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# NEWSLETTER

<http://urban-intergroup.eu>

## MEPs met the coordinators of the Urban Agenda for the EU

**M**embers of the URBAN Intergroup had a unique opportunity to meet and discuss with all coordinators of 12 partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June at the European Parliament in Brussels. The breakfast meeting between MEPs and coordinators has been set up in collaboration with the European Commission as a part of a two-day meeting organised only twice a year.



**Jan Olbrycht** (EPP, Poland), President of the URBAN Intergroup, underlined in his welcoming speech the importance of direct contacts between coordinators of partnerships and Members of the European Parliament who work on different issues linked to urban areas.

The meeting concentrated on short presentations of the state of play of each partnership, followed by MEPs' questions and remarks. Here are some MEPs' reactions after this breakfast meeting:



**Lambert van Nistelrooij** (EPP, Netherlands), Vice-President of the URBAN Intergroup: *"The Pact of Amsterdam gives a boost to the role of cities*



During the meeting with all coordinators of the 12 partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU, MEPs insisted on the need to turn to concrete actions. (© URBAN Intergroup)

*on the specific themes. Here we enable 'smart specialisation' at the urban level. Beyond that, I underline the visibility of the partnerships in the coming years: 'let the Stars Shine'. It should be done better than in the UK during the Brexit campaign, where the results of EU programmes were neglected."*



**Agnes Jongerius** (S&D, Netherlands), Vice-President of the URBAN Intergroup: *"It is good that partners from all over Europe are working together to*

find solutions to urban problems. Especially the challenge to provide affordable and decent housing to all Europeans should be on top of every agenda. In my opinion, a city cannot be a city with only Young Urban Professionals or DINKY's. A city is a city if fire-fighters and teachers also can afford to live there."



**Kerstin Westphal** (S&D, Germany): "It was a very fruitful exchange of views. As MEPs, we want to support urban areas in the best possible way - and in order to do so, we need to know from the people on the ground which idea works, and what needs to be improved."



**Mattijas van Miltenburg** (ALDE, Netherlands): "Thanks to the contribution of the coordinators of the Urban Agenda partnerships, this breakfast meeting was a success. They gave a clear overview about the progress that has been made so far. I am very much looking forward to the presentation of the action plans. For the interest of the European Parliament as co-legislator, and of course for our European cities, it is crucial that the partnerships present their action plans on time. I'm looking forward to the outcome and results, in order to make full use of it when we will start the discussions and preparations about the future urban policy and its provisions."



For **Danuta Jazłowiecka** (middle), it was a very valuable initiative to include regional partners into a wider debate on the use of structural funds after 2020.



**Jordi Solé** (Greens/EFA, Spain): "This working breakfast was a very interesting initiative. The results of the Urban Agenda for the EU will depend on the implementation of more concrete and specific actions. To this extent, we must build a close relationship with those stakeholders that best know the needs of the territory. Therefore, being able to directly meet with the coordinators is always a great opportunity to promote enhanced cooperation and to work better together."



**Danuta Jazłowiecka** (EPP, Poland): "It was a very valuable initiative to include regional partners into a wider debate on the future of regional development and the use of structural funds after 2020. This initiative was highly appreciated by all partners present and I am convinced that it should be followed up."

## URBAN voice

### NEW PUBLICATION

## Let the Stars Shine - engaging citizens in the EU

For more than 9 months, nine MEPs from the EPP Group have worked on improving communication and visibility of the successes and results achieved by EU regional and urban policy. Those are **Lambert van Nistelrooij** (Netherlands), **Jan Olbrycht** (Poland), **Andrey Novakov** (Bulgaria), **Pascal Arimont** (Belgium), **Ivana Maletic** (Croatia), **Marc Joulaud** (France), **Daniel Buda** (Romania), **Franc Bogovic** (Slovenia) and **Joachim Zeller** (Germany).

As of the beginning of 2016, these MEPs are working on the "Let the Stars Shine" action.

Several improvements have been made since then and more are under negotiation. These changes aim at showing governments, companies, journalists and people the added value the EU is bringing in citizens' daily lives.

Mutual communication is key: creating a situation where all stakeholders involved, including citizens, communicate with each other. MEPs call on EU citizens to come forward with ideas on how to communicate better and to suggest good examples of how the EU is supporting them, their projects,

companies or governments. There call can be resumed by the slogan: "Be the EU ambassador that we need!"

## Communicating on regional and urban projects

The concept of EU ambassadors is one of the novelties that has been introduced in EU regional policy, an example that can be followed by other EU policies as well. However, these ambassadors have to be given the possibilities to communicate. For many projects that receive funding from European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 or other EU programmes, the results only become visible after 4 or 5 years, or even more.

So far, it was not been legally allowed communicating on the results. Therefore, a proposal is now under negotiation that makes a small budget available to communicate on achievements of the projects until 4 years after it has been closed.

In September, the nine MEPs will kick-off

### VISIT

## From EU to Chinese Urban Agenda

In July 2017, nine Members of the European Parliament travelled to China during a delegation visit hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. Several EPP members of the URBAN Intergroup took part: **Jan Olbrycht** (Poland), **Lambert van Nistelrooij** (Netherlands), **Krzysztof Hetman** (Poland) and **Iuliu Winkler** (Romania).

The delegation visited the cities of Beijing, Zhengzhou, Nanjing and Yancheng and exchanged views with the Chinese National Reform and Development Commission concerning China's urban agenda.

### Cities pay 1% of their budget to rural areas

China's big building boom is not over yet. Indeed, China has the biggest concentrations of building cranes in the world. An oriented policy for social and economic development has been implemented in the country. There are for example increasing connections between cities and the rural areas. Cities even pay one percent of their budget to the rural areas to support their development. Many of these Chinese cities have lively twin relations



this action in their own Member State. Good projects and good ideas on communication will be selected nationally and then a European jury will select the winners. The focus will be on regional and urban projects.

The need for big changes has already been debated in the joint meeting of the REGI committee in the European Parliament and the COTER committee of the Committee of the Regions on the 29th of June. Now it is time for action!



The MEP delegation visiting the Jiangsu environmental protection technology center in Yancheng city, Jiangsu Province. (© Lambert van Nistelrooij)

with their counterparts in Europe and play a key role in the World Cities 2 programme. Through this programme, over 200 Chinese experts have attended trainings on addressing urbanisation challenges. Some questions however remain unanswered: especially the issue of freedom of establishment in Chinese cities and the limitations to China's growth. The exchange with China will continue on the 14th of September when a meeting will take place in Strasbourg with a delegation of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

# URBAN events and meetings

UNESCO PUBLICATION

## Culture has a role in urban development

The URBAN Intergroup, in cooperation with MEP **Bogdan Wenta** (EPP, Poland) and UNESCO, organised on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May a presentation of the UNESCO publication “Culture: Urban Future”. This is the first Global Report to explore the role of Culture for Sustainable Urban Development.

This report, which has been launched at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito (Ecuador) in October 2016, provides a policy framework to support national and local governments in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the New Urban Agenda.

Drawing on a global survey implemented with nine regional partners and insights from scholars, NGOs and urban thinkers, the report offers a global overview of urban heritage safeguarding, conservation and management, as well as the promotion of cultural and creative industries, highlighting their role as resources for sustainable urban development. The publication concludes with the Atlas which includes 22 sub-regional maps situating the cities belonging to UNESCO networks around the world.

### Protecting and promoting culture

**Bogdan Wenta**, member of the URBAN Intergroup, opened the event by underlining that the 2030 Agenda and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise the transformative role of culture in many areas like education, sustainable cities, environment, gender equality or health and food safety. More than half of this 17 goals are culture-related, also because they include the issues of cultural heritage and cultural diversity. “In the new European Consensus on Development that is very strongly interlinked with the SDGs, we are putting an emphasis on the protection and promotion of culture”, Wenta said.

During the seminar, representatives of the different Directorates Generals of the European Commission got the opportunity to react to the UNESCO publication and share comments and experiences on the role of



**Bogdan Wenta** (EPP, Poland) (*left*) underlined that the new European Consensus on Development has a strong emphasis on the protection and promotion of culture during the presentation of the UNESCO publication. (© URBAN Intergroup)

culture in different EU policies. From the perspective of the DG Education, Youth, Sports and Culture (EAC), cultural heritage is about people and – especially in the recent context – culture is a very important tool for the integration of migrants.

Moreover, the need to build communities around culture, especially in smaller cities, was also mentioned. Representative of DG International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) underlined that the EU executive is committed to further integrate culture into international cooperation. DG Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO) presented links with culture in cohesion policy and some possibilities to finance cultural projects.

During the debate, a representative of the Spanish Agency of Cooperation and Development which co-financed the publication of the report, presented motives of the cooperation with UNESCO and underlined that traditionally, Spanish experience in culture has an urban context.

**Jan Olbrycht** (EPP, Poland), President of the URBAN Intergroup, concluded the event by saying that in the context of the Urban Agenda for the EU – which is an implementation tool of the New Urban Agenda, the cultural dimension should be present in different partnerships. Moreover, the possibility of setting 13 new partnerships focused especially on culture next year should be taken into consideration.

## STATE OF PLAY

# The World Cities Project goes to second phase

On 15 June, members and partners of the URBAN Intergroup had the opportunity to learn more about the state of play of World Cities Project in the broader context of the international dimension of EU regional and urban policy. The presentation was given by **Ronald Hall**, Principal Advisor, Manager of the Northern Ireland Task Force, International Relations, DG REGIO, European Commission.

The World Cities Project was set up as a Preparatory Action of the European Parliament to promote the exchange of experience and best practice between the European Union and non-EU countries on the theme of territorial development with particular reference to urban development, urban-rural partnership and urban cross-border cooperation.

First phase of the project called World Cities I was granted €1.500.000 and has been implemented between 2014 and 2016. The cooperation between EU cities and cities from China, India, Canada and Japan was established.

The World Cities II project, which will be implemented between 2016 and 2018 with the same budget, will foster exchange between cities from Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam, South Africa and Australia with their peering European cities. This cooperation is designed to increase so-called 'triple-helix cooperation' between governments, research and business.

**More information about World Cities project** [world-cities.eu](http://world-cities.eu)

## STUDY VISIT

# Strasbourg open its doors to its monthly tenants



On Thursday 6 July, members and partners of the URBAN Intergroup were invited by **Roland Ries**, Mayor of Strasbourg, to discuss the urban development strategy of the European and Rhine Metropolis.

The meeting which took place at the "Eurométropole de Strasbourg" City Hall was a unique occasion to exchange with the Mayor on the political vision of the development of Strasbourg. Moreover, issues and challenges for development of the Eurométropole have been presented to MEPs. The historical context of collaboration between Strasbourg and the German neighbour city of Kehl has been underlined, as well as recent development and implementation of the cross border urban vision.

"I was surprised by the courage of city planners in introducing changes as well as new solutions in Strasbourg", commented **Jan Olbrycht** (EPP, Poland), President of the

URBAN Intergroup.

Participants of the study visit saw on the ground two very interesting projects. The first project, Deux Rives ("Two Banks") is one of the biggest urban project in France consisting in the development of a 3 km-long cross border sector between Strasbourg and Kehl newly connected by a tramway line. The second one, The Archipel project in Wacken area, is an ambitious area dedicated to business, high-quality housing and functional activities covering about 200.000 sq with a particular emphasis on the European scale. MEPs have monthly opportunities to see its constant development as it is situated just in front of the European Parliament building.

During the whole visit, participants got an overview of the public private partnership in the development of the projects and saw the importance paid into the social diversity in urban development.

# Looking ahead

Don't forget to register!

**FUNDING FOR ENERGY RENOVATION AS A STIMULUS FOR URBAN REGENERATION**  
Event organised by the URBAN Intergroup and Renovate Europe



**26 September 2017**  
11h00-12h30  
European Parliament - Brussels  
Room JAN 6Q1

 **\*\* REGISTER before 20 Sept COB \*\***  
<http://renovate-europe.eu/urban-intergroup-event/> 

 **REGIONS & CITIES** | **European Week Brussels** 9-12 October 2017

The debates during 15<sup>th</sup> European Week of Regions and Cities will focus on the Cohesion Report, future of the cohesion policy and its urban dimension.

**CITIES Forum 2017**  
Working Together for Better Cities  
Rotterdam, 27-28 November 2017



 

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Cities Forum will take place on 27-28 November in Rotterdam. This big urban event organised by the European Commission will focus on the Urban Agenda for the EU, New Urban Agenda, Urban Investment and Advisory Platform and the discussion about the urban dimension of cohesion policy post 2020.

Registration will be opened by the end of September.

**More information:** [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/conferences/cities\\_forum\\_nl](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/conferences/cities_forum_nl)

Deadline for registration: 29 September

**More information:** [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/regions-and-cities/2017/index.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/regions-and-cities/2017/index.cfm)

## Others about us

### The European European Public Real Estate (EPRA)

For almost two decades now, as the industry's voice in Europe, EPRA has been committed to working with our members to enhance the future of the European listed real estate sector. To achieve the best results EPRA has built close ties with partners at national as well as European level. The URBAN Intergroup is certainly one of our crucial partners as it brings together a unique cross-parties and cross-committees network in Europe with a horizontal approach to discuss many issues of EPRA's interest and expertise.

From our point of view, the real estate industry is still in search of dedicated MEPs



to champion the sector's issues and defend its interest.

Bearing in mind that overall the real estate sector employs 3,7 million people in Europe accounting for more jobs than the banking, automotive or telecommunications sector, we are glad to have found with the URBAN Intergroup a platform which understands the importance of the real estate industry for the European economy. Together we stand ready to bring more visibility to the real estate sector in general and highlight the benefits of the listed real estate in particular.

**For more information:** [www.epra.com](http://www.epra.com)

  
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