



December 2016 - 19<sup>th</sup> issue

# NEWSLETTER

<http://urban-intergroup.eu>

## The European Parliament supports the Urban Agenda for the EU with €2.5 mln!

**W**e are very pleased to announce that members of the URBAN Intergroup managed to submit a new preparatory action which aim is to support the Urban Agenda for the EU.

After MEPs adopted the 2017 EU budget on 1<sup>st</sup> December, the European Commission will receive in total €2.5 mln within three years to support different activities in the framework of the Urban Agenda. It will especially help the EU executive, for example via the Secretariat of the Urban Agenda, to provide expertise and administrative support to the Partnerships.

### **Financial support at an auspicious time**

This preparatory action will not only facilitate the organisational work of the different Partnerships, but will also catalyse synergies between them. Moreover, it should help to set up the whole communication strategy in order to inform a wider audience on the different urban issues the 12 partnerships work on.

The preparatory action will be implemented in the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 and might be extended for one more year.

This financial support comes at an auspicious time as different elements of the Urban Agenda for the EU are being developed, such as "One-stop shop" new web portal for cities. Mid October, The European Commission launched this portal to provide cities with information on different EU policies and financing opportunities.

In addition, the new Urban Data Platform, operated by the Joint Research Centre, has just been launched. This database provides a single access point to common indicators on over 800 European urban areas.

Finally, at the beginning of next year, four new Partnerships will start running: on Circular Economy, Digital Transition, Urban Mobility and Jobs & Skills. The remaining four (out of twelve) will be set up by summer 2017.

*The URBAN Intergroup can be proud of another success with the adoption €1 mln for a two-year pilot project: "Supporting the urban dimension of development cooperation: increasing financial capacities of cities from developing countries to deliver productive and sustainable urban development".*

# URBAN voice

## UN CONFERENCE

### Linking the global Urban Agenda with the one for the EU

Four members of the URBAN Intergroup attended Habitat III final conference in Quito (Ecuador) mid-October. Talks there focused, *inter alia*, on how to better link the adopted New Urban Agenda with the still in progress Urban Agenda for the EU.

“European participants were concentrated on the interconnections between the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Urban Agenda for the EU”, said **Jan Olbrycht MEP** (EPP, Poland), President of the URBAN Intergroup, who was in the official delegation at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. He explained that the outcome of the reflection is that the European Urban Agenda is an instrument to implement the New Urban Agenda inside the EU.

He also insisted that problems of cities are universals: “Cities all around the world must tackle similar issues, despite the differences of scale. However, during the discussions on city management, it has been clear that while the European cities underline the necessity of working in partnership, between different levels of governance, at the same time, other cities like African ones speak about the need of decentralisation”. According to him, one of the conclusions of the Quito conference is that “all cities must work together in order to find new solutions to similar problems.”

#### The importance of measuring achievements

**Ernest Maragall MEP** (Greens/EFA, Spain) underlined that the European Union should concentrate on how to translate the NUA in the European perspective. “The implementation is very important and the process to



“Cities all around the world must tackle similar issues, despite the differences of scale,” said **Jan Olbrycht MEP** (EPP, Poland) during Habitat III UN Conference.

measure achievements of the NUA’s goals”, he said.

“Good jobs, affordable housing, and attractive living conditions - that’s what citizens expect from the cities they live in”, said **Kerstin Westphal MEP** (S&D, Germany). “In Quito, we were able to present and discuss our European ideas and solutions for supporting cities in reaching these goals - and also to get input from other parts of the world,” she added.

**Bogdan Wenta MEP** (EPP, Poland) insisted that “more than half of the world’s population lives in cities”. He stressed that urbanisation is particularly dynamic in developing countries, “as it is often the result of protracted crises and natural disasters”. He insisted that “urban areas grow in a chaotic manner, they lack good governance, adequate infrastructure and access to basic services. As a result, one in every eight people in the world nowadays lives in slums and informal settlements”. The MEP concluded: “I hope that the New Urban Agenda will contribute to the improvement of the situation in these settlements in order to better understand the needs of people who live there and to fully develop their potential”.

*The European Commission presented in Quito three commitments to meet NUA’s global objectives. Firstly, the EU executive committed to deliver the NUA through the Urban Agenda for the EU. Secondly, it has been decided to develop global and harmonised definition of cities in partnership with OECD and the World Bank. And finally, the Commission presented its will to foster cooperation between cities in the field of sustainable urban development.*

## Social urban design on the agenda

The 10<sup>th</sup> international urban conference "City 2016. City management" yearly organised by **Jan Olbrycht MEP** (EPP, Poland) took place in Katowice, Poland on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November.

This year's discussions were focused on environmentally friendly cities as well as on actions for cities at global, European and national level. Participants had the opportunity to learn more about the New Urban Agenda and the outcome of the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) which took place in Quito in October.

### Big and open data

Moreover, they got insight on the state of play of the Urban Agenda for the EU as well as the Urban Innovative Actions. In the context of Polish urban policy, the role of cities in the Strategy of Responsible Development



**Belinda Tato** explains to Polish architects the idea of social urban design.

has been presented.

The main point of the conference was a key-note speech made by **Belinda Tato**, Spanish Architect from Ecosistema Urbano in Madrid, who presented the concept of "social urban design". The event has been concluded by the discussion about big and open data and the question on how to better manage information in the modern city.

*Presentations from the conference:*

[http://konferencjamiasto.pl/#do\\_pobrania](http://konferencjamiasto.pl/#do_pobrania)

## URBAN events and meetings

### REPORT

### Cities have economic, social and environmental advantages

Members and partners of the URBAN Intergroup had an opportunity to learn more about the State of European Cities Report during an extraordinary meeting of the Intergroup in Brussels on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

The European Cities Report - written by UN-HABITAT and DG REGIO - shows how cities are leading the way to a more innovative, inclusive and sustainable future.

**Lewis Dijkstra**, Deputy Head of the Economic Analysis Unit from DG REGIO, explained that this report will help cities to compare themselves. He underlined that it shows that cities are not only seen as a source of problems but also have many economic, social and environmental advantages.

Indeed, the report underlines that mayors are increasingly recognised as key actors in promoting jobs and growth, social inclusion, resource efficiency, low carbon mobility and climate change. Mr Dijkstra added that this publication will support the Urban Agenda for the EU and provide input to the HABITAT III conference and support the New Urban

Agenda.

For **Paulius Kulikauskas**, Chief of the UN-HABITAT Office for Europe and European institutions, this report is an important milestone in demonstrating how the EU experience could be shared with other parts of the world, in the spirit of the New Urban Agenda.

"The publication of the State of European Cities Report gives urban practitioners at the European and national level an excellent overview of the situation in Europe cities and towns," said **Jan Olbrycht**, President of the URBAN Intergroup. "Moreover, thanks to this report, European cities can compare themselves to other cities. Every mayor should receive this report," he added. In conclusion, he stressed that the report will be very useful during the elaboration of future regulations: "we need to have these analyses to make policy choices in the future, to know where to invest".

**Report available here:** [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/policy/themes/cities-report/state\\_eu\\_cities2016\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/cities-report/state_eu_cities2016_en.pdf)

## EIB is providing emergency response to the Urban Agenda

The Urban Agenda for the EU, as a policy declaration adopted by EU ministers, refers specifically to the European Investment Bank's role, and sets an important policy milestone for EIB's urban lending. As the EU bank, the EIB finances only projects which contribute to European policy goals. Therefore the Urban Agenda gives to the EIB a valuable orientation: supporting a policy goal mentioned in the Urban Agenda is without doubt serving European interests. Since 2011, the EU bank has provided €95 billion in areas covered by the Urban Agenda "priority themes". The EIB lends across all of these themes and across all Member States.

**EIB urban lending** is highest in countries with a network of large secondary cities, including:

- UK (€15.7 billion)
- France (€13.7 billion)
- Germany (€10.9 billion)

Regarding urban sectors, EIB financing is strongest in:

- water/sewerage (€16.8 billion)
- urban transport (€16.7 billion)
- education (€15.9)
- housing and urban regeneration (€12.3 billion)

The EIB has lent to one sixth of all 930 European cities with a population above 75,000 inhabitants. This often takes the form of a framework loan, through which a city can finance a multitude of investment projects over a period of normally 3 to 5 years.

These projects don't need to be completely planned at the time of loan signing; upcoming projects which meet the agreed loan criteria can be allocated to the loan during implementation – giving cities flexibility to adjust their investment programmes while having the financing secured.

**Smaller towns can also access EIB urban financing** via loans intermediated by:

- regional administrations
- public or private banks
- specialised enterprises (such as

housing companies or energy efficiency agencies)

**The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is also helping** to finance more urban investments. The EFSI guarantee enables the EIB to fund urban projects involving greater levels of risk, for example through:

- risk sharing with promotional banks
- lending to lower rated municipalities or municipal companies
- financing private sector services provision to municipalities through:
  - o PPP (public-private partnership)
  - o Energy Service Companies
  - o other structures with limited recourse to financial resources
- investing equity into urban development funds targeting urban regeneration

Besides financing, the EIB contributes actively to the Urban Agenda through its **advisory services**, for e.g.:

- JASPERS for projects financed by European Structural and Investment Funds
- ELENA for energy efficiency projects
- fi-compass to create financial instruments

In addition, cities and urban project promoters could (and should!) contact the European Investment Advisory Hub for expert support to turn a good idea into an investment for the benefit of European citizens.

The EIB participates also in a number of partnerships of the Urban Agenda to provide expertise on financing, e. g. in housing, refugee integration, and circular economy.

**More information about EIB urban financing:**

- How does the EIB contribute to the EU Urban Agenda? – Video interview with Gerry Muscat, Head of Urban Development, EIB <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSKtiQnCsas>
- The EU Urban Agenda toolbox – Build your sustainable community with the EIB and the CoR [http://www.eib.org/attachments/thematic/the\\_eu\\_urban\\_agenda\\_toolbox\\_en.pdf](http://www.eib.org/attachments/thematic/the_eu_urban_agenda_toolbox_en.pdf)

## SEMINAR

# New governance and investment strategies in metropolitan regions

Some 70 European politicians, staff members of the European Commission, experts and representatives of countries, metropolitan regions and regions took part to the expert seminar on “New governance and investment strategies in metropolitan regions”, organised in Brussels 29 September 2016 by the Metropolitan Region of Rotterdam-The Hague.

The metropolitan region of Warsaw, the newly formed Métropole d’Aix-Marseille-Provence and the Rotterdam-The Hague metropolitan region presented their regions, their objectives and challenges, as well as the importance of metropolitan cooperation.

**Philippe Raets** (Rotterdam-The Hague metropolitan region) highlighted the unique voluntary bottom-up cooperation between 23 municipalities. Besides their cooperation in organising regional transport, an ambitious investment programme has been put together to transform the economy into a new sustainable international competitive economy for the future (so-called “Next Economy”).

Indeed, an evaluation study published at the beginning of this year by OECD states that more and better cooperation in the metropolitan region of Rotterdam-The Hague can increase productivity by 2 to 4%. It also shows that the voluntary cooperation between the 23 municipalities and two large neighbouring cities is unique in the world and that the metropolitan region needs to raise its international profile.

### The importance of metropolitan cooperation

**Sylvain Crespel** explained the numerous tasks the new metropolis Aix-Marseille-Provence is given by national legislation: to stimulate the merging of universities in the region, to develop joint investment plans and to coordinate large projects.

**Paweł Sajnog** demonstrated a completely different approach of the Warsaw metropolis. Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) are used there to stimulate more metropolitan cooperation. Moreover, the Warsaw metropolis hopes that in the future ITIs can stimulate step by step a broader thematic cooperation in the metropolitan region.



According to **Matthijs van Miltenburg MEP** (ALDE, Netherlands) (on the right), more should be done to direct the budget of the European Structural and Investment Funds towards cities and metropolitan regions.

**Matthijs van Miltenburg MEP** (ALDE, Netherlands) recognised the importance of metropolitan cooperation in strengthening strategic investments and growth and in facing the big challenges of climate, energy and social inclusion. “The objectives of better regulation, better finance and the exchange of experiences of the Pact of Amsterdam should be striven for,” he said. According to him, more should be done to direct the budget of the European Structural and Investment Funds towards cities and metropolitan regions. He called for a joint debate, investigation and strategy to examine how European policies and European finances can support the investment strategies and development of metropolitan regions.

**Jan Olbrycht MEP** (EPP, Poland) and President of the URBAN Intergroup emphasised the role of the European Parliament which has repeatedly supported urban areas. The symbiotic relationship and cooperation between cities and rural areas is reflected in the governance of metropolitan regions. “We should focus on strengthening the role of functional urban areas in Europe, especially in the debate about the future of cohesion policy after 2020,” he said. In his opinion the discussion about the governance and investment strategies in metropolitan regions is very timely.

An OECD representative emphasised that the focus should be on functional urban areas in which municipal boundaries are not important but the areas in which all citizens live, work, go to school and benefit from facilities. The strength of the mutual relationship explains the strong growth that the OECD is measuring for metropolitan areas all around the world.

The presentations and the discussion provided some clear conclusions:

- Each metropolitan region organises regional cooperation in its own way; Integrated investment programmes (innovations, improving infrastructures for an ageing population, improving human capital, attracting youth and the elderly in active working population) are essential to achieve stronger regional development;

- The capacities and capabilities of regional and metropolitan operators is key for providers of capital, such as the EIB; Metropolitan regions should start to debate about policies, instruments and investment programmes: in the wake of the future of regional policy after 2020, the main question for metropolitan regions is "how can we ensure that a larger share of European funds is available for urban areas?"

---

## Looking ahead

---

Urban Innovative Actions' second call will be launched mid December. This second competition of innovative urban solutions will be dedicated to three topics: Circular economy, Integration of migrants and refugees, and Urban mobility.

Four information seminars will be organised:

- 1 December 2016 in Lille, France
- 7 December 2016 in Porto, Portugal
- 19 January 2017 in Thessaloniki, Greece
- 26 January 2017 in Budapest, Hungary

In October, the best 18 projects have been selected in the framework of the first UIA Call for Proposals linked to four themes: urban poverty, the integration of migrants and refugees, jobs and skills in the local economy and the energy transition.

378 proposals from across 24 EU Member States, took part in to the competition.

**For more information:**

<http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/1st-wave-uia-projects-approved>

---

## Others about us

---

### The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)

Over the past decade, the EUKN has provided strategic knowledge support to its members: EU Member States working together on urban issues. The topics we researched covered a wide variety of topics, ranging from migration to poverty and from small and medium-sized urban areas to multilevel urban governance. The EUKN has also supported many Presidencies of the Council of the EU with research on urban topics addressed within the framework of their Presidency programme. More recently, the EUKN has worked closely with the Dutch Presidency and the UN on the two strategic agendas that will provide both a global and a European framework

for the years to come: the Pact of Amsterdam and the New Urban Agenda.

In both agendas the notion of partnerships is crucial: partnerships between the European Commission, EU Member States, European cities, knowledge organisations, the private sector and civil society. The URBAN Intergroup is a natural ally. We have been collaborating with the URBAN Intergroup for many years and we will continue this cooperation in the years to come. Because, after Amsterdam and Quito, implementation is key! That is not possible without the political support of key urban actors, including the URBAN Intergroup.



Jan Olbrycht - ASP 12E102 - jan.olbrycht@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 455 11

Agnes Jongerius - ASP 11G173- agnes.jongerius@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 456 99

Karima Delli - ASP 04F151 - karima.delli@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 453 62

Lambert van Nistelrooij - ASP 08E206 - lambert.vannistelrooij@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 454 34

Peter Simon - ASP 12G158 - peter.simon@europarl.europa.eu - tel.: +32 (0)2 28 455 58

**CONTACTS**