



25th November 2008

**Final statement
by the ministers in charge of urban development**

EU urban development ministers met in Marseille on 25 November 2008 at the invitation of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union to discuss the following topic: *"The sustainable and inclusive city"*.

The European Commissioner for Regional Policy, representatives of the European Parliament, representatives of the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Council as well as representatives from the EIB attended the meeting.

The Presidency also welcomed representatives from candidate countries for accession to the European Union, neighbouring countries and several non-governmental organisations.

The meeting formed part of a set of three linked informal meetings, covering housing and territorial cohesion as well, allowing all these essential components of any integrated urban development policy to be addressed together.

This meeting took place in a context of global financial economic and social crises which could have a considerable impact on the lives of our fellows-citizens and on whole sectors of our economies. We have to use these pressures as an incentive to keep a firm steer in favour of sustainable and cohesive urban development, the only way to maintain new growth without creating any territorial and social disparities.

The need for an urban approach of public policies

-A- In historical and cultural terms, cities are a fundamental and decisive part of European identity. They determine the polycentric structure of European territory and cover up to 70% of the European population. The cities are a social reality and a reflection of social and political choices. As an interactive point of connection between the social, economic, political and environmental domains, and between players in the institutional, private and voluntary sectors, cities are a major positive force in and for Europe. As key players in global competitiveness, they are the main drivers of economic development and innovation. They are large centres of employment, business-to-business services and higher educational and research institutions, providing the services and social and cultural networks needed to ensure that residents enjoy a good quality of life and to foster social cohesion. Their diversity in terms of their size, form and methods of governance is an asset that we should capitalise on. Because cities mobilize the diverse potentials and promote sustainable economic growth, they are at the core of the Lisbon Strategy and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy.

-B- European cities face some major challenges: social cohesion challenge, environmental challenge, particularly the impact of climate change, and challenge of competitiveness in the context of globalisation; the new global energy situation; the financial and economic crises. Cities will have to deal with the tensions and risks of fragmentation of their territories, while simultaneously searching for excellence, integrating new sections of the population and showing solidarity with the most vulnerable people.

Sustainable and cohesive integrated urban development

-C- The complexity of this new context calls for deep changes by the adoption of a multi-sectoral approach. By linking governance, the environment, the economy and social inclusion,

and by combining global and local approaches, blending the very short term with the long term, sustainable development emerges as an opportunity to look at urban problems in a different light and to develop new ways of tackling them. Those in charge of urban policies need to adopt an integrated approach to develop sustainable and inclusive towns and cities.

-D- These challenges represent opportunities to innovate and create new, better quality jobs that are accessible to all, particularly the most vulnerable members of society. Social inclusion policies require simultaneously addressing the issues of economic development, access to employment, education, and training and to decent, affordable housing and high quality transport. Such an integrated approach helps prevent the social inequalities that might represent a hindrance to innovation, economic prosperity and our ability to live together. Sustainable cities are necessarily cohesive, that is to say welcoming, functional and a source of social progress for all.

-E- These issues bring collective and individual behaviour patterns into play. This is why members of civil society and urban residents themselves have a key part to play in designing, developing and managing sustainable and cohesive cities. The complexity of these issues requires local authorities to work with competent urban development professionals in both the public and private sectors, with the support of the financial institutions.

-F- The sustainable city forms part of an open economy. The trading and other relationships of the sustainable city contribute to an overall momentum, and rely in large part on local production and on optimising the commercial, logistical and transport functions.

-G- Urban and rural areas are interdependent. As a logical progression of the EU sustainable development Strategy, the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter call for a new approach to the relationship between urban and rural environments and to partnerships between urban and rural territories at the scale of functional areas, in order to secure balanced development of all areas based on respect for their diversity. This approach is necessary to ensure fair access to services. Additionally, urban-rural cooperation is necessary in addressing issues related to the development of business clusters, of energy economy, of renewable energy-sources, and of the preservation of natural resources, including more particularly water and the landscape.

Transborder cities are very important for a sustainable, cohesive and integrated urban development in Europe, They have a crucial role in the European cities networks .

-H- This integrated approach needs to take into account the range of scales on which cities function from neighbourhoods to the largest urban areas. It must also be based on multi-level governance to enable coordination between the various local, regional, national and European levels which have an impact on urban development.

-I- At the European level, numerous initiatives have been launched in favour of urban development which include the integration of the urban dimension in the ERDF Operational Programmes, exchange of experiences through the URBACT programme, the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, capitalising knowledge through the Urban Audit¹.

-J- Ministers paid tribute to the work carried out in 2008, under the Slovenian presidency of the EU. Under the French presidency, they went on with their considerations in order to:

¹ European statistical database which includes 330 indicators and covers 321 cities of the European Union (www.urbanaudit.org)

- 1) give effect to the commitments of the Leipzig Charter
- 2) take into account climate change
- 3) facilitate the use of the cohesion policy for integrated urban development projects.

- 1 - Implementing the Leipzig Charter in favour of integrated sustainable urban development

The Ministers:

- recognising the role played by the cities to foster territorial cohesion as asserted for the first time in the European Commission's Green Paper on territorial cohesion,
- welcoming the resolution of the European Parliament on monitoring the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter², especially the importance of an action programme for the implementation of the targets of the Leipzig Charter,
- recalling the conclusions of the Council on the contribution of architecture to the different components of sustainable development, technical, cultural, and also environmental, economical and social,
- taking note of the final report of the working group on Action 1.1 of the first Action Programme for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda presented by Slovenia, which invites to a better coordination between urban and territorial policies and constitutes a pre-requisite for the integrated sustainable urban development,,
- aware of their responsibility for ensuring appropriate spatial policies that support more balanced development of cities and regions while respecting their specificities,
- having regard to the major role of local authorities who are accountable for a large part of sustainable urban development policies, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle; paying tribute to the initiatives of exchange of knowledge on the application of the Leipzig Charter by the local authorities, as in the Cities Forum which will take place in Montpellier on 2 & 3 December,
- confirming their support for the concept of "*Baukultur*" as set out in the Leipzig Charter,
- underlining the importance and the relevance of the different approaches and examples presented by the study on "The levers of public action for the development of sustainable cities",
- recognising the importance of urban statistics and comparative indicators at the European level and of the coordination of the information in order to be able draw a comparative picture between cities and to benchmark them; and acknowledging the work of the European Commission's Urban audit in this regard,

1.1 confirm the commitments they made on adopting the Leipzig Charter, particularly their commitment to support deprived city neighbourhoods where the future of the cities is at stake, for a large part; and recommend a regular follow-up of the application of the Leipzig Charter through the meetings of ministers in charge of urban development;

1.2 propose to continue exchanges of views on the implementation of the Leipzig Charter and Territorial Agenda in a prospect of territorial cohesion;

² "Towards a European action plan for spatial development and territorial cohesion"(PA_TA(2008)0069)

1.3 reassert their commitment to reinforce the urban dimension of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (Göteborg Strategy), and of the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment ;

1.4 propose to work for the improvement of knowledge of the city and to reinforce through training the know-how and the skills, of individuals in partnership with key professional institutes and organisations;

1.5 propose to consider the key role of architecture and urban quality in the process of integrated and sustainable urban development, giving particular attention to heritage, creative and innovative architectural solutions and thus achieve better quality of living environment ;

1.6 propose, working with local and regional authorities, to implement integrated urban development policies in order to ensure greater coherence between urban functions (housing, social and economic activities, education and training, culture and leisure), to develop the levers of public action for the development of sustainable cities; those policies must be in accordance with the circumstances in each country /territory and pay a particular attention to coordination between urban and rural policies and to cross-border dynamics;

1.7 are in favour of a greater consistency between urban functions and of the concurrent implementation of policies of local economic development, education of young people, urban planning and development, and access to high quality transport, including public transport, for the benefit of residents of deprived neighbourhoods ;

1.8 affirm their commitment to carry on with and reinforce the work of the Urban Audit coordinated by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), with the national statistical offices and cities of the European Union involved in this;

1.9 note the conclusions and recommendations of the Jessica (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas - a tool of financial engineering in favour of sustainable urban development - working group appended to the present document. The countries involved in this process emphasise that the Jessica tool could be an important lever for completing ambitious urban development projects;

1.10 decide to build a reference framework for the sustainable city, in a spirit of solidarity, for the application of the Leipzig Charter, based on the appendix attached to this statement; for this purpose invite all actors in urban policy, including the representatives of the cities, the European institutions, the Non Governmental Associations and mainly the cities networks, the scientific and technical organisations and professional associations, to take part in a collective and open process.

- 2 - Taking account of climate change in line with urban development

The Ministers:

- in line with the European strategy for sustainable development and urban environment; and with international agreements on sustainable development
- welcoming the adoption of the European Commission's Green Paper on adapting to climate change in Europe;

- conscious that a significant proportion (69%) of European greenhouse gas emissions are produced in cities and that combating climate change requires an integrated approach to public policy, more particularly by optimising energy efficiency in transport, buildings and public spaces and by reducing the carbon footprint in urban development operations, in line with local, regional, national and European levels;
- considering that climate change is not only an environmental challenge for governments and cities but also an economic opportunity to strengthen their competitiveness at a global level and create new jobs; that innovation in tackling and mitigating the effects of climate change and adapting to its consequences is a factor in increasing the attractiveness of particular areas; and is also a factor in conserving resources, more particularly water resources;
- considering, given the risk of aggravating fuel poverty associated with the effects of climate change and the energy crises and underlining that the need and participation of all social and economic stakeholders have to be taken into account in policies to support sustainable development and fight against climate change ;
- conscious of the need to take urgent action to support sustainable urban mobility for all, emphasising the need to provide deprived sections of the population with urban transport that meets their needs and supporting initiatives to open up deprived neighbourhoods by improving access to transport services;

2.1 suggest to the European Commission that it should take into account the role of cities and regions in its ongoing work on climate change mitigation and adaptation ; and underline the importance of investments in this field as one of the solutions to the financial and economic crises ;

2.2 invite the relevant authorities to set up integrated urban sustainable energy-climate mobility policies taking into account the environmental, economic and social dimensions together;

2.3 propose that European research programmes should examine the consequences of climate change on the most deprived sections of the population, and underline the importance of partnership between enterprises and universities ;

2.4 propose to promote exchange of best practices and networking at national, cross-border and cross-national levels, and knowledge capitalisation; underline the importance of such networks, and more particularly the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) and the specialized European networks of local authorities³ as well as of the dialogue with cities in third party countries; with a view to asking the European Commission to support the efforts to capitalise on the results and data gathered as part of the Urban Audit, the activity of the ESPON observatory, the Urbact programme, the data and analysis of the European Environmental Agency and European research programmes;

2.5 encourage local authorities and other bodies, where appropriate, to carry out an initial assessment of the measures currently under way and draw up territorial climate strategies in conjunction with the national planning documents, the local Agenda 21 programmes, and the local urban planning documents ;

³ Energie-Cites has a data base of 500 good practices (www.energie-cites.eu)

2.6 undertake to strengthen cooperation between countries to develop greenhouse gas reduction strategies in urban areas, in line with the objectives set by the European Union;

2.7 undertake to promote the role of urban planning in adapting climate change and mitigating its impacts and in this view to promote the compact city and act to ensure that sustainable urban development contributes to this and to limiting urban sprawl; support the exchange of ideas on the tools to be used in this regard with particular attention to addressing this issue upstream in the planning system;

2.8 undertake to promote appropriate policies to improve the energy efficiency of existing and new buildings in both the public and private sectors and the use of renewable energy.

- 3 - Promoting the use of cohesion policy in support of urban integrated development

The Ministers,

- taking into account the important role of the Cohesion policy in favour of sustainable integrated urban development, and, in particular, through fostering the urban dimension of the Operational Programmes,
- acknowledging the publication by the Commission at the time of the meeting of Ministers of the working document by the Directorate-General for Regional Policy entitled “Fostering the urban dimension - Analysis of the Operational Programmes co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (2007-2013)”

3.1 welcome the fact that that the urban dimension of the Operational Programmes is being taken more into account, leading notably to a significant increase in the proportion of ERDF funds over the 2007-2013 period ;

3.2 propose to promote integrated urban operations in the framework of the implementation of the Operational Programmes ; in this respect invite managing authorities to ensure support to integrated urban projects and of the involvement of the cities and local stakeholders concerned ;

3.3 invite the Commission to update its analysis of the ways and means of taking the urban dimension more into account through cohesion policy when it publishes its strategic report on economic and social cohesion in 2010 on the basis of the reports expected from the Member States in 2009, in accordance with Article 30 of Council regulation 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006.