



Commission puts forward commitments to reach global targets in sustainable urban development

Quito, 20 October 2016

In the context of the U.N. Habitat III conference, the European Commission has presented three commitments to meet the New Urban Agenda's global objectives.

The [New Urban Agenda](#), adopted at the [U.N. Habitat III Conference](#) taking place this week in Quito, Ecuador, contains guidelines to make cities all over the world more inclusive, green, safe and prosperous. It is a cornerstone in the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and other milestone reform agendas, in particular the [Paris Agreement](#).

U.N. Habitat partners, including the EU and its Member States, presented commitments to implement the New Urban Agenda, each with a specific scope, expected achievements and deliverables.

Speaking from the U.N. Habitat III Conference, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"Our commitments are building on the EU's experience in urban policy over the years, with programmes and projects that have delivered. It is time to extend their concept beyond the EU's borders. It will put the EU at the forefront of the global effort to harness the power of rapid urbanisation, and turn it into opportunities for jobs, growth and an improved quality of life for all."*

The three commitments are:

1. Delivering the New Urban Agenda through the Urban Agenda for the EU

The New Urban Agenda and [the Urban Agenda for the EU](#) share the same vision for balanced, sustainable and integrated urban development.

The Urban Agenda for the EU was designed for cities to have their say in policy-making. With its [12 priority themes](#), multi-level governance and focus on peer-learning, the Urban Agenda for the EU contributes to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda within the EU, and in partnership with urban stakeholders – not only cities, but also businesses, NGOs and representatives from the Member States and EU Institutions.

Action plans for the 12 priority themes are being drafted. They will include policy recommendations, good practices and projects to be shared and scaled up in the EU.

2. Developing a global, harmonised definition of cities

To compare data, to benchmark and to monitor better, a common definition of cities should be used across the globe. In partnership with the OECD and the World Bank, the EU will develop such a definition, relying on the [EU-OECD definition of cities](#), based on population size and density and [the EU degree of urbanisation](#).

An online database will be developed, as well as a global list of cities and their main features. A proposal for a global definition of cities will eventually be submitted to the United Nations.

3. Fostering cooperation between cities in the field of sustainable urban development

Drawing on the solid approach of the EU-funded [URBACT network](#) and on the methodology of the EU's [International Urban Cooperation \(IUC\) programme](#), cities across the world [\[1\]](#) will be encouraged to link up with one or more partner cities to develop and implement local action plans and projects on common priorities – access to water, transport systems, health or housing. Business partners should be closely associated in the drafting and implementation of these action plans.

An online networking platform will provide guidance and enable cross-regional cooperation.

Background

Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development taking place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 – 20 October 2016.

In [Resolution 66/207](#) and in line with the bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996 and 2016), the United Nations General Assembly decided to convene the Habitat III Conference to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanisation, to focus on the implementation of a [New Urban Agenda](#), building on the [Habitat Agenda of Istanbul](#) in 1996.

For More information

[Habitat III Conference](#)

[EU Urban policy](#)

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[1] The scope of the commitment covers cities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Canada, China, India, Japan, the United States and the European Union.

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