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NEWSLETTER

<http://urban-intergroup.eu>

URBAN voice

RESOLUTION

MEPs support the urban dimension of EU policies

The European Parliament adopted, by 499 votes to 70 (with 102 abstentions) the resolution on the urban dimension of EU policies, on the 3rd of July. This resolution is based on the own-initiative report by **Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski** (non attached, Poland), initiated in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

MEPs welcomed the Urban Agenda for the EU as a new model of multi-level governance based on partnership by engaging cities in the review of existing legislation and reflecting on the future shape of policies. They called for the Urban Agenda to be coordinated, reinforced and formalised, stating that it should not remain a voluntary process and that the Member States and the Commission should acquire more of its ownership.

The Parliament observed that the EU is incrementally strengthening the urban dimension in a number of its policies, as shown for example by the smart cities and communities concept (the European Innovation Partnership) and by initiatives such as: the Urban Community Initiative I (URBAN I), URBAN II, the Urban Development Network, the Urban Innovative Actions, the European Capital of Culture, the

European Green Capital and the European Capital of Innovation, the Covenant of Mayors and the Urban Agenda for the EU (Pact of Amsterdam). Cities may also play an important role in the design, financing and implementation in the Union's external policies as a public diplomacy tool.

New global challenges demand local responses

Members called for better coordination and integration of the instruments and programmes dedicated to cities in various EU policies. This could be achieved by appointing a Commissioner with a political leadership role.



Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (non attached, Poland), member of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, was a rapporteur of the resolution on the role of cities in the institutional framework of the European Union, adopted by a large majority of MEPs.

Cities have also proved their capacity to efficiently manage integrated actions for sustainable urban development: this includes issues such as security and immigration, demographic shift, youth unemployment, challenges relating to the quality of public services, access to clean and affordable energy, natural disasters and environmental protection.

The Parliament stressed, in particular, the need to: strengthen the political representation of cities and municipalities in the current EU institutional framework (including a reinforcement of cities representation within the European Committee of

the Regions); consolidate the involvement of European local government associations such as EUROCITIES and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR); carry out territorial impact assessments of all policy measures and legislation that affect the local level.

Last but not least, MEPs stressed the need to exchange good practices between European cities.

Texte adopted: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0203_EN.pdf

URBAN events and meetings

PRESENTATION

The URBACT program to develop new and sustainable solutions

On the 10th of January, members and partners of the URBAN Intergroup took part into the presentation of the URBACT program. The work on mapping 97 URBACT Good City Practices and their potential transfer and adaptation to EU cities through URBACT Transfer Networks was summed up.



Good examples of other cities

Moreover, concrete results of the involvement of cities into the network were shown. The City of Mollet del Vallès in Spain presented its work on the transfer and adaptation of local food policy, realised in partnership with other European cities, and based on good examples of other cities from the network. Representatives of the city of Wrocław in Poland testified the building of an Integrated Action Plan on public and social in-

novation, which was done thanks to the co-operation with other European cities. The meeting was also an occasion for URBACT representatives to contribute to the Intergroup's legislative discussions and reflections on the urban dimension of the cohesion policy after 2020. Participants discussed the future of the URBACT programme, especially in the context of the Urban Agenda for the EU.

Instrument of the European Cohesion Policy, URBACT is a European Territorial Cooperation programme co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Member/Partner States of the European Union since 2002. URBACT finances and enables local authorities to work together to develop new and sustainable solutions to major urban challenges, through networking activities, knowledge-sharing, and capacity-building for urban practitioners.

URBACT currently counts 24 networks involving around 200 EU cities and more than 2,000 local stakeholders actively working to develop and implement participatory and integrated policies at local level. The number of URBACT networks and cities is expected to grow by the end of 2020.

URBACT also actively contributes to the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) as a member of the 12 partnerships, as an observer in the DG meeting on Urban Affairs and in the Urban Development Group, and as a partner proposing candidate urban authorities for the UAEU partnerships to the DG meeting.

Presentation of URBIS – Urban Investment Support

The meeting of the URBAN Intergroup, which took place in Strasbourg on the 18th of January, was dedicated to URBIS – Urban Investment Support. This new advisory service for cities in planning investments was launched in Rotterdam by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB), at the Cities Forum in November last year.

The aim was not to create a completely new advisory hub but rather to merge existing forms of support and advice for cities in a more holistic way. That is why URBIS is a result of collaborate efforts within EIB to bring all urban elements in one place on a web page hosted on existing European Investment Advisory Hub.

On the one hand, URBIS will provide advice to cities and their partners to improve a city's investment strategy (advice in strategic planning, prioritising, optimising of investment programmes and projects). On the other hand, it will focus on investment support by exploring opportunities for financing under the ESIF and EFSI or by bringing projects and investment programmes to a bankable stage.

URBIS is dedicated to a targeted audience: urban authorities of minimum 20 000 inhabitants. However, smaller cities can apply as well if they put together common programme of projects. EIB advice will be given for an integrated investment programme with a



On the left, the President of the URBAN Intergroup, MEP Jan Olbrycht (EPP, Poland) is attending the presentation of the Urban Investment Support pilot project.

short or medium-term time-horizon, typically 3-5 years. Investment projects should be typically over €20 million, but can include programmes of smaller projects.

This Urban Investment Support is a pilot project which will be assessed by the EIB and the European Commission quite soon (second half of 2018) in order to see if this type of special focused advice for cities is useful and demanded.

During the discussion, MEPs positively acknowledge the mission of URBIS. They will take into consideration its future assessment. Moreover, they stressed the importance of conditionality in getting the URBIS advice in order to create cities' ownership and commitment for supported projects.

For more information: <http://eiah.eib.org/about/initiative-urbis.htm>

URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU

Meeting with the Urban Poverty Partnership

After the meeting with coordinators of all 12 Partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU in June 2017, the URBAN Intergroup inaugurated on the 31st of January 2018 a series of bilateral meetings with the Partnerships. MEPs met the coordinators and some members of the Urban Poverty Partnerships to discuss how to deal with problems such as unemployment, social exclusion, segregation or poverty concentrated in cities. After two years of reflection and many discussions, this Partnership developed a set of concrete integrated actions to be imple-

mented such as a proposal of a block grant for urban authorities to fight poverty in the framework of cohesion policy post 2020 or a proposal of setting up a European network of national observatories with experience in urban development. The need of developing data on urban poverty at EU level was recalled as well.

Moreover, members of the partnership presented in the Action Plan concrete ideas on how to tackle four priorities, such as child poverty (for example by the adoption of a

European Child Guarantee), the regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods, the fight against homelessness or finally the vulnerability of Roma people.

During the discussion, participants agreed that place-based approaches must go hand in hand with people-based approaches to

combat poverty in European cities. While speaking about complementarities between different approaches and policies, MEPs strongly regretted that in the proposal of the European Commission for post 2020, the European Social Fund has been separated from the European Regional Development Fund.

*The Urban poverty Partnership is one of the 12 partnerships set up in the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU. This Partnership is coordinated by Belgium (Federal Public Planning Service, SPI) and France (General commission for territorial equality, CGET). Others members are: the **Cities** of Birmingham, Daugavpils, Keratsíni-Drapetsóna, Kortrijk, Lille, Łódź, Timisoara, the Brussels Capital and the Île-de-France **Regions**; **Member States** Germany, Greece, Spain; **Stakeholders** Eurochild, EUROCITIES, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), UN Habitat, URBACT; the **European Commission** DG Employment, DG Regional and Urban Policy.*

The Urban poverty Partnership worked on four priority areas:

- I. Child Poverty*
- II. The Regeneration of Deprived Neighbourhoods*
- III. The Fight Against Homelessness*
- IV. The Vulnerability of Roma People*

PRESENTATION

European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

On the 19th of April in Strasbourg, the URBAN Intergroup hosted the presentation of the European Year of Cultural Heritage by a representative of the DG for Education and Culture from the European Commission. The aim of the meeting was to overview the legacy of the different projects and events organised during this special year dedicated to culture and adaptive reuse in Europe.

A special attention was given to promote good practices and smart ways of transforming Europe's industrial, religious and military heritage for new use(r)s. During the whole year, many discussions gathered local and regional authorities, urban planners, architects, heritage professionals and citizens to find the best solutions how to transform heritage and to turn it into a driver of sustainable development for European cities and regions.



The meeting was an occasion for MEPs to see concrete examples of urban-related projects founded by different European programmes such as: URBACT (project on the reuse of vacant spaces), Erasmus+ (project Europe-Tour-cultural tourism in rural areas, REVAB-open training system on the restoration and reuse of farm buildings) or Horizon 2020.

Some recent projects founded by Creative Europe Programme have also been presented: Culture for Cities and Regions, European Creative Hubs Network (ECHN) and Culture and Creative Spaces and Cities. "Investing in cultural heritage is a place of urban innovation" said **Jan Olbrycht** (EPP, Poland), President of the URBAN Intergroup, summing-up the meeting.

More information: <http://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/>



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