbourhoods with a special need for renovation) was the first German programme to opt for the transverse approach in seeking to combat the urban decline caused by the loss of the coalmines and steelworks in the Ruhr Basin. In 1998, the scheme's success caused the federal government to adopt the formula, in 1999 proposing it in all the 16 German Länder under the name of the 'Bund-Länder-Programm Soziale Stadt' (Federal-Regional Programme for the Social Town).

Like the URBAN initiative that it partly inspired, the Soziale Stadt programme opts for a territorial, integrated and participatory approach to the renovation of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. *'The major added value of programmes such as Soziale Stadt or URBAN,'* explains Karl Jasper, URBAN coordinator at the North Rhineland – Westphalia Ministry of Buildings and Mobility, *'is that they encourage local residents to become involved in the projects. This brings two benefits. Firstly, we draw on their personal experiences so as to better adapt the projects and to make them more sustainable. Secondly, the dynamic these projects generate makes it possible to create social structures that have a permanent stabilising effect on the neighbourhood. Ultimately, it is the role of government that is redefined: the government that assists, which helps people in difficulty, becomes the government that releases inherent potential to enable people to help themselves. "Help yourself and URBAN will help you": that could be the motto.'*

But Karl Jasper is also quick to point out that URBAN is no more than one modest aspect of urban action in North Rhineland – Westphalia. The present Objective 2 programme (about EUR 2 billion) is principally active in urban areas and this Land alone – the most densely populated and industrialised in Germany and Europe's number one regional economy – invests EUR 150 million a year in urban development, divided between the Soziale Stadt programme (40 million), the 'Stadtumbau' reconversion programme (30 million) and various other measures for the benefit of small and medium-sized towns (80 million).

Mainstream

The Rhineland of North Westphalia also provides an example of the future of urban development management financed by the Structural Funds. It is quite remarkable that the mayors of five of the Land's biggest towns sit on the European programme monitoring committee without any prerogatives and very much on an equal footing with the other partners, such as the Chambers of Commerce.

One of the promoters and inventors of the Soziale Stadt programme is Ullrich Sierau, the City of Dortmund's alderman for town planning. This former head of unit at the Land's Ministry for Urban Development expresses an opinion that seems to be shared by many regional developers: *'We are favourable to the principles of the Lisbon strategy: we must encourage competitiveness, innovation, knowledge and the training of human resources. But I still believe in the principles of the Social Town: nobody must be left by the wayside. You need to strike a balance. In any event, capital is not going to be attracted into areas where the social problems have not been resolved.'*

To find out more:

www.urban-leipzig.de
www.urban.dortmund.de

The URBAN Germano-Austrian network is an excellent resource in the field of urban development at European level as well as for the two countries in question. Deutsch-Österreichisches URBAN-Netzwerk
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 Tel.: +32 (0)2 5501610, Fax: +32 (0)2 5035606
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LE HAVRE (FRANCE)

Creation of an urban park



Total cost: EUR 9 343 413

EU contribution: EUR 2 472 721

'The URBAN II flagship project in Le Havre is the creation of an urban park lying between the town and the port. This will provide a place to relax and to walk for the residents of the Saint-Nicholas district, link this neighbourhood to the town centre and give it a new image by attracting residents and investors. The site design draws to the full on its exceptional nature: the presence of maritime basins and port activities, and close proximity of the sea and town centre. Special lighting will show off the site to best effect, especially the basins. The construction of a bridge leading to the heart of the park will help break the relative isolation of the Saint Nicholas neighbourhood and above all lend a municipal or even inter-municipal vocation to this convivial space.'

Ouahid Dorbane, General Representative for the Development of the Southern Neighbourhoods of Le Havre
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BRISTOL (UNITED KINGDOM)

Inclusion of young disabled people



Total cost: EUR 342 575

EU contribution: EUR 169 938

'The *'Just CHIL' (Just Children Helping Inclusion by Listening)* project is an innovative response to the needs of young disabled people with learning and behavioural difficulties. Local research showed that this group is more at risk of exclusion from school and adopting anti-social or even violent behaviour, while their needs are too complex for the mainstream education system alone to address. The project is aimed at the most difficult of these young people. It uses an educational approach that focuses on the individual and the peer group to help the young person to recognise and change his or her behaviour. The courses cover anger management, negotiation, conflict resolution and citizenship, all skills that the participants can draw on in their everyday lives. The project has had a significant impact: all 60 of the young people who completed the training have since shown significant improvements in their behaviour, school attendance and progress into employment. One young woman won a Princess Diana Memorial Award for community work, four young people have joined the URBAN programme steering group and others are active in organisations in the wider community.'

Steve Morris, Director of the South Bristol URBAN II Programme
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SAMBREVILLE (BELGIUM)

Training in building renovation



Total cost: EUR 202 057

EU contribution: EUR 101 028

'The aim of this project is to enable disadvantaged persons – principally men – to restore a social link and at the same time to receive, on completion of the training course, a certificate of competence in various branches of construction and renovation (bricklaying, ceiling work, painting, electricity, etc.). With this certificate they will be able to find a job in the building sector or go on to further training to acquire increased skills. The ultimate aim is to train 60 people, each receiving 820 training hours. In terms of job creation, 30 people will have the opportunity of immediate employment. Another aspect of the training for trainees to work restoring local heritage. Two houses and one apartment building in the neighbourhood have already been renovated as a result of this training scheme.'

Philippe Lhomme and Laurent Warnon, URBAN Technical Assistance Unit, Municipal Administration of Sambreville
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DUBLIN (IRELAND)

When the residents restore their environment



Total cost: EUR 505 437

EU contribution: EUR 233 120

'Ballyfermot, in Dublin, was a neighbourhood with a lot of waste ground that had become a kind of "no man's land" and very much an eyesore. In 2002, an URBAN project was launched to encourage residents to take responsibility for improving these sites. The granting of financial aid was subject to a number of conditions: the projects would have to be maintained into the future, agreed after consulting with the local people, carried out by volunteers and aimed at improving and protecting the environment. The projects are therefore all designed, carried out and maintained by members of the local community. The project results are currently the subject of an independent evaluation but it is already clear that the programme has increased pride of place and helped to bring local people together to deal with local issues. It has created very positive relations between neighbours, reduced acts of vandalism and enabled local people to feel a sense of ownership towards their living environment.'

Caitriona Ryan, Programme Manager, URBAN Ballyfermot
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www.urbanbl.ie



Sweden

“Jalla, Jalla”, a contribution to social inclusion’

Susan Runsten, Coordinator of the URBAN II Gothenburg programme

Gothenburg lies on the west coast of Sweden. With its 485 000 inhabitants it is the second largest city in the country. During recent decades, Gothenburg has undergone extensive structural changes. From being a city relying on its industry, port and shipyards, it has developed a more diverse economy, including ICT, tourism and biomedicine activities.

Gothenburg today is a prosperous and growing city. It is also a city facing serious problems. These are mainly related to the social exclusion that resulted from the influx of refugees and their relatives in the 80s and 90s. There are also large demographic differences and inequalities between different parts of the city. 20 % of Gothenburg’s present population was born abroad. The immigrants are largely concentrated in the northeast of the city, in areas where unemployment rates are high and the educational level low. When Gothenburg qualified for an URBAN II programme, it was decided that one of the main areas for investment would be the utilisation of human resources in these neighbourhoods, with the focus on education and employment.

One of the projects that has received funding from URBAN II is ‘Jalla, Jalla’ (Go! Go!). *Jalla, Jalla* is managed by Medborgarskolan (an adult education association) in cooperation with the Swedish Employment Office and a local football club named GAIS. The project aims to help immigrant, long-term unemployed men to get a job. This is achieved through study of the Swedish language and acquisition of computing skills, combined with attention to social relations and practical civic education in an NGO environment.

The common interest is football and GAIS provides the opportunity to go and see football matches as well as to play football and to network with the sponsoring companies. A number of workplaces at firms linked to the project are available through the Swedish Employment Office. This unique combination of adult education, leisure-time activities and networking with employers has proved to be very successful. *Jalla, Jalla* received EUR 338 300 in ERDF funding to welcome 60 participants during the period from March 2004 to December 2006. One of the expected results was that 20 of them would get a job lasting one year or longer, an objective already reached in October 2005. A further 18 of the 45 participants had by then got short-term jobs through the project.

One of the strengths of *Jalla, Jalla* is the way all involved concentrate on employment. The principle is not to complete the education and then look at employment but rather to work towards the labour

market from day one. This approach very quickly led to visible results – i.e. jobs – for some of the participants, which in turn inspired hope and commitment among the other group members: ‘If it is possible for him it is possible for me. So I had better do my best!’

In a study of the local partnership in URBAN II Gothenburg, ten projects were viewed and compared in order to find out how different actors co-operate and what this means for the project’s success. This study found that one of the success factors is for the project objectives to be strategic and to coincide with the overall aim. The aims and objectives should also be within reach of the project and not unattainable. This in turn makes it possible to show concrete results, which seems to be the most important factor in creating commitment at all levels in the partnership. *Jalla, Jalla* is a good example of how this can work.

Another success factor for *Jalla, Jalla* is that the partnership is complementary. Medborgarskolan, the Swedish Employment Office and GAIS have different competences and perspectives that add resources to the project. The partners also have different tasks and roles to play in the project. Diversity is a good thing in a partnership!

During the last ten years Gothenburg has received both national and European funding to work with distressed areas, ethnic minorities and immigrants. These initiatives have improved living conditions and created more attractive neighbourhoods. New methods and strategies have been developed to promote democracy, adapt educational institutions to their multilingual conditions and strengthen the local economy. However, there are difficulties with the area-based urban initiatives. Evaluations have pointed out that by focusing on specific areas or categories of people you can contribute to the stigmatization of that same neighbourhood or its inhabitants. There is also the danger of looking at the problems and possible solutions of unemployment and segregation by focusing solely on the distressed areas instead of addressing them in relation to the city and the region as a whole.

The challenge for the future must be to overcome these obstacles through solid strategies combining the fight against social exclusion in the cities with the overall aims of regional development and growth. What we can learn from *Jalla, Jalla* is how vital it is to focus the potential in each individual. We should also keep our expectations high as to what can be achieved in a truly inclusive and multicultural city.

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Czech Republic

“A project from the underground”

Lumíra Kafková, Director of the Managing Authority of the Objective 2 programme for Prague



Above and below: redevelopment work at the Florenc B. metro station, in Prague.

The main objective of the Objective 2 programme for Prague is to make the Czech capital a dynamic European city worthy of its status.

In 2004-2005, we issued four calls for proposals that resulted in the selection of 148 projects representing a total investment of almost EUR 100 million from the European Regional Development Fund. Most of these projects, and especially those representing the largest investments, were proposed by the City of Prague and its various boroughs. Projects promoting the city transport system are particularly interesting to present.

The project described here aims to improve the conditions for integrating persons with limited mobility whilst improving prospects for the creation of new jobs and the attractiveness of the urban environment.

The essence of the project is the provision of easy, barrier-free access to the Florenc B. underground station. This was achieved by constructing a lift linking the platforms to the transfer corridor and a second lift up to street level. Investments were also made in signalling and other relevant equipment.

Once implemented, the project will greatly improve the public transport service and accessibility of the neighbourhood. There are an estimated 33 500 disabled people living in Prague, including 4 000 wheelchair users. Barrier-free access to the underground network will make it easier for them to travel to the city centre as well as to major transport hubs such as the railway station and central coach station. This would also make it easier for them to gain access to a labour market of 14 000 companies and 12 000 entrepreneurs with natural person status.

The works will be carried out between September 2005 to March 2007 in two phases. Phase one is completed. The total eligible costs of the project are EUR 2 110 638, of which the ERDF is to cover 50%. The Czech State will provide 33.1% of the amount, that is EUR 698 621. The rest (16.9%, or EUR 356 698) is being covered by the City of Prague.

Based on a partnership with the Regional Coordinator of Prague Integration Transport and the National Council of Handicapped People, the project is a response to a general social demand for improved living conditions for persons with reduced mobility and the needs of all sections of the population in a vulnerable situation.

Like everything that helps make travel faster and more comfortable, the scheme is part of a longer-term effort for public transport.



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Web: www.strukturalni-fondy.cz/jpd2

GRAZ (AUSTRIA)

"Graz, City of Knowledge"



Total cost: EUR 4 200 570
EU contribution: EUR 200 000

'Thanks to the 'City of Knowledge' integrated project, implemented by the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG) and co-financed by the URBAN programme, western districts of Graz now have a new innovation-based enterprise centre. This offers suitable premises for entrepreneurs active in new technologies, especially health technologies (medical technology, bioanalysis, etc.). The centre also aims to serve as a bridge between education and free enterprise for graduates of the nearby university. In addition to encouraging companies to set up or move into western Graz, the project aims to become a centre of excellence for the region as a whole.'

Christian Nussmüller, Programme Manager of the URBAN Link GrazWest, City of Graz
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www.urban-link.at (www.graz.at)

TURIN (ITALY)

Renovation of the Piazza Livio Bianco



Total cost: EUR 2 226 885
EU contribution: EUR 914 998

'Located in the south-west suburbs of Turin, the Piazza Livio Bianco lies at the heart of the renovation strategy implemented in the URBAN zone of Piedmont's capital. Citizens and associations have made strong demands for this project to renovate the square and once again make it a centre of the neighbourhood's social and cultural life, thereby avoiding further deterioration and discouraging the presence of marginal elements. The participation of local residents is the motor for the whole operation, from design (a public competition and residents' vote) to management of the square once the works are completed. An association set up in 2004 – 'Piazziamoci in Piazza' (Let's Take the Square) – will be responsible for on-going management of the square. This will coordinate the cultural activities organised throughout the year and continue to actively involve the neighbourhood residents.'

Gianfranco Presutti, Project Manager, URBAN II Programme, Torino
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www.comune.torino.it/urban2

HERAKLION (GREECE)

Revitalisation of neighbourhoods in crisis



Total cost: EUR 10 913 948
EU contribution: EUR 8 185 461

'The west coast of Heraklion exhibits many signs of socio-economic decline, such as high long-term unemployment, poverty, exclusion and a dilapidated environment. The main aim of the URBAN programme is the economic and social regeneration of these urban areas. The measures taken to achieve this objective embrace three major parameters: innovation, durability and the development of knowledge. There is a need to create poles of attraction for visitors as well as outlets for the local population by stimulating the local market and linking it to the coastal area.'

Kyriaki Manola-Goundra, Head of the Managing Authority for URBAN II programmes in Greece
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VANTAA (FINLAND)

Family Centre for immigrants



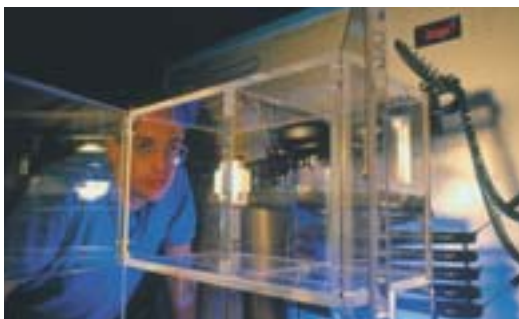
Total cost: EUR 210 000
EU contribution: EUR 57 000

'In Finland too, the immigrant population is increasing and it is important to avoid segregation and radicalism. For this purpose, the URBAN II programme in Vantaa, close to Helsinki, helped set up a family centre that uses various practical approaches to support immigrant parents in the care and upbringing of their children. The structure promotes integration and provides a natural meeting place for Finnish and immigrant women. At this 'customer-oriented' centre, families can receive practical preventive support and participate in group activities. The groups are headed by centre staff – paediatric nurses, family workers, psychologists, nurses, social workers – who work in close cooperation on a multi-professional and integrated basis to provide coherent and continuous support.'

Jukka-Pekka Sorjonen, URBAN II Vantaa Programme Manager
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Research and innovation, an opportunity for the least prosperous regions

A conference held in Warsaw in February served as a reminder of the increasingly important role played by the Structural Funds in a field of crucial importance to European cohesion and competitiveness.



■ Glass fibre resistance test at the Beira Interior University, in Covilhã (Portugal).

The 'European Innovation Scoreboard 2005' (EIS),⁽¹⁾ published in January 2006, shows major disparities between countries. Most of the new Member States are in the process of catching up, but at a rate that does not augur well for short-term convergence within the EU. Also, if present trends continue, there will be no narrowing of the innovation gap between Europe and the USA.

An examination of innovation performances in Europe with reference to five criteria (innovation drivers, knowledge creation, innovation and entrepreneurship, innovative applications, and intellectual property) led to the identification of four groups of countries:

- the leading countries: Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany;
- the average performers: France, Luxembourg, Ireland, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Italy and Iceland;
- the countries catching up: Slovenia, Hungary, Portugal, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Greece, Cyprus and Malta;
- the countries losing ground: Estonia, Spain, Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Turkey.

This scoreboard provides a tool for realising the 'integrated innovation/research action plan' launched by the Commission in October 2005 and that places particular emphasis on the role of the Structural Funds in driving innovation.

Another report, 'Creating an innovative Europe',⁽²⁾ presented on 20 January 2006 and carried out for the Commission by a group of four high-level experts headed by Former Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho, confirmed these mixed results. Calling on Europe's leaders to take strong measures to support research and innovation, 'before it is too late', this report also concludes that the Structural Funds should be seen as 'a key means of supporting research and innovation capacity, in particular for pursuing cohesion in this area.'

Research, innovation and the Structural Funds

It was against this background that Commissioners Danuta Hübner (regional policy) and Janez Potočnik (research) attended the 'Research and Innovation, an opportunity for the Convergence Regions' conference, held in Warsaw on 13 February.

In her address, Danuta Hübner stressed the contribution the Structural Funds make to research and innovation and how the 'convergence regions', that is the Union's least favoured regions, can benefit from the Funds to make up for the fact of lagging behind in this field.

Aid from the Structural Funds for research, technological development and innovation (RTDI) amounts to EUR 10.5 billion. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) provides 97% of this amount. Approximately 8% of the ERDF's resources are therefore invested directly in RTDI, allocated to four types of activity: about EUR 2.7 billion goes to research projects at universities and other specialist institutes; EUR 2.8 billion goes to research infrastructure, such as technological incubators, etc.; EUR 3.6 billion goes to innovation and technology transfers, networks and partnerships between businesses and research centres; about EUR 350 million is allocated to the training of researchers (co-financed by the European Social Fund).

About 70% of these amounts (which do not include investments in other sectors favourable to innovation, such as the information society, energy or aid to businesses), or EUR 7.8 billion, benefits Objective 1 regions, that is those regions where the per capita GDP is less than 75% of the Community average and those that exceed this figure as a result of the statistical effect of EU enlargement to 25 Member States.

Restating that RTDI is a top priority for the 2007-13 Structural Funds programming, Commissioner Hübner ended by indicating the five principles that should guide the convergence regions in the field of research and innovation:

- 1) the development and implementation of more sophisticated and ambitious strategies using the tools that the EU has already tried and tested, such as Regional Foresight⁽³⁾ or Innovative Actions;
- 2) closer cooperation between the private sector, public research institutions and administrations;
- 3) research results that lead to products and services with a commercial interest;
- 4) the need to derive maximum benefit from foreign investments by encouraging local SMEs to be active on international markets;
- 5) support for innovative clusters based on lasting public-private partnerships.

⁽¹⁾ Available at the site: <http://www.trendchart.org/>

⁽²⁾ For summaries of innovation performances of individual countries in the EU-25: <http://www.trendchart.org/scoreboards/scoreboard2005/index.cfm>

⁽³⁾ Available at the site: http://europa.eu.int/invest-in-research/action/research06_en.htm

REGIO and networks

OPEN DAYS 2006

Preparations are already well under way for the 2006 European Week of Regions and Cities ('OPEN DAYS'), organised by the Committee of the Regions and the DG REGIO. About 3 000 experts are expected to attend this biggest annual event on the European regional policy calendar. This year's OPEN DAYS – on the subject of '*Investing in Europe's regions and cities: public and private partnerships to boost growth and jobs*' – will take place in the context of the new cohesion policy and new generation of Structural Fund programmes for the 2007-13 period. 134 delegations from the regions and cities with offices in Brussels have been selected as partner organisations in drawing up the common conference programme.
http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/conferences/od2006/index.cfm

The regions and cities want to be more involved in reform.

According to a recent survey published by the Committee of the Regions, the Member States have failed to fully involve the regions and cities in their proposals to reform the Lisbon strategy. Just 17% of the regions and cities that answered the survey questions expressed satisfaction with their involvement in preparing the National Reform Programmes (NRPs), the cornerstone of the current process to modernise the European economy. Many respondents cited lack of consultation as the main reason for the failure to participate in this approach. Furthermore, on occasions when there was consultation, 80% or respondents claim that national coordinators failed to recognise the true value of the proposals. The survey also shows that towns and regions want to see greater coherence between the NRPs and the European Union's cohesion policy so as to achieve a better balance in achieving the objectives of growth and jobs.

http://www.cor.eu.int/en/press/press_06_01001.html

EAPN: a new look at Structural Fund management

In January 2006, the European Anti-Poverty Network/EAPN published the second edition of its *Manual on the Management of the European Structural Funds*. Available in French and English, the work is neither a policy document nor a simple guide to instruct associations and non-government organisations (NGOs) on how to obtain financing. Instead it looks at how the Structural Funds are designed, programmed, publicised, implemented, followed up and evaluated – and what role the NGOs can play in this process. The manual anticipates the issues at stake in the new programming period (2007-13) on the basis of the experiences and practices of the NGOs 'on the ground' in the course of the present programming period (2000-06). It looks at examples in various Member States, both 'large' and 'small', 'old' and 'new', from north to south and from the Atlantic to the Baltic, as well as at the different development models.

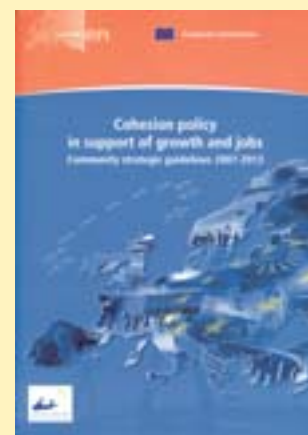
http://www.eapn.org/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=1749

REGIO agenda

Dates	Event	Place
03-05 May 2006	Urban Futures 2.0 http://www.stockholm.se/english/frameset/main/urban_futures2.0.pdf	Stockholm (S)
30 May-1 June 2006	First Economic Forum of European Regions – EurOreg	Paris (F)
01-02 June 2006	Preparing urban actions in future Structural Fund programmes 2007-2013: the role of cities and regions	Barcelona (E)
06-08 June 2006	World Investment Conference – Making Europe more attractive and competitive http://www.world-investment-conference.com/default.asp	La Baule (F)
08-09 June 2006	Shaping EU Regional Policy: Economic Social and Political Pressures http://www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk	Leuven (B)
12-13 June 2006	Regions for Economic change: Innovating through EU Regional Policy.	Brussels (B)
22 June 2006	Evaluation for better decision making 2007-2013 – delivering cohesion, growth and jobs	Warsaw (PL)
09-12 October 2006	OPEN DAYS 2006 European Week of Regions and Cities http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/conferences/od2006/index.cfm	Brussels (B)
19-21 October 2006	General Assembly and Annual Conference of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) http://www.aebr.net/	Pamplona (E)

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Regions matter



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<http://www.iclei-europe.org/>

The International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) was founded in 1990 to launch and serve an international movement of local authorities (towns, municipalities, municipal associations, etc.) involved in implementing sustainable development. Today ICLEI has over 370 members in 60 countries. The website of ICLEI's European office (over 180 members) is very useful for anybody interested in the problems of towns and the environment in Europe.



<http://www.energie-cites.org/>

Because 75% of energy in Europe is consumed in an urban environment, local authorities have more of a strategic role to play than ever. Set up in 1990, with over 130 members in 21 countries and representing more than 300 towns, Energie-Cites is the association of European local authorities for the promotion of local sustainable energy policies. This bilingual website (English and French) gives access to a wide range of information facilitating exchanges of experience, transfers of know-how and the mounting of joint projects in the field of local energy and environmental strategies.



<http://europa.eu.int/invest-in-research/>

The European Commission recently launched this site, which, as its name suggests, aims to promote investment in research and innovation. As a 'gateway' to a complex field, the site provides a simplified overview of the issues and presents the various incentive devices and measures likely to interest the investor: tax benefits, State aid, public-private and research-industry partnerships, foundations, intellectual property, etc.



<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/roma>

The European Commission launched this site dedicated to the Roma in January. It provides information on EU activities to support the Roma, Gypsy and traveller community across Europe. The site is intended for all those interested in these minorities: public authorities, associations, NGOs and the general public. Site users can access a wide range of information on EU policies, programmes and initiatives designed to encourage the social inclusion of Roma and to combat discrimination against them.



2007–13: preparing the new generation of programmes with the Inforegio site

The Member States and the regions are preparing the upcoming 2007–13 programming period. The Inforegio website presents extensive information and important documents of interest to all the actors involved in this endeavour. The aim is to facilitate exchanges between these stakeholders and to inform the general public about progress. Do not hesitate to address your questions and contributions to the Regional Policy DG.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/debate/forum_en.htm

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