



July 2012 - 7th issue

NEWSLETTER

<http://urban-intergroup.eu>

STRUCTURAL FUNDS

Urban dimension of cohesion policy 2014-2020

The URBAN Intergroup members and partners were deeply involved in the negotiations of EU post 2013 cohesion policy, especially concerning the urban elements in the proposed regulations. The new cohesion policy legislative package 2014-2020 voted by MEPs from the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) on July 11th foresees the new concept of the urban dimension of the cohesion policy.

Jan Olbrycht MEP (EPP, Poland), President of the URBAN Intergroup and rapporteur on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), proposed to devote the **5% of the national ERDF allocation** for integrated, sustainable urban development actions to **"functional urban areas"** rather than just to cities, as proposed by the European Commission.

This allocation can be treated as a "pilot project" with the main aim to ensure the integrated approach and the cooperation of different partners in urban areas. Those actions will complement different investments in cities implemented within operational programmes as it is the case today.

According to the voted proposal, the urban actions should be implemented not only through the **Integrated Territorial Investments** (ITIs), as proposed by the Commis-

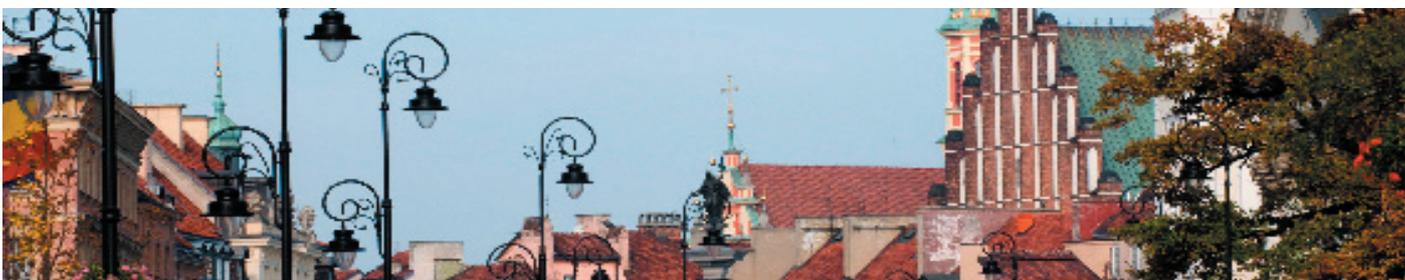
sion, but also through a specific operational programme or a priority axis. It will enable regions and cities to adapt to the specific regional and national rules and to use existing structures where it is possible.

More flexibility

MEPs introduced more flexibility concerning the **delegation of power** to cities and existing bodies managing functional urban areas. While implementing the urban actions, the delegation (taking the extremes) can mean only the selection of projects or the grant of a global grant.

MEPs strongly supported the allocation of 0.2% of ERDF to **innovative actions in urban areas** and their exchange of experience, networking and capacity building. However, the last should be done rather while using existing programmes and bodies. In consequence, they opposed the establishment of a special "Urban Development Platform" in the regulation.

Finally MEPs introduced a new element: the promotion of **urban-rural linkages**, a direct consequence of the RURBAN preparatory action, which was initiated by the URBAN Intergroup and is currently implemented by the European Commission.



Cities contribute to the success of EU cohesion policy

In an effort to gain better insight into cities' opinions on cohesion policy and integrated urban policy, the European Metropolitan network Institute (EMI) and URBAN Intergroup issued a joint questionnaire and have now published the results.

A group of 109 professionals employed by local and metropolitan governments and regions across Europe expressed their views on the current and future plans on cohesion policy via this first EMI-URBAN Intergroup online questionnaire.

After analysing the results, EMI, represented by Ries Kamphof, officially presented findings to the members of the URBAN Intergroup in Strasbourg on the 5th of July. Results show that cities think themselves to be key players when it comes to the successful implementation of EU cohesion policy.

The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions covering the current programming period (2007-2013) as well as the future cohesion policy period (2014-2020). Respondents were asked to assess programmes for interregional cooperation and financial instruments.

Regarding future urban integrated policy, re-

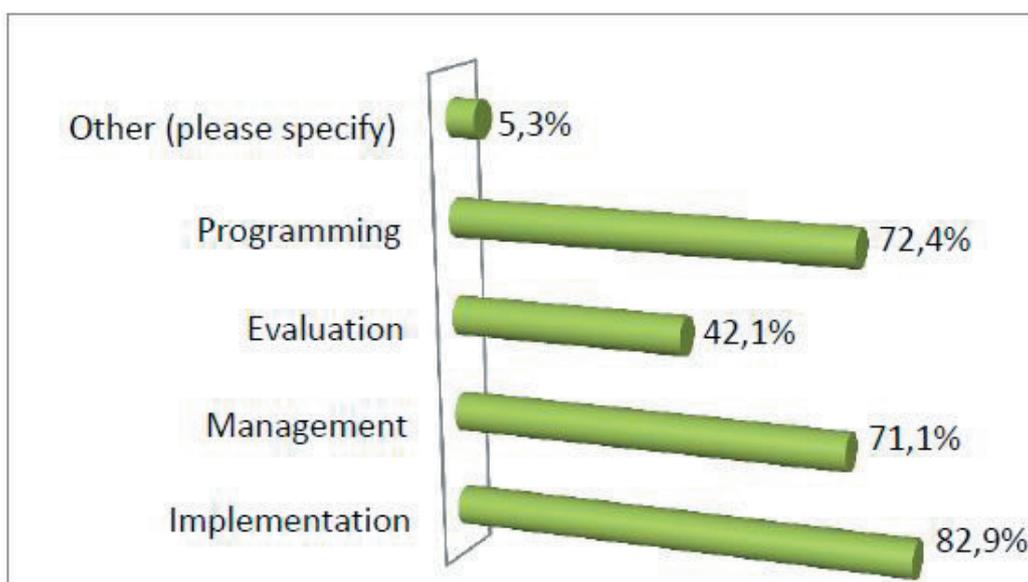
spondents gave their views on the role of cities as well as on which topics they thought future policy should focus on.

Some **initial conclusions** according to results of the questionnaire:

- "European territorial cooperation" is most successful objective of cohesion policy (2007-2013)
- Programmes geared towards interregional cooperation (e.g. URBACT II, INTERREG IVC) are more widely known than (specific) financial instruments (e.g. JESSICA, JASMINE)
- Regarding future cohesion policy (2014-2020), respondents feel that cities should be responsible for management of structural funds
- Future cohesion policy should prioritise combating poverty and promoting social inclusion
- There should be an urban policy on the EU level

More information: www.emi-network.eu and www.urban-intergroup.eu

What should be the role of cities in future Cohesion Policy?



From EMI-URBAN Intergroup questionnaire; "Urban dimension of Cohesion Policy & integrated urban policy"; R. Kamphof & S. Wensveen (EMI), June 2012.

URBAN conferences and meetings

LUNCH DEBATE

Mayors, experts and MEPs discuss the urban dimension of structural funds

The URBAN Intergroup organised on the 8th of May an informal lunch debate with the mayors from EUROCITIES and experts to discuss different aspects of the draft structural funds regulations 2014-2020 relevant for cities.

The lunch took place in the European Parliament in Brussels at a vital moment of the MEP's work on the draft regulations. It offered an important and timely opportunity for direct exchanges between city mayors, their technical experts on structural funds implementation, and Members of the Intergroup.

Participants were shared between four "thematic tables" dealing with key aspects of the draft regulations for cities: partnership provisions, new territorial instruments supporting sustainable urban development, the role of cities in the European Social Fund (ESF) and functional urban areas.

The event was hosted by **Jan Olbrycht** MEP (EPP, Poland), President of the Urban Intergroup. MEPs **Peter Simon** (S&D, Germany),

Joachim Zeller (EPP, Germany), **Constanze Krehl** (S&D, Germany), **Oldřich Vlasák** (ECR, Czech Republic), **Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid** (EPP, France), **Elisabeth Schroedter** (the Greens/EFA, Germany) and **Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines** (EPP, Spain) also participated in the discussions with 20 politicians and technical experts from cities across the EU.

EUROCITIES is pushing for a stronger urban dimension in the draft regulations as follows:

1. Major cities must be directly involved in the partnerships that decide EU investment programmes
2. There must be a strong urban priority throughout the regulations
3. Member states must be required to delegate funding to cities and metropolitan areas so that local challenges can be effectively addressed
4. The selection of cities for delegation of funds must be transparent, based on criteria developed in each member state in partnership with cities.

EHF RECOMMENDATIONS

Affordable housing for all despite shrinking budgets

On the 24th of May, Barbara Steenbergen, Head of the EU office of the International Union of Tenants (IUT), presented to the URBAN Intergroup members and organisations the recommendations from the European Housing Forum (EHF) regarding social housing, based on a series of four lectures on the implications of shrinking budgets and the need for affordable housing.

Ms Steenbergen reminded that with the ongoing financial crisis, the availability of decent and affordable housing is under increased pressure throughout Europe. She also said that the EU should seek to ensure that Member States housing policies are of-

fering incentives for all housing providers to raise the level of the affordable and social housing stock in their country.

She later insisted that for the EHF, it is necessary to establish a clearly structured future EU cohesion policy where the importance of housing, and its integration in urban developments, is taken into account as a priority.

EHF members also consider that funding opportunities should be maximised and housing related measures maintained in the EU funding period 2014-2020. They also think that the EU should give a strong role to cities in the discussion on the future of cohesion policy and the operational programmes.

Sustainable Urban Mobility as an EU priority

On June 14th, members of the URBAN Intergroup met in Strasbourg with representatives of the cities of Bologna (Italy), Funchal (Portugal) and Utrecht (the Netherlands), partners of the CIVITAS MIMOSA project, to discuss "Sustainable Urban Mobility in times of crisis".

CIVITAS is the EU Flagship Project for sustainable urban mobility funded under the 7th Framework Programme (FP7). The project aims to promote sustainable urban mobility, creating innovative and practical measures to reduce traffic, improve road safety and have a positive impact on the environment, enhancing the public transport networks and the use of vehicles and alternative fuels.

During the seminar, representatives of the cities discussed innovative solutions and interventions made by the five partner-cities of CIVITAS MIMOSA: Bologna (Italy), Utrecht (the Netherlands), Tallinn (Estonia), Gdańsk (Poland) and Funchal (Portugal).

Thanks to this meeting and the innovative and practical tools identified by CIVITAS MIMOSA, the URBAN Intergroup had the opportunity to better identify future policies and funding on environmental sustainability and urban mobility within the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), by streamlining a number

of dedicated budgets for more effectiveness. CIVITAS MIMOSA partner-cities recommend in particular the creation of a fast track for cities that have shown experience and leadership in the field of sustainable urban mobility.

The meeting was attended by many MEPs involved in the negotiations of the new cohesion policy after 2014: among them, **Jan Olbrycht** (EPP, Poland), President of the URBAN Intergroup and rapporteur of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) regulation and **Lambert van Nistelrooij** (EPP, the Netherlands), Vice-president of the Intergroup and rapporteur for the Common Provisions Regulation.

Mr **Olbrycht MEP** commented on the great value demonstrated by the five partner-cities over the last four years and stressed the importance of considering sustainable urban mobility as a policy priority of the European Parliament.

He also stressed the need for closer links between research and implementation, focusing on financing channels, including the European Regional Development Fund, that promote the sustainability of services and actions through projects funded by the European Union.

More information: www.civitas-mimosa.eu



Members of the URBAN Intergroup exchanged views on "Sustainable Urban Mobility in times of crisis" with representatives of the cities of Bologna (Italy), Funchal (Portugal) and Utrecht (the Netherlands), partners of the CIVITAS MIMOSA project (© EPP Group & CIVITAS MIMOSA).

URBAN voice in Europe

EU SUSTAINABLE ENERGY WEEK

“Let’s give us means in investing in sustainable energy”

Karima Delli MEP (the Greens/EFA, France), vice-President of the URBAN Intergroup, took part in a conference on “Financing opportunities for Sustainable Energy in the next Multiannual Financial Framework” on 19th June in Brussels, during the EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW).

This event was an occasion to remind how investments in energy efficiency and sustainable energy are important, especially to get out of the economic, social and environmental crises we are facing, and to meet EU objectives.

“Investing in sustainable energy at a time when energy costs are constantly increasing is the way to re-launch sustainably our economies by creating green jobs for tomorrow and reducing our energy dependency and

energy poverty,” said the Green/EFA MEP.

Karima Delli MEP also reminded the need to defend first and foremost an ambitious European pluriannual budget in order to allow energy investments Europe needs.

As a co-rapporteur for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), she underlined the role of structural funds in the future cohesion policy after 2013. She especially insisted on the ERDF role to focus on specific sectors such as housing, in which the leverage effect is particularly important in terms of profitability and local jobs.

Ms **Delli** finally called for the diverse financial instruments to be better coordinated, more accessible and planned on the long-term in order to attract co-investors.

URBACHINA PROJECT

Sustainable urbanisation in China



On June 1st, **Jan Olbrycht MEP** (EPP, Poland), President of the URBAN Intergroup, met in Brussels the delegation of European and Chinese academics working on the project URBACHINA “Sustainable Urbanisation in China: Historical and Comparative Perspectives, Mega-trends towards 2050”.

URBACHINA is a four-year project funded under the European Commission’s Seventh Framework Programme with a budget of about 3,3 M euros. It is implemented by a consortium of 11 leading European and Chinese research institutions and coordinated by the CNRS (France’s National Centre for Scientific Research).

The project is focused on the analysis of China’s urbanisation trends and on the definition of possible future scenarios with reference to concepts of sustainability, with a special focus on the following areas: institutional foundations and policies, land property and the urban rural divide, infrastructure and services for sustainable urbanisation, and traditions and modern lifestyles in cities.

More information about the Project: www.urbachina.eu

Jan Olbrycht - ASP 14E101 - jan.olbrycht@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 455 11
Arlene McCarthy - ASP 13G351 - arlene.mccarthy@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 455 01
Oldřich Vlasák - WIB 03M113 - oldrich.vlasak@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 453 57
Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid - ASP 13E158 - marie-therese.sanchez-schmid@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 457 83
Karima Delli - ASP 08H342 - karima.delli@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 453 62
Ramona Mănescu - ASP 08G254 - ramonanicole.manescu@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 458 65
Lambert van Nistelrooij - ASP 12E142 - lambert.vannistelrooij@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 454 34
Peter Simon - ASP 12G146 - peter.simon@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 455 58
Rui Tavares - ASP 07F265 - rui.tavares@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 456 52

