

The New Leipzig Charter.
A chance to rethink urban policy in the
European Union

Contributions from the Eixo Atlântico
del Noroeste Peninsular





Biblioteca dos Estudos Estratégicos

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Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional
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INTRODUCTION TO PUBLICATION

Ricardo Rio & Lara Méndez





Ricardo Rio
President of Eixo Atlántico



Lara Méndez
Vice-president of Eixo Atlántico

Urban policy has historically been one of the biggest deficits within the construction of Europe. The initial slogans of a Europe without borders, and the Europe of cities and citizens was achieved in the first case and only partially in the latter: although there were verified advances in the rights of citizens, and the concept of European citizenship linked to the Europe without borders, the same did not happen in relation to the Europe of cities, especially in what concerns urban policies that allowed a consistent and balanced development of European big cities. The asymmetry between big and medium-sized cities, the different demographic and territorial scales, and the positive concept, more theoretical than real, of polycentrism, were not assembled in a common concept of urban policies until recent times, with the elaboration of the European Urban Agenda, which tries to provide the European Union with a coherent concept that orientates and promotes actions in this field.

Over the years, there have been manifold instruments to finance urban regeneration, almost all of them with remarkable success, but there has not been, until now, a coherent political strategy that inspired and harmonized the access and the management of these funds. It is no coincidence that even today, there is not a specific office in the European Commission for the urban agenda, or for matters directly related to cities, and these policies get diluted in different commissioners.

Some instruments for urban policies started to come up with Delors, first with urban pilot projects (UPP), funded on the basis of article 10 of the ERDF Regulation of the time, and later with the popular and successful URBAN initiative, which transformed our cities, especially their historic quarters, since from the very beginning in the Iberian Peninsula URBAN was more identified with the deteriorated neighbourhoods of historic quarters than with the deteriorated neighbourhoods in the outskirts. Successful national programmes emerged later on, such as the POLIS programme in Portugal; however, being limited to the national sphere, they did not have an European continuity or dimension, and they just travelled to other countries through the exchange of good practices. In Spain, the FEMP bolstered programmes related to urban infrastructures, mainly about sanitation, like the POL or the POMAL.

These did not developed an urban strategy; they financed necessary works (sanitation, residual water treatment stations, etc), but without a political concept that developed it, making the success of the programme dependent on the level of intervention of each council. Afterwards came the EDUSI in Spain, with an excellent level of definition on paper, but a complex and difficult level of implementation that is jeopardising its effectiveness and development. All this provides a first picture of the situation with a very positive aspect, the involvement of the EU in the urban policy through funds for regeneration and modernization of services and neighbourhoods within cities, and a very negative aspect: the lack of a harmonizing and inspiring policy of intervention in European cities.

There are not objective reasons for this to happen, but the best explanation points to a management vision, and not a political one, about the urban aspect in Brussels, which results in absurd paradoxes like the fact that such relevant aspects for cities like mobility and waste management are absent from urban policies. Even in member states like Spain, urban policy and cohesion are divergent and administered by different departments, and their coordination depends on the good will of politicians, or on the ability of the public officials in each ministry. In this way, urban policy is found within the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, and cohesion is in the Ministry of Treasury.

In this sense, it is necessary to understand one of the main differences between Spain and Portugal that jeopardised the implementation of European policies in Spain. Portugal has a very coherent structure where the Ministry of Planning programmes the attribution of European funds, and the Agency for Development and Cohesion manages all European funds in Portugal (except for those related with Agriculture and Fisheries, which have their respective stewardships). However, Spain does not have a planification department for these funds, a former claim that the Eixo Atlántico made to the national government; and the management of funds, especially those with the greatest impact on urban policy, ERDF and the Social Fund, is divided between the Ministry of Treasury, which manages the ERDF, and which managed before the Cohesion Fund when Spain had access to it, and the Ministry of Labour, which has historically managed the European Social Fund.

All this adds up to a complementary but different situation that helps to understand this complex picture: the European Union has no formal competences in Urban Policy. It gets involved in it at the behest of governments, but let us not delude ourselves: governments do not usually equip the European Commission with competences; it is not without reason that they invented the principle of subsidiarity. Then, what are governments demanding from the European Union in terms of urban policy? Obviously matters related to funding. In this way, a clear asymmetry is produced, on the one

side, between funding and the lack of a community strategy, and, on the other side, between countries like Portugal where funds respond to a strategy, and countries like Spain where funds are distributed without a previous scheme, depending on the needs of each one and especially on the political weight of each government. This is also an existing reality in Portugal, although to a lesser extent, especially when there are government disruptions in the same framework of community support.

However, in this arduous path full of difficulties like the one we are crossing, there were some very positive facts that determine the journey towards the creation of a European urban policy, which started to take shape with the approval of an European Urban Agenda. The most important fact and the best point of reference was the adoption of the Leipzig Charter about sustainable cities, which took place in this German city in 2007. This charter is the first solid document to draw a modern urban policy, and it established the principles of sustainability, comprehensiveness and citizen participation as the basis for the urban development of the future.

With this, it was sought an approach focused on the design of urban solutions that surrounded both the different government levels -the so-called vertical integration and multi-level dialogue- and the social and economic agents outside the institutions -the so-called horizontal integration and participation. The subsequent revisions, and other documents, completed a conceptual body that, promoted by the German presidency in 2007, will be culminated by a revision process from July onwards during the German presidency in 2020. This is why, from our point of view, it will be one of the greatest ideas for the post-pandemic European reconstruction, and which can be bolstered by the Portuguese presidency in January 2021, lead by a Prime Minister who has experience as the Lisbon mayor, and as such, is a prominent connoisseur of the most urgent needs for local governments.

For all this, we want to vindicate what has been one of our historical working axes, together with cooperation, along the 28 years of the Eixo Atlântico: urban policy. We are doing so through this publication that, together with referential documents that establish the conceptual framework of the European urban policy, is joined by a group of reflections by experts from Spain and Portugal, both from the Euroregion and from Lisbon and Madrid, which aims at strengthening the instruments for a debate in which all cities and mayors should get involved.

The benignity of the process and the debate should not abstract ourselves from a series of problems hidden between its lines, and about which we should set our position because this means the defence and safeguarding of the interests of our cities, and an essential contribution to promote a quality debate, representative within the Union.

In this sense, this document should not be just a commemoration of the Leipzig Charter, but rather the departure point to define what should be a new model of collaboration between administrations, based on co-responsibility and the clear distribution of competences, respecting the role of cities. One of the big questions raised by the diversity in the typology of European cities and the asymmetry that this implies is that the big metropolises, generating a bigger and more complex number of problems than medium-sized cities (and, consequently, a bigger urgency in their resolution), determined urban policy.

This meant confusing the concept of the urban with the concept of big metropolises, establishing a dependency between them that was inadequate in form and exclusionary in substance. Cities are the space where contradictions appear, creating the so-called social pathologies.

For example, problematic housing estates, consequence of a development that was not always conscious in the second half of the last century, related to populational rushes that abandoned rural areas to seek a better future in the cities, and the arrival of migrants to the most developed areas, coming in some cases from the inland and rural areas of the less developed countries in the Union, and, from the 70s onwards, from África, first due to the decolonization and war conflicts (Algeria in France, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique in Portugal, Equatorial Guinea in Spain, and the remains of the British Empire in the United Kingdom), and later due to hardship and war conflicts especially in Africa and some areas in Asia, which provoked an uncontrolled migration of people with cultures and religions that were not just different, but also very distant from the main cultural and religious traits in Europe.

This provoked not just an overpopulation in big capital cities like London, Paris or Madrid, but also the creation of ghettos with limited living conditions and which, especially in the case of France, represented a wake-up call for the whole EU when they started to appear in a more visible way in the 90s. In fact, this can be compared with the scarce conflicts provoked by the Latin-American migration in Spain and Portugal at the beginning of the 21st century, due to economic reasons. This migration, on the one hand, affected the growth of cities, and on the other hand did not provoke the same kind of conflicts that happened, for example, in France. This was not just due to cultural and religious affinities, but also to the fact that there were incipient elements of a urban policy that helped to manage these situations.

Social pathologies, especially the most serious ones (unemployment, drug addiction and alcoholism, gender and intrafamily violence, and crime), are situations that undermine cohabitation and deteriorate the urban structure to a large extent. Due to this, they are the ones that require a large amount

of mitigating resources, instead of attributing them to medium-sized cities that aim for a harmonic and sustainable urbanism, but which at the same time have the capacities to create a preventive and limiting effect over these social pathologies. In this sense, and to conclude this introduction, we believe that there are two fundamental contributions that must be taken into account. The first is the need to develop, as a high priority, a coherent and coordinated territory planning among the three administration levels involved in it: the national government, the autonomous governments and the councils in Spain, and the national government and the councils in Portugal. These levels join in Portugal the Coordination Commissions in its new configuration, more representative of the territory and less governmental, although the territory planning in Portugal has historically had a more coherent development.

The existence of ‘freguesias’ (parishes) with juridical character and of Intermunicipal Communities (CIMs) prevented one of the problems of the Galician inland: the impossibility that county-led places with less than 20,000 inhabitants, but which provide services to more than 50,000, compete for urban-related European funds due to the fact that the structure of counties does not have, at least in Galicia, legal personality, and this makes it impossible to meet the requirements stipulated by Brussels to access urban funds.

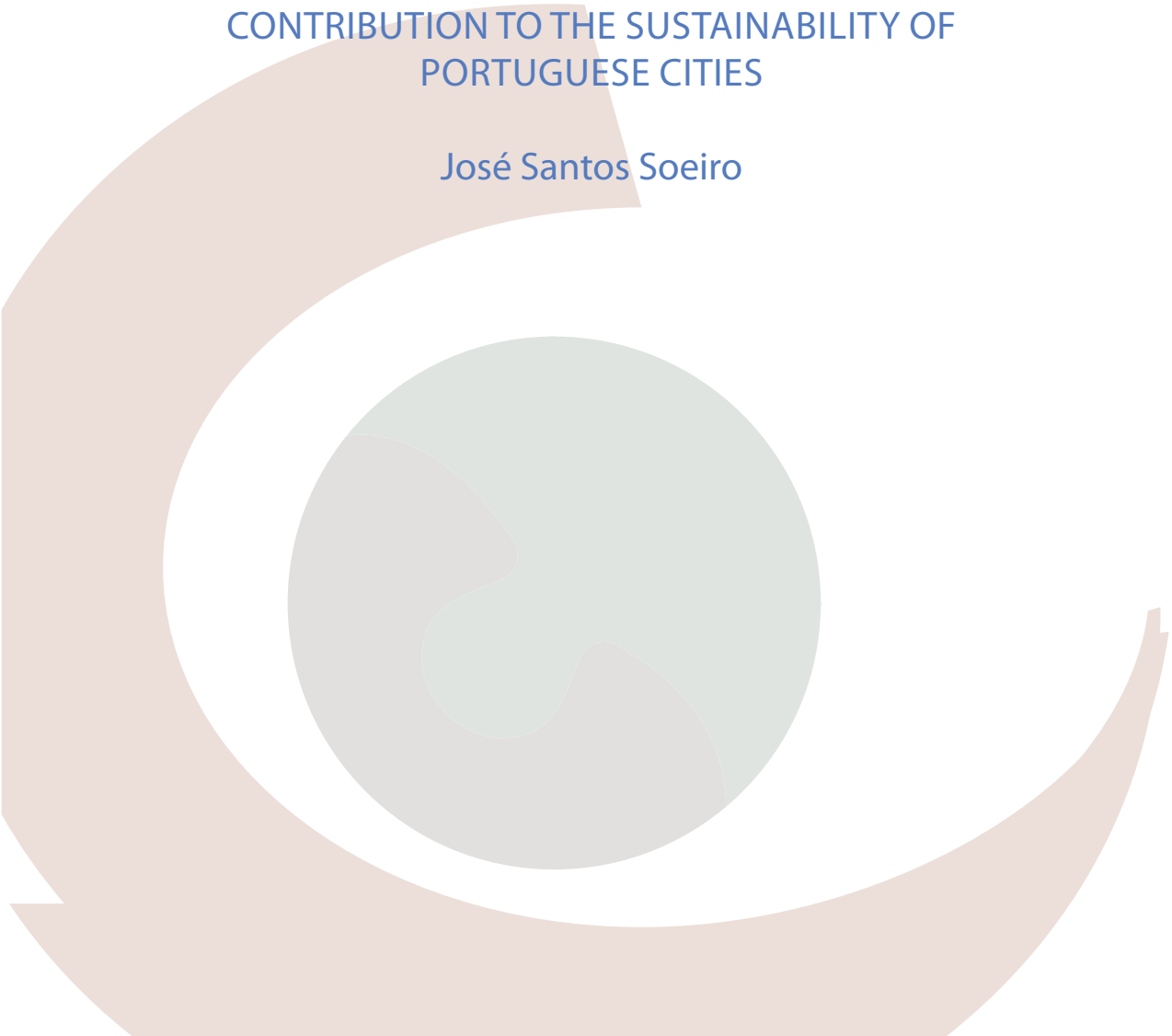
We consider that the solution to this problem can progress defining and developing an urban policy with a larger territorial basis. This, on the other hand, implies a larger participation of social, economic and institutional agents of the territory. In this sense we believe it is necessary and essential to involve the volunteering associations of the cities, like the Eixo Atlántico, which can compensate one of the biggest deficits of a governance that is coherent on the paper, but not as efficient in practice. We are talking about the participation of the FEMP in the committees of programming and accompaniment of both policies and funds which happen at a European level.

We are definitely not calling into question this participation, but it should be complemented with the participation of the federations of municipalities and regional provinces, as well as the volunteering associations of municipalities, since the reality of Galicia is not just different from that of Catalonia or Andalucía, but also has a very specific circumstance, which is the relation with Portugal: this creates a cross-border urban system with 7 million inhabitants which constitutes in its own right the third one in the Iberian Peninsula, behind Madrid and Barcelona, and ahead of Lisbon. This is something that the FEMP alone can not provide, and, given that there is not a regional structure of municipalities in Portugal, the FEGAMP can just handle a partial view of it. This is why we consider it necessary to create a multi-level participation in this area, where no one is irrelevant and everyone is needed.



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN POLICY
EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS
CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF
PORTUGUESE CITIES

José Santos Soeiro



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Abstract

The territory of Portugal shows strong asymmetries in the population and incomes. The challenge for us is to promote a regional development policy aimed at reducing the income gap between territories, which stimulates territorial cohesion and the competitiveness of territories.

National options for regional development are inseparable from the guidelines on the implementation of European structural and investment funds, i.e. a regional development policy is conditioned and is an extensive component of the European Union's Cohesion Policy.

Urban Policy is now one of the main responses of Cohesion Policy to the harmonious development of European territories. However, it cannot be seen as a policy aimed only at large metropolises and metropolitan areas. It promotes the creation of a cohesioned and articulated network of small and intermediate cities which, although marginal in relation to the main metropolitan areas, constitutes the vital mesh that gives resilience and economic and social dynamics to the territories.

The Sustainable Cities 2020 Strategy reinforces the contribution of the urban structure of the national territory and the improvement of the quality of life of populations in urban areas for the territorial development of the country, constituting a strategic reference for the application of the European structural and investment funds foreseen in Portugal 2020, reflecting the relevance conferred by Portugal to the principles of the Leipzig Charter. Territorial Strategies make a very important contribution to strengthening the territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy and are a mechanism ensuring that the specificities and different degrees of development of regions and sub-regions are duly taken into account.

Portugal 2020 promotes the implementation of Integrated Actions for Sustainable Urban Development (AIDUS), materialized through the Pacts for Development and Territorial Cohesion of the two Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Porto, as well as through interventions specifically aimed at urban regeneration and revitalization in higher-level urban centers.

The Strategic Urban Development Plan (PEDU) is the programming instrument that supports the contract between the managing authority and urban authorities.

The municipalities that make up the complementary urban centers of the urban network should have an urban regeneration action plan (PARU), accepted by the managing authority, consistent with the integrated territorial development strategy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document seeks to give an overview and synthetic on the strategy “Sustainable cities 2020”, which aims at the territorial development of the country by strengthening the urban structure of the national territory and improving the quality of life of populations in urban areas, recognizing that increasing the sustainability of cities will also lead to an increase in the country’s competitiveness. This general view is done in the context of the implementation of European structural and investment funds for the current 2014-2020 programming period.

The valorization and strengthening of the national urban system are fundamental conditions for the pursuit of the objectives and priorities established by Portugal and Union European, inherent to Portugal 2020 and the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020: to promote the competitiveness of the national economy, social cohesion and sustainable development of the country.

The Sustainable Cities 2020 strategy seeks to strengthen the strategic dimension of the role of cities in the various areas of the Portugal 2020 Strategy, being anchored in the paradigm of sustainable urban development and seeking to establish itself as a guiding document for the development of the territory.

As a strategic reference for the implementation of the European structural and investment funds foreseen in Portugal 2020, it reflects the relevance given by Portugal to the principles of the Leipzig Charter and the contribution they can make to the central plan promoted for the period 2014-2020: to put Portugal back on a path of growth and employment.

2. ONE OVERVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS

Portugal presents itself today clearly as a two-speed country. In the last decade, the population concentration has increased, with population gains taking place in the Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Porto, the Algarve and Madeira and in some medium-sized inland cities that tend to structure the surrounding rural area.

About 70% of the population living on the continental land is now in the coastal strip (50 km), with an average population density of around 350 inhabitants/km². The average population density of the interior today is 90 inhabitants/km². During the 21st century, the population living on the continental

land decreased by 0.5%; however, NUTS III in the interior decreased by 10.9% and in Lisbon Metropolitan Area it grows up by 5.7%.

Considering a purchasing power index of 100 for the Continent, the interior only reaches the value of 75, but Lisbon MA exceeds 125. The *pc* GDP dispersion indexes disclose divergence processes at the level of NUTS II and NUTS III. The “convergence regions of the Continent” worsened their initial position against the national average.

That is, in addition to demographic, economic and social conditions, the development model Portuguese has not proved capable of providing a process of regional convergence of *per capita* GDP. Portugal cannot develop based on such glaring inequalities. Inequalities when they assume proportions of this nature are themselves a serious obstacle to development, to the consecration of the constitutional principle of equal opportunities and to the social justice.



The challenge for us is to promote a regional development policy aimed at reducing the income gap between territories, which stimulates territorial cohesion and the competitiveness of the territories which we simply designate from within, measured and identified on a NUT III scale.

The problems of these territories, tending to be depopulated, aged and increasingly stripped of economic activity, cannot be solved on a basis of complementarity with the coast, on the contrary presupposing and requiring public policy instruments specifically designed and supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds specifically intended for them.

The evolution of mobility has been marked by a strong increase in communication infrastructure, especially road transport, but also a very particular concentration of collective mobility solutions in the most populated areas.

This trend has profoundly altered the territorial distribution of citizens and businesses seeking public services, affecting the country's territorial cohesion and contributing to the desertification of the interior, people and economic activity, leading in parallel to an overload of services, networks and infrastructure in the areas with higher density.

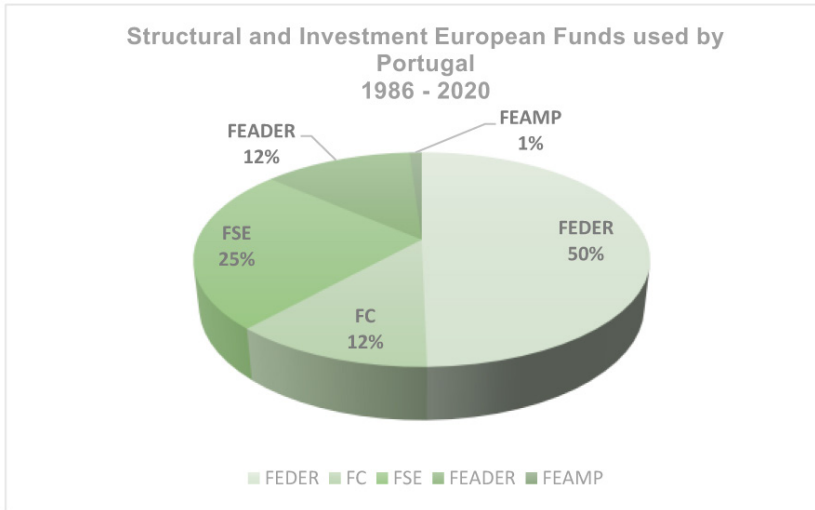
National options for regional development are inseparable from the guidelines on the implementation of European structural and investment funds, i.e. a regional development policy is conditioned and is an extensive component of the European Union's Cohesion Policy.

Structural and Investment European Funds used by Portugal
1986 - 2020

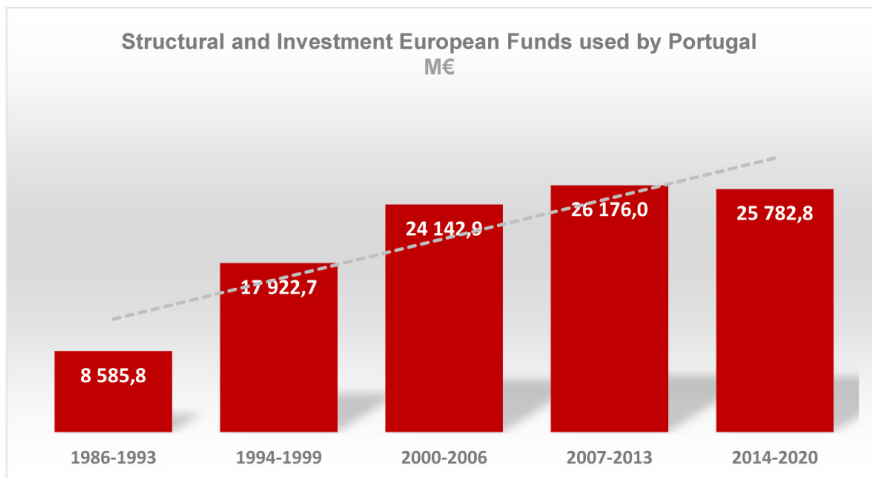
| | Total | % | ERDF | CF | SEF | ERDF (1) | FEAMP (2) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | M € | | | | | | |
| Ensemble of programming cycles | 102 686,9 | 100,0% | 51 024,2 | 12 339,9 | 25 317,5 | 12 939,8 | 1 065,5 |
| PT2020 (3) 2014-2020 | 25 859,5 | 25,2% | 10 776,9 | 2 861,7 | 7 769,9 | 4 058,5 | 392,5 |
| QREN 2007-2013 | 26 176,0 | 25,5% | 11 790,1 | 3 099,3 | 7 486,1 | 3 573,8 | 226,7 |
| QCA III 2000-2006 | 20 738,7 | 20,2% | 13 532,7 | | 4 784,2 | 2 185,0 | 236,8 |
| FC II 2000-2006 | 3 404,2 | 3,3% | | 3 404,2 | | | |
| QCA II 1994-1999 | 14 948,0 | 14,6% | 9 790,4 | | 3 087,6 | 1 860,5 | 209,5 |
| FC I 1993-1999 | 2 974,7 | 2,9% | | 2 974,7 | | | |
| QCA I 1986-1993 | 8 585,8 | 8,4% | 5 134,1 | | 2 189,7 | 1 262,0 | |

(1) Inclui FEADER e FEOGA (O)

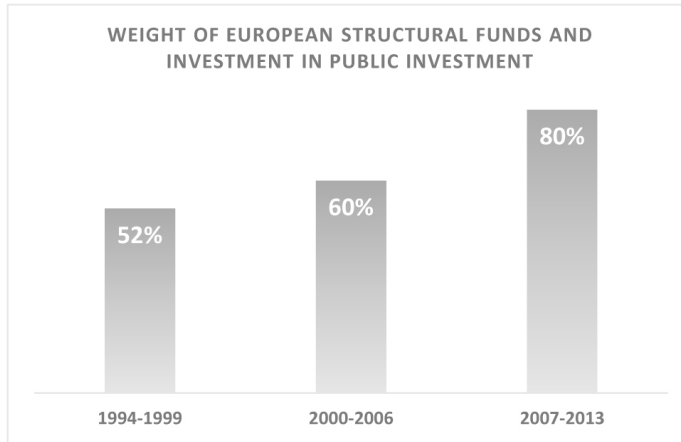
(2) Inclui FEAMP e IFOP



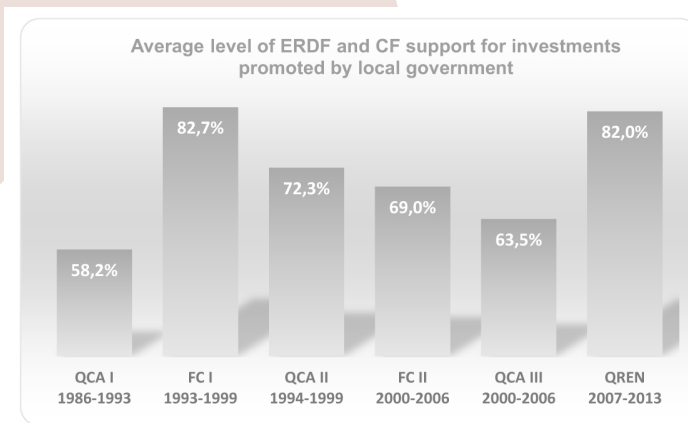
Since adhesion to the European Communities and including the current 2014-2020 programming cycle, Portugal has benefited from mobilization European structural and investment funds in an overall quantitative area of more than €102 billion.



The weight of European structural funds and investment in public investment has grown significantly from 52% in 1994-99 to 80% in the 2007-2013 programming cycle.



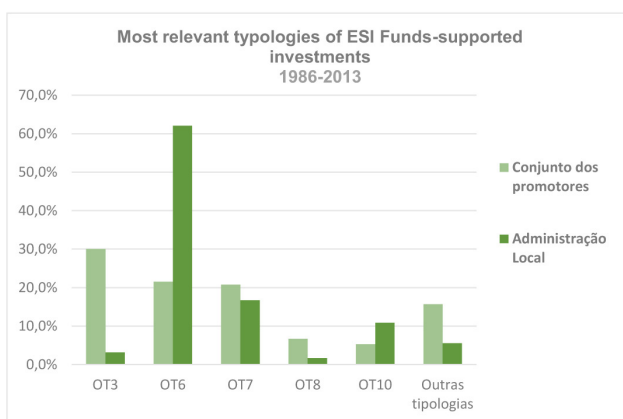
This development reflects the continued reduction in un-co-financed public investment, a trend that intensified after the financial crisis that began in 2009 and especially during the Economic and Financial Assistance Program for Portugal (*troika assistance*).



From the early times in which we sought to provide the territory with basic equipment aimed at improving the basic living conditions of citizens, water networks, sewage, roads, schools, etc., it has evolved into greater attention in enhancing the competitiveness of territories and cities.

Temporal evolution of investment typologies supported by ERDF and CF

| Typology of investments | Total | | 1986-1993 | 1993-1999 | 2000-2006 | 2007-2013 |
|--|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | M€ | % | M€ | | | |
| Total | 95 405,3 | 100,0% | 14 861,7 | 25 106,1 | 33 425,0 | 22 012,5 |
| 3 Strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises | 28 633,0 | 30,0% | 6 017,9 | 8 537,5 | 6 443,2 | 7 634,5 |
| 7 Promoting sustainable transport and eliminating bottlenecks in key infrastructure networks | 20 573,4 | 21,6% | 3 220,5 | 6 518,3 | 8 834,5 | 2 000,0 |
| 6 Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency | 19 842,7 | 20,8% | 2 233,2 | 5 551,5 | 8 082,3 | 3 975,7 |
| 10 Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning | 6 383,1 | 6,7% | 803,4 | 998,4 | 1 698,2 | 2 883,1 |
| 8 Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility | 5 024,9 | 5,3% | 169,1 | 88,9 | 4 271,2 | 495,7 |
| Other typologies | 14 948,2 | 15,7% | 2 417,7 | 3 411,4 | 4 095,5 | 5 023,6 |



Without a view of the territory, there is a risk that the new measures for Europe's recovery will accentuate regional asymmetries and social inequalities, and the new financial resources may tend to be oriented to regions with a higher level of wealth, more dynamic and better prepared for a more immediate response.



Use of European Structural and Investment
Funds (ERDF and CF) in the territory
1986 - 2013

| | M€ | % |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Programming cycles ensambly | 49 725,5 | 100,0% |
| Total | 16 140,0 | 32,5% |
| Centro | 11 286,7 | 22,7% |
| Alentejo | 5 622,0 | 11,3% |
| Lisboa | 9 016,6 | 18,1% |
| Algarve | 2 027,1 | 4,1% |
| Açores | 3 136,7 | 6,3% |
| Madeira | 2 496,4 | 5,0% |

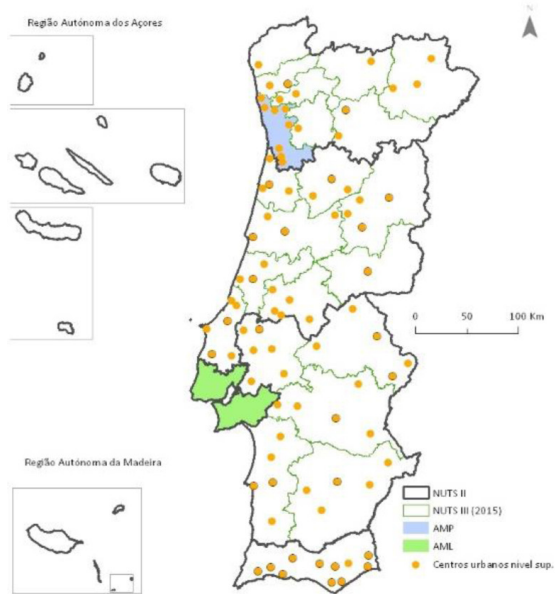
The focus of Europe's new recovery measures and the next multiannual financial framework in the energy and digital transition should not be to prevent the necessary attention to tackling regional disparities and the challenges facing Europe's regions.

The less developed regions, the inland regions and the territories of low population density, concepts that overlap for Portugal, continue and highlight social and economic problems that require other answers that, if not met, more asymmetric will remain in the future.

Urban Policy is now one of the main responses of Cohesion Policy to the harmonious development of European territories. However, it cannot be seen as a policy aimed only at large metropolises and metropolitan areas.

The incentive to the urban system of the territories of low population density, through the creation of a cohesion comprehensive and articulated network of small and intermediate cities that, although marginal in relation to the main metropolitan areas, constitutes the vital network that confers resilience and economic and social dynamics to the territories.

NUTS III (2015) e centros urbanos de nível superior (PNPOT/PROT)



The strengthening of cities and towns is today the fundamental condition for rebalancing the regions and halting the population emptying of increasingly large portions of the territory. They will be at the forefront of combating social exclusion that predominantly occurs in urban centers.

3. THE SUSTAINABLE CITIES 2020 STRATEGY

The **Sustainable Cities 2020 Strategy** reinforces the contribution of the urban structuring of the national territory and the improvement of the quality of life of populations in urban areas for the territorial development of the country.

The creation of a strategy that guides cities and evaluation of their implementation results from the recognition that the sustainable, integrated and harmonious development of the Portuguese territory depends, crucially, on the capacity of their cities to assert themselves as their central agents, catalysts for environmental, social and economic development, leaders in promoting equity, social cohesion and the safeguarding and empowerment of territorial resources and natural and cultural heritage.



Portuguese cities participate in a network consisting of many medium-sized cities and some large metropolises, in a distribution pattern that contributes crucially to the construction and identity of the European area and to the quality of life of their populations. The Sustainable Cities 2020 Strategy aims to highlight a way to territorial development, centered on cities and the critical role they play in structuring territories, their development and cohesion.

It is based on the strategic options of territorial basis established in the framework of the policy of spatial planning and urbanism and its instruments of reference, namely the territorial model and the urban system poured, respectively at national and regional level, in the National Program of Spatial Planning Policy (PNPOT) and in the Regional Plans for Spatial Planning (PROT), as well as the specific options for local strategic development of territorial plans of municipal and intermunicipal scope.

It is structured according to the principles of an integrated approach to territorial development, considering the incorporation of different sectorial policies (environment, employment, transport, education, health, etc.) at various organizational scales and levels (national, regional, sub-regional, local), and advocating the participation and coordinated cooperation of different actors, public and private:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Urban structuring of the territory, promoting the strengthening of the national urban system and assuming it as a cross-cutting reference and ordering criterion in the implementation of public policies, for the balanced and efficient structuring of the national territory and for the strategic coordination of regions and cities |
| 2 | Territorialisation of policies, fostering integrated territorial-based approaches that ensure the implementation of public policies through an adaptation to the specificities of the places |
| 3 | Horizontal coordination, promoting strategic and operational convergence of sectoral policies and urban and territorial development policies, through coordination and articulation between the various institutional actors, assuming a long-term perspective for the sustainability trajectories of urban systems, and ensuring coherence between the available strategic management instruments |
| 4 | Vertical coordination, promoting the coordination of public policy interventions with territorial expression between national, regional and local governance levels, ensuring a multilevel strategic and operational framework and the coherence and optimized programming of actions |
| 5 | Active involvement, ensuring that urban development strategies are built with the involvement and active participation of a representative framework of urban agents and citizens, which ensures the appropriation, accountability and commitments of all partners, focusing on these same strategies in achieving results |
| 6 | Knowledge of the territory, promoting the systematic, integrated and up-to-date production of information on cities, including their potential for resources, capacities, functional relations and urban dynamics under a common framework of sustainable urban development |
| 7 | Collective capacity building, promoting innovation and collective learning, through the dissemination and dissemination of experiences and good practices, through local, national and international platforms, cooperation between public, private and civil society, and between governments and citizens |

The **Sustainable Cities 2020 Strategy** reinforces the contribution of the urban structuring of the national territory and the improvement of the quality of life of populations in urban areas for the territorial development of the country, and have been decisive contributions to the implementation of this strategy:

- ✓ The implementation of ITI - Pacts for Development and Territorial Cohesion and local development strategies in urban environment (DLBC);
- ✓ Support focused on the regeneration, revitalization and urban rehabilitation of major urban centres, including through a financial instrument created specifically for this purpose;
- ✓ The creation of an Urban Sustainability Index, a synthetic index composed of a set of composite indexes that measure and characterize the state and evolution of Portuguese cities in critical dimensions of urban sustainability, which allows to create a healthy competition between cities and NUTS III, and that ensures the evaluation of the results of investments in actions related to sustainable urban development;
- ✓ The promotion of networks and platforms for urban knowledge and innovation, as well as the dissemination of good national practices during this period.

4. THE NATIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING POLICY PROGRAM

The **National Spatial Planning Policy Program (PNPOT)** is an instrument for the development of the territory, of a strategic and national nature, taking precedence over the other instruments of land management, and is also a rational cooperation with the other Member States for the organization of the territory of the European Union.

The PNPOT prevails over all other territorial management instruments in force, establishing the principles and guiding rules of the discipline to be defined by new spatial planning plans. The options defined therein should reflect a reciprocal commitment to compatibility with the actions of other instruments, such as national sectoral plans (e.g. employment, economic growth, rural development, sustainable development, climate change, energy, nature and biodiversity conservation, sea, water, forests, combating desertification, etc.), special land-planning plans and regional land-use planning plans.

Under the PNPOT, the following strategic objectives for Portugal have been defined, which are the reference framework for policy commitments with territorial impact:

| | |
|----|--|
| 01 | Preserve and enhance biodiversity, resources and natural, landscape and cultural heritage, make sustainable use of energy and geological resources and prevent and minimise risks; |
| 02 | Strengthen Portugal's territorial competitiveness and its integration into the Iberian, European, Atlantic and global areas; |
| 03 | Promote the polycentric development of territories and strengthen infrastructures to support territorial integration and cohesion; |
| 04 | Ensure territorial equity in the provision of collective infrastructure and equipment and universality in access to services of general interest, promoting social cohesion; |
| 05 | Expand advanced information and communication networks and infrastructures and encourage their increasing use by citizens, businesses and public administration; |
| 06 | Enhance the quality and efficiency of territorial management by promoting informed, active and responsible participation of citizens and institutions. |

5. TERRITORIAL STRATEGIES IN PORTUGAL 2020

Territorial Strategies make a very relevant contribution to strengthening the territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy and is a mechanism ensuring that the specificities and different degrees of development of regions and subregions are properly taken into account and ensures the direct involvement of sub-regional authorities and regional and local authorities in the planning and implementation of programs, relevant initiatives and projects, leading to a greater sense of ownership of European, national and regional development objectives at all levels.

Portugal has covered a path of affirmation of NUTS II, not only as a regional management scale of European funds, but also as a reference scale for the deconcentrated management of sectorial policies and, more recently, of affirmation of NUTS III as a privileged level for the articulations between central government and local governments, as well as for inter-municipal cooperation and the increase in the scale of intervention of local projects.

In the period 2014-2020, this path is sought either by reinforcing the logic of regional programming at NUTS II level or by proposing as a territorial reference for the realization of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) the NUTS III scale (or contiguous NUTS III groupings) through Pacts for Development and Territorial Cohesion.



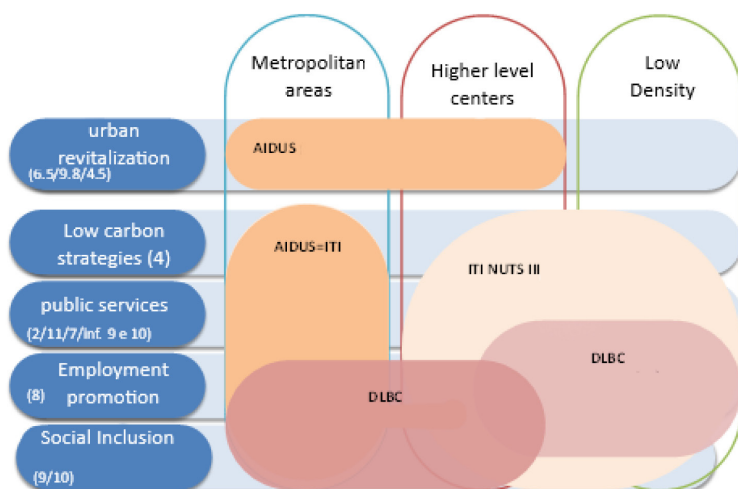
This way that began selectively in the CCA III (2000-2006) continued in the QREN (2007-2013) exhaustively, with the generalization to the entire territory of the Continent of global grants with associations of municipalities. In continuity, in the period 2014-2020 it seeks to consolidate this path, either by strengthening the logic of regional programming at the level of NUTS II (for example as the territorial scale best suited for the development of the regional component of the research and innovation strategy for smart specialization), or by proposing as a territorial reference for the implementation of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) on the NUTS III scale through **Pacts for Development and Territorial Cohesion**, without prejudice to providing for the possibility of achieving ITI in other territorial configurations, directed at operations in limited and selected areas (e.g. ITI Oceans).

Central elements of the territorialisation of actions

- ✓ Centrality of the regional (NUT II) and subregional (NUTIII) levels: levels of strategic planning and concentration of interventions.
- ✓ Consolidation of a subregional mesh (CIM/ITI – NUTS III)
- ✓ Centrality of the urban system defined by law (PNPOT), with three levels:
 - Metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto;
 - Urban system that structures the remaining regions;
 - areas of low density with a strong rural aspect
- ✓ Use of non-administrative geographies in local strategies (rural and coastal DLBC and urban DLBC) and, in other cases, focused on the promotion of a very specific territorial asset (e.g. Sea);
- ✓ Governance and monitoring elements that promote integrated monitoring of territorial approaches (e.g. specific monitoring, common CA on this issue, use of sub-regional strategies in the "RIS3 Regional Councils"

The scale of NUTS III, more specifically their **Territorial Development Strategies**, also serves as a reference to ensure the strategic coherence of other local interventions, in urban, rural or areas of articulation between them.

This seeks to create a complete and clear sub-regional strategic framework that ensures the coherence of interventions, regardless of how they are implemented (ITI or DLBC), and that allows rural development, urban development and coastal development to be explicitly assumed as an integral part of regional development.



Being global, this sub-regional strategic framework, energized by the associations of municipalities, in conjunction with the other actors relevant to the integrated processes of regional development, is also to be assumed as a reference in the context of other interventions, in addition to those that will be integrated in the Pacts for Development and Territorial Cohesion (ITI) or in DLBC promoted in the territory.

For example, the component of subregional strategies focused on promoting business competitiveness should be weighed within the governance mechanisms associated with regional smart specialisation strategies or within the framework of the mechanisms for weighting the regional merits of incentives to SMEs.

Pacts for development and territorial cohesion – ITI NUTS III

Main challenges:

- ✓ structuring of the national urban system and attractiveness of urban areas
- ✓ modernization of local public administration
- ✓ promotion of low carbon strategies
- ✓ protection of the environment and adaptation to climatic changes
- ✓ employment sustainability and quality
- ✓ cohesion and social inclusion

Territories:

- ✓ NUT III (or groups of contiguous NUTS III). Universal to the entire territory of the continent

Responsible:

Intermunicipal Communities and Metropolitan Areas

Pacts for Territorial Development and Cohesion have been implemented throughout the continent, using the regulatory instrument for Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI), covering the interventions of municipal and intermunicipal entities essential to the implementation of the strategy, with special emphasis on the reorganization of the provision of public and collective services, whether in the area of inclusion or education and training, as well as in increasing the quality of provision of these same services or services provided directly by municipal and intermunicipal entities, in particular through measures promoting administrative modernization and the qualification of such services.

Territorial development strategies
Portugal 2020

| | | nº | 1 000 € |
|--|------|------------|------------------|
| Pacts for Territorial Development | ITI | 22 | 1 161 628 |
| Local Development Strategies | EDL | 82 | 306 200 |
| Strategic Urban Development Plans | PEDU | 105 | 773 971 |
| Urban Regeneration Action Plans | PARU | 170 | 203 095 |

Information reported on 31-12-2019

Not all typologies of territorial development strategies are indicated



6. INTEGRATED ACTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Under the perspective of structuring the urban system, as defined in the PNPOT and PROT, the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 promotes an integrated intervention focused on the following areas:

- Strengthening the role of **Metropolitan Areas** in structuring the urban system, with particular focus on the challenges associated with low-carbon strategies (e.g. energy efficiency and sustainable mobility) and urban regeneration and revitalization;
- **The promotion of urban regeneration and revitalization focused on urban centers that structure the national urban system** and serve as an interface in the urban-rural articulation (higher-level centers) and with incidence in urban rehabilitation areas. It is intended to strengthen the capacity to regenerate and value the built areas, qualify public spaces, rehabilitate housing and foster new urban functions in obsolete or at-risk areas, being privileged integrated operations of rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas.

In order to address these challenges, **Integrated Actions for Sustainable Urban Development (AIDUS)** are promoted, materialized through the Pacts for The Development and Territorial Cohesion of the two Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Porto, as well as through interventions specifically aimed at urban regeneration and revitalization in higher-level urban centers, through specific allocations in autonomous axes of their operational programs in the North, Centro, Lisbon and Alentejo, thus contributing to the compliance of the regulatory requirement of minimum concentration of 5% of ERDF in AIDUS.

In this framework, AIDUS has been implemented to pursue Sustainable Development strategies considering the relevance of urban systems in energizing growth and jobs, competitiveness and innovation, as well as sustainability and promoting quality of life. AIDUS thus intends to structure operations based and specified in urban development strategies.

The AIDUS instrument, in addition to ITI interventions in the Lisbon and Porto Metropolitan Areas, has as its central role the promotion of the attractiveness of urban areas of incidence, as well as the territorial structuring of higher-level urban centers and urban regeneration and revitalization, cohesion, employment and territorial sustainability, and the materialization of the AIDUS instrument will be continued as follows:

- In strategic terms, AIDUS are the ITI that correspond to the implementation of the Pacts for Development and Territorial Cohesion in the Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Porto, with special emphasis on the promotion of low carbon strategies;
- Through an autonomous axis in the North POR, Centro, Lisbon and Alentejo, that includes the components of regeneration and urban revitalization in urban centers of higher level.

This autonomous axis also integrates the allocation for a financial instrument for urban regeneration and revitalization, including the rehabilitation component of housing and energy efficiency in housing, public buildings and equipment, covered by urban regeneration and revitalization interventions. Community funds for housing intervention in the context of urban regeneration and revitalization are mobilized exclusively through financial instruments.

| Financial instrument for urban rehabilitation and revitalization | |
|--|--|
| 1282 M€ | proposed investment |
| 669 M€ | contracted investment |
| 1133 | rehabilitated housing |
| 1790 | new residents |
| 29152 | annual reduction of primary energy use |

Information reported at 30-06-2020

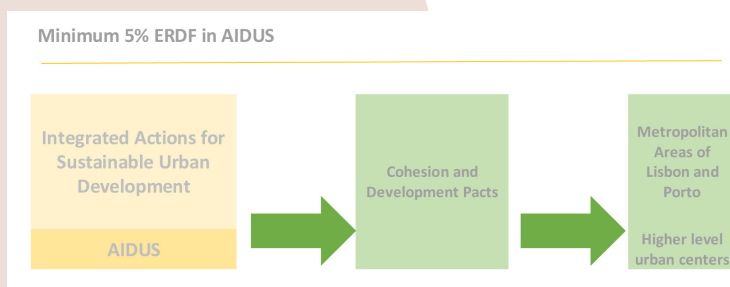
The entities responsible for implementing AIDUS will be the **Urban Authorities**, more specifically:

- **The Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Porto**, in the case of the implementation of the respective pacts for the development and territorial cohesion;
- **The municipalities** that streamline and implement the action plans for urban regeneration and revitalization that will be supported within the priority axes of the North, Central and Alentejo OPs and that by proposing the specific content of the action plans, participate in the selection of operations, as set out in Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation.



As synthesis, the implementation of AIDUS is carried out by the ITI of the two Metropolitan Areas, complemented by the autonomous axes of the Continent's POR in its component of operations to enhance the urban structure of the territories of incidence and promotion of the attractiveness and competitiveness of cities, through operations aimed at improving the urban environment and the revitalization of cities and operations of rehabilitation and physical regeneration, economic and social development of disadvantaged communities and urban areas, where implemented in higher-level urban centers.

The concentration of these interventions in these higher-level urban centers, which aims to comply with the regulatory requirement of 5% ERDF in AIDUS, does not invalidate the possibility of regeneration and revitalization actions in urban centers in other regions of the country (Algarve, Azores and Madeira), nor in lower-level urban centers in the North, Central and Alentejo regions (in which these cases do not contribute to the ring-fencing of AIDUS).



7. STRATEGIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The **Strategic Urban Development Plan (PEDU)** is the programming instrument that supports the contract between the managing authority and urban authorities.

Urban authorities formulate an integrated urban development strategy (strategic urban development plans) including, inter alia, investment priorities 4e, 6e and 9b and their allocation, being implemented by urban authorities, including the selection of operations implementing the strategy.

The strategic urban development plans are selected according to common selection principles that weigh the proportionality of the proposed investment, the administrative capacity of urban authorities, the socio-functional characteristics of the space to be intervened, the coherence and articulation of the interventions envisaged with other instruments to promote urban revitalization, and ensure

a critical dimension that allows the achievement of relevant impacts of intervention in the densification of the urban population and sustainable urban development , on environmental and urban quality.

The PEDU should be the integration element of the following planning instruments, which support each of the investment priorities:

- **Sustainable urban mobility plan**, defined at NUTS III level
- **Urban regeneration action plan**, with territorial scope incident in historic centers, riverside areas or abandoned industrial areas, within one (or more) Urban Rehabilitation Area(s) (ARU).
- **Integrated action plan for disadvantaged communities**, with territorial delimitation corresponding to small sub municipal areas, according to the socio-functional characteristics of the space. The integrated action plan for disadvantaged communities, and consequently the physical, economic and social regeneration operations to be carried out, should focus on critical areas of the municipal territory, with interventions at the physical level, existing, to be accompanied with interventions of a social nature. In territorial terms interventions are not limited to ARU.

The investment priority 6.5 of the regional programs of the North, Centre and Alentejo include the *“Adoption of measures to improve the urban environment, revitalize cities, recover and decontaminate abandoned industrial areas, including reconversion areas, reduce air pollution and promote noise reduction measures”*.

In view of the intended territorial focus of the interventions, with regard to the territorial dimension of urban regeneration intervention (PI 6.5), it is a basic criterion to constitute a territorially defined area, focusing on sub municipal spaces of urban rehabilitation areas (ARU), namely historic centers, riverside areas or conversion areas of abandoned industrial areas. Urban regeneration interventions supported by a financial instrument should also count on the participation of urban authorities by issuing an opinion on the framework of applications in the strategic urban development plan.

The Urban Authorities are responsible for the selection of operations, and it is up to them to apply the selection criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee of their operational financing program, as well as to attest to the conformity of the operation with its strategic plan for sustainable urban development.

8. URBAN REGENERATION ACTION PLANS

The **Urban Regeneration Action Plans** (PARU) should include the economic dynamism of the urban center space and, in particular, the reception of productive initiatives related to trade and services.

In the context of the actions of urban regeneration and rehabilitation of buildings planned for the incident territory, in addition to the component related to the requalification of the housing stock, the dimension of requalification of retail trade is promoted and reinforced, as a basic component of the urban experience, due to the positive social impacts that tend to generate and the potential they contain in relation specifically to the development and promotion of tourist activity in the area to be intervened.

The municipalities that make up the complementary urban centers of the urban network should have an **urban regeneration action plan** (PARU), accepted by the managing authority, consistent with the integrated territorial development strategy.

The operations to be considered are selected and approved by the managing authority by applying the selection criteria approved by the monitoring committee of the respective funder OPs and conformity assessment with its urban regeneration action plan. Typologies of operations that can be included in the PARU:

- ✓ Comprehensive rehabilitation of buildings for housing, equipment for collective use, commerce or services, public or private, with an age equal to or greater than 30 years.
- ✓ Rehabilitation of public space, since it is associated with rehabilitation actions of the surrounding building complex in progress or concluded 5 years ago or less, which may involve the demolition of buildings for the creation of public space and the recovery and expansion of green infrastructures.
- ✓ Rehabilitation of abandoned spaces and industrial units with a view to their conversion, intended for the types of use referred to in the previous lines.
- ✓ Development of actions with a view to the management and animation of the urban area, the promotion of economic activity, the valorization of urban spaces and the mobilization of local communities, provided that they are directly related to the actions foreseen in the previous lines.
- ✓ Studies and actions associated with the improvement of air quality and noise reduction and the quality of life in urban areas, especially the realization of pilot projects to reduce air pollution, the reinforcement and modernization of the network urban air quality measurement at a regional level, conducting regional emissions inventories with relevant information for air quality models, and subsequent integration and making available in the national information system (QualAr), creation of air quality assessment models with spatial resolution at regional, urban and road levels, and the preparation of studies and plans with a view to producing information to support decision-making on noise.

The Municipality shall present its strategy for the actions to be developed in the investment priority 6.5 – Adoption of measures to improve the urban environment, to revitalize cities, recover and decontaminate abandoned industrial areas, including conversion zones, to reduce air pollution and to promote noise reduction measures, presenting at least the following elements:

- 01 Diagnosis, and the socio-functional characteristics of the space to be intervened should be signalled, the main problems and priorities for its territory supported by a set of statistical indicators of pre-determined basis and supported, to a large extent, in census data;
- 02 Strategic objectives, including the involvement of the various actors in the territory to intervene;
- 03 Territorial delimitation plan of the perimeter in which it is intended to intervene, and the strategy has to focus on historic centers, riverside areas or abandoned industrial areas, within one or more Urban Rehabilitation Areas (ARU);
- 04 Housing model - demographic evolution, restocking, forms and types of housing occupancy and regeneration;
- 05 Economic model - functional reconversion and revitalization of the local business fabric;
- 06 Rules and criteria for the protection of architectural and archaeological heritage;
- 07 Indicative identification of the investments to be developed, both in terms of planned collective equipment and in terms of interventions in public space, by public and private entities and estimation of public investments, achievements and expected results (quantified targets). The number of buildings that are badly degraded or in need of major repairs included in the ARU that is expected to be intervened should also be quantified.
- 08 Governance model, explaining the involvement of actors and the instruments and mechanisms of leadership, participation, accountability, monitoring, monitoring and evaluation.



THE EVOLUTION OF URBAN POLICY IN THE EU
ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE BALANCED DEVELOPMENT
OF ALL TERRITORIES

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“Europe has all that it takes to tackle the greatest of challenges. We can do this, together. What we need is everyone’s engagement and the political will to follow through”. Timmermans and Katainen, 2019, “Towards a sustainable Europe in 2030”. Prologue”¹

Abstract

To talk about urban policy in the context of the European Union (EU) means to refer fundamentally to the role that member states have played in order to promote that, in absence of specific competences about urbanism within the community institutions, it should be the voluntary cooperation between these and the former, besides other actors of undeniable relevance (among which cities are included), the one that lights the shared way towards global sustainability. The EU’s work is being centered, according to the Urban Agenda for the European Union, around normative, financial and knowledge exchange proposals. All of this upon the basis of a work method based on thematic work groups (partnerships) and on action plans that emerged from these experiences. Paraphrasing Timmermans and Katainen, Europe has everything that is needed, challenges are defined, and there is a formal commitment to face them together, but there are suspicions about the existence of a real political will to implement it, as well as specific funding for it, and an adequate coordination between the territorial cohesion policy and the urban policy.

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1. Discussion paper “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030”

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3b096b37-300a-11e9-8d04-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF>

1. INTRODUCTION

On May 30th 2016, in Amsterdam, the EU ministers responsible for urban policies, under the presidency of Ronald Plasterk (Minister for Internal Affairs of the Kingdom of Holland), endorsed the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU), closing a long period with more than ten years of an eventful search of a formal commitment about urban policies at a community level, which would open the door towards a new form of multilevel cooperation whose present is already outlined, but whose future is still uncertain.



Figure 1. Urban Agenda for the EU logo.

The importance of this agreement should be gauged from the perspective of the absence of specific attributions for urbanism within the community institutions. The EU Treaties did not attribute competences in this regard, and even when the Treaty of Lisbon, approved on December 13th 2007, incorporated territorial cohesion among the shared competences between the EU and the member states (art. 4.2.c), it still was an attempt to face the territorial challenges through the improvement of the coordination between sectoral policies at all scales, without including urban policy in a specific and individualized way. The unprecedented strengthening of the sectoral aspects (at the international, national, and even local level) has been a common wrong, quite difficult to tackle, in contrast with complex, transversal, interrelated and cohesive views of the global aspects. This entails, essentially, everything that is related to the urban sphere and, definitely, territorial and urban planning.

The aim of this article is to highlight, above all, the effort of member states within this journey, as well as the important role that they played. The continued work carried out by them and the European institutions with regard to urban policy along many years has been done beyond the specific sectoral formations of the EU², and with a great spirit of voluntariness within the commitments that, despite having been unequal along the years, have had an undeniable worth.

2. There are ten of these formations: General Affairs; Foreign Affairs; Economic and Financial Affairs (including budgets); Justice and Internal Affairs (including civil protection); Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumers; Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space); Transport, Telecommunications and Energy; Agriculture and Fisheries; Environment; Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (including audiovisual matters).

Reviewing the so-called “Urban Acquis” -to which a whole commented Annex is dedicated in this book- should be enough to acknowledge that, besides the competential sphere of each member state or the community institutions, a common way has been travelled in order to design, organize and give value to a whole system of informal collaboration, which has ended up producing documents with authentic formal commitments for all their participants.

The effort of the European institutions has also been remarkable and a key one in relation to funding. In fact, it is well-known the support that it has given to specific projects in cities, or programmes related to urban development, through initiatives like URBAN³ or JESSICA⁴. It has not just been about the funding, but also about other aspects like the institutional promotion of city networks, as well as networks of exchange and dissemination of knowledge or good practices, like URBACT⁵ and EUKN⁶, and even the support of the implementation of mechanisms that allow the design and monitoring of urban policies, like URBAN AUDIT⁷ and the Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities (RFSC⁸). Through all of these initiatives, the EU has gradually played a role of support for cities and European regions in the search of a larger and better competitiveness and cohesion, as the Commission has repeatedly acknowledged, although it has been smaller in relation to the balanced development of all territories.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded between 1989 and 2006, with more than 1,600 million euros, the so-called urban pilot projects (Phase I, from 1989 until 1994, and Phase II, from 1997 until 1999), and the URBAN community initiatives (I, between 1994 and 1999, and II, between 2000 and 2006). Moreover, the Urban Axis, within the Operational Programme of Sustainable Development 2014-2020, has been funded with 1,012,754,015€ from ERDF funds, with the aim of assigning resources to urban areas and cities, selecting, through open calls, the ISUD strategies (integrated sustainable urban development).

3. URBAN: ERDF assistance for the implementation of innovative strategies or urban regeneration that, by means of an integrated approach which considers the social, economic and environmental aspects, favours a sustainable urban development in accordance with the principles and strategic orientations of community policies.

4. JESSICA: *Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas*. Initiative of the European Commission developed in collaboration with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Council of Europe Development Bank, in order to provide financial instruments that help in the implementation of sustainable urban development and urban regeneration actions.

5. URBACT: European programme of exchange and learning that promotes sustainable and integrated urban development, which covers 550 cities, 29 countries and 7000 active local agents.

6. EUKN (*European Knowledge Network*): network currently made up of eight European countries (Spain included) and knowledge and research institutions about urban matters, which aims to generate a professional community which shares knowledge in such areas and exchanges good practices.

7. URBAN AUDIT: European project sponsored by the DG REGIO of the European Commission, together with Eurostat, that compiles statistic information that allows to compare the quality of life in the main European cities. It collects data approximately every 3 years.

8. RFSC: voluntary tool to promote sustainability in European cities, designed with and for cities, and shared at a European level. It is also translated to Spanish to enable its use by city councils.

And besides this strict economic commitment, as indicated in its name, there is also an integrated approach as the methodology to consolidate a new way of working in urban areas, more coordinated, participative, strategic and also efficient and sustainable. In sum, more attuned to the new postulates of multilevel governance that demand, at a global level, the United Nations Urban Agenda⁹ (NUA, 2016) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)¹⁰.



Figure 2. United Nations Urban Agenda logo.



Figure 3. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development logo.

Cities have also played an important role in this common effort towards the creation of a community urban policy, being real actors of the sustainable urban development of the future, in competition with states themselves, especially in a continent like Europe, which is mainly urban. As CASTELLS and BORJA (1998) argue, “nation states are too small to control and lead the global flows of power, wealth and technology of the new system, and too big to represent the plurality of social interests and cultural identities within society, thus losing legitimacy both as representative institutions and as efficient organizations”.

Urban areas house in Europe more than two thirds of the population, they generate 85% of GDP, they represent between 60 and 80% of the energy use, and they face different challenges from the social to the economic sphere, without losing sight of the environmental aspect. All of this within a territorial context where more than 75% of the territory is rural, but where the urbanization rate is getting higher and higher, as do the size of the cities themselves.

The EU already has more than one hundred metropolitan areas where more than 60% of the population lives. Therefore, tackling the analysis of the generation of the EU urban policy and its contribution to the balanced development of all territories makes perfect sense.

9. Spanish version in <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-Spanish.pdf>

10. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/2015/09/la-asamblea-general-adopta-la-agenda-2030-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible>

The wider international context also contributes to such interest, inasmuch as there is a planetary commitment towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and it will be necessary that all the actors of this change work together, side by side and hand in hand, so that no one is left behind: international organisms, regions, states, villages and cities, the academic community, the civil society, financial entities, the private and professional sectors, etc. The Commission itself has acknowledge this, when it states that the 2030 Agenda of the UN and the SDG are the compass and the map and therefore determine the strategic framework of the EU and its member states.



Figure 4. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda.

2. THE WORK OF MEMBER STATES IN URBAN AND TERRITORIAL MATTERS

The urban policy of the EU has evolved through a particular intergovernmental way of working and the European institutions themselves, which gives rise to the so-called “soft policies” (DE SANTIAGO, E. 2017), which identifies policies at a European level where there is no previous competence framework, nor formal nor direct, and which thus depend on the initiatives that are voluntarily developed among the involved actors. Their results are therefore known as “soft law”, that is, legal figures that lack the binding force in the shape of laws or decrees, but which maintain a kind of legal relevance, besides the consequent political commitment.

The work structure of member states within the EU is organized around the rotating Presidencies of the Council, which rotate every six months among the twenty seven member states.

The relevance of these urban matters and the priorities established within them depends on the agendas of thematic activities that each state wishes to organize, and also on the system of presidential trios established since 2010, which incorporates a new initial three-way coordination about a wider coordination process¹¹. When the agenda includes urban aspects of interest, they organize meetings which may have one, two, or three different levels: the technical level, which has its semiannual meeting, and two political levels, the General Directors and the Ministers (which will always be informal, because the competences in urban matters are not delegated). These meetings can be set up depending on the priorities of the Presidency at such moment, and the relevance of the matters to be discussed. There will not be, in general, an informal Ministers meeting when the Presidency does not want to propose a document that should be object of endorsement or commitment by all member states, and which happens quite often.

In accordance with this, it could be said that the key role to ensure the continuity and coherence of these works is played by the Urban Development Group, UDG, as a permanent work group at a technical level, which carries out a first approach to the corresponding theme and which provides, from such technical level¹², proposals which will later be discussed and supported or rejected by the first political level, which is the General Directors. With both interministerial work groups they prepare the documents, agreements and pacts which should finally be supported by Ministers and end up shaping the urban *acquis* of the EU.

But it is not just member states that make up this work structure: in the aforementioned three levels there are also representatives of the associate states (Norway, Switzerland) and candidates (Turkey), the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions (CoR), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), other community institutions of European relevance in urban matters, such as the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Environment Agency, the European city associations (CEMR, Council of European Municipalities and Regions and EURO-CITIES), and other actors (ETCP-CEU Council for European Urbanism, EUKN, URBACT, etc).

Concerning territorial matters, there is also a similar work methodology and structure, and its articulation in urban matters depends mainly on the coordination degree which both disciplines have in each member state. The coordination at a European level is guaranteed because the cohesion policy

11. The tree-way presidencies where Spain is included is also made up of Belgium and Hungary. In the case of Portugal, it is Germany and Slovenia.

12. The representation of this UDG corresponds to the Sub-Directorate General of Urban Policies of the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda (MITMA), in agreement with the competences attributed in relation with the "policies of sustainable urban development which implement the 2030 Agenda and the international Urban Agendas" and "the monitoring at a national and international level of the initiatives and programmes about sustainable urban development" (Royal Decree 953/2018, July 27th).

is one of the community competences, so there are other formal work groups with their headquarters in Brussels, like the COCOF, or Committee of the Coordination of Funds, recently replaced by the COESIF and EGESIF, or the TCUM: Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters. At the level of member states, when the territorial and urban disciplines reside in different ministerial departments, as is the case of Spain, where it is not even clear to which Ministry the territorial disciplines belong (they have moved from the former Ministry of Environment to the Ministry of Treasury and also the Ministry of Territorial Policy), the internal coordination is not easy, and many times the efforts are dispersed when they could be combined and would allow to take part in the same vision and, consequently, the same position, but stronger, in front of Europe.

The permanent work technical group in territorial matters is the Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP¹³), which was created during the Portuguese Presidency in 2007 and which organizes its own meetings apart from the UDG ones, as happens with the General Directors as well. However, when a country that holds the rotating Presidency joins in a single Department the urban and territorial competences, there are often combined informal meetings of Ministers for these matters, which ends up reinforcing the narrow interdisciplinary vinculation that both areas should have, and the opportunity to work through them towards common objectives and sustainability.

3. THE EUROPEAN URBAN ACQUIS: A LONG WAY UNTIL THE URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION (UAEU)

The EU general “acquis” (EUR Lex¹⁴) is defined as the common basis for rights and obligations that vinculates the group of countries within it and, acknowledging its own constant evolution, covers the political content, principles and objectives of the Treaties; the legislation and jurisprudence of the EU Court of Justice; the declarations and resolutions approved within the EU framework; the acts of foreign affairs and common security; the agreements about justice and internal affairs; the international agreements held by the EU and the ones held by member states. This “acquis” should be accepted by all of them and they commit themselves to incorporate it -as much as necessary- into their national legal orders and, by means of them, apply it through their own policies.

13. The representation of NTCCP is held by the Sub-Directorate General of Urban Development of the Ministry of Treasury, responsible for the representation of the committees and workgroups of coordination of European funds and other committees or collegiate organs of its competence, and the coordination and promotion of Thematic Networks related to ERDF and other funds assigned (Royal Decree 1113/2018, September 7th).

14. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/acquis.html?locale=es>

Within the are of urban policies there is already a nourished “community acquis” specifically called “Urban Acquis” which comes from those many years of informal collaboration between the member states and the European institutions. Some specific documents stand out in a special way, besides all aforementioned experiences -especially financially-related-. For the interest of this article, these would be, chronologically and thematically, the following:

- Leipzig Charter of Sustainable European Cities (May 24th, 2007).
- Marseille Declaration and European Frame of Reference for Sustainable Cities (November 25th, 2008).
- Toledo Declaration about integrated urban regeneration (June 22nd, 2010).
- Riga Declaration about the construction of the Urban Agenda for the European Union, and the acknowledgment of the role of small and medium cities (June 10th, 2015).
- Pact of Amsterdam, where the Urban Agenda for the EU is approved (May 30th, 2016).
- Budapest Declaration about a new multiannual financial framework within the context of political, social and environmental urgency (March 14th and 15th, 2019).

A brief analysis of each of them can be consulted in the Annex of this publication, although this article if not focused on a detailed study of this whole acquis, made up after two decades of combined work. It is interesting to highlight that, beyond the documents themselves and the initiatives vinculated to funds which were mentioned in the Introduction, the generation and implementation of work methodologies are also integrated in this acquis. These are the truly interesting methodologies for the future, and they are already so in the present.

By means of them, the essential conceptual principles have been consolidated, such as the integrated approach, the focus on the city, the special attention towards disadvantaged neighbourhoods (through the “integrated urban regeneration”), and more recently, the alignment with the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda. In fact, the EU has fully committed to their fulfillment, which will require cross-border territorial approaches, and the alignment of a new five-year political cycle with the effective application of their objectives (there are 17 in the SDG), and each is assigned 169 targets and 232 evaluation and monitoring indicators). It is a commitment, moreover, which reaches all the steps of the Public Administration, companies, and the civil society, with the collective aim of ensuring a sustainable future in the context of a modern economy, a clean environment, a habitable planet, and the welfare of citizens.

The acknowledgment of the substantivity of local entities as representatives of the cities and the remaining urban areas as independent protagonists of the international relations with European institutions has also been consolidated. This formal, and even practical, acknowledgment (the active participation in all meetings that give rise to different commitments), which should keep being reinforced, has presented some rifts on the occasion of the implementation of funds allocated to the integrated and sustainable urban development.

In the current period of community programming 2014-2020, the urban dimension has been the most important one within the cohesion policy, being estimated that a minimum of 50% of the resources of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for such period has been invested in urban areas. And although some functional urban areas have been allowed to count on an important funding, the procedure designed at a supranational scale has given local entities a quite limited role (just the selection of operations).

It has also located them in a position of confrontation with other local entities (with which they had to compete), and even with their Autonomous Regions and the State itself as a management authority and, above all, it has excluded urban areas with less than 20,000 inhabitants. These areas are not excluded in any of the Urban Agendas, neither national nor international ones, from the “urban policy” and the need to have integrated strategies at their disposal.

The acknowledgment of the role of such entities by the Commission, not just as “urban authorities”, but also as possible networks that interact with the Commission without intermediaries (such as the Urban Development Network¹⁵) should keep being nourished, but not just with the aim of improving the execution of funds allocated for integrated and sustainable urban development, and to promote the information and experiences exchange (GALERA RODRIGO, S. 2016), but also because they are essential actors in the objectives of the 2020 Europe Strategy, in order to reach an intelligent, sustainable, and integrating.

15. This is a network promoted by the European Commission, specifically by the General Directorate of Regional and Urban Policy, whose aim is to support cities in order to implement their Integrated and Sustainable Urban Development Strategies (ISUDS). Acknowledging the “administrative and operational complexity” of these Strategies, the objective is to help the so-called “urban authorities” in the implementation of funds allocated to sustainable development.

4. THE URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION (UAEU) AND THE SPANISH URBAN AGENDA (AUE)

Beyond the specific contents of the UAEU (specified in the Annex of this publication), it is especially interesting to highlight the generation of a specific work methodology which tries to approach the problems of urban areas of any size (small, medium and big cities) establishing thematic work groups between the Commission, the EU organizations, national governments, local authorities and any other concerned party. By means of such associations, action plans are developed. These must allow, as the Commission¹⁶ itself explains in its official website:

- a) To improve legislation (directives, regulations) with the aim of making it more efficient and coherent, without imposing unnecessary administrative burdens to companies and other organizations involved.
- b) To improve the funding programmes, entailing the improvement of the quality of funding sources -including the ones that correspond to the cohesion policy- and the access of municipal governments to such funds, again, without generating additional funding. Last but not least.
- c) To share knowledge in two ways: on the one hand, gathering reliable data to ensure that the urban policy is based on proved practices and experiences about the solving of the most important common problems and creating a good knowledge base about urban policy that fosters the exchange of good practices.

Those work groups (partnerships) are constituted, through a participative and voluntary process, by a limited number of member states (between 3 and 5), some cities and regions (between 5 and 8), the Commission and other actors, all of which elaborate an Action PPlan for each of the fourteen thematic axes previously selected as “priority matters”, and they propose improvements in the three aforementioned areas. The priority matters are the following, in chronological order according to the moment of its implementation:

- Air quality
- Housing
- Poverty and urban regeneration
- Inclusion of migrants and refugees
- Digital transition (intelligent cities)
- Urban mobility
- Circular economy
- Employment and training in the local economy

16. https://ec.europa.eu/info/eu-regional-and-urban-development/topics/cities-and-urban-development/urban-agenda-eu_es

- Innovative and responsible public hiring
- Sustainable use of soil and nature-based solutions
- Energy transition
- Adaptation to climate change
- Security in public spaces¹⁷, and
- Culture and cultural heritage

The Spanish participation in this process has been positive, both at a national, autonomic and local level. Thus, the Association of Poverty and urban regeneration is present in the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda (Ministry of Public Works and Transport, when it started its journey). In the Climate change association: the Barcelona Provincial Council. In the Energy transition one: NASUVINSA-Autonomous Community of Navarre. In the Digital transition (intelligent cities) group: the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transition (former Ministry of Economy and Business). In the Inclusion of migrants and refugees association: Barcelona City Council. In the Security in public spaces one: Madrid City Council and in the Culture and cultural heritage one; again the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, as well as the Canarian government and the city councils of Ubesa, Baeza and Murcia.

This is added to the fact that Spain, at a national level, has joined all international commitments that seek a more sustainable and efficient urban development in a resolute and convinced way. In June 2018, the Government approved the Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda, which identified as one of the main catalyst policies the Spanish Urban Agenda (AUE)¹⁸. On February 22nd 2019, after a large participative process that gave a voice to every concerned agent, they approved their own “national urban policy”, the AUE, that is, a general and strategic framework to orientate public and private interventions in urban areas and to propose a set of actions to inform about necessary reforms with sustainability criteria.

17. This thematic area, which appeared through a Commission's initiative to analyze the challenges that cities face, and the resources that they can make use of to prevent and react against terrorist attacks (it was not in vain that the Association coordination was entrusted to Nice, which was joined in January 2019 by Madrid), generated a wide discussion between the Commission and member states. The latter wanted the Action Plan to focus more on the security of urban spaces from the point of view of urbanism and urban planning, that is, on the creation of safe spaces of cohabitation, feeling of security for citizens, freedom of use, etc, rather than on this new threat derived from terrorist acts. Both aspects are currently being worked on.

18. The rest of catalyst policies identified by the Spanish Government for its capacity of “accelerating the process in a transversal way and at a higher rate in the combination of 17 SDG” are the following: the Plan of prevention and eradication of poverty and social exclusion; the Law of Climate change and energy transition; the Strategy of circular economy; the Digital strategy for an intelligent Spain; the scientific and technical research for the SDG; Social Economy; Strategy 2017-2020, the Plan of Open government and the Spanish cooperation at the service of the SDG. <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/Multimedia/Publicaciones/Documents/PLAN%20DE%20ACCION%20PARA%20LA%20IMPLEMENTACION%20DE%20LA%20AGENDA%202030.pdf>

The Spanish urban agenda (AUE)¹⁹ is made up of a situation diagnosis, a Decalogue of strategic objectives which covers 30 more objectives about specific thematic aspects, a list with dozens of possible actions to implement by different actors in the shape of a “carte menu” and a whole system of evaluation and monitoring indicators. It also contains sheets and recommendations that enable the elaboration and development of action plans, following their objectives, and incorporates the Plan of Action of the General State Administration, which, in fact, is immersed in the process of implementation and with many of its actions already taking place (DE LA CRUZ MERA, A. 2019). These actions are grouped in 5 kinds, as requires the Urban Agenda of the United Nations (NAU): regulations, funding, governance, information and participation, and knowledge dissemination and exchange. It also coincides with the UAEU in three of them: improvement of regulations, funding and knowledge exchange.



Figures 5 and 6. Spanish Urban Agenda logo and cover photo.

Regarding the success or failure of the UAEU in relation to the pursued objectives, although there has not been enough time to evaluate a long-term strategic commitment like this one, it is possible to get an overall picture of the reached matters through the data provided by the document titled “Urban Agenda for the EU - multilevel governance in action (2019)²⁰”, from which we can extract the following positive data:

- The 14 thematic workgroups have covered 262 partners, whose majority is compounded by cities and/or metropolitan areas (52%). The next ones are the member states, but at a larger percentage distance (16%). After that come the European institutions (Committee of Regions, European Investment Bank, and the 17 General Directorates of the European Commission) and “other participants” like organizations, programmes, initiatives, city networks, companies,

19. <https://www.aue.gob.es/>

20. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/brochures/2019/urban-agenda-for-the-eu-multi-level-governance-in-action

etc., each of them representing the 10%. Regions are in the last place, which represent only a 5%, a curious fact given that most of European states with decentralized political-administrative systems allocate the most relevant competences regarding urbanism and spatial planning to them. This is the case, for instance, of Spain.

- During 2018, 8 Action Plans were approved - corresponding to the aforementioned first 8 thematic associations-, 4 more were approved during 2019, and there are just 2 pending approval from Associations that started working later, the one about Security in public spaces, and the one about Culture and cultural heritage.
- There are currently 114 actions underway, among which stand out the ones addressed to the EU (the majority) and the local sphere stand out, being fewer the ones that involve member states and regions. These data determine one of the most important differences between the UAEU and the NAU, since whereas the first mainly implies the community institutions, the second requires a protagonist role for the nations and the remaining concerned actors.

As a less positive fact, and generating a certain concern at least at a local level, the number of actions included in the thematic plans already approved are focused on the sphere of the regulation and the improvement of knowledge, whereas the measurements aimed at improving funding are still pretty absent, even if no new sources are being created besides the preexistent ones. At a national level, as states GONZÁLEZ MEDINA, M. (2019), the latter are actually inexistent, which shows that member states expect the funding linked to Urban Agendas (be them the European, national, regional or local ones) to come fundamentally from the EU.

This is highlighted in the Spanish Urban Agenda, whose section 4.1. within the Action Plan for the General State Administration includes the formal commitment of “working, both at a national and international level, in order to align the program of the new European multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 with the national urban policies, in the case of Spain, as well as their urban agenda and its implementation plans”. It also give details about this commitment stating that “the Ministries of Treasury and Public works²¹ and transport will collaborate with each other and also with the European Commission, in order to reach the highest alignment with the strategic goals of the Spanish Urban Agenda and the program developed for the new multiannual financial framework 2021-2027, where at least 6% of the ERDF at a national level within the framework of employment and growth investment will be allocated to sustainable urban development”.

21. Currently the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda.

And it ends up pointing out section 4.1., which “[...] by means of the aforementioned collaboration with the European Commission, the objective is that these strategic goals are clearly reflected on the management (shared, or not, with other member states), of European programmes in the area of urban development, standing out due to its complementarity and synergies, notwithstanding its final design in the new programming period, both in terms of Innovative Urban Actions, and of URBACT”.

On the part of the EU and mainly from the local sphere, there has been some disappointment with the realization that the UAUE action plans have not been reflected on the proposal document of Regulation about Community Funds for the period 2021-2027 which was carried out by the Commission. It does not really incorporate proposals that allow to overcome the scheme applied during the current programming period 2014-2020 and the common feeling is that there has neither been enough work, not as much conviction or efforts to keep acting with the same instruments.

In Spain specifically, there has been an allocation close to 1,900 million euros for city councils, through different aid schemes in the area of ISUDS -where more than 1,350 million euros have been mobilized for 173 “functional areas”-, as well as the more specific areas of energy efficiency, mobility or renewable energies. But ISUDS have shown important weaknesses, not just about management, but also, and above all, about design. Its ad hoc elaboration to apply for public aid announced by the Ministry of Treasury and the need to fit into one of the four Thematic Objectives predetermined by the European Commission (TO2 “Promotion of ICT through electronic administration and intelligent city projects”; TO4, “Promotion of cultural and natural heritage and integrated actions of city revitalization, improvement of urban areas and its environment” and TO9, “Economic and social regeneration of the urban environment in disadvantaged areas”) have impeded the definitive leap that Urban Agendas are claiming.

This is the necessary integrated approach that leaves behind the disjointed sum of projects and sectoral programmes, as well as the generation of true city strategies that face the present and ensure greater success for the future, beyond the lawful and, in many cases, indispensable objective of funding procurement. Another weakness within this process is the absence of functional areas with less than 20,000 inhabitants. The schemes that ignore the potentialities of functional areas with spatial proximity and similar characteristics (in terms of geography, history, economy, environment, or any other aspect) must be overcome, in order to contribute to the minimization of the negative impacts of polycentrism, which is quite hard to fight and which prevents an adequate approximation to the balanced development of all territories.

5. PARALLEL WORK ABOUT TERRITORIAL COHESION

The European Commission has played a key role in the new multilevel governance with characterizes the UAEU, and has also made an important parallel work about territorial cohesion. Both the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) from May 1999, agreed in the informal meeting of Ministers responsible for territory planning in Potsdam, and the Territorial Agenda of the EU (TA 2020), approved in Leipzig in 2007 and renewed in Gödöllő (hungary) in 2011, together with programmes like ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observation Network) have been reinforcing the European territorial dimension from the point of view of a greater cohesion and territorial balance.

Among the objectives of this TA, besides the global aspects related to sustainable development in terms of territory, there is also (coinciding with the ESDP 1999 and the following TA 2020, which will be commented straightaway) the search for a balanced and polycentric urban system, a new urban-rural relation, the access assurance towards infrastructures and knowledge, and the protection of the natural and cultural heritage. All of them recall the integrating, intelligent and sustainable growth which, from a purely semantic and a practical point of view, seem to be contradictory and incoherent. At least the terms “development” and “sustainable” if the idea is to depart from the inherited and current models of economic development, where the management of resources, the role of markets, and the institutional, social, economic and environmental policies have been left behind in relation to the new sustainability objectives pursued at a global level (ARTARAZ, M. 2001).

However, analyzing the results of these initiatives with the perspective offered as time goes by, the truth is that these efforts were poorly rewarded in practice, identifying a limited impact on the pursued objectives. The cooperation and implementation of new forms of governance were not able to be efficient in the obtainment of significant advances in terms of the desired territorial rebalance. In fact, the European Parliament resolution from March 24th 2009, related to the “Green Book about territorial cohesion and state of the debate about the future reform of the cohesion policy²²” acknowledges that “despite the important advances achieved in the area of convergence in the European Union, in the most recent reports about cohesion stands out a tendency towards the intensification of territorial disparities between the EU regions, for instance in matters of accessibility, especially in the EU structurally disadvantaged regions, as well as at an interregional scale and in the interior of the EU territories, which could lead to a spatial segregation and deepen the differences between prosperity levels of the EU regions”.

22. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:117E:0065:0072:ES:PDF>

This being the case, on May 19th 2011 the EU Territorial Agenda (TA 2020) was agreed. Among its innovations there is the so-called “place-based approach”, that is, the approach based on the characteristics of each place and the possibility of using them as a potential of endogenous development, from which it would be possible to foster processes of territorial cohesion at three levels: local, regional, and national; while at the same time facing the geographically diverse impacts of global change. The objective of this TA 2020 is to advance towards an integrating, intelligent and sustainable society for a regionally-diverse Europe.

This agreement was achieved in the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development in Hungary, coinciding with the priority objectives of such Presidency, among which there were other highlighted relevant aspects in relation to global sustainability from the point of view of their territorial impact, such as demographic challenges (Hungary was then, and still is, intensely losing population, just like other countries from Eastern Europe), climate change, energy, and environmental challenges.

This Agenda constituted a complement of the 2020 Strategy²³ within the territorial dimension, although the latter is still a pending subject. Territorial imbalances persist and they are not just produced between member states, but also within each state territory and even between urban centers and the city peripheries. Five years after the TA agreement, renewed in 2011, the reports related to the polycentrism consolidation in the EU still show large territorial inequalities in relation to urban structures, accessibility to goods and services, and regarding territorial cooperation (ESPON 2016).

It can be said that the scarce success of the territorial dimension of the European cohesion policy still has its origin in the absence of ambitious territorial cohesion policies in many of its member states. One of them is definitely Spain. Special emphasis is also placed on the fact that, being territorial planning a key discipline to achieve the sustainable development in its three-aspect character (social, economic and environmental), the Constitution and the Autonomy Statutes have acknowledge this competency as exclusive of the Autonomous Communities.

The necessary solidarity and the adjustment of interterritorial imbalances that spatial planning requires are exclusively allocated to an Administration whose territorial and competential area are limited (think about this “ambitious” spatial planning within the area of an uniprovincial Autonomous Community, or without deep internal territorial imbalances, for example).

23. The 2020S is the decennial strategy of the EU for growth and employment, which is sustained in 5 large objectives: increase of employment, rise of the R&D investment, reduction of greenhouse gasses emissions, fight against school dropout, and reduction of the number of people in risk of poverty or social exclusion.

This is perhaps the reason why in 2020, that is, forty years after the constitutional acknowledgment of this exclusive autonomic competence and, according to the also exclusionary Constitutional Court (STC 61/1997), there are still six Autonomous Communities that have not been provided with instruments at a regional level that can be applied to their whole territorial area.

And the 11 Autonomous Communities that have them present large divergences in their contents and approaches, even meaning that some of them are far from being considered real strategies of territorial planning as they are conceived in Europa (DE LA CRUZ, A. and MADRUGA, I. 2019).

With such situation it is easy to affirm that it is quite difficult to defend in Europe what generates such little conviction and commitment at an internal level in the member states. In fact, if we analyze the territorial planning from the perspective of promotion of a balanced development in France, Germany and the United Kingdom, we can see that, in terms of national policies, they have very little to do with this global and tridimensional vision of the economic, social and environmental aspects. In France it is a mainly-economic model, in German it is mainly administrative and consensus-building, and in the United Kingdom is is fundamentally social.

More recently, in the report of the European Commission, “My region, my Europe, our future: the seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion”²⁴, from October 9th 2017, it is concluded that the cohesion policy should especially take into account two international agreements: the COP21 about climate change, and the 2030 Agenda, and an adequate definition about territorial cohesion should be the one that pursues a better use of the regional potential and the territorial capital in all its diversity; the one that seeks a better positioning of the European regions (not just strengthening their specific profile, but also the cross-border cooperation), and the one that promotes coherence of the EU policies in relation to territorial impact (both horizontally and vertically), in order to support sustainable development at a national, regional and local level.

All of them fit in the 2030 Territorial Agenda, which suggests the following political foundations and horizontal instruments²⁵ for a more sustainable future:

24. https://www.dgfc.sepg.hacienda.gob.es/sitios/dgfc/es-ES/ipr/fcp2020/fcp2020Dc/Documents/short_7cr_es.pdf

25. “Towards a sustainable strategy in 2030”. Discussion paper of the European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/rp_sustainable_europe_es_v2_web.pdf

| 2030 TERRITORIAL AGENDA | |
|---|---|
| Political foundations | Horizontal instruments |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From linear to circular economy. - Sustainability from the orchard to the table. - Energy, edification and mobility of the future. - A socially fair transition. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education, science, technology, research, innovation and digitization. - Funding, price fixing, taxation and competitiveness. - Responsible corporate behaviour, social responsibility of companies, and new business models. - Open and rule-based trade. - Governance and assurance of the coherence of policies at all levels. |

The new Leipzig Charter includes among its priorities this 2030 territorial strategy, to the extent that the UAEU ends up appearing as an instrument which, together with funding, aims to get its effective implementation.

5. THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

There are five elements that mark the future of the territorial dimension of urban policies in the EU cohesion policy: the effective implementation of the UAEU, the updating of the Leipzig Charter, the 2030 territorial agenda, the new funding framework 2021/2027 and the Green Deal. Actually, as mentioned in the paragraph above, it could be said that the UAEU and funding are the instruments that would allow the EU to reach the goals of the remaining three elements, which are considered the essential ones.

The previous sections have revealed the challenges that the UAEU and the 2030 territorial agenda are facing. Regarding the first, the main challenge is the effective implementation of the actions included in the action plans made by the thematic workgroups, as well as to achieve that the European Commission commitment stays firm (from a political and economic point of view, in the new programming period). A key contribution to this will undoubtedly be the EU interest in reinforcing the link of its urban agenda with the NAU, and the necessary measurement and evaluation of the EU advances in relation to the SDG of the 2030 Agenda.

The coordination between the Leipzig Charter, which will be approved this year thanks to the boost of the German Presidency, and the UAEU is not yet clear and, in fact, this is one of the matters that is still intensely discussed at a technical level.

For the moment, the UAEU appears as its annex, which has been achieved thanks to the insistence of some member states. The most interesting novelties which can be envisaged in this new European commitment are mainly related to:

- The coherent coordination of methods and objectives between the European programmes and initiatives: the Urban Agenda, URBACT, the Innovative Urban Actions and the programmes of the Cohesion Policy. Among them stands out the proposal to keep advancing in relation to multilevel governance, where “functional areas”, as well as “neighbourhoods”, are included in a novel way, although it is not very clear which kind of competences they could have within the national structures.
- The approval of the so-called “National Urban Policies” and the “City Strategies”.
- An adequate coordination with the Green Deal and the 2030 Territorial Strategy.
- An approach where the urban funding instruments are based in a solid analysis of the specific local situation and where, both at a political and an administrative level, they provide the precise conditions of the financial and legal framework to achieve the city’s empowerment²⁶ (a claim also addressed to each member state’s own internal authorities).

The three sustainability pillars (economical, social, and environmental) give rise to a just, green and productive city, where the value of culture and public spaces is reinforced with its inclusion in the concept of urban environment - “Baukultur”-, in accordance with the Davos Declaration. We can identify three spatial levels of European cities: the neighbourhood, the city, and the regional or metropolitan context, which is based in a complex network of interdependencies and functional associations in line with the 2030 territorial agenda. And all of this, within the context of the usual references to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

According to the aforementioned, Spain is not in a bad position. It already has its own national policy, and they are starting to address their actions plans as real integrated and sustainable City strategies through the AUE and the City councils, independently of the specific funding for its implementation and development. They have proved to be true holistic, coherent and SDG-aligned work programmes. Our Urban Agenda includes among its goals the objectives that are part of the new Leipzig Charter, that is: an active and strategic territorial policy which is supported in a soil use planning that promotes polycentric settlements with the appropriate densities and compactness in

26. It literally says: “The Ministers are committed to foster, within their responsibilities and capacities, the establishing of national or regional urban policies in order to, among others: [...] support the development or national or regional funding programmes for significant urban challenges, and activate the co-funding of European Funds as important instruments that implement strategies and project of sustainable and integrated urban development”.

urban and rural areas with optimal connections; a mobility focused on short distances that minimize traffic needs; the rejection of urban expansion and the prioritization of renovation and regeneration of urban areas; green and blue infrastructures to increase biodiversity and to allow a neutral urban development in climate and ecological terms; a better air quality; safe and accessible public spaces that provide healthy life environment for all citizens, enough adequate and quality housing, and mixed-use urban spaces to promote new forms of production and economic activities within the green, innovative and service-based economy.

The cohesion policy is also configured as a key element to implement sustainable and integrated urban development strategies and approaches based on each specific place, for regional and local urban projects. According to the information provided by the General Directorate of European Funds of the Ministry of Treasury in its website²⁷, the new funding framework for the regional development and the cohesion policy after 2020 sets five investment priorities in which a larger fund allocation by the EU in the 2021-2027 seven-year period can be expected. Between 65 and 85% of the EFDR and the Cohesion Fund resources will be especially focused on objectives 1 and 2, allocating them to the following priorities (taking into account the same three region categories: less developed, in transition, or more developed):

- First: a more intelligent Europe through innovation, digitization, economic transformation, and support to small and medium businesses.
- Second: a more ecological and carbon-free Europe, which applies the Paris Agreement and invests in energetic transition, renewable energies and the fight against climate change.
- Third: a more connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks.
- Fourth: a more social Europe, which makes real the European pillar of social rights and which supports quality employment, education, educative and professional capacities, social inclusion, and equality in the access to health services.
- Fifth: a Europe closer to its citizens, which backs local-management growth strategies and which contributes to a sustainable urban development in the EU with an approach more adapted to regional development.

The fund allocation method will still take into account the GDP per capita, although new criteria (all of them relevant for Spain) are added, like youth unemployment, low educational levels, climate change, and the reception and integration of migrants. Ultra-peripheral regions will still benefit from a EU special aid.

27. <https://www.dgfc.sepg.hacienda.gob.es/sitios/dgfc/es-ES/ipr/fcp2020/Paginas/inicio.aspx>

With regard to the strictly urban dimension, there will be a continuation of the support to local-management sustainable urban development strategies with 6% of EFDR, and a new program of capacities creation and networks establishment addressed to urban authorities, called the European Urban Initiative, will be initiated. But the real challenge is that the fund distribution should take into account the criteria that the Leipzig Charter identifies as priorities and which, in the case of Spain, as commented before, are in line with the AUE.

Finally, the European Green Deal²⁸ is greatly supported not just by the EU, but also by banks, and it is probable that funds are more concentrated in programs and projects with such characteristics. Its roadmap proposes actions to boast an efficient use of resources through the change towards a clean and circular economy, to restore biodiversity and to reduce pollution, and it describes the necessary investments and the funding instruments available. Projects like environmentally-friendly technologies, innovative industries, public and private transport systems which are cleaner, cheaper and healthier, the decarbonization of the energy sector, more energy-efficient buildings, among others, will fit in these investments which will count on financial support and technical assistance for people, companies and the most affected regions by the transition towards a green economy.

The so-called Just Transition Mechanism, which will contribute to mobilize a minimum of 100,000 million euros during the 2021-2027 period in the most affected regions will be joined as well by the announcement of an European Climate Law and the political commitment to achieve a climate-neutral EU by 2050.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The EU urban policy shows significant advances in what was a constant evolution along the last two decades. A whole series of formal declarations and commitments, financial instruments, knowledge-exchange networks and, above all, the implementation of new work methods that reinforce the so-called “multilevel governance”, have enabled the generation of a whole “European urban acquis” with legal and practical transcendence, both for the EU and member states, regional and local authorities, and other actors. Furthermore, his coordination framework has taken place in an area where Treaties do not allocate competences to European institutions: urbanism and urban policies, and this gives this acquis a double value.

28. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_es

The new work methodology, fundamentally implemented through the UAEU thematic work groups (partnerships) has contributed to increase the coherence of a regulatory framework of the EU about urban matters, to reinforce the integrated character of related actions, to improve the development of the EU policies with an urban dimension, and to strengthen the role of local authorities. It seems that today it is widely agreed that the generation of such work methodology is the true value which this Urban Agenda has provided, given that the adjustment of the pre-existing financial instruments to new objectives still rises some -founded- suspicions.

There are some steps that must be taken now. For example. the leap from strategies of integrated and sustainable development as they are known today, and the mainly sectoral and biased vision that predominates urban actions, towards local Urban Agendas and City Strategic plans which, besides the denomination that they might receive, address at the same level the global challenges like migratory impacts, climate change effects, the overcoming of economic, sanitary and any other crises (resilience), the reduction and disappearance of poverty and inequalities, etc. And they must do so with a holistic, comprehensive and integrated vision, incorporating social, economic and environmental aspects with the aim of unfolding the territory potentialities as a source of welfare for the population.

Europe already counts on adequate conceptual and operational frameworks to address the identified challenges. And community institutions, member states and the remaining administration levels, as well as, of course, villages and cities, are ready to work together to approach them. The SDG are the lighthouse that guides us through this long way, and global strategies at a European, national, regional or local scale are the ideal instrument to achieve them. We need political actors to take the lead that is expected from them in all the existing governance levels, and the same commitment is demandable from civil society, the private sector and academia.

An adequate funding would close the circle. And we need it to be sufficient, but also to be in line with the pursued objectives and with the new instruments expected for its achievement.

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THE LEIPZIG CHARTER: THE SUSTAINABLE CITY
AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE IDEA
THIRTEEN YEARS LATER

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Die Stadt muss schön sein...

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1. THE CENTRALITY OF THE CITY AND URBAN LIFE IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY

Before the change of millennium, most of human population came to be predominantly urban, so we are sure that, as we keep advancing from that moment, which was a sign of a new age, the urban dimension will be raised and will become one of the most prevailing and distinctive marks of the times we are in. So much so, and with such a large outreach, that talking about cities and urban spaces (taking into account that it is a very comprehensive matter, open to many claims) will require a renewed conceptual and, of course, semantic reconsideration, as disruptive (or more) as the one that resulted from the emergence of industrialization in the past.

Apart from the concepts, which tend to idealize the referent of the city in contrast to the instrumental indistinction of the space, or rather, of the *urban territory* in an advanced process of functional dematerialization, the genealogy of the conceptual production with doctrinal aspirations, urban plans and territory ordinance, such as manifests, international charters, conventions, agendas, declarations, pacts, programmes, etc. illustrates this continuous journey of referential, orientative and, in short, dedicatedly anticipating commitment of the hope and visions of the future which is inherent to the balance of communal life.

Because after all, besides all this, we cannot forget that it is on the territory that our feet rest, and it is in our present time, legitimated by the memories of what we elaborated, that we exist, and that we are called to foresee the future.

Although this is not the place to examine the nature of the big urban debates, and even if these are embedded in an open perspective (today we would call it holistic), they are the necessary introduction to address the so-called *Leipzig Charter* (LC), from May 2007. The charter is, then, an excellent occasion to discuss the sustained development of our territory and of the several contexts in which it is embedded. Within this perspective, the LC constituted a well-founded framework, rooted in an interactive and unavoidable triangulation: the city, in its widest, most polysemic sense; sustainability, for its operational and indispensable evidence; and Europe, the design of an identity dimension, in permanent and necessary (re)construction. These are the conceptual foundations of the Leipzig charter, which also brings us here to discern the strategic lines of the urban future in the peninsular northwest.



The city, the urban space, and from the crisis of the public space to the debauchery of the private one

The city, as matrix idea, especially among us as a polis, or a Graeco-Latin *urbs*, as a community of individuals circumscribed to its habitat, with consciousness of themselves and of their cosmos within the walls, agents and receivers of cultural production, mediators of symbolic, religious, political and social archetypes. The city, a place of celebration and memory, but also a stronghold and basis of attack, sedentary lifestyle and flux switching. A space, by nature, of exchange, creativity and contact of ideas, people and goods. Paradoxically, and still today, its root has a center of (agri) culture and domestication. A consumption basis with its origin in the silage, food and energy supply, distribution of work and roles, and simultaneously of alterity, segregation and promiscuity among people and uses. But, invariable, the city is always the most intense point of diversity densification. The city is still the product of an ideal with a long journey, currently subjected to several misconceptions when we mention it, but which preserves this fundamental idea of what the physical territory must inevitably have, the cosmopolitan experience.

Today, the concept of the city faces its canonical end. The definitive remission of an entirely symbolic and ideal meaning, in front of an inexorable process of global urbanisation and metropolisation. Indeed, under the threat of extinction of the public space, the matrix foundation of *polis*, *civitas*, and in any case transversal to every latitude or culture. We would go even further admitting the debauchery of the private space (J. Habermas, 1978), which disintegrates through the intrusion of *datamedia*, rather than just commercializing, expropriating the individuality and extinguishing its own intimacy. Coexistence dimensions are first transferred from the public space to the private, making the former anonymous, a place of passage, of advertising -that is, no-one's place-; and later the private space, for offering itself as a target of the discursive interaction of the *media*, which are immersed in the innermost domestic intimacy, where massification absorbs the individual and threatens freedom. Emptied of all sociability, intimacy becomes a retreat for an individuality in constant loss, through stripping and surveillance. As R. Sennett reminds us (1979), the more intimate the community is, the less sociable it becomes. Hence the sense of city and its key role in the desirable scrutiny of any future scenario.

It could thus be said that the first step towards the rehabilitation of the central role of cities, as a factor of requalification of the urban space and, particularly, of European reconstruction, is precisely to recover the symbolic scope of what cities represent, at least, since the primitive Graeco-Latin

identitary expression, grasped in the continent: the relaunch of the urban public space to the scale of individuals, as a basic element of civic community and territorial cohesion, in what we would call the Aristotelian allegorical place, where the citizen's voice uttered from the agora can take advantage of potential guarantees to reach the city gates and, above all, to be understood up to the multisectoral and undifferentiated ends of the urban environment that is nowadays experienced and inhabited.

The urban being has progressively de-spatialized itself. One can be more urbanite or citizen... One can live in an urban way, what the collective imaginary calls rural, and to live, in the same concept, from expeditious or marginal agricultures on the outskirts of the metropolises. Nowadays we are all urban, even in the desert or in the Amazonia, visiting the Galapagos Islands or Tibet, or departing from the Tierra del Fuego towards Antarctica... Urban space, besides holding most of the world population, is the source that generates the diversity of lifestyles that are established globally.

For its part, the city, in its most refined sense, and I insist, as an ideal of reference, presents itself as an alternative synthesis. This is how we understand the foundation of the centrality of the city, for its recovery in the scope of the urban space, facing two main challenges: that of the *scale* and that of the *network*. That idea about the end of the city that emerged in the industrial revolution, after the end of the eighteenth century, which stated that the city was associated with growth, quantity, and population increases, must evoke precisely the opposite today. Not just the cyclical phenomena against urbanization, the semantic drifts of *rurbanization*, but also, precisely, the incessant search for the central dimension of collective identity, the fair dimension that the ancient Greeks talked about, not just the dimension of quantity, as incomprehensible as it may be, but the dimension of quality, of governance, the sustainability of the reunion, the appeasement of otherness, of distant feelings, of the one who arrives, and the security of the one who leaves, for the capacity of inter-communication that promotes and guarantees to those who are physically distant...

In a sense, the rehabilitation of community reminiscences, interestingly, are neither exclusively urban nor rural... once again the reach of the voice as a measure for humanity... The irreplaceable value of the *direct* and lively rhythm of biocycles, which digitalization threatens to subvert, curse, even extinguish... The cities as laboratories of coexistence or inevitabilities of the time we have reached... The nations and countries contained within them... In fact, this is a new picture of the challenge of urban relationships, I would say, rather than what occurs between regions, which are imperfect states. How many times has this been the case in the European scene, being only feudalization scales, devoid of agility and of the operational basis of exchange and contact that cities offer.



These are places of departure and arrival, of network definition, hierarchy of itineraries and not just a uniformization system. The cities observed as the river, which is movement, compared to the hydrographic basin, which is a slightly deep receptacle, just for support of the river and its ramifications... The river is the one that shapes and draws, while the basin resists, adapts and is adapted...

Therefore, the city appears in this context as the unitary and alternative model of European referencing, articulator and cohesion factor of the territory, for the decisive role that it can play as a hinge, particularly at the level of several scales in which we find ourselves. From the national and international levels, in a certain sense, blurring the risk of the intermediate level, which tends to be more conflicting, and of which the region is an example (the same that, however, enhances the energies of proximity). For their part, cities, outside the national context, are consensually better equipped with a common identity base, with a wider scope. With the ability to mobilize energies and crossings. Finally, at the global level, the city represents an unquestionable base of multilevel exchanges, arrival and departure reference, and from a European strategic point of view, desirably more complementary and in solidarity with each other, rather than island-like and merely competitive, as it has been promoted all these years.

2. THE LEIPZIG CHARTER (LC) - THE CITY AS A CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENT OF A EUROPEAN IDENTITY MATRIX

The LC, seen in the context of the EU's territorial cohesion policy, constituted one of the most expectant summary commitments within the work agenda for the next German Presidency (July/December 2020), because, inevitably, Europe's future is increasingly the future of sustainability and of the articulation of its urban network. Resuming the initiative from May 2007, it is now important to evaluate, update and reformulate what is considered the most expressive support of this design, and which has in the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU), also known as the *Pact of Amsterdam* (May 2016), the foundations of the conceptual scheme intended for sustainable development of the European territory. A process whose prospective core is found in the urban space - or in its ideal sense, i.e. the cities - the most consistent perspectives of cohesion in the European territory.

Let us remember that the principle was that of economic growth, social progress and innovation, aware, however, of the need to adopt an integrated policy of development and special attention to socially-disadvantaged urban areas. The LC, however, was also open to the inclusion of priority themes, a request that would gain relevance, almost a decade later, with the endorsement of the Pact of Amsterdam.

Thus, the UAEU appeared based on the preparatory work activities of the previous year, registered in the Riga Declaration (2016), where, besides reiterating the economic urban potential and the social inclusion, new challenges were admitted, considering them to be emergent, such as those that have become protagonists with the crisis of the refugee waves that then aimed for the European continent. The UAEU can therefore be configured as an application tool and, simultaneously, as the portfolio of priorities of the community urban system, meant to act as a hinge between the multisectoral processes of European legislation, the inventive consistency in the access to financing funds, and the sharing of knowledge and experiences among the internal diversity. That is, the definition of the three fundamental pillars for the design and implementation of community policies²:

- **Better regulation:** considering local impacts and the urban dimension of community legislation, anticipating difficulties in implementation;
- **Better funding:** improving accessibility, coordination and simplification of the funds available for urban authorities;
- **Better knowledge:** strengthening the knowledge basis about urban policy and cooperation and sharing good practices between cities.

It was made clear the need to rationalize and articulate community policies, not just at the level of European institutions and member states, but also to integrate urban authorities in a better way. Avoiding, however, the creation of new regulations, structures, or the opening of new funds. Above all, it was essential to promote the free initiative and volunteering between the manifold existing community realities, namely, urban authorities and Member States. Twelve priority themes were listed³:

1. Housing
2. Employment and competences
3. Urban poverty
4. Integration of migrants and refugees
5. Circular economy
6. Climatic adaptation
7. Energy transition
8. Urban mobility
9. Digital transition
10. Sustainable use of the soil and nature-based solutions
11. Air quality
12. Innovative and responsible public procurement

2. UAEU

3. They can be considered themes for the constitution of Innovative Urban Actions, in this case, an instrument of the European Commission intended for Urban Authorities, attributed with a financial envelope.



Let us remember that the LC is concomitant with the Territorial Agenda of the European Union, (TAEU), simultaneously adopted in Leipzig under the slogan: Towards a more competitive Europe, based on the diversity of its regions. In fact, although the LC may have its inspiring reference in the Green Book about urban environment (1990) and in the pilot projects funded by structural funds of that decade, highlighting the environmental component that persisted in the design of EU territorial policy (Naylon et al., 2007), the truth is that the design of territorial cohesion had as its main attractor the development envisaged for a regional scale: the region.

It could be said that the growing awareness about sustainable⁴ development, at least since the United Nations Conference in Stockholm (1972), has put the environment fragility on the agenda, as one of the main recurrent concerns in international conventions. At a global level, however, it was at the Conference of Rio de Janeiro (Agenda 21, 1992), followed by a series of conventions both at a European and a global level, that the focus on development shifted to the sustainability⁵ of the cities. It should be noted that this was a relationship that would contribute in a decisive way to the emergence of the urban scale within world affairs. It was unequivocally recognized that a large part of the impact and visibility of community policies, particularly the environment, had the urban space as its main focus, i.e., the cities. On the other hand, the recentralization of regional development policies based until then on depressed regions, began to affect all kinds of regions.

However, we believe that urban and city policies have the merit of blurring the complexity of articulation at a regional scale, much more susceptible to the idiosyncrasies of internal politics in most Member States. It was then agreed to value the urban dimension as an element to give privilege to, for the transversality and integration at all levels in the performance of several sectoral policies.

Obviously, valuing the relationship: of the public space; the infrastructure networks, striving for energy efficiency; the innovation in the education sector; and the intervention in socially-disadvantaged housing areas; all this, with the framework of the TAUE, which emphasized the recognition of the relationships between cities and regions. In particular, its polycentric texture, its organization of network interdependencies, and also the so-called city-countryside relationship, including several approaches, among which it stands out the climate change matter.

4. The definition appeared for the first time in the Brundtland report (1987).

5. Of which it is an example the Aalborg Charter (1994), the Charter of European Cities & Towns for Sustainability at the Lisbon Conference (1996); the revision of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997); the Lille Action Program (2000); the joint declaration of "Urban Acquis" in Rotterdam: "Using the best practices of cities for the benefit of cohesion policy" (2004); the Bristol Accord on Sustainable Communities in Europe (2005); as well as others with a greater or lesser focus on the themes considered here.

In a certain sense, it can be admitted a transformation of cohesion policies that were initially based on the CAP⁶/Rural Development, through financial incentives and support to the private sector, and investment in infrastructure; all this in view of the increasing importance of the environmental, energy, and transport policies, with a greater expression in the public sector and greater visibility in urban spaces.

European governance is therefore intended to be more intersectoral, with the direct involvement of the protagonists of regional, local and urban authorities. On the other hand, it is increasingly necessary to improve the evaluation instruments of development plans, projects and supports, not only at the strategic, environmental, territorial, and other related levels, in order to check possible contradictions and deviations from the endorsed political objectives.

The context of the Leipzig charter

To begin with, it is worth reviewing some references of the temporal context in which the Leipzig Charter was signed in May 2007, in order to better understand the current situation. It should be remembered that, before the end of the year, a huge global financial recession broke out, resulting from the aftershocks generated by the collapse of the US housing market, with already-forecasted effects upon the European economies, particularly those where the scarcity of assets exposed the problem of sovereign debt. In contrast, while Europe was reconstituting itself to the east at the beginning of that year, with the adherences of Bulgaria and Romania, the euphoric federalism celebrated in Lisbon a treaty which, in many aspects, was already lagged in relation to what was being said, trying to force what, in the perspective of European construction, was most unfortunate and yet to come. Ignoring the previous signs, embodied in the result of the European referendums from France (2001) and Holland (2005), the Lisbon Treaty did not immediately have a full discussion, namely, due to the non-ratification of Ireland.

However, what can be considered as a historical fallout since then has not ceased to constitute a reflection factor in relation to the current European model, especially through the argument founded on the criticisms of the distancing between citizens and the European institutions, as well as the weakening of the electorates of nations. On the other hand, there have emerged other converging factors that worsened the confidence of citizens in the European project, accentuated by the intervention of the so-called *Troika*, which revealed the latent division of a southern *sub-Europe*; and, more recently, with the unavoidable *Brexit*, whose real impacts are still difficult to assess.

6. Common Agricultural Policy.

But these might certainly impose on us a new vision of Europe, with which Europeans can increasingly identify themselves, and which is able to unite us in a volunteering rather than imposing way.

Also in Lisbon, seven years before, when the Strategic Agenda for the European Council (March 2000) was approved, this pan-European idea exclusively based on the economic and technological aspect of development, devaluing the priority of social and environmental approaches (although it mentioned them), proved to be insufficient to fulfill European designs. It was rectified by the European Council in Gothenburg (June 2011) with the reinforcement of *sustainable development*. However, the kindness of the statements and the coherence of the strategies keep having several application difficulties. The triptych “greener, smarter and more inclusive” continues to be difficult to implement, and even in some places, it is merely virtual.

With the signature of the Leipzig Charter (LC), it was reinforced the political awareness about the role of cities in strengthening the European cohesion, from a perspective of sustainable urban development, with economic growth associated with the subsidiary and social responsibility of the State at its most diverse levels. In the next year, the Marseille Declaration (2008) will emphasize the integrated, cohesive and sustainable urban development. The associationism of cities then gains relevance with the celebration of meetings and the creation of networks, which are joined by political representatives, urban authorities, and other agents of local development.

With the establishment of the European Strategy 2020 (March 2010), the cities and the urban space consolidate the privileged role that they are taking on the narrative of European development, especially because they are recognized as the stages par excellence for job creation and for the quality of life for citizens. Strategic goals for inclusive, sustainable and smart growth. This is what is stated in the subsequent Letter of Toledo, in June of the same year, about the emphasis on the Integrated Urban Regeneration, aiming to apply the previous principles, *that is, a more intelligent, sustainable and socially inclusive urban development in Europe*. It is divided into three key parts:

- a) How to deal with current urban challenges and apply the 2020 Europe Strategy;
- b) Unwrapping the framework of European Reference of the European City; and,
- c) Consolidating an European Urban Agenda for the future.

The economic crisis that bursted in Europe, especially in urban Portugal, with unemployment and the real estate crisis which affected local families and finances, put on the table a vision of the city valued in revisiting the existing, instead of the urban expansionism previously experienced.

Five years later, barely contradicted by the reminder of the Polish presidency (2011), there appeared the Riga Declaration (2015), which rescued Europe's priority in having an Urban Agenda, this time with the novelty of starting to contemplate the inclusion of small and medium-sized urban areas. This reinforcement was not unrelated to a convergent and broad international movement affecting the environment, the sustainability and the habitat that, in that period, before and after, experienced reasonable progress and signed referential frameworks. Let us see, as an example, the contribution from last year conference: "*CITIES - Cities of Tomorrow: Investing in Europe*" (Brussels, Feb. 2014); in that same year, the United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing, from the UN Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 2015); the International Guidelines on urban and territorial planning (NY, Sep. 2015), in the context of the UN General Assembly, in order to prepare the Habitat III; and finally, among other conventions with the common denominator of sustainable development, the so-called Paris Agreement on climate change, a decisive manifest in the awareness about the need for a new paradigm (Paris, nov./dec. 2015).

As we have already mentioned, with the Pact of Amsterdam (May. 2016), it was initiated the European Urban Agenda, which the Bucharest Declaration (Jun. 2019) reinforced, providing the bridge with the LC.

The latest developments reveal the trend for the convergence of strategies between the United Nations, the European Union, and some countries more aware of the impact of their international political agenda, with a more or less normative character. That is, the purposes of sustainable development and social equity are looking for the necessary action plans so that policies can become effective. For that purpose, the European Commission, perhaps aware of the main foundation of its own internal crisis, recently proposed for the period (2021-27) the political objective of bringing Europe closer to citizens. For this, already in the current year, some European institutions have already recognised⁷ for future generations of urban strategies the possibility of allocating 6% of the total ERDF to sustainable urban development (Cruz Mera, 2020).

Three master ideas emerge in the statements above: the awareness of the global network of cities, in addition to more or less regional, more or less national, contexts; the importance of local governments, of urban and metropolitan authorities, the administrations of small and medium-sized cities; and finally, the sustainability of the future, based on low carbon levels, biodiversity, efficiency, resilience, intelligence and ecology, with progressive margins of self-sufficiency. In short, we might say, a desirably happier urban reality.

7. European Commission: General Directorate of Regional and Urban Policy; and Joint Research Centre.



3. FROM BRAGA AND FOR BRAGA, THROUGH THE LEIPZIG CHARTER

An explanation of Braga's reality

Braga, the Portuguese city heir to the two-thousand-year-old Bracara Augusta, was the capital of the Roman province of Callaecia (3rd century). That is, a vast colonial region that generally comprises Galicia (Spain) and the territory to the north of the Douro river (Portugal). It occupies a central position between the course of this river and the Minho river, to the north, which constitutes a section of the border between Portugal and Spain. Certainly, one of the oldest, most peaceful and stable borders in Europe. Currently having a city population of around 120 thousand inhabitants, in the case of Portugal, it occupies an intermediate position and can be admitted as the third Portuguese city, external to the only two metropolitan contexts of Lisbon and Porto. Braga is installed in a densely populated municipality (around 990 inhabitants/km²), with a dispersed population, constituting a potential attraction with a population of over one million.

The city has experienced a remarkable urban growth, as shown in the last inter-census period (+10.5%), whereas a demographic transition that allows to reconcile the growth of an elderly population (aging rate 85.6%, 2013) and the resulting increase in the life expectancy, with a young population (35% less than 25 years old, 2011). This profile enshrined the city in recent years as the Capital of Youth, both at a European level (2012) and at an Ibero-American level (2016).

Currently being an important political and administrative center, it shows, with a great percentage of socioeconomic indicators, qualifiedly-better values than the country average (3rd best city for doing business and 4th best city to live in⁸). The city has two universities and a polytechnic institute, with an Iberian international nanotechnology laboratory. The schooling rate is above the national average (2013-2017). More recently, 2019 was a particularly gratifying year in terms of culture, with the highlight of the classification of Bom Jesus do Monte as a cultural landscape, inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The same entity also recognized it as a Creative City, in the category of Media Arts. All of this in the same year that Braga was catalogued as the 2nd best European tourist destination.

8. Bloom Consulting. Portugal City Brand ranking (2018).

Braga in the Leipzig Charter

The noticed absence of specific EU competences in the field of urban planning and city policies somehow reflects what the EU is in terms of a political organization and, in a way, also a reflection of the situation of the union itself. In Portugal, urban planning policies have a long historical tradition emanating from the centralist norms that make it largely dependent on the initiatives and the funding of the central government. More recently, the broad guidelines for spatial planning and city policies, such as major public works subsidized by the State like infrastructures, equipments and other incident actions within the public space, since they decisively depend on the effort factors of the European integration process, in terms of implementation they keep depending on the national political processes.

Therefore, in the domain of distributive voluntarism, the strongest expectations fell on the relationship between the local urban power and the country's central administration. That is precisely why the implementation of strategic and regulatory guidelines is difficult, it generates diffidence and it faces many resistances, especially in the levels of social organization that are further from the power centres, and further from the direct aspirations of citizens.

On the opposite level, the path of exchange and mutual knowledge between cities that has been taken in recent years, like the contact with different realities, the exchange of experiences, the establishment of networks, or merely the bilateral relations -such as twinning cities, the participation in European networks, such as URBACT- has generated situations of approximation and enrichment, intense learning, collaboration between participants and continued cooperation. This has been one of the most effective ways of valuing cosmopolitan cultural expressions and European integration, which is nowadays producing good results.

The example of the city of Braga shows a municipality that is entirely urban in its active life, with small stretches of agroforestry rurality, very fragmented and with a scattered, somewhat dendritic, population, which is joined by a smallholding framework marked by a manifest rooted individuality, still entrepreneurial and endowed with great initiative. In our view, this is the framework that determines the design of **territorial cohesion** and the assertion of the **public space** as fundamental factors of local urban development, which is desiredly integrated and increasingly sustained. Hence the **planning and ordering of the territory**, being closely associated with the continuous and daily domain of **urban management**, constitutes, among us, the basic integration level of which we can give testimony, in view of the postulates published in the LC.



The last four decades, which include the establishment of the democratic regime, allowed to overcome the structural evidence of poverty and extended the basic infrastructures to the whole territory of most Portuguese municipalities. Since then, and especially in Braga, the pace of urban growth has not ceased to reveal itself, having benefited from the catalytic, multisectoral, arising factors from the European integration. Like the country, except for large metropolitan areas, Braga started to show a two-level urban development at the same time. On the one hand, seeing itself under the obligation to continue with the objectives of a **modernity** to be fulfilled, especially in response to the classic urban growth process. That is, the answer to the basic desires of an intense demographic growth associated with a process of social integration, such as housing availability, the increase in the productive system, job creation, and the provision of basic infrastructure (sanitation, road infrastructure, school equipment, sports and cultural facilities, university installation, among others), which even today is lacking some segments, such as road infrastructures, with *last mile* impasses, which are yet to be finished.

At the same time, and on the other hand, the municipality is now committed to responding to new plans, many of them resulting from the process of deepening the European integration, the cultural evolution of a better educated population, and the traces of globalization with a local impact. We could say, to perform the **post-modernity** of the post-industrial era, with evident points of tension with the previous ones. That is, those of the *tou court* growth, required by sustainable development, such as the transition to an ecologically-balanced environment, with a citizenship aware of their cultural identity and collective memory, based on the values emerging from the citizens' quality of life.

The current challenge in the need to fulfill this commitment, to provide an immediate response to urgent problems about growth, compatible with the urgent aspirations for sustainability and decarbonisation, is specially apprehended with the persuasive ability to integrate the broadest population sections, and the ambition to promote the broadest and most comprehensive incorporation of what we might call the public space, eradicating once and for all the idea that this is a neutral element, *i.e.* nobody's territory, in order to become the privileged domain of the rehabilitation of the concept of the city, cultivating the spirit of a multi-scaled, enlarged and diverse community.

From local needs, and from the principle of subsidiarity, we must have full awareness of the growing scarcity of public funds -or at least, in the coming years, the fading of its provision- so that the wealth-producing sectors must imperatively be called upon to participate in its civil and social responsibility.

Of course, in a perspective that is increasingly desired to be more transparent, mutually appealing and proportionate. The time of the volunteering patrons seems to have become extinct, so this area deserves to be politically rethought and reflected upon. The financial imbalances that we suffer today, namely, in Braga, such as those that resulted from the disproportionate adventurism events in the recent past, testify before the international community the constraint of the freedom of options for the next generation, and even the sustainability of development in the coming decades.

Although it may be other examples of economic irrationality, particularly from the banking, communications and energy sectors, we give our concrete testimony referring to the local financial debacle caused by the construction of the stadium for the European football championship (2004) and other related sports ventures, which, by expressing the scope that promoted it and the activity that justified it, cannot be alien to the reflection and responsibilities for change that the European Union must start in this chapter, and at the level that concerns it, and that we all know are not exclusive to a city, region or country. And the football sector is a field of European public life that cannot be indifferent to, nor run alongside, Europe. This may even prove to be a good example of a test field for applying the three pillars of the UAEU, concerning the development and implementation of EU policy with Member States and Urban Authorities: better regulation, better financing and better knowledge.

With these perspectives, and from the perspective of the euro regional plan of the peninsular northwest, the **interactive synergies** of the territories represent an auspicious opportunity to obtain critical mass and support for urban sustainable development. The Eixo Atlântico is the first expression of this international and cross-border strategy, poured into the municipal land-use plan of Braga, which is in force. Even more since it is a political organization for regional and European cooperation, based on a voluntary network of cities with strong common identity roots.

It is also true that, in terms of international cooperation, we cannot stop to mention the international networks that the Municipality of Braga has been integrating. First, EUROCITIES - a network of the largest European cities, which brings together around 140 cities. At a Lusophone level, the UCCLA - Union of Portuguese Language Capital Cities- network of cities in the Portuguese-speaking space. Also the Global Parliament of Mayors - a network of cities from the five continents, with a special focus on Europe and the United States; the International Michelin Cities Network - a network of cities that have Michelin facilities, or that have twinning arrangements with their host city, Clermont Ferrand, in France; the ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, which consists of the largest international reference network of local governments united by the commitment to sustainable development; and the Champions Mayors of the OECD - an OECD network with mayors from around the world, designed to promote inclusive economic growth within cities.



In this regard, we can also point out the global network of twinning towns in the city of Braga, especially incidental in the Portuguese diaspora around the world. At the diplomatic level, President Ricardo Rio promoted in the last seven years the visit to Braga of 92 credited ambassadors in Portugal, who could learn about the local reality and establish contacts at the most diverse levels. Also InvestBraga, a municipal company of promotion of economic development, which constituted a structure of 26 corporate “ambassadors”, representatives of the main companies with international projection located in the municipality.

Widening the cooperation system up to the local level, we can highlight other structures that deserve our mention because they contribute to the global vision of the city.

The fact that Braga is half a hundred kilometers far from a metropolitan area, has not coerced its autonomy, demonstrated at a polarity level of polycentric articulation that is, by nature, the urban structuration mark of sustainable development, both at a cross-border, regional and sub-regional scale. In this sense, despite the boundary inconsistencies of different circumscriptions and networks in which these cities are inserted, there has been, at this level, an effort of complementarity and cooperation that should be highlighted.

It is known that the Portuguese continent does not have an administrative scale on a regional basis, with the intermediate gap between the central and local (municipal) administration, so at this level we fundamentally have today the intermunicipal communities (CIM); in the case of Braga, the CIM of Cávado (2008), coinciding with the respective NUTS III. They have a subregional scope, constituting itself as an association of municipalities that establishes a mediating role between them, and develops contracted functions in different sectors, between the municipalities themselves, and between them with the central administration.

Let us note, however, that basically in the same period, a voluntary and polycentric structure of interurban cooperation would be created, based on applications for Community funds from the QREN, the so-called Quadrilátero Urbano (joining the cities of Barcelos, Braga, Guimarães, and V. N. Famalicão). Initially expected to last seven years (2008/15), through the commitment of the participants, from then on it was constituted as an Urban Network Cooperation Pact, ceasing to be exclusively municipal in order to expand itself to the region’s main university, the oldest technological center of industrial innovation and the industrial association of supra-municipal scope. They have as main objectives the development of new technologies, mobility and promotion of the cultural offer.

3.1. About territory planning

In terms of programming, planification, and spatial planning, for a mostly-urbanized municipality, it is necessary to pragmatically consider its physical relationship with the daily practice of urbanism, which is incident in the daily life of urban management. That is, with the urbanization processes; and at another level, although inside physical planning, the dimension resulting from the access to the structural framework of available resources, which allows to promote in the current deficit budgetary context through the Urban Axis of the Operational Program 2020, the realization of strategic urban public works.

Starting precisely with the latter type, we have as an unavoidable reference the **Strategic Plan for Sustainable Urban Development** (PEDU). THE PEDU-Braga2020, which is more a programming tool than a plan, supporting the financial contracting of *investment priorities* (IP), between the managing body of European funds and the local urban authority. It is exemplary in the Portuguese case, since Braga is considered a *superior-level urban center*. In fact, PEDU configures a top-down strategy, because it depends on a spectrum of three predetermined axes, which are in turn subject to the aforementioned IP. They deal with the themes of sustainable urban mobility and regeneration. The latter is subdivided in a general approach and in the specific denomination for disadvantaged communities⁹.

However, CMB took care to articulate the eligible axes with the planning tools in progress. That is, both those resulting from the legislation at a national level, e.g., the revision of the Municipal Land-use Plan (PDM 2015), as well as those with their own initiative, an example of which is the Strategic Development Plan Of Braga (2014-26). Both have been simultaneously subject to public discussion and interinstitutional consultation.

The temporal incongruity of the calendar development of the processes is a recurring reality. Planning tools running independently of each other, with strict and very short instruction times, invariably promote a high degree of conceptual formalism and often result in support studies rather than diagnoses, many times expeditious. Let us see most of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (PMUS), an area that Portugal is only now beginning to integrate, and that had to be phased. It was first necessary to develop an instrument to support applications, and then contract a PAMUS, with the requirements that the sector has been complaining about, and which has now finished the public discussion.

9. Axis 1 – Sustainable urban mobility (PMUS-Braga 2020); Axis 2 – Urban regeneration (PARU-Braga 2020); Axis 3 – Support to disadvantaged communities (PAICD-Braga 2020).

On the other hand, the instruments of planning and physical ordering of the territory, with direct impacts on urban management, have been incorporating intangible dimensions, mainly coming from strategic planning, but also, in our opinion, from two new emerging factors which deserve particular consideration in the scope of sustainable urban development purposes. The direct effects of fading the **welfare state**, and the **judicialization¹⁰ of the territory**.

At the national level, urbanism, planification territory planning, have been unified for more than two decades in a single legal regime, the Legal Regime for Instruments of Territorial Management (RJIGT 1999¹¹), which established the general bases of soil policy, spatial planning and urbanism, and was reinforced by the New Basic Law on Spatial Planning (LBOT 2014¹²), which gave rise to the revision RJIGT (2015¹³), defining the present corpus that established the legal framework and the strategy in place.

From the general to the particular, we could say that there are several articulations that are linked to this purpose, from the most comprehensive, as is the National Program of Spatial Planning Policy (PNPOT 2007-13, 2019¹⁴), to the extreme opposite, the Detailed Plan (PP 1999-2015¹⁵). Or by the importance of urban planning, especially for historically-different reasons which are older than democracy itself, the resilient legal figure of Urban Allotments (LU 1973...¹⁶). That is, one of the strongest expressions of the effective urbanization process that lasts in the country until today. This legislative spectrum is dominated by the Planos Diretores Municipais (**Municipal Land-use Plans**) (PDM's 1990-2015¹⁷), which Braga was curiously one of the pioneer municipalities to approve in Portugal (1994/2001)¹⁸.

It is the basic institute of spatial planning of municipalities that has been more determinant and more tested. Having been framed in the RJIGT, it occupies today a central, perennial and most invoked role in the daily life of cities and Portuguese urbanism.

10. Ran Hirschl. *Towards Juristocracy: the origins and consequences of the new constitutionalism*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2007. 296, qtd. in Loureiro, Maria Rita (2014).

11. D-L 380/99, Sept. 22nd.

12. D-L 31/2014, May 30th.

13. D-L 80/2015, May 14th.

14. Law 58/2007, Sept. 4th, ratified by the Decl. de Retific. 80-A/2007, Sept. 7th, and 103-A/2007, Nov. 23rd. Giving rise to the first revision through the Law 99/2019 - Diário da República, n. 170/2019, Série I Sept. 5th.

15. D-L 380/99, Sept. 22nd, within D-L 310/2003, Dec. 10th; Desp. 6600/2004, Feb. 23rd, in Secr. Est. do Ord. Ter., DR 78 (II série), Apr. 1. Meanwhile included in the RJGT (2015).

16. D-L 289/73, Jun. 6th. with countless alterations until today.

17. D-L 69/90, Mar. 2.

18. Diário da República, I.ª série-B—N. 117 — May 20th 1994 / Diário da República, I.ª série-B—N. 25 — January 30th 2001

From our local experience, since the 2015 review, the PDM has embraced a strategy which is recognized in the 4 main objectives in force¹⁹:

- 1) a municipality where we want to live;
- 2) a municipality that we want to visit;
- 3) a territory to invest in; and, the path towards Iberian centrality.

Very succinctly: in the first point, it is highlighted the valuation of the quality of urban life through planning, privileging the municipal ecological structure, landscape, sustainable urban mobility, and the consolidation of the network of public equipment; in the second point, tourism development, mainly based on the valorization and promotion of the cultural heritage; in the third point, the attraction of foreign investment, in particular, of international initiative, with a strong component in innovation and technology, and also supporting local businesses and industrial spaces; finally, in the fourth and last point, the purpose of opening the municipality to the outside, promoting associationism and international relations, starting with the realism of the regional euro-integration in the peninsular northwest.

As the main contribution of the present document for the purposes that we want to discuss, we would emphasize the implementation of the *Estratégia de Paisagem* (Landscape Strategy), within the revision scope of the ongoing PDM (2020). A process that results from the convergence of several initiatives of urban policy, which have their root in the establishment of the Braga Historic Centre; promoting the urban eco park of *Sete Fontes* (a hydraulic system, mainly of baroque expression, that supplied water to the city); and the pioneering spirit of joint creation with the municipality of Guimarães, the intermunicipal program of *Sacro-Montes*, an objective based on the promotion of the common cultural heritage and the forestry system of both counties.

However, with the ongoing procedure of the new revision of the PDM (2015), imposed by the application of the dichotomous rustic/urban soil affectation, which extinguishes the figure of “urbanizable” soil, the *Estratégia de Paisagem* (2017-20) started with the integration in the Territorial Development Strategy of this PDM²⁰. Its main objectives aim to respond to the requirements of the new EUA, where landscape, namely at the local urban level, places special emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goal 11 - *Sustainable Cities and Communities*.

19. Diário da República, 2.ª série — N. 201 — October 15th 2015.

20. *Estratégia de Paisagem* within the scope of Braga PDM, CMB, June 2020.

“A new urban agenda, where the quality of the landscape is decisive for the quality of life of everyone who lives in or visits it, especially within a framework of climate change and natural and man-made risks that threaten health and well-being”²¹.

The coherence of the option was also intended to follow up on the adoption of convergent measures and European nature-based guidelines, taking as reference the European Landscape Convention (ELC - 2000), which has been transposed into national legislation (2005)²², with all the environmental and ecological inferences emanating from it. In the same year, the present strategy would also incorporate the instruments of the National Architecture and Landscape Policy (PNAP), as well as the aforementioned PNPOT.

Note that this initiative involved active work in a *teamlab* regime, involving a broad and interdisciplinary group of city council technicians, whose main objective was to identify, characterize, and define the fundamental themes that support a landscape strategy for the council. Hence the principles were established for a *green* and *blue* structure as a way to operationalize strategic objectives, tending to define Landscape Units in a mainly urban context. Constituting itself in this way as an innovative initiative, designed to achieve a different perspective of the territory, with its own physiognomy and identity, and the aim of implementing specific regulatory categories within the municipality territory.

It is known that one of the main sources of direct financing for municipalities stems from the urbanization process. The more constructions a municipality has, the more contributory income it receives. Taxes, fees and various operating costs are one of the main sources of municipal financing and, consequently, of animation for daily urban licensing²³. In a city in constant growth, since five decades ago, this process has exerted a high urban pressure in recent years, with evident consequences in terms of the dismantling of the territory and urban design. Particularly because the urbanization process was based on the subdivision of small parcels (the largest were *quintas*) based on the antecedent rustic land registry, with a smallholding nature.

The domain of urbanism constituted the municipal area where political decisions have a greater passivity.

21. Estratégia de Paisagem within the scope of Braga PDM – Relatório Final. CMB/LOCCIMETRO, Braga, June 2020.

22. Dec. 4/2005, Diário da República, 1.ª série – A — N. 31 — February 14th 2015.

23. Coming directly from the section “Loteamentos e obras”, without exploring indirect data, we have the following situation from the last three years: 2017: 3,167,000 euros (3,4% of the revenue budget collected in 2017); 2018: 4,197,000 (4,2% of the revenue budget collected in 2018); 2019: 4,188,000 euros (3,7% of the revenue budget collected in 2019). Source: DMG/CMB Jul. 2020.

Everything, we should underline, under the design created for the circulation of private cars. In a very brief way we could say that the big bet is the revisitation of the existing territory, in its integrated and sustained rehabilitation. In a territory like the northwest of Portugal it is a future imperative to curb urban dispersion, and it is therefore necessary to exercise tight control of the supply of available soil for construction *ex-novo*, and to find ways to stop land speculation, although there is a lack of effective instruments to carry it out. With a progressively dispersed population and an increasingly aging population, without renewing itself, the equation that is enunciated for the future of the sustainability of territorial infrastructure will begin to raise concerns in the medium term.

In the face of a tendentially restrictive and dependent **public funding**, and the decrease in the State's capacity for intervention in its multiple providential and subsidiary facets, it is necessary to have a society which is also, potentially, more contentious; subject to litigation, disputes, arbitrations and permanent compensatory dimensions.

From the point of view of territory planning and urbanism, what we can witness from the legal framework in which we work, is that this is, in general, unfavorable to the supremacy of the public interest over the private. It is common sense that, since the 19th century, private property is *sacred* within Portuguese law. And especially when the differences in power and influence of operators are imposed through the appeal to complex and intimidating legal strategies. As already mentioned, the specialties of **law**, in the case of urbanism and territory planning, being increasingly more verbose of legislation and jurisprudence, it can be said that it has become a truly sub-disciplinary new area that we have internalized is not within reach of any territory technician, or legal expert.

We even give our personal testimony about everyday life, on the appreciation of architectural and urban projects, recognizing an increase in daily contacts with lawyers, in contrast to the past, when mainly architects and engineers were in charge. In short, it is increasingly the *engineering* of Law, the one that designs the territory of urban municipalities.

Today there is clearly, at the level of local authorities and technicians who scrutinize urban licensing, a defensive predisposition with regard to process analysis. The level of susceptibility is such that they avoid at all costs to formulate information and to make decisions that could generate conflict or subjectivity, since these, in addition to introducing entropy into the processes themselves, can have unpleasant consequences for those who dare to take them on.



In other respects, we need more reversibility actions and correction options for the errors and the dragging of the irregular building that was tolerated in the past. Demolitions are rare. Without ceasing to seek the maximum rehabilitation and reconversion of much of this construction and of the anthropic structures harmful to the territory, every uniform and generalist solution should be avoided, since they only promote injustice by rewarding those who did not originally fulfill its obligations.

An example of this is the exceptional regularization of economic activities (RERAE)²⁴, an instrument based only on economic criteria, which establishes procedures for regularization, expansion and alteration of economic activities, which worked over the years successively, in most cases, in illegal conditions, as is the case of farms with a very strong environmental impact, such as livestock, quarries, and management of industrial waste and expansions. The same that, with the exceptional legitimacy granted to them, without any guarantee of changing the attitude that they maintained over the years, on the contrary, subverting the law, continues degrading with impunity the environment and dismantling the territory.

In terms of urban management, there is an increasing need to obtain and deepen the counterparts provided in the law, not as a residual obligation, but rather as a commitment from the private sector towards social and environmental responsibility investments. This is an area where it is necessary to improve the methods and to work hard on the effectiveness of results. Either in terms of concessions of the compensation space provided by law, or in terms of impact mitigation, especially the environmental ones, generated by the productive activity. We should safeguard the uses and complements that support sustainable development. This means reconciling the installation of new companies in a productively-prosperous, socially fair, clean and qualified environment.

3.2. Urban rehabilitation

In an urbanized Europe this is perhaps the most challenging expression of the future at the moment. The front where the main moves of sustainable cities are played. We had internalized the idea that urban rehabilitation was exclusive to central areas and historic quarters of our cities, but today this approach embraces as a matter of principle the entire anthropic space. The expansion time gave way to the revisiting time. Braga has today, in the current ongoing PDM, at the level of the classification plant and soil qualification, 12,922 use-affectation polygons, in 183.4 km², for an average density of about 1000 inhabitants/km².

24. Decree law n. 165/2014, Nov. 5th.

These numbers show well the complexity and the atomization of the territory, which has been making its way since 1994.

Urban rehabilitation, being more than a physical intervention domain, has been extended to the most comprehensive concept of urban regeneration, which goes from building rehabilitation to the consideration of its uses and functions. From historical and cultural heritage, up to contemporary constructions. Whether by readjusting to the real estate market, socio-economic rehabilitation, or enhancing energy efficiency and environmental factors. The municipality of Braga, in 2013, officially had more than 10,000 vacant lodgings and a group of about three dozens of small industrial parks with significant percentages of vacants, or built but not occupied with productive units.

Urban Rehabilitation is therefore assumed by the municipality as a strategic pillar for territorial development, social cohesion, economic and environmental sustainability, and the patrimonial and touristic valorization of the council. With this aim, **Urban Rehabilitation Areas (URA)** were created within the scope of a specific legal regime²⁵, dedicated to the programming of operations of urban rehabilitation, accessible to various supports and stimuli. In Braga, in addition to the primordial Urban Rehabilitation Area of the Historic Center, the intervention perimeter was extended to three surrounding URAs, reinforcing the concept of consolidated city, due to the emphasis given to the admission of a strategic line differentiated in the edification of the years 1970/80. This approach had, however, different sensitivities in the country. From the urban municipalities that were considered practically as a single URA, to the extreme of a municipality in the northern interior, which selected 88.

To this end, today we especially rely on the dynamics of the private sector, which fits in the approved programming instruments, such as the PEDU, or ordering-related, under review, the PDM. URA's are provided with tax incentives, and technical and logistical support to operators. On the public investment side, we are aware of the importance of applications and projects as leverage means for the concertation of the announced and affirmed investments, and the privileged relationship of the municipality with institutions and citizens.

With this purpose an advisory council was created - the **Strategic Council of Heritage and Urban Rehabilitation of Braga (CERPUB)**²⁶, promoter of the qualified participation in matters related to urban regeneration, namely representing the main actors and institutions on which social, economic and cultural development depend the most in Braga.

25. Law n. 95-A/2009, DR, 1.ª série, N.º 170 — September 2nd 2009.

26. Created on Feb. 1st, 2016.

Public initiative interventions, which included external structural financing, had to adapt to the contingencies of the predictable attributions, and not only to the interpretation of the most pressing needs. In this case there was an option to rehabilitate three collective referential equipments: the Forum, former park of exhibitions and events of Braga, which was unequivocally unadapted to the current demands; the Municipal Market (1956) and its surrounding public space, to create a centrality to the north of CH; as well as the intervention of the *Pousada da Juventude* to promote the demand from the youth that has enriched the city. The remaining rehabilitation interventions focused on the theme of sustainable mobility and the rehabilitation of social housing, which we will explain below.

In 2015/2016, in the context of PEDU, it was carried out the mapping, instruction and submission of applications, on a tight schedule, and which represented for Braga a rehabilitation effort of 22,750 million euros. Meanwhile, the Forum is already bearing its fruits, especially if we consider the role that it plays in the scope of action of the municipal company InvestBraga, the main front of the municipality for the economic and business development of the council. In other respects, in partnership with other institutions such as the University of Minho, having a greater financial effort, autonomous of the autarchy, and in a multiannual framework, public wide-reaching investments were continued, for being structuring and qualifying of the attraction of Braga. This is because they value the rehabilitation of cultural and environmental heritage. This is the case of Parque das Sete Fontes, the rehabilitation of the Convent of S. Francisco, or the intervention in Insula das Carvalheiras.

However, we must recognize that, in the context in which we live, urban rehabilitation is mainly entrusted to the private initiative, so it is also important to highlight the importance of creating specific financial instruments, as is the case with the **Financial Instrument for Urban Rehabilitation and Revitalization** (IFRRU 2020), created by the central administration and banking, mainly aimed at the private sector.

It should be noted that, in Portugal, 28% of primary energy consumption refers to the residential and services sectors, when it is known that about a million buildings need intervention works. Although the resort to new construction continues to prevail, it was necessary to create a financial instrument that would encourage the reversal of this situation. IFRRU (2015), with this objective, mobilizes the allowances approved by the Regional Operational Programs (POR) and the Operational Program of Sustainability and Efficiency in the Use of Resources (PO SEUR), from Portugal 2020, which can cover up to 70% of the promoters' investment²⁷.

27. In addition to these allowances are those from the European financial institutions: the European Bank for Investment (EIB) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), <<https://ifrru.ihru.pt/web/guest/ifrru2020>>, accessed on July 18th 2020.

At the end of June there was an investment amount of 490 applications, mainly focused on the municipalities of the metropolitan areas²⁸, with Braga standing out in the continental national panorama as the main city outside this context, with a total of 41 registrations entered the municipality, all of them of private origin, and which estimate a potential investment of 1,282 million euros.

Conservation operations in buildings have been increasing, not only with the requirement of the new support framework for energy efficiency, but rather with the intrinsic imperatives to the operation's own nature, especially with regard to the **Historic Quarter** and centres of patrimonial interest. It should be highlighted that it is one of the main endogenous resources to support an economy whose fundamental pillar is the tourist attractions. *We have to prioritize the preservation of pre-existing heritage architectural and urban planning*, namely, in the sense of valuing the architecture of existing interior spaces, and the identity expressions of our *know-how*, the promotion of traditional construction techniques, decorative arts and the recovery of crafts and vernacular materials, such as: stone, tiles, wood, plaster, glass and iron.

In this sense, given the increase in rehabilitation works in the Historic Quarter, and paying attention to the new gentrification phenomena, it was considered an imperative to adapt the specific regulations, such as the one that the municipality is promoting for urban licensing in the Historic Quarter. Only in Braga, urban operations, consisting of conservation works, increased by 53% between 2013 and 2019. Simultaneously, the promotion of urban rehabilitation also involves measures of stimulation and discouragement. In the latter by tax penalty, with the increase of inherent taxes, deactivated property, or what concerns abandonment and the degradation of buildings, especially of heritage reference. Other benefits can also be added to the available ones, such as the creation of urban rehabilitation prizes. Incentives not only for restoration, but also for contemporary building, with rehabilitating functions of the territory, or even to research on the type of knowledge and its application in terms of urban rehabilitation.

From the rehabilitation of traditional urban uses, we give as an example of intervention the project to encourage traditional and historic trade, whose model derives from national legislation and which aimed to protect establishments of heritage value from the effect of the liberalization of tenancy laws²⁹, and whose operational continuation has recently been jeopardised.

28. In the report from June, 490 applications were registered, which correspond to a total investment amount estimated at 1,282 million euros.

29. Law No. 42/2017, which establishes the regime for the acknowledgement and protection of establishments and entities of local historical, cultural or social interest.



In Braga, the implementation took place under the aegis of the “*Lojas com História*” project, from which 44 stores were selected, being in this moment about to proceed to a second phase, whose preliminary survey has already gathered 268 establishments. This is an area of historical and cultural heritage that deserves special attention in the authentication and certification processes, because commercial establishments with these characteristics, apart from being a tourist attraction per se, go beyond the daily relationships and the close ties with the main markers of the city’s identity.

3.3. Sustainable urban mobility

Urban rehabilitation processes increasingly imply, in a direct way, the objectives of **sustainable urban mobility** (MUS), with which we are committed. From the experience we can share, we have in the example of PMUS, framed in PORN-Portugal 2020, the pilot intervention projects in four neighbourhoods of Braga³⁰ with a high population density.

Popularly known as “**zones 30**”, because they emphasize the purpose of valuing non-polluting means of transport, pedestrian safety, or universal accessibility, the effects of which had the greatest impact on the arrangement and regularization of road space. Also, regularization of car parking, restriction of the speed of circulation, in order to favor pedestrian safety, and incorporation of multiple accessibility. Of the natural tension that always happens with changes of informal habits in the degraded and permanently transgressed public space, this time it was carried out exclusively by the municipality, with the requalification of public space, collective equipment, urban furniture and even the rectification of some infrastructure. This process, due to its exemplary character, is intended to be replicated in other places. If the resources allow it.

However, it must be stressed that the present dynamic can catalyze the need to promote an effective PAMUS that, being started, aimed to maintain the coherence of intervention in the MUS plan.

The problem of **car** circulation in Braga, which is not isolated from the generality of the urban country, still represents the main obstacle to the accession of the majority to a new paradigm. Not that this is a problem comparable to that of the large metropolises, but because the growth model based on its expansion is still very internalized in the common view.

30. Neighbourhoods: Torre Europa, Montélios, Quinta da Fonte, and the Makro area.

In Portugal, the individual car corresponds to a weight of around 60% in the modal split. In 2017, there were about 490 light passenger vehicles per thousand inhabitants, compared to 1990, which only registered 185,2³¹. From what we can see this will probably be the generating core, direct and indirect, of the main obstacles to the implementation of the MUS. Not only because most of the traffic is dependent on pollutant fossil energy - even if electric and natural-gas locomotion has been growing in recent years - but mainly because the *ratio* of passengers to vehicles in circulation is really unsatisfactory, with direct consequences on traffic flow and urban parking. In fact, car circulation is, in our opinion, also a European problem, of the same magnitude as fisheries or the PAC, and whose resolution cannot be delegated exclusively downstream, mainly due to its structural dimension, practically handed over to the policy of local urban authorities.

With the motorization tax constantly increasing, without expectations of public investment in the short term at the level of infrastructures, it is still necessary to conclude the last segments that they claim to articulate. For consistency of the installed system, there is no other alternative but to make the agonistic effort to reconcile the mitigation of the problems of transit with tactical interventions, continuing a strong investment in the inversion of mobility paradigm. We therefore believe it is necessary to admit that structural investments will be needed, in the achievement of the so-called traffic, access and crossing *last miles*, the promotion of transport interfaces (rail/road), and the strengthening of public transport. The case of Braga, to respond to the challenges, is doubly interesting, for having an entirely urban transport company, which has been growing in number of passengers; the increase of the electric and natural gas fleet and, simultaneously, last year, for having also started to manage the surface car parking in the city center.



31. Pordata, June 2020.

We are convinced that physical planning, specifically, through urban design, has here a decisive intervention. Specifically, the introduction of new segregated spaces for the use of bicycles, which are provided since the preparation works for the first review of the PDM (2013), a network of cycle paths of several dozen kilometers (vision 2025). The truth is that, despite having a generally favorable topography, there has not been enough resources or the manifest expression of the public opinion, decisive to promote its prioritization, in the face of dominant complaints of greater traffic fluidity. The behavior of drivers and the deterrence measures against overspeed should also be more effective in stimulating and guaranteeing the desirable circulation in coexistence.

Due to the lack of an alternative in the impossibility of eliminating intercity traffic in urban crossings, it is necessary to bet on the system of *intelligentia*, in an integrated way, open to different data crossings with real-time access. In this sense, it appeared the *Braga Urban Innovation Laboratory Demonstrator* project - (BUILD, 2018), an initiative in the field of urban intelligence focused on decarbonization, supported by the Portuguese Government's Environmental Fund, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the intensity of carbon dioxide in the city of Braga.

This project, which developed test interventions in the context of urban space, with a great emphasis on mobility, incorporates the creation of a **Municipal Centre of Traffic Control and Management**. It is intended to monitor and support the decisions related to information coming from various detection devices expected, or already present, in the territories. At the same time, it articulates the information collected with the territorial entity *Quadrilátero Urbano*³², through the akin system (CIMOB) that provides information on a subregional scale. It will then be possible to integrate competencies, like monitoring traffic counters, crossing values from speed gauges and managing the traffic light network.

In terms of programmed initiatives, we can highlight some actions that will be interesting to share for its experimental character. Framed in PEDU/PMUS, having been recognized the high number of students who drive to school by car, with scarce use of the public transport, and other alternative means, let us say, with percentually-lower values than the journeys, in general, home-work-home, it was acknowledged the priority of working with the school population. Furthermore, active intervention in these age groups may, in the long run, guarantee the transformation of habits and attitudes. In this sense, progress was made with projects of improvement of the access to the main schools in the city, namely: "Kiss & Go", freeing the second row parking lanes next to the establishments; the "School Bus", a bus with a periphery-center connection, with the same objective: to avoid traffic

32. Which is currently developing an integrated ticketing project for public transport, at the level of the four cities of the region.

congestion outside schools at rush hour, and the implementation of a network of raised pedestrian crossings, some of which were provided with additional safety lighting devices.

As an example of the civic participation strategy, the voluntary proposal of a group of citizens who applied for the Participatory Budget was adopted, with the idea of eradicating existing barriers and obstacles on public roads, disrupting access for people with reduced mobility. Having identified the candidacy with the slogan “eu não passo aqui” (“I can’t pass through”), the municipality decided to co-opt it, reverting it to the opposite objective, i.e., “eu já passo aqui” (“I now pass through”) (2016). With this purpose, a permanent intervention model was created at the level of municipal works in the public space, having as a rule the removal of all kinds of obstacles, in order to standardize walk spacing and slopes, making them accessible for everyone. Let us remember that right now, half of the city’s population is already experiencing difficulties in elementary locomotion, such as going up and down stairs. A reality that is the daily life of the ageing population of many European cities.

In other respects, in the field of urban management, there are increasingly more frequent requests about mobility impact, related to new urban projects, especially those that have a greater pressure on the territory. For example, in the Historic Center, the intensity of rehabilitation imposes measures of containment and moderation at the level of mobility. In fact, in the short term, there will be no parking availability that can accompany the growth in the number of vehicles. It is already agreed that large peripheral enterprises will need to provide free and public parking spaces within the scope of the mandatory legal concessions. These places must be articulated with urban transport, and thus be able to contribute to the automotive easing in the center of cities.

The success of the transition process of locomotion styles must go through civic participation. Of course, first through citizen participation, by means of public consultation processes which should be proactive and competent, but also through permanent structures for accompaniment and process monitoring, on the part of the public promoter. It has been fundamental within the scope of mutual knowledge and the transversality of the ways of being, the Local Action Group (GAL), which brings together institutional partners, associations and universities with this objective. The GAL was recognized as a key partner by the URBACT Network - *CityMobilNet*, which Braga participated in and worked with. This European network was one of the most successful ones in which we took part, due to the interactions developed, especially, in technical terms and in contact with new experiences, which contributed a lot to the update of our municipal technicians involved.



3.4. Social convergence

The focus of social convergence, community solidarity, integration of minorities and the fight against poverty, had in the **Integrated Action Plan for Disadvantaged Communities (PAICD)**, also a domain of Braga's PEDU, the main intervention focus in terms of urban rehabilitation of the social neighbourhoods of the municipality. In view of the availability, two neighborhoods were selected (Santa Tecla and Enguardas), with residents with a high percentage of members from the gypsy community, stigmatized by social exclusion phenomena: poverty resulting from chronic unemployment, households heavily dependent on social benefits, school failure of young people, small crime events, all of this in a disqualified urban environment, living in houses in poor conditions. A rehabilitation operation of 147 dwellings is currently underway in the neighborhood of Santa Tecla, and more than fifty in other places, within the scope of an investment of around 5,5 million euros.

The municipality of Braga has had a municipal company since 1999 for this mission, BragaHabit, which directly supports today about 1300 families, through a diverse range of interventions and projects. The main one is certainly the management of more than half a thousand housing units. But also in the direct support to subletting-type contracts³³, and the use of other organic devices about social support for housing, such as the rental of shared residences, a pioneering model in Portugal.

But it is also true that, in addition to the rehabilitation and availability of housing, the potential of this municipality's business instrument takes part in other priority areas, such as socio-educational services and socio-territorial interventions. Consider the example of providing school meals, community entertainment services (arts, creativity, communication) and direct family support. Translated into the crescent partnership in projects with local institutions of social solidarity and universities, particularly in encouraging the participation of residents in the decision-making processes related to urban rehabilitation and regeneration, these are unavoidable factors for the implementation of the measures of emancipation and integration of neighborhoods within the urban fabric, or the implementation of actions aimed at building energy efficiency.

For the pursuit of the aforementioned purposes, it is being carried out the development of a **Local Housing Strategy** program, which will allow us to learn more comprehensively about the needs, and to envisage the necessary solutions to face the recent difficulties of speculative rise in housing prices. These are today aggravated for several reasons, such as the increase of tourist demand.

33. RADA - it is a housing support scheme that consists of the granting of a subsidy aimed at co-paying the monthly rent payment within the scope of housing lease contracts for disposable-income housing.

Municipal companies like BragaHabit can and should play a strategic role in urban rehabilitation, in general, in the energy transition imposed by the environmental goals we are committed to. But, above all, in the response to the new poverty and migrant foci that require it.

A well-assumed and well-conceived social housing policy, developed under principles of good governance -encouraging well-managed cooperative management, with social and democratic participation- will make all the difference in achieving the objectives of social cohesion and the recovery of city values within the urban space. This means to have clean, decent and affordable housing.

3.5. Heritage, culture and knowledge

Social cohesion, inscribed at the most diverse scales, worthy of a solidary and guiding society, necessarily has as a primordial foundation the revival of the identity heritage. It cannot be developed of course here, in these few lines, how the importance of the topic deserves the priority of the design of sustainable urban development, but we cannot fail to share some testimonial considerations, which we believe are both structural and urgent. This means, starting with its most canonical aspect, that perhaps we could ignore the mention of the concept “**Baukultur**”, inscribed in the LC. That is, the declaration on urbanism and architecture of European expression that calls for the qualification of the built space. The same that can stimulate the common basic cultural identity of Europeans, embodied in their own internal diversity. Without further ado, the consideration of all human activities that dynamize the urban environment and have an increased cultural responsibility, in the obvious perspective that it drives the economy and the social and environmental sustainability (Gonçalves, 2005).

We have already talked about the battlefield installed in the historic quarters of our cities, and in all urban centers, with strong identity characteristics, a true plateau where the contradictions of sustainable development are dramatized. From the economist “façadism”, which only thinks in terms of euros per square meter, to the difficult commitment to strive for reconciliation between this diffuse concept of authenticity of places and the viability of contemporaneity. But the issue of urban heritage is much more than architecture and urbanism. It is, above all, the memorial vision endowed with the energy of affects with prospective success in the future. Rather than rhetoric, it is nowadays the prospect of rehabilitation of public space, or if you want to put it that way, the collective, when it shows trends for cartelizing itself. This may actually be the same mars field where the future of individual freedom, which could lead to the dissipation of private life, is at stake.



Rather than the square, the street, or the garden, or even the collective commercial space, the territory for everyone is the expression of contemporary heritage. In the sense that it does not ignore or threaten the legacy of the past. For urban heritage, it must be found the middle ground between the design of the elites and the accessibility of the masses, between literal restitution and selective regeneration, between static musealization and dynamic integration, between localism and tourism. In sum, between closing and opening. Applying common sense, rather than wisdom, the middle ground will certainly be the right measure.

After the Sacro-Monte de Braga, Bom Jesus, was classified as UNESCO heritage, as a *cultural landscape*, the issue of cultural heritage has acquired a scope that no longer fits entirely, for better or for worse, within the local decision-making sphere. However, it is true that heritage, especially after the establishment of the democratic regime, gained a great relevance within the urban policies of Braga in the last decades. Consider, indeed, one of the most sensitive political expressions in our council, a reflection of the advances and retreats of citizens' civic maturity.

Being Braga a two-thousand year old city, it comprises all tranches of the western urban historiography. However, two periods have come to be considered strategic elements in international promotion, either for the complementarity they offer in contrast to other regional specificities, or because of the physical and intangible assets they enjoy. We are talking about **Roman Braga** and **Baroque Braga**³⁴. Furthermore, the dimension of endogenous heritage has also been supported in parallel, as the reflection of traditional knowledges (e.g. Braga's viola, the bells, the cavaquinho, etc.), local festivities (São João, Semana Santa), or cultural ways and itineraries (Roman routes, the way of St. James- the Way of Torres, and the ways of São Bento).

The itinerary dimension of the heritage, within the scope of a decarbonized Europe, exemplified by our **Iter-Romanum** candidacy³⁵, a network of European cities that intend to launch the Roman routes as European cultural itineraries of the Council of Europe, which can represent the reunion of these appetites with the human scale that longs for them. Furthermore, the itinerary overturning of the heritage makes it possible to extend the critical mass of endogenous supply, linking sites that, in isolation, would not justify an exclusive visit.

34. Bracara Augusta Foundation; Atlantiaca association (Roman Cities of the Atlantic); Roman Portugal Association; Iter-Romanum – candidate to European cultural itinerary; Festivities, Roman Braga, and Baroque Braga.

35. Braga leads the candidacy, aiming at classifying the Roman roads as European Cultural Itinerary - "Iter-Romanum", composed of a network of European entities: Arlon (Belgium), Archaeological Park of Ljubljana (Slovenia); The Silver Way route (Spain); Alésia Park (France); Aquileia (Italy); and Bracara Augusta.

Finally, within the brief testimony that we can give, with useful motivation, to revisit the Leipzig Charter (LC) and, through direct association, the Urban Agenda of the European Union (UAEU), we emphasize the growing importance of knowledge as an unavoidable factor of sustainable urban development. An intermediate domain, one would say, between the big data of information and the humanistic wisdom of individuals. A design that stopped belonging exclusively to universities, schools and research centers, but that does not do without them, in order to summon all development agents, both local and global.

For this call, which Braga already answers with two universities, a polytechnic centre, a vast vibrant school network of all teaching levels, both public and private; a Foundation (Bracara Augusta); all of these joined by the International Nanotechnology Laboratory, of Iberian management; and there is also a group of companies with global expression, which independently promote knowledge transfer with application in technological innovation. In this call appears also the Braga City Council, which, as an example of a strategic definition, recently created the **Urban Innovation Laboratories**, which include an observatory. An applied research development interface involving municipal technicians and researchers, mainly university students, in a mutual investigation/action process with the laboratory and field of action, the territory of Braga.

MSMB, July 2020.



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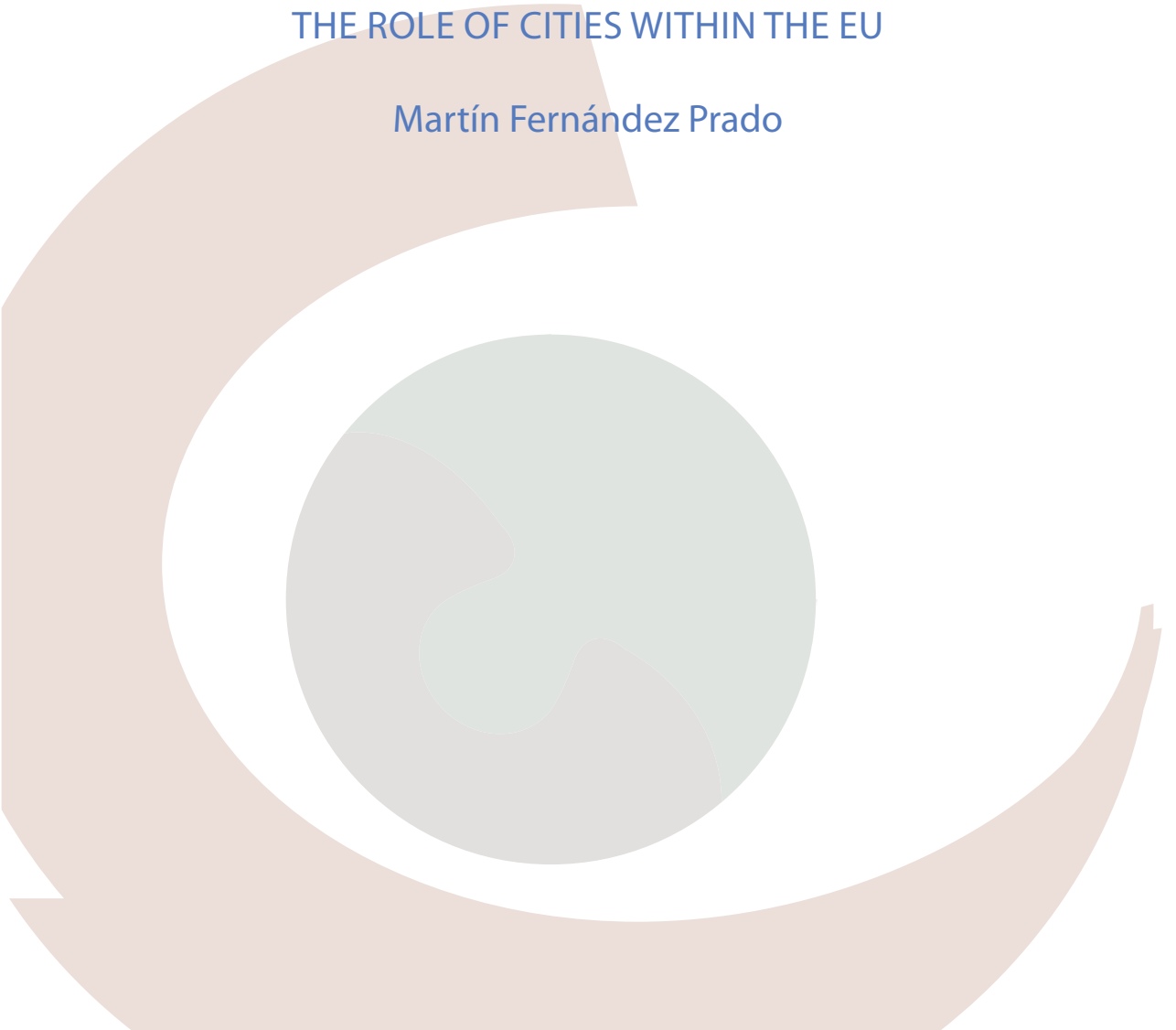
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THE NEW LEIPZIG CHARTER:
A CHANCE TO REDEFINE
THE ROLE OF CITIES WITHIN THE EU

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Keywords: Leipzig Charter, European Urban Agenda, urban policy, Sustainable Urban Development.

Abstract

We have been highlighting for years the crucial role of cities in Europe and in the world, pointing out that we live in a society of cities. Unfortunately, both at a European level and in Spain, this statement has not been accompanied by the necessary development in policies, regulations and budget allocation that such a statement might entail.

European cities have not been acknowledged in European policies the role that they do have de facto in the construction of that united Europe and in the upkeep of the quality of life that characterizes the old continent. This text aims to review what the European construction has meant for Spanish cities, how they have participated in the construction of the European “Urban Acquis” and which must be the role they should play in the future, which should be defined in the revision of the Leipzig Charter beyond the actions carried out by Member States.

It is proposed that the renewal of the Leipzig charter works as a chance to define a European urban policy that assigns the city the role it has already been performing de facto during the last years and that takes into account the different particularities and characteristics of cities and their rural areas of influence, with special attention to medium-sized and small cities, their polycentric networks and their functional areas, which are the true “heart” of Europe and the spaces with the highest quality of life. Apart from the political declarations of Leipzig, this cannot be possible without, obviously, the political, regulatory and budgetary measures of the EU, and a true willingness to do so on the part of Member States.

The approval of the European Urban Agenda (EUA) and the Urban Agendas (UA) of some states, including Spain, “Intermediate Administrations” and those that are already being developed in many of the cities, represents an exceptional roadmap and a clear path walked towards the direction that should be specified in these measures and budgets in order to achieve a true sustainable urban development. The New Leipzig Charter should give this Urban Agenda and its implementation process the protagonism that is needed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The renewal of the Leipzig Charter

The rotating Presidency of the EU that will correspond to Germany during the second semester of 2020 has announced the will to renew the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities¹ that had been approved during the previous German presidency in May 2007, as well as the Territorial Agenda of the EU². The renewal of these documents is an excellent occasion for Europe to reflect on what has been the urban policy of the European Union during the recent years and what are their future prospects, defining in a clear way what should be the role of cities in the construction of a united Europe.

The intention to renew these documents was specified in the Declaration of Bucharest³ from 2019, where the Romanian Presidency of the EU reflected on the opportunities and the challenges, as well as the general state of urban and regional development policies. As such, the Bucharest Declaration aims to serve as a bridge between the Pact of Amsterdam⁴, adopted in 2016 during the Dutch Presidency of the EU, the Urban Agenda of the European Union⁵, approved and underway since 2016, and the documents that will be reviewed and updated during the German presidency: the Territorial Agenda of the European Union and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities.

Last May, it was put on the table for general discussion between stakeholders and administrations a “martyr document” and first draft of what could be this new Leipzig Charter, “The New Leipzig Charter. The transformative power of cities for the common good”⁶, which already introduces some of these changes but, as will be discussed below, it could further specify the good intentions it points to.

Writing this text in the summer of 2020, in the middle of the COVID pandemic and already entering an economic and social pandemic caused by the measures to restrict mobility and activity in order to minimize the effects of the health pandemic, it is also necessary to reflect on the role of cities and their urban policies in the definition, reconstruction and impulse of the new post-pandemic reality, which should be presented, explicitly or implicitly, as an element in this new letter and it is an aspect upon which we should also reflect.

1. Leipzig Charter https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/themes/urban/leipzig_charter.pdf

2. EU Territorial Agenda https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/what/territorial-cohesion/territorial_agenda_leipzig2007.pdf

3. Bucharest Declaration <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/urban-agenda-eu/bucharest-declaration>

4. Pact of Amsterdam <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/urban-agenda>

5. European Urban Agenda <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/urban-agenda>

6. The New Leipzig Charter. The transformative power of cities for the common good. Draft: 05.05.2020. <https://skupnostobcin.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/new-leipzig-charter-draft-050520.pdf>

Cities, as they have done during the health pandemic, have a central role in the post-COVID socioeconomic reconstruction. The strengthening of their role, their empowerment in Europe and in the member states, and the recognition of their work in serving citizens will be key in the socioeconomic recovery that Europe is considering and that must be specifically included in the renewed Leipzig Charter. However, this urgency and immediacy of post-pandemic measures and plans for the rebuilding of Europe and its citizens must not divert us from the process and path that are being developed, and the principles of sustainable development: the Green Deal⁷ or European Green Pact and the strategy established in the EUA should be maintained.

Similarly, although urban policy is not one of the sectoral formations specifically defined in the Council of the European Union, member states have been making progress on the urban issue and have increased attention and budget for urban policies. But above all, cities and their networks have been “pushing” for a greater recognition of their role in Europe and have been accompanying the European construction, in many cases doing it from individual efforts or getting together in organizations and structures that have helped to define the European “Urban Acquis”⁸. This contribution must be more explicitly included in the new Charter.

Reciprocally, and especially in the case of Spain, European policies and agreements have greatly helped to modernize Spanish cities in a “second youth” after the first one, which coincided with the arrival of democracy in Spain in 1978 and the development in subsequent years.

1.2. The evolution of Spanish cities and the role of European policies

If we talk about the history of recent municipalism and the evolution of cities in Spain in the last 50 years, we have to highlight two significant processes. At first, the role that municipalities assumed after the approval of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, acquiring its democratic and participatory role and producing a first modernization of the city. And a second stage, in which we can say that its “incorporation into the 21st century” was produced, with a second modernization as a result of its coordination with European urban policies to try to synchronize its transformation towards sustainable societies.

The municipality has been a key piece since its creation in the administrative organization and the territorial and political planning of our country.

7. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_es

8. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/newsroom/document/pdf/saarbrucken_urban_en.pdf



During the dictatorship they were understood as another spring of a centralized state that followed the historical tradition since its implementation at the beginning of the 19th century, but with the arrival of democracy, the Constitution gave them a much more important role than the mere decentralization, since it made them a political entity of the first order, a basis for coexistence and participation due to its proximity to the citizen, and therefore a key element in the development of the Spanish society.

This new political role brought with it a modernization of its administration, of the services offered and, especially, the regeneration of the city itself, which was expressed in a new urban image with the improvement of facilities and services, the humanization of public space and in general with the improvement of the urban image and quality. A process which was general to society as a whole, covering transversely all social aspects, and which generated in some Spanish cities a true mutation and an exemplary global transformation for many other countries.

The transformation lasted until the mid-1980s and gradually weakened and slowed down in our cities, being finally overtaken with the appearance of European programs associated with European funds and the assumption by the cities of the principles established in the European charters and treaties, authentic key pieces in the second revolution and the continuation towards a sustainable urban environment.

This process has been bi-univocal, back and forth: on the one hand, the European treaties and charters, and especially the European equity fund programs for urban actions, have greatly helped in the modernization and sustainable development of our cities, but on the other hand, the role that these cities have played has been equally important in the construction of the European quality of life through the development of strategies and plans linked to these policies, the knowledge exchange in associations and groupings of cities, and the transfer of good practices and experiences that has allowed to keep evolving these European and state policies.

Likewise, the implementation in urban areas of sectoral policies, which, in most cases, have the areas with the greatest affection in the cities and, therefore, the space in which it has been possible to achieve greater progresses, has helped to achieve the global community goals.

1.3. The United Nations framework for sustainable development

Most authors point to the Earth Summit, organized by United Nations and held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, as the turning point of the new development policy, including the urban policy that was embodied in the “Rio Declaration on Environment and Development”⁹.

To achieve this declaration, the approved document was previously debated in 1987 by the UN World Commission on the Environment and Development “Our Common Future”¹⁰, the original name of the Brundtland Report for which it is best known, and which had special significance as the first attempt to eliminate the confrontation between development and sustainability.

This document introduced important aspects that have been maintained over time, such as environmental protection ceasing to be a national or regional task to become a global problem, or the need to stop seeing development and the environment as if they were separate issues.

It also established the currently worldwide-assimilated strategy, that to achieve sustainable development it was necessary to think globally but act locally, giving cities a leading role in meeting the large global challenges.

The Brundtland Report launched the concept of sustainable development and defined sustainability as the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs”¹¹. It consists of a three-dimensional idea: environmental, social and economic sustainability.

During the Conference it was approved the adoption of an action program for the 21st century, called Agenda 21¹², which defines some of the 2,500 recommendations related to the application of the principles of the declaration.

This program was the reference for the application of the concept of sustainable development during the subsequent years and the first of another series of programs and agendas that have been evolving and have been applied in these last three decades: first, with the conference called Rio+5¹³, then with

9. <https://www.un.org/spanish/esa/sustdev/documents/declaracionrio.htm>

10. <http://www.upv.es/contenidos/CAMUNISO/info/U0506189>

11. <https://www.un.org/es/ga/president/65/issues/sustdev.shtml>

12. <https://www.un.org/spanish/esa/sustdev/agenda21/index.htm>

13. <https://www.un.org/spanish/conferences/cumbre&5.htm>. Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly for the review and evaluation of the implementation of Agenda 21. NY 1997.

the adoption of an agenda called the Millennium Development Goals¹⁴, later at the Johannesburg Earth Summit in 2002¹⁵, and more recently with the approval of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations¹⁶ and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of which, for the matter that brings us here, Objective 11 is of special relevance: “make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”¹⁷.

It could be said that by changing the terminology (Agendas 21, Sustainability, Smart, IUDS strategies, Urban Agenda ...) and with the normal evolution, we have redefined this same program and the concepts of the Rio Summit and the report “Our Common Future” over the last 30 years.

Parallel to this global process led by the United Nations, the European Union has been an active agent in its design and implementation and has developed its own sustainable development policy which will be reviewed in detail in section 3 “The role of cities in the construction of Europe during the last decades”.

Despite this smooth path of the two processes, and the evident conceptual confluence in a large part of the postulates and background of the discourses, it has been necessary to wait until the Amsterdam Pact in 2016 to establish a common point of operational convergence between the two in the European Urban Agenda (EUA)¹⁸.

14. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/es/millennium-development-goals.html>. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were created as a roadmap to launch the Millennium Declaration. Based on the values and principles agreed by the Member States at the 2010 Millennium Summit, the MDGs have served as a global framework for collective action aimed at reducing poverty and improving the lives of people with scarce resources.

15. https://www.un.org/spanish/conferences/wssd/cumbre_ni.htm

16. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/development-agenda/>

17. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/cities/>

18. https://ec.europa.eu/info/eu-regional-and-urban-development/topics/cities-and-urban-development/urban-agenda-eu_es

2. SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN POLICY

It is important to define the conceptual framework in which this new Leipzig Charter is going to function. Sustainable development is a fundamental principle in the EU that appears in the Treaty on European Union in its article 3.3¹⁹.

Beyond what was stated in the Brundtland Report, it is important to highlight that sustainable development requires the integration of immediate actions, and medium and long-term local and global goals, and it implies a threefold social, environmental and economic perspective that must be addressed through integrated approaches.

Based on the 2001 Gothenburg Strategy²⁰, the European Council adopted in June 2006 the revision of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy²¹, renewed in 2006 and 2009²².

The European Urban Policy is based on a set of work methodologies and common principles related to the management and planning of the city which has been built in the last years and has come to be called the European Urban Acquis. This urban sustainable development policy has a series of basic characteristics that should be the basis for the development of the New Leipzig Charter and the aspects into which it should delve. Among these characteristics it stands out the integrated transversal approach, the methodology of participatory and multilevel work, and the fact that it involves bottom-up dynamic and flexible processes during its development.

This integrated approach is characterized by its multi-sectoral nature (in the triple helix: social, economic and environmental), its multilevel nature (local, regional, national, and supranational), its multi-actor, cooperative and collaborative character (civil society, companies, other administrations and government) and it should be participatory in a network structure (involving all parties concerned, including the citizenship in general, the network management of shared projects, etc).

19. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF Art. 3.3. "The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It shall promote scientific and technological advance. It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child. It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced".

20. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20977/00200-r1es1.pdf> Since 2001, the European Union has a Sustainable Development Strategy, approved at the Gothenburg European Council, and subsequently reviewed in June 2006 and 2009.

21. <https://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&mf=ST%2010917%202006%20INIT>

22. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0400:FIN:EN:PDF>

In Spain these policies began in the 90s with the implementation of the local Agenda 21 programme²³ by a large part of the Spanish municipalities (approximately 30% of them), with urban regeneration and revitalization operations with a marked social interest in neighbourhoods with a huge complexity and social problems, in contrast to traditional expansionist policies. They combined physical interventions with the implementation of programmes of social and economic nature, as well as a leading role of the environmental challenges that must be faced locally.

Subsequently, the sustainable urban development projects linked to the ERDF Funds were added: the URBAN I and II Programs, the subsequent Urban Initiatives, the IUDS Strategies that are being currently developed, and the URBACT program, among others.

In this context, the elaboration of an urban policy focused on the sustainable management of development in the cities is becoming increasingly necessary. We must distinguish between a policy that is specifically targeted at cities and a policy that is not, but which is 'urban' insofar as it has an impact on cities, such as housing or transport policies, social services, urban planning, etc.

3. THE ROLE OF CITIES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE DURING THE LAST DECADES

Urban aspects and policies are not a direct competence of the European Union, although the Lisbon Treaty incorporated the bases of the sustainable development policy by incorporating territorial cohesion into economic and social cohesion, as a competence shared between the EU and the Member States²⁴.

Urban policies are not part of the specific sectoral formations of the Council of the European Union, although the Member States have been working together on urban and city development issues through Informal Meetings of Ministers organized by the successive six-monthly presidencies in power, through meetings of General Directors, or through a permanent working group at the technical level: the Urban Development Group (UDG), in which they are represented together with the 27 Member States, the Commission, the European Parliament and other institutions with European relevance in urban issues²⁵.

23. <https://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/countr/spain/inst.htm>

24. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/es/sheet/5/el-tratado-de-lisboa>. Art.4.2.c of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

25. <https://www.mitma.gob.es/arquitectura-vivienda-y-suelo/urbanismo-y-politica-de-suelo/actividad-internacional/union-europea/las-politicas-urbanas-a-nivel-europeo/politicas-urbanas-a-nivel-europeo>. Conceptualization of the urban policies at European level made by the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda on its website.

For its part, the European Commission has been working very sectorally on urban issues through various General Directorates and services and creating an Interservices group on Urban Development²⁶ for a greater internal coordination, trying to achieve the transversality of urban policies which are difficult to achieve from the verticality of sectoral policies. In any case, if it can be said that there is a General Directorate with greater responsibilities in urban policies, although this may seem incongruous for not being one of the subjects of direct competence of the EU, this is DG REGIO²⁷, which in its definition includes Urban policy, the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, in whose Portal on Urban Topics its main European initiatives can be consulted²⁸.

The European Parliament, for its part, has also developed urban initiatives and activities, especially those developed by the Urban Intergroup²⁹, made up of more than 89 MEPs representing the majority of the Member States of the EU and all political groups in the European Parliament. They work with 143 partners at local, regional, national and European levels, who represent the interests of the villages and cities of Europe, or who work in the relevant domain for urban development. It is also relevant the work of a specific parliamentary commission for Regional Development, the REGI Committee³⁰.

Despite all this, urban policy has been developed in a constant way, but it seems that one of the first decisions that the European Union should take is the creation of a specific formation about urban affairs.

The consolidation process of the ‘urban acquis’ has been developed through two parallel processes: on the one hand, the intergovernmental cooperation between Member States that has been widely developed in another chapter of this publication by Angela de la Cruz, and on the other hand, the involvement of the municipalities in a threefold aspect: the development of projects and municipal plans for urban actions funded by the EU, the local application of global sectoral policies, and the creation of networks for the exchange of experiences and good practices.

As we said, despite the fact that the EU does not have specific powers in urban matters, it has built a discourse, an urban policy and an urban strategy throughout the last decades.

26. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/

27. https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/regional-and-urban-policy_es

28. <https://www.mitma.gob.es/arquitectura-vivienda-y-suelo/urbanismo-y-politica-de-suelo/actividad-internacional/union-europea/las-politicas-urbanas-a-nivel-europeo/politicas-urbanas-a-nivel-europeo>

29. <http://urban-intergroup.eu/>

30. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/es/regi/home/highlights>

At the same time, the Member States have collaborated by approving important declarations. This work has been done in a continued way in the diverse meetings and declarations, in all of them taking specific steps forward in the commitment to the development of a European model based on common principles. We can therefore say that it has been a quiet and not too fast process, but continued and laying firm foundations. It is a work done by the states, with little or scarce participation from cities. The main statements of influence on European urban policy are:

- *Lille Action Programme, 2000*
- *Rotterdam Urban Acquis, 2004*
- *Bristol Accord, 2005*
- *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, 2007*
- *Marseille Declaration, 2008*
- *Toledo Declaration, 2010*
- *Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020, 2011*
- *Riga Declaration, 2015*
- *Pact of Amsterdam and Urban Agenda for the EU, 2016*
- *Bucharest Declaration, 2019*

Although there is an annex to this publication that gathers a detailed explanation of the main reference documents in the construction of urban policy, we incorporate a brief summary in this text.

The Lille Action Program, 2000

Is a proposal for a multi-level cooperation program on urban issues for the whole of the EU, whose aim is to help Member States and their cities to give tangible shape to the objectives established at European level to address the challenges of the cities. It identifies priorities that should be present in the city strategies, such as promoting the integrated approach in urban development³¹.

The Rotterdam Urban Acquis, 2004

Under the title “Cities empower Europe”, it was intended to consolidate an European urban thought through urban experiences in European cities, which forms the basis of successful urban policies³².

31. https://www.agecu.es/agecu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/declaration_de_lille_2000.pdf

32. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/newsroom/document/pdf/saarbrucken_urban_en.pdf. The ‘Acquis URBAN’. Using Cities’ Best Practises for European Cohesion Policy. Common Declaration of URBAN cities and players at the European Conference “URBAN Future” on June 8th and 9th, 2005 in Saarbrücken (Germany).

The Bristol Accord, 2005

It gathers the characteristics that sustainable communities should have and ratifies a commitment to collect case studies of characteristics of sustainable communities. There is a revision of the progresses registered across all Europe; it includes a selection of case studies; and it suggests the suitability of carrying out further work in order to improve the European dimension of the Agenda on Sustainable Communities³³.

The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, 2007

There is an agreement on common principles and strategy for an urban development policy, this commitment focuses on starting political debate in the respective Member States about how to integrate the principles of the Leipzig Charter in their respective national and local Urban Development policies, how to make use of the integrated approach and associated governance and how to foster a balanced territorial organization based on a polycentric urban structure.

Marseille Declaration, 2008

In continuity with the line of work that began with the Leipzig Charter. It ratifies the agreed principles on sustainable cities. It provides a methodological tool for the implementation of the principles of the Charter: the EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK for the sustainable city. It is an online platform designed to boost the sustainability of European cities. It offers performance criteria, methodologies, and evaluation instruments related to sustainability. (Checklist on urban sustainability and an integrated approach to urban development). It has a database of good practices.

Toledo Declaration, 2010

It incorporates for the first time the strategic role of integral urban regeneration in the future of European urban development. The role of cities in achieving the 2020 Strategy is highlighted: the use of integral urban regeneration as an instrument to achieve this more sustainable, more inclusive, and smarter urban model.

Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020, 2011

Under the subtitle of “Towards a Europe of inclusive, intelligent and sustainable diversity of regions”, it was endorsed at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Planning and territorial development on May 19th, 2011 in Gödöllő, Hungary, with the general objective of making territorial cohesion in Europe a common goal³⁴.

33. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/summarysustainablecommunities_/summarysustainablecommunities_es.pdf. The chances of success of the approach to sustainable communities and their application.

34. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/what/territorial-cohesion/territorial_agenda_2020.pdf



Riga Declaration, 2015

Under the title “Towards an Urban Agenda for the EU” this declaration represents a new step forward in the construction of the Urban Agenda by defining its principles and essential elements. As one of the common European priorities, the Declaration also recognizes the importance of small and medium-sized urban areas, and the existing potential that they offer in terms of territorial development and for the achievement of European objectives³⁵.

Pact of Amsterdam and Urban Agenda for the EU, 2016

The Pact of Amsterdam determines the main objectives and the operational framework of the EUA and it defines it as a set of actions aimed at strengthening the urban dimension of the policies of the EU through three axes: better regulation, better financing, and better exchange of urban knowledge. From an operational point of view, these actions are grouped into three blocks: internal and intersectoral coordination, thematic partnerships and institutional coordination, and multilevel governance, which have already been commented on in other chapters of this publication.

Its fundamental objective is to strengthen the urban dimension of both national policies and those of the EU. A new form of multilevel governance is proposed, through which the institutions of the EU, Member States, cities and other parties concerned can work together. The EUA has been a key document in the construction of European urban policy, and it must be the basis for those established in the renewal of the Leipzig Charter.

Bucharest Declaration, 2019

Entitled “Building the EU from the ground up with our regions and cities” at the 8th summit of Regions and Cities of the European Committee of Regions, it gave important support to the EUA approved in 2016 and laid the foundations for the renewal of the Leipzig Charter currently under discussion.

These documents, which have been approved by successive presidencies, their conceptual continuity and coherence, and their constant evolution, allows us to affirm that Europe is mature enough to definitely assume a common urban policy and move from voluntariness and indirect or induced work to another more direct and decisive one in political, administrative, regulatory, financial and participatory terms. Europe’s first chance to declare it will be the upcoming renewal of the Leipzig Charter.

35. https://www.mitma.gob.es/recursos_mfom/pdf/A2262DA6-0495-4A12-B623-2CD0AAC1C8F7/131241/20150610_EUUrbanDeclaration_Riga1.pdf

4. THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS OF THE 'URBAN ACQUIS' FROM THE CITIES BEYOND GOVERNMENTAL ACTION

4.1. Trajectory of European financing of urban actions

Although there is no competence basis for urban policies in the treaties of the EU, the impact of community sectoral policies upon cities is evident. Within the principle of subsidiarity that guarantees respect for states, regions and cities, the urban process has been consolidated from the European Commission on the basis of Regional, Cohesion and Urban policies. In this order. This is done through programmes and community funding where the EU has a long tradition of city support programs.

DG REGIO, through the urban dimension of cohesion policy and especially for the allocation of structural funds for development (ERDF), has made an important contribution to urban development in European cities. The main programs have been:

- Urban regeneration actions: Urban pilot projects,
Phase I and II: (1989-1994 and 1997-1999)
- URBAN I and II community initiatives (1994-1999 and 2000-2006)
+ URBACT (2003-2006)
- URBANA (2007-2013)
+ URBAN AUDIT and URBACT II.
- IUDES strategies (2014-2020). It tripled the funding, compared to the previous period. And it forces to allocate 5% of ERDF resources at a national level to urban policies.
+ URBAN AUDIT and URBACT III

The new funding period 2021-27³⁶ is currently on the table, and it should determine in which policies and with what amounts the European policies will be funded. The first working documents have already been debated in recent months and years, and it seems that it has been established that urban policies will continue to increase and that the ERDF funds at a national level must allocate at least 6% of resources for these urban strategies.

36. In May 2018, the Commission proposed a series of regulations related to the post-2020 cohesion policy of the Union. These regulations follow the ordinary legislative procedure. One of the main objectives of this reform is to simplify the procedures and to increase the effectiveness of the Union investments. The eleven thematic objectives used in the Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 have been replaced by five policy objectives for the ERDF, the ESF+, the Cohesion Fund and the EMFF.

The proposed budget for the future cohesion policy is 330,6 billion€. Around 200,6 billion€ will be allocated to the ERDF, more than 41 billion€ to the Cohesion Fund (of which 10 billion€ will go to the Connecting Europe Facility) and 88,6 billion€ to the ESF+.

The Cohesion Policy keeps investing in all regions based on the same three categories of regions (less developed, in transition or more developed).

The method of allocation of funds continues to take into account, to a large extent, the GDP per capita. New criteria are added (youth unemployment, low educational levels, climate change and reception and integration of immigrants) to reflect the reality on the ground in a better way. The ultra-peripheral regions will continue to benefit from a special aid from the EU.



It would be convenient to align these funds with urban agendas and its implementation plans, and, where possible, increase this percentage up to at least 10% of the national ERDF funds.

DG REGIO has promoted other initiatives such as URBAN AUDIT³⁷ or the URBACT program, which have evolved in the different planification periods.

URBACT³⁸ is a European territorial cooperation program for exchange and learning that promotes sustainable and integrated urban development, encompassing 550 cities, 29 countries and 7000 active local agents. Co-financed by the European Commission (European Funds for Regional Development) and the Member States, URBACT facilitates that European cities work together to develop effective and sustainable solutions for the main challenges that they face, sharing good practices and the acquired experience, and integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions.

URBACT has been operating for more than 15 years and three large URBACT I, II and III programs have been developed, employing the resources and technical knowledge with the aim of strengthening the capacity of cities to offer integrated urban strategies and actions according to the urban challenges. The program achieves these goals by creating thematic networks focused on different urban problems, each one with between five and twelve members, which include professionals, Public Administrations, as well as interest groups of other public organizations, the private sector and civil society.

In order to achieve these goals, URBACT III (currently being implemented through the 23 new URBACT Action Planning Networks (APN)³⁹ that will go to Phase 2) is developed through three types of interventions: the transnational exchange, the building of capacities, and the capitalization and dissemination with a total eligible budget of 96,3 million euros.

Spain is one of the Member States of the EU that has contributed with most municipalities to these networks, with a total of 18 partners (of which 3 are leaders of their respective networks)⁴⁰.

37. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/themes/urban/audit/index_es.htm. The European Urban Audit launched by the Directorate-General for Regional Policy is possible thanks to the joint action of the 27 national statistical institutes, coordinated by Eurostat. The information gathered makes reference to more than 300 variables that describe the quality of life in European cities.

38. <https://urbact.eu/urbact-glance>

39. The main objective of Action Planning Networks is to bring together between 7 and 10 cities across Europe to share their experience on a certain thematic challenge linked to sustainable urban development and share their ideas about possible solutions, for a period of more than 2 years. Each associated city will consolidate a Local Group URBACT, made up of the most relevant urban actors with whom the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) will be co-designed for future implementation.

40. The URBACT National point in Spain is represented by Paisaje Transversal, an innovation office specialized in sustainable urban development led by Jon Aguirre.

URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS⁴¹

The ‘Urban Innovative Actions’ (UIA) is an initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas across Europe with resources to test new and untried solutions to address urban challenges. According to article 8 of the ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of 372 million euros for 2014-2020.

To respond to the increasingly complex challenges that they face, the urban authorities must go beyond traditional policies and services and they must be bold and innovative.

Urban Innovative Actions offers urban authorities the possibility of taking risks and experimenting with the most innovative and creative solutions. UIA’s main objective is to provide urban areas all across Europe with resources to test innovative solutions for major urban challenges, and to see how they would work in practice and how they would respond to the complexity of real life.

There are other Directorates with specific urban actions, such as DG ENVIRONMENT, which is specified in aspects of Urban Environment and urban sustainability.

Another important aspect of European urban policies is the possibility of promoting sustainable investment in European urban areas, allowing Member States to use part of the EU aids, the so-called Structural Funds, in order to make refundable investments in urban areas, known as the Commission’s JESSICA initiative⁴² (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas), in cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). Although it is true that in the case of Spain this tool has been scarcely used, possibly due to the little knowledge of it and because it was reflected as debt to the administrations, it is probable that in the near future it will be used more.

4.2. Networks, cooperation and exchange of experiences

In this process of construction of European urban policy, if there is an area where cities have had a primary and driving role, it is in the creation of city networks for cooperation, exchange of experiences and joint work in order to achieve the objectives shared by all cities for sustainable development and improved quality of urban life.

41. <https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en>

42. <https://www.eib.org/en/products/blending/jessica/>

Many networks have been created, both at a general level and in specific territorial or thematic interests areas. Among the themes, we can highlight the International Association of Educating Cities, or the Covenant of Mayors for the Climate, and, among the territorial organizations, the one that promotes this book, the Eixo Atlántico del Noroeste Peninsular, a non-profit organization that brings together the main cities of Galicia and the North of Portugal in order to promote cross-border cooperation.

Some of the most general and transversal networks, which have had the largest influence on urban policy and in a global way, are developed hereunder.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)⁴³

Created in 1951, the CEMR is the oldest and widest European association of local and regional governments. It is the only organization that brings together national associations of local and regional governments from 41 European countries and it represents through them all the territorial levels: local, intermediate and regional. It aims to influence European Policy and Legislation in all areas that have an impact on municipalities and regions and to provide a forum for discussion between local and regional governments through their national representative associations. CEMR is also the European section of the world organization United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), through which it represents the European local and regional government on the international stage.

Spain is represented by the FEMP, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces.

EUROCITIES⁴⁴

This is the network of the main European cities, and its members are the local and municipal governments elected from them. Founded in 1986, it brings together the local governments of more than 140 of the largest cities in Europe and more than 45 partner cities, which, together, rule over 130 million citizens in 39 countries.

Through six thematic forums, a wide range of working groups, projects, activities and events, it offers to its members a platform to share knowledge and to exchange ideas. It works with the EU institutions, where it has become an influence group with the aim of reinforcing in Brussels the important role that local governments must perform in a multi-level governance structure and it wants this to be recognized in the European legislation.

43. <https://www.ccre.org/>

44. <http://www.eurocities.eu/>

The Spanish cities that are part of this network are: Barcelona (one of the 6 founders), Bilbao, San Sebastian, Fuenlabrada, Gijon, Madrid, Malaga, Murcia, Seville, Terrassa, Valladolid and Saragossa.

European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)⁴⁵

The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) is the only independent network promoted by the EU Member States in the field of urban policy, research and practice. As a network of national governments, EU Member States and knowledge institutes, the EUKN is deeply involved in EU policy making, where it also performs an important lobbying function. The EUKN has been providing strategic urban knowledge and research assistance to the EU Member States. Moreover, the EUKN participates in key European projects and it is a connector between several urban networks.

Spain renewed its membership in 2019 after having been a member between 2004 and 2014.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Urban Development Network –UDN. Between 2014 and 2020, the European Fund for Regional Development is directly allocating 15 billion euros to integrated strategies for sustainable urban development. Around 900 cities in the whole EU are able to apply for these strategies. The Urban Development Network supports the exchange of information between the cities that take part in the Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategies and Urban Innovative Actions. The Network encourages dialogue on sustainable urban development between the Commission, the cities, and other concerned parties.

The Urban Development Network is made up of more than 500 cities/urban areas across the EU, responsible for implementing integrated actions based on strategies of Sustainable Urban Development financed by the ERDF in the 2014-2020 period.

The mission of the network is to review how European funds are implemented on the ground in European cities and to support the exchange of information between cities involved in the integrated Sustainable Urban Development and in Innovative Urban Actions.

45. <https://www.eukn.eu/>



ESPON⁴⁶

European Spatial Planning Observation Network. It is not exactly a network of cities but rather a program that aims to create a consolidated network of European Territorial Observatories and to increase the use of policies and data, in a comparable, systematic and reliable way.

The ESPON 2020 program aims to promote and encourage a European territorial dimension in what concerns development and cooperation by providing evidence, knowledge transfer and policy learning to public authorities and other political actors at all levels.

The objective of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Program is to support the reinforcement of the effectiveness of the EU Cohesion Policy and other policies and sectoral programs under European Structural Investment (ESI) funds, as well as national and regional territorial development policies, through the production, dissemination and promotion of territorial tests that cover the entire territory of the 28 EU Member States, as well as 4 EU Partner States: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Besides city networks, a number of other professional networks have also been created, which have helped in the implementation of European policies and the exchange of experiences between cities of different countries.

European Council of Spatial Planners - Conseil Européen des Urbanistes ECTP-CEU⁴⁷

Founded in 1985, ECTP-CEU brings together 28 professional associations and institutes of spatial planning from 24 European countries, as well as their corresponding members. It is an umbrella association that provides its members with a common framework to promote visibility, the acknowledgment of the important social role of urban planning and development in Europe and its teaching, its continued professional development, and the definition of professional responsibilities.

However, despite the existing European initiatives, the knowledge about urban landscape is very fragmented, and therefore, in the future section, there will be proposals of some measures aimed at unifying and concentrating part of this urban knowledge which is nowadays very divided.

46. <https://www.espon.eu/programme/espon/espon-2020-cooperation-programme>

47. <http://www.ectp-ceu.eu/index.php/en/>

4.3. Sectoral policies of influence in urban policies

There are many European sectoral policies which, without being explicitly part of the urban, have a huge influence on cities. Policies and strategies such as the fight against Climate Change, transport, energy, housing, circular economy, social policies, etc. often have a larger influence in cities than those defined as urban policies.

Some of the major European programs and strategies that will be developed over the next few years, such as the European Green Pact or the European Strategy for Social Policy, have an enormous influence on cities and can become, if not true urban policies, a lever of important transformations. Consequently, we need a greater coordination in these aspects to generate synergies and to take advantage of all the existing possibilities when we are advancing in the sustainable development of our cities.

5. THE FUTURE ROLE OF CITIES IN EUROPEAN POLITICS

The European Union that began as a union of states and that in a second phase developed the concept of a union of regions, needs to take one more step in the approach to citizens and to become a union of cities and citizens. It is necessary to empower citizens in the European construction.

It is impossible for European policies, plans and strategies to succeed without an important local dimension that becomes strategic and central in these policies, and, if this does not happen, the impact will always be more limited than if they are developed with a clear vision and a local involvement. There is nothing happening that does not happen in a city. The proximity to citizens and a more detailed knowledge of realities allows for a greater citizen participation and a more specific approach to the problems and the implementation of strategies, which will undoubtedly give greater transparency and trust to the population, and will result in a larger involvement and success.

Although so far both the European Union and the Member States have not been very prone to this municipal empowerment and have only taken some first steps in the participation of the regions and intermediate administrations, the process of renewal and updating of the Leipzig Charter can and should be an exceptional occasion to reclaim this mission and to finally give cities the role they should play in the European construction and in the implementation of their strategies, creating an authentic European urban policy in a real and explicit way, with all that this entails and making real sense of positive subsidiarity.



Based on what has already been expressed in the document “The New Leipzig Charter. The transformative power of cities for the common good. Draft: 05.05.2020”, **the New Leipzig Charter (NCL) should:**

- IN URBAN POLICY the NLC should:
 - Define a true European urban policy and assume the political commitment of creating it with specific deadlines, with urban issues becoming part of the priorities of the Council of the EU. Therefore taking a step further in the consolidation of the European urban acquis as a key strategy for the current reality.
 - Deepen the commitment to both vertical and horizontal multi-level governance, and both at a European and a state level, which allows to clarify the roles and competences of the different governmental levels involved in the urban policies. Demanding a greater commitment from member states in what concerns political and financial decentralization towards the cities.
 - Base the relationship between administrations and between cities on a collaborative spirit and procedure, defining an authentic co-responsibility between administrations, the respect for the local administration, avoiding the city council to be the space for the confrontation between administrations. The urban and sectoral policy on cities must be always consensuated with the local administration. The NLC is a chance for it to be the departure point of a new way of understanding the relationship between administrations, guaranteeing their development at the closest levels and not just at the national one.
 - It is necessary to define the clear respect of competences between administrations, and in the case of widely decentralized states like the case of Spain, where the regions have a very strong weight, more transfers of skills and budgets to the cities should be made.
 - Integrate sectoral strategies into urban policies, in which, although they are not only urban, cities do have an enormous weight in their achievement and implementation. Aspects such as waste, energy, transport, etc ... are sectoral policies that must be more clearly integrated with urban policies. With special attention in this field to the EUA, which should lead to a clearer commitment from the sectoral administrations of the Commission. There are many European sectoral policies of enormous municipal impact that need to be integrated into the common urban policy and in the sustainable development documents.
 - Encourage Member States to guarantee the effectiveness of the participation of cities and their groups in the preparation and monitoring of the different European programs at a national level, especially those related to the new funding period and the programs with a clear impact on the cities.

- Expressly declare that European urban policy, although unique, must be adapted both to local policies and to the territorial and demographic realities of each country, and the developmental moment of each society.
 - Expressly defend and declare the importance of the integrated planning strategy in the field of urban sustainable development policies and the importance of developing urban agendas at all administration levels and governments or similar documents and link it as a *sine qua non* to the management of funds for a greater effectiveness and thus also promoting this planning.
 - Define the clear will to disseminate knowledge about urban policy and what it means among the general population and the whole of society and not only among experts in the field. Only a society that knows this urban policy can demand it and demand its rulers to carry it out and make it evolve.
 - Promote and increase European programs and initiatives about cohesion policies related to cities (URBACT, ESPON, European Urban Initiative, etc) and implement new ones.
- For CITIES, the NLC should:
 - Be the turning point in European policy to give cities the true role they deserve.
 - Give greater presence and prominence to cities and city networks within European mechanisms, bodies and decisions, as engines for change and actors in the search for local solutions to current global challenges.
 - Place greater emphasis on the recognition of global responsibility in relation to the rest of the world and in its triple aspect (social, environmental and economic) of European cities. As well as expressing the role of the city in the relationship between Europe and developing countries and continents, promoting their role of cooperation and transfer of European values.
 - Investigate about and expand the need to take into account the different types of cities, according to countries, sizes and socio-economic characteristics. And define the concept of a sustainable European city for each of these groups of cities. This concept would be defined through indicators and common methodology adapted to the different types of cities, and would allow the self-evaluation of each city and the setting of improvement objectives.
 - The NLC should make more profusion and delve into the importance that medium-sized and small cities have in the construction of urban Europe: their enormous role as heads of extensive rural areas and their importance in providing these areas with equipment, infrastructures and services that prevent the depopulation of these rural areas.



- Advance in the incorporation of the concept of functional urban areas, with special attention to metropolitan ensembles, polycentricity of smaller-size nuclei, and transitional urban spaces. Both Europe and Member States must develop mechanisms at the normative, organizational, and financial levels, for the incorporation and development of new functional areas with the explicit participation of cities and municipalities. It is necessary to move towards a more flexible and inclusive concept of the “urban area”. Urban areas for sustainable urban development can and should go beyond administrative boundaries, being configured around the different urban functions, the polycentric territorial systems, and larger territorial interrelationships.
- Should pay more attention to the relationship between the city and the surrounding rural space. In the definition of urban areas for the policies of sustainable urban development, they should take into account the rural-urban relationships. Urban expansion has led to the development of areas where the urban and the rural fabric are intermingled. The social and functional differences between life in cities, and the surrounding rural areas become increasingly difficult to distinguish and to draw a clear line between urban and rural areas. The NLC should provide strategies to requalify these transitional spaces. Urban and rural areas must cooperate to contribute to a balanced territorial development.
- The concept of urban area must be completed with that of polycentric urban networks. Advancing towards greater polycentrism, both at the national and at the European Union level, can favor cooperative and network strategies between cities for a more equitable regional development. This strategy is especially interesting for small and medium-sized cities, as the EANP itself expresses in its presentation: “The main objectives of city networks revolve around the need to structure a lobby system against third parties, the consolidation of minimum territorial, economic, political and demographic spaces which allow to generate and use economies of scale and agglomeration, as well as the development of infrastructures and cutting-edge activities. They also seek the insertion into an international system that allows the access to and use of a growing volume of information and the exchange of experiences and technologies, in addition to obtaining leadership roles and the insertion, through networks, into higher performance spaces”⁴⁸.
- For this reason, the NLC should promote the territorial and thematic grouping of cities and local entities for the joint development of sustainable urban development through integrated territorial documents.

48. <https://www.eixoatlantico.com/es/eixo-atlantico/presentacion>

- Firmly declare the importance of municipal associations. Developing new partnerships, participation mechanisms and relationships between cities, supporting existing ones and generating mechanisms of coordination between them.
- Support the transfer of knowledge, people, experiences, etc. between cities in general, and define some specific actions such as annual or biannual meetings in a European Urban Forum⁴⁹, a new website that brings together everything that concerns European urban policy, or a global urban observatory that takes into account the different European urban realities and that allows the strengthening of the management of data and high-quality indicators, and thus assess the evolution of the implementation of the EUA and other sectoral policies, and design new more effective programs.
- An important step and not too “traumatic” would be the possibility of creating this hub of urban knowledge and experience at a European level that agglutinate, coordinate and complete the already-existing elements, which are not yet connected.
- A further step must be taken to strengthen the role of citizens and local agents in the elaboration of sustainable urban developments and their strategies and throughout all the phases of their implementation. It should be done on a double scale: at the level of the urban area as a whole and at the level of the specific area where the actions are carried out, in order to involve the population of the neighborhood and the agents of the area. The decision of increasing the real participation of society should appear more explicitly and it should move on along that path with concrete proposals. We need an integrated approach, a greater and real citizen participation, and internal coordination.
- It should delve into the need to particularize strategies for the area or neighborhood of action, and the reality of the urban area. The strategies must identify the existing problems and potentialities in the functional area that is the object of action, focusing on horizontal principles and transversal objectives.
- It should deepen and specify more the commitments and recommendations of the principles of urban development for cities, which in most of the cases do not go further than its mere enumeration, missing some elements such as the circular economy, the integration of the migrant population or the ageing of European society.
- Promote access to European information for citizens through the municipalities. The creation of European offices for information for citizens through city councils would be a very good strategy to make the EU and its policies and programs known to citizens.

49. There was already a precedent in 1997, in Vienna, organized under the presidency of Delors, or in Barcelona in 2010, where a “European Summit of Local Governments” was held and the Barcelona Agenda “Towards a European Local Agenda” was approved.



- In relation to the EUROPEAN URBAN AGENDA (EUA) the NLC should:
 - Specify what was stated in the Bucharest Declaration about the need to develop a functional relationship between the New Leipzig Charter, the EU Urban Agenda and the Post-2020 Territorial Agenda.
 - Strengthen the development and implementation of the European Urban Agenda, making it a not only operational but also political instrument. The NLC must promote the EUA and transfer its unequivocal political support to this document.
 - Define the main axes or sectoral policies based on the European Urban Agenda and its Action plans with measurable objectives and defined and unified indicators, and obviously guaranteeing enough funding in order to implement these policies and plans defined in the different local urban agendas.
 - Align the NLC with the UN 2030 Agenda, its SDGs, especially the Goal 11, and with the “European Green Deal” strategy and the Paris Agreement of the COP21, the European Pillar of Social Rights, The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, or the Sustainable Cities Reference Framework.
 - Identify clear but flexible objectives to respond to the big emerging challenges in Europe, as well as the global challenges: fighting climate change, population ageing, rural depopulation, migration processes from Africa and the Middle East, youth unemployment, etc...
 - Define a set of indicators that allows to define, taking into account the different urban casuistry, what a “Sustainable City” is in Europe.
 - Expressly include some measurable objectives or a commitment to do so in the short term, which already includes action commitments in the short term.
 - In line with what Eurocities advocates, create a high-level group in the urban agenda in which representatives of cities, states, MEPs and commissions take part to boost progress on urban issues⁵⁰.
 - Claim recognition in the action of the national, sub-national and local Urban Agendas of the protagonism of the functional areas that have enough autonomy, and the neighborhoods or parishes that can fully reflect the transversality of urban policies.

50. <http://www.eurocities.eu/>

- In FINANCING the NLC should:
 - In the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27, the Structural Reform Program and EU Recovery Plan, ensure that funds allocated to urban policies are increased at the European level, especially those related to the implementation of the EUA with specific budget allocation.
 - At the level of the Member States, link the performance of the UA and its Action Plans to the allocation of those funds.
 - Ensure a greater coordination of the structural funds and cohesion with other programs and funds such as Horizon Europe, InvestEU, LIFE+ or EIB financing in relation to urban policies. Establishing a specific line of the EIB for comprehensive projects of high impact in urban areas, increasing it in key aspects, like social housing.
 - The ERDF funds at the national level should allocate at least 10% of resources to integrated urban development (currently 5%, and proposal of 6% in the first draft), it would be convenient to align these funds with urban agendas and their implementation plans.
 - Urge Member States to allocate a greater percentage of their public funds to the local administration, especially in cases like Spain, very under-represented in the distribution of public funds in relation to other European countries.
 - Facilitate and increase direct European financing to cities, giving leadership and responsibility to the local administration in aspects of marked urban character, or in the one linked to the European Green Pact.
 - Allow small towns of less than 20,000 inhabitants that are heads of rural areas, creating a functional urban area or being part of a discontinuous polycentric network of nuclei, can directly access European urban funding and national cohesion funds for urban policies.

The cities, as they have done during the health pandemic, have a central role in the post-COVID socioeconomic reconstruction; the reinforcement of their role, their empowerment in Europe and in the Member States, and the recognition of their work in serving citizens will be key in the socio-economic recovery that Europe is considering and that must be expressly included in the renewed Leipzig Charter, as well as the role of multi-level integrated strategic planning. The current Covid-19 crisis cannot be absent from the Charter.



6. AS A CONCLUSION

The renewal of the Leipzig Charter has been a very welcome initiative at all levels and by all European agents and there has been an unanimous agreement in sharing its general principles and objectives.

Obviously, and in the case of an institutional political statement that must be approved unanimously, on many occasions they remain mere generic statements and, in general, concepts that already very accepted and assumed collectively, but it seems necessary that during these months that remain until its endorsement, we can try to reinforce and advance in some aspects that will allow to take important steps in the growth of the European urban acquis and, finally, in the definition of a true European urban policy.

The renewed Leipzig Charter must start defining a clear and concrete European urban vision that involves cities, local entities and polycentric city networks in the definition of such urban policy. It must gather the existing plurality among the different European cities, further reinforcing the role of medium and small cities that are the key and the gate of the rural territory, which they must provide with services in order to avoid rural depopulation and which must also be reinforced in the final statement of the NLC.

In conclusion, the integrated sustainable urban development proposed by the NLC should be progressively oriented towards functional urban areas and polycentric urban systems, and towards renewed forms of rural-urban cooperation based on agreements between urban centers and their surrounding areas.

Defining the main axes or sectoral policies based on the Urban Agenda and its Action plans with measurable objectives and defined and unified indicators and, obviously, guaranteeing enough funding to be able to implement these policies and plans defined in the different local urban agendas.

It is obvious to say that the greatest knowledge, intelligence and the best human capital to define and develop urban policies lies in the cities themselves, their administrations and local governments, but this statement, although obvious, should be transferred de facto to European policies.

Since the states have not yet achieved territorial cohesion, and differences continue to widen, cities can help achieve a greater cohesion and equality among citizens.

And also, since sometimes there are conflicts between the states, and between them and the European institutions, cities can break the negative or confrontational dynamics, or become agents of renewal and build a more coherent and cohesive European reality.

On the other hand, it is also evident that the new Leipzig Charter must align itself with the United Nations agenda and with the Sustainable Development Goals, having a central role monitoring the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement, identifying objectives that should be clear but flexible enough to respond to the great emerging challenges: the fight against climate change, the population ageing, the depopulation of rural areas, the migratory processes from Africa and the Middle East, new health pandemics, etc...

Therefore, the challenge for this new Leipzig Charter is to try to condition the scenario from 2020 so that in the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework and the Cohesion and Urban Policies, cities achieve the role that they deserve and become capable of proposing a better scenario and urban society to overcome the great emerging challenges, doing so by relying on the European Urban Agenda, the UN 2030 Agenda, the 11 SDGs, and the rest of the European plans and global strategies.

Finally, and given the exceptional moment at the global and European level that the COVID crisis has generated, it seems appropriate that some kind of consideration should be made about how to face the effects of COVID or other types of pandemics that can happen in the future in our cities and that may go against some of the current principles, such as greater urban compactness to avoid land consumption, or the priority of collective over individual transport due to environmental issues. We have seen how there are certain current trends in the purchase of extra-urban land for construction of houses with gardens, or the increased use of private vehicles by people who previously used the public transport for fear of a greater risk of contagion.

Aspects like these or many others, such as access to green areas, the design of houses or public space and furniture are being reviewed with a vision of the pandemic, and at least a reflection or expression should be explicitly proposed in the deployment document in face of these new threats, and how to achieve greater resilience in our cities, and expressly declare that the COVID health crisis reinforces the value of strategic integrated planning as a key tool to guarantee sustainable development in its three versions: environmental, social and economic, also in pandemic and post-pandemic times.



Therefore, we must all rejoice and congratulate ourselves for this new step taken in the construction of an authentic European urban policy and the advancement in the construction of the European urban acqis that the NLC is going to mean. We expect the debate that will take place in Europe in the coming months until its approval and about which this book wants to do its bit, will flourish in a great text and we wish that its final editors will get it right, because their success will be that of our cities and Europe as a whole and it will be an important step for maintaining and improving the quality of life of our citizens.

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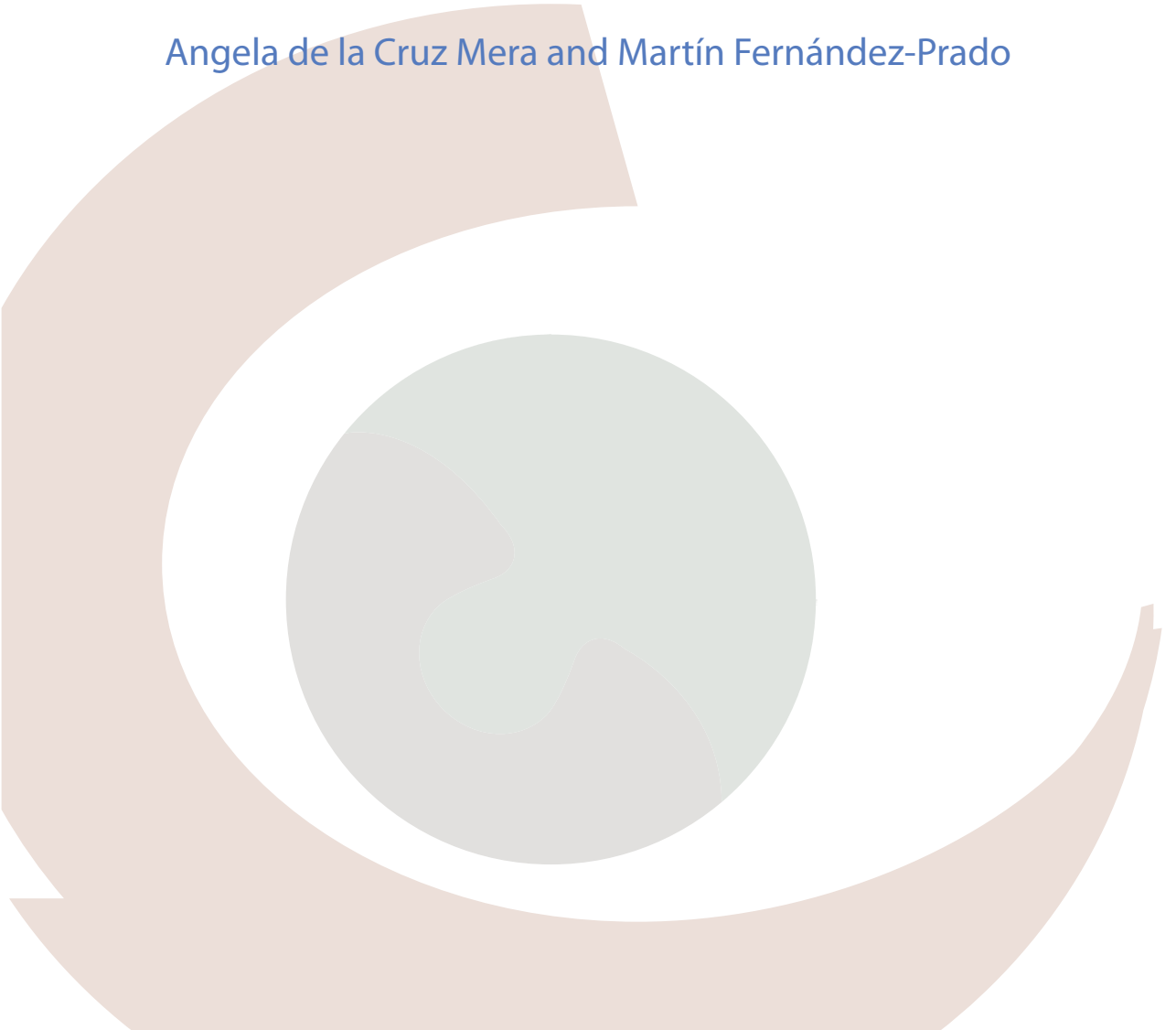
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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
MAIN EUROPEAN URBAN POLICY DOCUMENTS

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THE COMMUNITY URBAN ACQUIS

- Lille Action program (2000)
- The Rotterdam 'urban acquis', Cities Empower Europe (2004)
- The Bristol Accord (2005)
- Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (2007)
- Declarations of Marseille and the European Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (2008)
- Toledo Declaration on Integrated Urban Regeneration (2010)
- Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020 (2011)
- The Riga Declaration for the construction of the Urban Agenda of the European Union and the recognition of the role of small and medium-sized cities (2015)
- Pact of Amsterdam, which illuminates the EUA (2016)
- Bucharest Declaration (2019)

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DOCUMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

- Our Common Future (1987)
- Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992)
- Rio+5 (2007)
- Millennium Development Goals (2000)
- The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development (2015)
- The new Urban Agenda (2016)

THE COMMUNITY URBAN ACQUIS

This is a brief tour around fundamental elements of the main documents that compose it.

- **Lille Action program (2000). Pluriannual cooperation program in urban affairs within the European Union**

During the French Presidency of the European Union the Lille Agenda, also known as the ‘Multiannual Program of Cooperation in Urban Affairs within the European Union’ was presented. It was adopted at the informal meeting of ministers dealing with urban affairs in Lille on November 3rd, 2000. The Lille Agenda was intended to allow Member States to work together in order to develop a common approach by creating a shared and permanent frame of reference, although it was acknowledged the differences between the different countries and the different priorities of each of them.

A multi-year and multi-level cooperation program on urban issues was proposed for the whole of the European Union with the aim of helping Member States and their cities to give shape to political objectives set at European level to face the challenges of cities. It identifies the priorities that must be present in the city strategies. Among these priorities, it highlighted the promotion of the integrated approach in urban development, and a call was made for greater recognition of urban issues within the EU work.

The program proposes a common set of nine priorities:

1. A better acknowledgement of the role of towns and cities in spatial planning.
2. A new approach to urban policies at the national and community level.
3. The improvement of citizen participation.
4. An action to address social and ethnic segregation.
5. Promotion of an integrated and balanced urban development.
6. Promotion of the partnership between the public and private sectors.
7. Dissemination of best practices and networks.
8. Promotion of the use of modern technology in urban affairs.
9. A deeper analysis of urban areas to deepen knowledge of interrelated phenomena in cities.

This new vision was intended to facilitate the debate, the experiences exchange, the development of benchmarks, and a more effective and integrated use of structural funds targeted to urban areas.



- **The Rotterdam ‘urban acquis’, Cities Empower Europe (2004)**

The next important milestone in terms of global European agreements came in the Informal Conference of Ministers responsible for urban policy, held in Rotterdam on November 30th, 2004, during the Dutch Presidency. In this meeting, the so-called Urban Acquis was adopted, described as “*a set of common principles that underpin successful policies and a more coherent approach to urban policy*”.

The elaboration of the ‘urban acquis’ was being built and consolidated through urban experiences in European cities and it formed the basis of successful urban policies. An attempt was thus made to establish a set of strategic principles and common operations to achieve successful urban policies. The urban acquis, divided into 5 sections:

- Priorities:
 - Based on the three pillars of sustainability: economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental quality, which must be balanced.
 - Cities should be livable, desirable places, and places with cultural identity.
- Mechanisms for successful urban policies:
 - Adequate integration of sectoral policies: local, regional, national and international.
 - The specific situation of the cities in question must be taken into account when allocating government resources.
 - City strategies must be long-term.
 - There must be a balance between top-down leadership and bottom-up participation. Leadership from governments must be balanced with the empowerment and the real participation of communities.
 - There must be a concertation approach specified in inter-institutional agreements.
 - All parties concerned must be involved, proposing a territorial governance between public and private partners, associations, neighborhood communities and citizens.
- Achievement of an adequate spatial balance in the urban area itself:
 - Policies should focus in the medium and long term on specific areas of needs or opportunities in the cities. In order to have a greater impact of these actions, we should act in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods.
 - Socio-economic challenges in disadvantaged neighborhoods must be linked to economic opportunities in the city as a whole and in the region in general.

- Institutional collaboration between cities and regions should be encouraged. As well as that of cities inside each region and also with their regional administration.
- Likewise, balanced urban networks should also be encouraged, as well as the functional cooperation between small, medium-sized and big cities.
- Action recommendations were established in order to achieve the desirable objective of building a compact city, oriented to the development of integrated approaches in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- Fostering good practices and learning from successful policies
 - Good practices and successes should be made known and promoted in other cities.
 - Policies should be subject to measurement and evaluation in order to assess their success.

Prior to the ministerial meeting in Rotterdam, a congress of large cities was held in Leiden/Noordwijk, where cities were actively involved for the first time and became levers of change. And it was open, for the future, the participation of large networks of European cities such as EUROCITIES, or the CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions), among others.

During this period of Dutch presidency, the European Urban Knowledge Network was also created (EUKN), initially through the initiative of 15 Member States to gather and promote good practices.

Likewise, the set of Urban Audit indicators was expanded, a compendium of comparable statistics and indicators for European cities, which had already been launched by the European Commission in 1998.

- **The Bristol Accord (2005)**

Approved during the UK presidency at the informal ministerial meeting in Bristol in December 2005, it is an agreement that seeks to establish a common definition of sustainable communities in Europe, and it established the following previous characteristics which would be key for the creation of sustainable communities across Europe:



- I) Economic growth is of central importance. Without economic growth, EU Member States are unable to invest in the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities*
- II) The integrated Sustainable Communities approach grows directly out of Europe's unique tradition of social inclusion and social justice.*
- III) The role of cities is key to success. Successful cities with strong cultural identities deliver sustainable communities beyond their limits – regionally, nationally and even internationally. And achieving the goals of Lisbon will require European cities to be places of international excellence that allow the knowledge economy to thrive.*
- IV) Sustainable communities are the ones that respond to the challenge of social segregation at all levels, including neighbourhoods.*
- V) Sustainable communities also embody the principles of sustainable development. They balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental challenges and meet the needs of existing and future generations.*
- VI) Recognition that sustainable communities can exist at different spatial levels: neighbourhood, local, city, regional.*

The Bristol Accord establishes eight characteristics of sustainable communities (transcribed literally):

- (1) ACTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE - Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities.*
- (2) WELL RUN - with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership.*
- (3) WELL CONNECTED - with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.*
- (4) WELL SERVED - with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all.*
- (5) ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE - providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment.*
- (6) THRIVING - with a flourishing, diverse and innovative local economy.*
- (7) WELL DESIGNED AND BUILT - featuring quality built and natural environment.*
- (8) FAIR FOR EVERYONE - including those in other communities, now and in the future.*

Two important concepts were incorporated into the Bristol Agenda: broadening the focus from just cities to also make reference to smaller towns and other settlements, as well as the reinforcement of the vision that cities are seen as engines of economic growth. The accord also ratifies a commitment to gather case studies about characteristics of sustainable communities according to the defined model.

- **The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (May 24th, 2007)**

The Leipzig Charter is a common urban regeneration strategy that continues the philosophy of the Bristol Accord from December 6th, 2005, which defined as criteria for the sustainability of cities a good economic and employment level, social integration, good services and connections, respect for the environment, adequate design, and true participation of the citizenship in public decisions that affect them. All these aspects are key for the great global commitment to sustainability that is the 2030 Agenda and which would take almost a decade to be approved (2015).

Also in the field of urban regeneration, it opened a way to consider that it is the best tool within the EU to respond and solve the most pressing and repeated problems in the cities. Among them, the gradual and persistent ageing of the population, the increasing immigration, the transformation of abandoned industrial sites, and youth unemployment. And it proposes as action strategies and recommendations: the use of integrated approaches, the creation and consolidation of high-quality public spaces, the modernization of infrastructure networks and the improvement of energy efficiency, the use of spaces for proactive innovation and educational policies, the special attention to the less advantaged neighborhoods, the development of strategies to improve the physical environment, the strengthening of the economy and labor market policy at the local level, the promotion of efficient and affordable urban transport, and the assurance of a true participation of all the actors involved.

In the same year that this Leipzig Charter fought for the consolidation of sustainable urban development, the European Territorial Agenda (2007), which aimed to reinforce the territorial dimension of the Lisbon Strategy, would associate the sustainable development challenges to objectives of a territorial nature that had already been highlighted in the European Territorial Strategy of 1999, such as the development of a balanced and polycentric urban system, a new urban-rural relationship, a better assurance of the access to infrastructures and knowledge, and the sustainable development related to the cautious management and the protection of the natural and cultural heritage (ALONSO NAVEIRO, M. 2018).



- **The Marseille Declaration and the European Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (November 25th, 2008)**

This document confirmed the objectives of the Leipzig Charter by emphasizing the concern and importance of climate change, although its most interesting contribution was the web tool (the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities: RFSC), made available to all possible interested parties so that, on a voluntary basis, they could adopt it as a way to measure the compliance of the urban sustainability objectives and the integrated approach in European cities. Its greatest endorsement was achieved after the Informal Meeting of Ministers held in Poznan, during the Polish Presidency of 2011, in which the support to this operational work tool was revalidated by all Member States and the European Commission, which would take, however, many more years to unfold its different phases.

Among the many virtues of the RFSC was and still is the homogeneity in the language used and in the criteria that define urban sustainability in any EU city, and its synthetic nature of other already-existing reference frameworks and tools. It is a flexible and modifiable instrument that allows to adapt itself to the great existing diversity. It stands out the checklist for self-assessment, the system of indicators (some recommended and some secondary ones), the useful tool for visualization of the results, with their sustainability diagrams and also that of the exchange of experiences between cities, networking and the Library of Good Practices.

Currently, despite being available to all Member States and translated into 19 official languages, it is languishing due to the lack of financial support from the European Commission, which detached itself from the project in 2014, alleging technical problems, the important delay suffered in its implementation and, above all, the limited use by its potential users and, consequently, its poor results.

The updated version of this tool, which is the one that is currently accessible on the web, <http://www.rfsustainablecities.eu/>, is widely used by the French local authorities, which shows the enormous difficulties in developing intergovernmental cooperation projects, and their reasonable success in those countries that tend to lead its emergence (DE SANTIAGO, E, 2017).

- **The Toledo Declaration on Integrated Urban Regeneration (June 22, 2010)**

The Toledo Declaration addressed the true dimension of the Integrated Urban Regeneration in Europe, which was attributed an important strategic potential¹ for a smarter, sustainable and socially inclusive urban development in Europe. Besides, it was the “formal” prelude to the current Urban Agenda for the EU², although this is an especially unknown fact even in Spain, where the Ministry of Housing, back in 2010, was already promoting and pursuing the idea of this great European commitment in favor of a greater sustainability of urban policies.

The context of this document was headed -from the doctrinal point of view- by the principles of the Europe 2020 strategy, and from the economic and social point of view, by the devastating effects that the financial-economic crisis was already producing in European cities and in the States themselves, which sensitively affected Spain through its real estate sector. Within such context, the policies considered as a priority were those concerning the recovery of the built heritage and those others that could be launched in existing cities on the basis of an integrated approach that had to take into account the many concurrent environmental, social and economic aspects.

Probably as a result of the difficulties that the RFSC was already posing, the cooperation that broke through as a result of the Toledo Declaration was eminently intergovernmental, keeping the European Commission on the sidelines. However, the commitment of Member States was clear, and section C of the document included an explicit mention of “the need to consolidate in the future an European urban agenda” which should progressively mature until taking its definitive form. In this sense, the need for a double effort was recognized: the intergovernmental support and the contribution of the European Commission, mainly or particularly through the urban dimension of the Cohesion Policy.

1. The importance of this issue is visualized in the Reference Document that is attached to the same Declaration. This document identifies the holistic approach and applies it to the “Integrated Urban Regeneration” through the joint consideration of social, economic and environmental aspects and the vertical, horizontal and transversal coordination typical of multilevel governance.

2. Although there is a Communication of the European Commission from 1997 on the matter “Towards an urban agenda in the European Union”, the truth is that the form and content with which it was approached have little to do with what would be the understanding of this great European commitment in the work of the following decade and, of course, in what this would finally be.



- **The Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020, (2011). Towards an inclusive, smart and sustainable Europe of diverse regions**

The 2020 European Territorial Agenda, which will replace the previous one, approved in 2007, is the main guiding instrument for the Union's territorial policies and it constitutes a broad agreement about territorial cohesion approved with the support of the Committee of the Regions and in tune with the European Commission. It was approved at the informal ministerial meeting of ministers responsible for spatial planning and territorial development on May 19th, 2011 in Gödöllő (Hungary).

It intends to modify the Cohesion Policy of the European Union, helping to add the territorial dimension to the already existing social and economic dimensions, in line with what was stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty and also seeking coordination between the territorial components of the different sectoral policies in the most possibly efficient way.

The so-called “place-based approach” will be incorporated into this agenda, an approach based on the characteristics of each place. It is proposed to start from endogenous aspects for development and to propose territorial cohesion processes at the three scales: local, regional and national; while at the same time facing the rich diversity that characterizes Europe, involving the authorities of each territorial level in order to improve its territorial development based on the principle of subsidiarity in the definition of custom-built strategies, objectives and instruments for each place.

The structure of the European Territorial Agenda 2020:

- I. Territorial cohesion is a common goal. For a more harmonious and balanced state of Europe. Concepts, principles and objectives.*
- II. Challenges and potentials for territorial development. Driving forces and their territorial aspects.*
- III. Territorial priorities for the development of the European Union.*
- IV. Making EU territorial cohesion a reality.*

- **The Riga Declaration for the construction of the Urban Agenda for the European Union and the acknowledgement of the role of small and medium-sized cities (June 10th, 2015)**

After five long years of ostracism for the common European urban policy, with the exception of the Polish Presidency in the second half of 2011, which fought to configure the urban dimension of cohesion policy, in the Informal Meeting of Ministers held on the occasion of the Latvian Presidency of the EU, it was approved the Riga Declaration, which was the definitive step towards the construction of the Urban Agenda of the EU, through the intergovernmental cooperation of the Members, this time together with the European institutions.

Although it would be the Pact of Amsterdam the one that would finally give shape to this desideratum, in Riga the principles and essential elements of the future Agenda were fixed, acknowledging, furthermore, that it was one of the common European priorities. And another topic that was insistently dealt with (in fact, it was the star theme of the Latvian Presidency) was the importance of small and medium-sized urban areas and their great potential in terms of territorial development and for the achievement of sustainability objectives.

Also during these years the involvement of the European institutions with the Urban Agenda gained strength. Among other essential documents to understand this process are:

- The Resolution of the European Parliament, of July 23rd, 2011, on the “European Urban Agenda and its future in the cohesion policy”.
- The opinion of the Committee of the Regions, of June 25th, 2014, under the title “Towards an integrated Urban Agenda for the EU”.
- The discussion papers for the forum “CiTIEs - Cities of tomorrow: investing in Europe”, elaborated by the European Commission to participate in a big event organized in Brussels about the cities of the future (February 17th and 18th, 2014), which explored why the Urban Agenda was necessary, what type of document it should be and what contents it should have and, finally, how it could be implemented from an operational point of view.
- The Commission communication, in July 2014, on “The urban dimension of EU policies: key elements of an Urban Agenda for the EU”, with which a public consultation process was opened and whose results were published in May 2015, under the title “Results of the public consultation on the key characteristics of an EU Urban Agenda”.

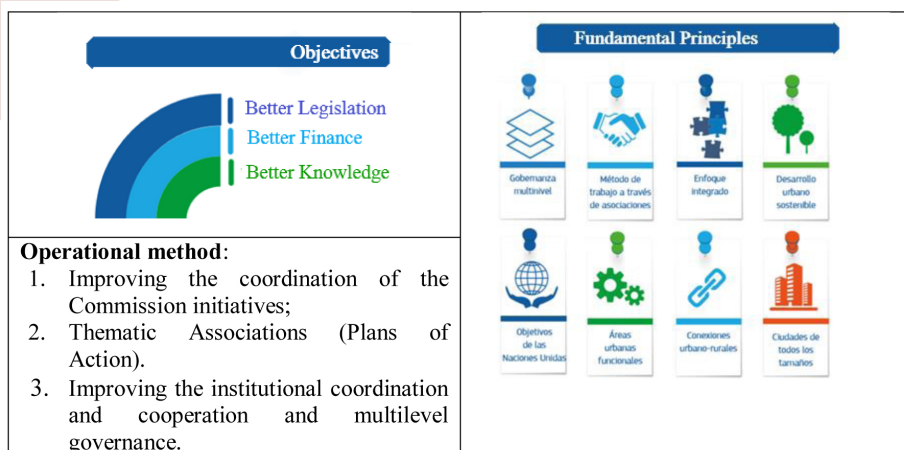


- The elevation to one of the Council formations, specifically that of General Affairs from November 19th, 2014, of the Commission’s commitment and the Member States to continue studying and developing the territorial dimension of the cohesion policy and continuing the work on the Urban Agenda for the EU, with full respect for the principle of subsidiarity³ and the competences attributed by the Treaties.

• **The Pact of Amsterdam, which approved the Urban Agenda for the European Union (May 30th, 2016)**

The value of this commitment is unquestionable, since after it, the EU Urban Agenda was carried out through an ongoing process of work that is still taking place, after the support received for this entire process in 2019 with the Bucharest Declaration.

The Urban Agenda for the EU⁴ “aims to be a coherent set of actions of key European actors, in order to realise the full potential of the European Union and deliver on its strategic objectives at a national and a EU level. Its fundamental objective is, therefore, strengthening the urban dimension of both national and EU policies. It considers a new form of multi-level governance, whereby the EU institutions, Member States, cities and other parties concerned can work together”.



3. The principle of subsidiarity guarantees that the level of intervention in the areas of competence shared between the EU and the EU countries is the most relevant and, in any case, that the EU only intervenes when their performance can become more effective than that of the EU countries at the national or local scale. Throughout the evolutionary process of the Urban Agenda for the EU, it has been present and it has been demanded in a systematic way, by many of the Member States, to appear formally mentioned in the documents that were being approved.

4. <https://www.mitma.gob.es/arquitectura-vivienda-y-suelo/urbanismo-y-politica-de-suelo/actividad-internacional/union-europea/el-pacto-de-amsterdam-2016-y-declaracion-de-bucarest-2019>

The three fundamental pillars of this Urban Agenda connect with those of the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations (NUA), although the latter was approved a few months later, at the Habitat III Summit, in October, 2016 in Quito, Ecuador. So, if for the NUA⁵, the objectives were promoting improvements, at least, in the areas of: regulation, planning, funding, knowledge exchange and dissemination, governance, transparency and participation (DE LA CRUZ MERA, A. 2020), for the European Urban Agenda the key points are the improvement of regulation, funding and knowledge, without creating different funding sources from the already-existing ones, without generating more bureaucratization or new administrative barriers, nor, of course, affecting the current distribution of existing competencies, nor the decision-making structures.

This Agenda also pursues transversal objectives, in coherence with the urban and territorial dimension of the 2014-2020 Cohesion policy, which uses the integrated approach in order to promote thematic integration of complex territorial aspects; the polycentric development, which seeks social and economic cohesion of the territories; and the functional areas, with a variable spatial focus and which allows dealing with the rural-urban relation.

Regarding the work methodology, one of the great novelties of this Agenda is the creation and implementation of the so-called “partnerships” based on a series of previously-selected subject areas. These are currently fourteen: air quality; circular economy; adaptation to climate change; digital transition; energy transition; housing; inclusion of migrants and refugees; innovative and responsible public procurement; jobs and capabilities in the local economy; sustainable land use and nature-based solutions; urban mobility; poverty and urban regeneration; public safety; and culture and cultural heritage.

Each of these associations is made up of between 15 and 20 members, where several Member States (4 or 5), several cities (4 or 5), associations such as EUROCITIES and CEMR, knowledge networks such as URBACT and EUKN, the EIB, Associated States, experts and other potential concerned parties are represented. Moreover, the European Commission takes charge, with its own budgets, of the basic technical assistance (as a secretariat) of these thematic associations.

5. <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-Spanish.pdf>



- **The Bucharest Declaration (2019)**

This Declaration was signed in the Informal Council of Ministers competent in matters of urban planning of the EU in Bucharest (Romania), in June 2019, and it was configured as the intermediate step between the Pact of Amsterdam and the new Leipzig Charter, which will be signed within this year 2020. It is, therefore, an instrument that articulates both agreements and that, above all, offers the necessary support for the continuity of the Urban Agenda for the European Union.

Through it, it is acknowledged the quick transformations that Europe is experiencing, mostly due to global dynamics, the digital revolution, climate threats and demographic changes and the risk they pose to the production of social, economic and territorial inequalities. This commitment sought efforts concentrated on all levels of government and within them, the important role of local and regional administrations due to their greater proximity to the problems and also in the search of solutions.

Specifically, this Declaration contains relevant agreements regarding the following topics:

1. Keeping the current level of attention and commitment in relation to the issues and work areas proposed by the Urban Agenda for the European Union.
2. Establishing connection bridges between that Agenda and the updating of the Leipzig Charter, which is expected to include new principles and commitments.
3. Continuing making improvements in the regulation, financing and in the operation of the networks of knowledge diffusion and exchange, key axes of action for the Urban Agenda for the European Union, both at the community and the internal level in the Member States themselves.
4. Improving the coordination between the aforementioned Urban Agenda and the European Territorial Agenda in order to face social and territorial fragmentation, urban sprawl and other relevant challenges, both territorial and urban.
5. Completing the list of thematic working groups of the Urban Agenda (partnerships) with two new ones: one on culture and cultural heritage, and another on security in the cities.

The European institutions, and in a very special way the Commission, are also invited to take into account within their own policies, and especially in the financing ones, all those actions that identify the Thematic Plans prepared by each of the working groups, and to apply them

effectively. Obviously, this invitation also reaches the Member States and, of course, the sub-national and local authorities. Not in vain were they all part of the partnerships from which the aforementioned Action plans emerged. It was also requested the strengthening of the coordination between the cohesion and urban policy of the EU, acknowledging the transversal and integrating role that underlies the latter.

All of this within a context of strengthening the democratic base of the EU in which the multi-level governance is recognized as a fundamental element to guarantee the active and equitable participation of all the government levels in a spirit of confidence and with a negotiation horizon of the next multiannual financial framework, which must take into account, qualitatively and quantitatively, these important challenges.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DOCUMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations and especially its Commission for Environment and Development has been developing a sustainable development policy since the end of the 1980s, which has been specified through documents and summit resolutions and which has been settled in the world during these decades and has served to build the current 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Urban Agenda, both documents of enormous conceptual influence in the European Urban Agenda and in the European cities. The main documents of influence in the construction of this global and urban development agenda are:

- **Our Common Future (1987)**

In October, 1984 the UN World Commission on Environment and Development met for the first time in order to define a strategy for development and for a more prosperous, fairer and safer future, and to establish a global agenda for change that was embodied in a document approved in 1987 by the UN World Commission for Environment and Development “Our Common Future”, the original name of the Brundtland Report by which it is most known, and which had special significance since it was the first attempt to eliminate the confrontation between development and sustainability.



This document introduced important aspects that have been maintained over time, such as the fact that environmental protection had ceased to be a national or regional task and had become a global problem, or that we had to stop seeing development and the environment as if they were separate issues.

It also established the strategy, today assimilated worldwide, that to achieve sustainable development it is necessary to think globally but act locally, providing cities, neighborhoods and their citizens with a leading role in achieving the great global challenges.

The Brundtland Report launched the concept of sustainable development and defined sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs”. It consists of a three-dimensional idea, known as the triple helix: environmental, social and economic sustainability, which states the problem of environmental degradation that often accompanies economic growth and, at the same time, the need for such growth to alleviate inequalities and poverty. In all of these aspects there is work to do, independently of the development level. It is a statement as a “cry of alarm” in face of the situation reached and in view of the need to adopt decisions to ensure the maintenance of resources for future generations.

The document Our Common Future was the basis of all the discussions that guided the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (Rio 92), giving rise to important documents that were a positive turning point for all the environmental approaches developed until then.

- **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992)**

The importance of the document “Our Common Future” was not only the definition of the concept of sustainable development, but the fact that its principles and concepts were incorporated into all UN programs and served as the basis and foundation for the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the Declaration approved there about the environment and development. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was approved in Rio de Janeiro by 172 governments, including 108 Heads of State and Government and it defined a series of principles, which specified the civil rights and the obligations of the States in relation to development and the environment.

At the Rio Summit, besides the important Rio Declaration on Environment and Development it was also adopted and approved the Agenda 21, a plan of global action to promote sustainable development, and a Declaration of principles related to forests. In addition to these documents without legal value, two instruments with mandatory legal force were also signed: the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Declaration contemplated actions that should be taken in all areas: environmental, social, economic, scientific, cultural, institutional, legal and political, defining up to 27 principles covering almost every area, from the elimination of poverty, or the role of women in the world, to the right of states to make a rational use of its resources without causing damage to the environment. These principles have guided global development policies since 1992 and have been updated and evolving through different documents until the current 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

During the Conference, it was also approved the adoption of an action program for the 21st century called Agenda 21, which defines some of the 2,500 recommendations regarding the application of the principles of the statement. This program was the reference for the application of the concept of sustainable development during subsequent years and the first in another series of programs and agendas that have been evolving and being applied in these last three decades: first with the conference called Rio+5, later with the adoption of a complementary agenda called the Millennium Development Goals, then at the Johannesburg Earth Summit in 2002, and more recently with the approval of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since the Earth Summit, the spirit of Rio endures in the action of governments, non-governmental organizations, major groups and individuals from all over the world. It could be said that by changing the terminology (Agenda 21, Sustainability, Smart, IUDS strategies, Urban Agenda...) and with the usual evolution, we have been redefining this same program and the concepts of the Rio Summit and the report “Our Common Future” over the last 30 years.



- **The Earth Summit + 5 in 1997 (Rio+5)**

As agreed at the Earth Summit in 1992, a special session was held in New York 5 years after the Earth Summit for the United Nations General Assembly in order to assess the progress produced five years after. This new Earth Summit was known as Rio+5.

Therefore, the summit had several objectives:

1. Assessing the extent to which countries, international organizations, and civil society in general had responded to the proposed challenges.
2. Determining and recognizing the progress and challenges achieved in the application of the agreements endorsed at the Earth Summit.
3. Identifying errors, failures and omissions, proposing corrective measures.
4. Promoting similar agreements throughout the developing world of the global agreement.
5. Promoting the necessary global partnership to achieve sustainable development and trying to re-renew and re-engage countries, governments, non-governmental organizations, main associations, and the general citizenship in the reformed challenges.
6. Determining priorities and objectives and outlining a work plan for the next stage of application of the instruments of the Earth Summit.
7. Accelerating the implementation of Agenda 21 and achieving its global reach. To achieve this objective, a Program for the Implementation of Agenda 21 was adopted, and the main deficits regarding sustainability were identified.
8. It was decided to carry out a new evaluation after five more years, that is, ten years after the Rio Summit in 1992.

- **Millennium Development Goals (2000)**

As a development of the agreements endorsed at the Rio and Rio+5 summits, in September 2000, the Heads of State and Government of 147 countries met in the United Nations General Assembly with the will to unite determinations, and with the common commitment to make a collective effort to combat the extreme poverty existing in many countries and to improve the international cooperation in the fight against this drama and improve the development and quality of life of the poorest countries.

To guide this objective, the so-called Millennium Declaration was approved, establishing 8 goals that would be aimed at achieving significant improvements and minimum standards 15 years after their approval.

These Millennium Development Goals established the following objectives:

1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieving universal basic education.
3. Promoting equality between the sexes and women empowerment.
4. Reducing the mortality of children under 5.
5. Improving maternal health.
6. Fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Guaranteeing the sustainability of the environment.
8. Fostering a global partnership for development.

It was especially important to recognize that the fight against inequality and the lack of development in many countries of the world does not only concern them, but it should also be a global and collective task and that the international cooperation in this regard should be reactivated and widened, and therefore, this should be one of the eight objectives. The Millennium Declaration proposes other important issues and consensus in relation to issues such as peace, security and disarmament, human rights, democracy and good governance, and the strengthening of the United Nations itself.

These objectives were established as clearly as possible and with specific and quantified goals, indicating the level that the main economic and social variables that reflect the approved objectives should reach in 2015. Thanks to these concrete objectives and commitments, the Millennium Declaration became the guide for action of the United Nations and of many countries and organizations.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) thus became a very useful and successful tool in fighting poverty globally, they achieved important advances concerning many of the goals, including halving the number of people living in extreme poverty and the percentage of people without access to drinking water sources, as well as significant improvements in all areas of health and in primary education. Obviously, a lot of progress was made, these MDGs were extremely helpful, and they entailed a significant improvement, but not all targets were achieved by the end of the 15-years planned period. As a result of the experience of these Millennium Goals, and well aware that in some aspects it was also necessary to establish a similar framework for the current great challenges of humanity, it was decided to make a new Agenda and 17 new objectives were approved, this time about development, for all the countries in the world and not just for the poorest ones, as had been the case with the previous millennium goals.



- **The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development**

On September 25th, 2015, the 193 countries that make up the United Nations (UN) system committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. They are well known for their colorful logo, consisting of a color wheel and the 17 icons that symbolize, in an individualized way, the themes in which, at a global level, it is considered as a priority to act between now and 2030, in order to guide the world towards a more sustainable future and with greater dignity for everyone.



The SDGs replace and improve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were adopted in September 2000, with the so-called “UN Millennium Declaration”. This great World Alliance that raised a time horizon until 2015, pursued much more quantitatively and qualitatively limited objectives and addressed, above all, aspects such as poverty, hunger, illiteracy, mortal diseases, and a set of indignities that afflicted -and continue to afflict today- millions of people, mainly in developing countries.

Today, the SDGs are configured as transversal objectives that cannot be understood in an isolated way and that force to work in a coordinated way in favor of a greater global sustainability from the environmental, social, economic and territorial point of view. Its enumeration is the following:

- SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger, achieving food security and the improvement of nutrition, promotion of sustainable agriculture.
- SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- SDG 4: ensuring an inclusive, equitable and quality education, promoting lifelong educational opportunities for everyone.
- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- SDG 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.
- SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy.
- SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.
- SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- SDG 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.
- SDG 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.
- SDG 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.
- SDG 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

By means of this large international agreement, which has had sporadic developments, like the Climate Change Conference (known as COP21), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, or the New Urban Agenda, the world has been provided with a set of principles, shared norms, commitments and targets, which aim to be viable and which seek that all possible private or public actions, from each and every one of the actors involved in the present and the future of the planet, are adopted in the framework of a new global social contract that does not leave anyone behind, no matter the place of the world where they live.

The Agenda compels to auto-evaluate itself, both at an internal and an international level, in order to analyse the fulfilment of its 169 targets and, for this, it proposes a complex system of indicators that, although difficult to apply on homogeneous bases, allows to analyse the degree of commitment and fulfilment of every SDG.



- **The New Urban Agenda**

The 2030 Agenda, whose fundamental contents can also be analysed in this Annex (previous section), included a specific SDG about cities. It is, specifically, the SDG 11, and it seeks the achievement of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements.



The reasons for this inclusion were clear for the UN, since the urbanisation process at a planetary level is unstoppable. More than half of humanity, that is, around 3,500 million people (54,5% of the total) lived, at the time the 2030 Agenda was elaborated, in cities, and such number will only increase in the future. In fact, it is envisioned a number close to 5,000 million people by 2030, and that 95% of the urban expansion will take place in developing countries.

Consequently, it is an undeniable fact that the biggest problems that humanity is facing, such as poverty, climate change, healthcare, inequalities and education are, and will be, mainly urban. Quick urbanization is putting pressure on the provision and management of freshwater, wastewater, quality of life and public health, and the solutions must be found within cities and the remaining urban areas. Cities occupy only 3% of the world surface, but represent between 60% and 80% of the energy consumption and 75% of carbon emissions. According to the data of the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2016 90% of city inhabitants breathed air that did not meet the safety regulations established internationally, which provoked 4,2 million deaths due to atmospheric pollution. More than half of the world urban population was exposed to levels of air pollution at least 2,5 times higher than the safety standard.

All this is joined with the extreme vulnerability of 828 million people, who live in slums, mostly located in East and Southeast Asia, although the number in the remaining areas is steadily increasing.

As expressed before, one of the most relevant international Agreements that were adopted after the approval of the 2030 Agenda with the aim of reaching a greater sustainability, had to do with the SDG 11. This was the New Urban Agenda (NUA) that appeared after the Quito Declaration, with the celebration of the Habitat III Conference in October 2016.

For the UN, in this age where the planet is experiencing an unprecedented growth in urbanisation, cities can be a source of both solutions and conflicts. This is why an adequate planning and management of its development is recommended, because urbanisation is not seen as an intrinsically-negative element, but also as a powerful instrument to make the needed development sustainable. In fact, urbanisation is linked (when it is well planned and implemented) to job creation, the possibility of generating means of subsistence, and the improvement of the quality of life, especially (but not just) in developing countries.

It is true that, as CLOS, J. (2016) acknowledges, “there is not a single recipe to improve urbanisation and achieve a sustainable urban development, but the New Urban Agenda provides the principles and tested practices to give rise to this idea, and move it from the paper to the real world. An ideal that inspires and informs those in charge of taking decisions and the urban inhabitants of the world, to get hold of our common urban future. In this decisive juncture in the history of humanity, rethinking the way in which we plan, build and manage our urban spaces is not just an option, but rather an imperative. Our job to reach this ideal starts now”.

The UN is very clear about this task. We are all potential actors within this necessary process: member States, sub-national authorities (and within them the local ones, with a huge strength and relevance), civil society, academia, the private sector, etc. This is why it demands from each and every one of them, in the sphere of their respective interests and responsibilities, its implementation ASAP, and the actions, at least, in the areas of regulation improvement, planning, funding, governance, and the dissemination and exchange of knowledge.

July 31st, 2020.



ANNEX 1

Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities





PREAMBLE

The “LEIPZIG CHARTER on Sustainable European Cities” is a document of the Member States, which has been drawn up with the broad and transparent participation of European Stakeholders. In the knowledge of the challenges and opportunities as well as the different historical, economical, social and environmental backgrounds of European cities, the Member States’ Ministers responsible for Urban Development agree upon common principles and strategies for urban development policy. The Ministers commit themselves.

- To initiate a political debate in their states on how to integrate the principles and strategies of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities into national, regional and local development policies,
- To use the tool of integrated urban development and the related governance for its implementation and, to this end, establish any necessary framework at national level and
- To promote the establishment of balanced territorial organisation based on a European polycentric urban structure.

The Ministers thank the German Presidency for having prepared the report “Integrated urban development as a prerequisite for successful urban sustainability” and the studies “Strategies for upgrading the physical environment in deprived urban areas”, “Strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy in deprived urban areas”, “Proactive education and training policies on children and young people in deprived urban areas” and “Sustainable urban transport and deprived urban areas” with their examples of good practice in Europe. These studies will help cities of all sizes in the effective implementation of the principles and strategies set out in the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities.

The Ministers declare:

We, the ministers responsible for urban development in the Member States of the European Union, consider European cities of all sizes which have evolved in the course of history to be valuable and irreplaceable economic, social and cultural assets.

With the objective of protecting, strengthening and further developing our cities, we strongly support the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, building on the Lille Action Programme, the Rotterdam Urban Acquis and the Bristol Accord.

In doing so, all dimensions of sustainable development should be taken into account at the same time and with the same weight. These include economic prosperity, social balance and a healthy environment. At the same time attention should be paid to cultural and health aspects. In this due attention should be paid to the institutional capacity in the Member States.

Our cities possess unique cultural and architectural qualities, strong forces of social inclusion and exceptional possibilities for economic development. They are centres of knowledge and sources of growth and innovation. At the same time, however, they suffer from demographic problems, social inequality, social exclusion of specific population groups a lack of affordable and suitable housing and environmental problems. In the long run, cities cannot fulfil their function as engines of social progress and economic growth as described in the Lisbon Strategy unless we succeed in maintaining the social balance within and among them, ensuring their cultural diversity and establishing high quality in the fields of urban design, architecture and environment.

We increasingly need holistic strategies and coordinated action by all persons and institutions involved in the urban development process which reach beyond the boundaries of individual cities. Every level of government - local, regional, national and European - has a responsibility for the future of our cities. To make this multi-level government really effective, we must improve the coordination of the sectoral policy areas and develop a new sense of responsibility for integrated urban development policy. We must also ensure that those working to deliver these policies at all levels acquire the generic and crossoccupational skills and knowledge needed to develop cities as sustainable communities.

We strongly welcome the statements and the recommendations set out in the Territorial Agenda of the European Union and the work of the European Institutions which promotes an integrated view of urban issues. We recognize the Aalborg Commitments as a valuable contribution to strategic and coordinated action at a local level and the conclusions of the European Forum for Architectural Policies on Building Culture on 27 April 2007. We take note of the European Charter “Network Vital Cities”.



We recommend:

I. Making greater use of integrated urban development policy approaches

For us, integrated urban development policy means simultaneous and fair consideration of the concerns and interests which are relevant to urban development. Integrated urban development policy is a process in which the spatial, sectoral and temporal aspects of key areas of urban policy are co-ordinated. The involvement of economic actors, stakeholders and the general public is essential. Integrated urban development policy is a key prerequisite for implementing the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Its implementation is a task of European scale, but it is one which must take account of local conditions and needs as well as subsidiarity.

The reconciliation of interests facilitated by an integrated urban development policy forms a viable basis for a consensus between the state, regions, cities, citizens and economic actors. By pooling knowledge and financial resources, scarce public funds can be more effectively used. Public and private investments will be better coordinated. Integrated urban development policy involves actors outside the administration and enables citizens to play an active role in shaping their immediate living environment. At the same time, these measures can provide more planning and investment certainty.

We recommend that European cities consider drawing up integrated urban development programmes for the city as a whole. These implementation-oriented planning tools should:

- Describe the strengths and the weaknesses of cities and neighbourhoods based upon an analysis of the current situation,
- Define consistent development objectives for the urban area and develop a vision for the city,
- Coordinate the different neighbourhood, sectoral and technical plans and policies, and ensure that the planned investments will help to promote a well-balanced development of the urban area,
- Coordinate and spatially focus the use of funds by public and private sector players and
- Be co-ordinated at local and city-regional level and involve citizens and other partners who can contribute substantially to shaping the future economic, social, cultural and environmental quality of each area.

Coordination at local and city-regional level should be strengthened. An equal partnership between cities and rural areas as well as between small-, medium-sized and large towns and cities within city-regions and metropolitan regions is the aim. We must stop looking at urban development policy issues and decisions at the level of each city in isolation. Our cities should be focal points of city-regional development and assume responsibility for territorial cohesion. It would therefore be helpful if our cities would network more closely with each other at European level.

Integrated urban development policy offers us a set of instruments which have already proved their worth in numerous European cities in developing modern, co-operative and effective governance structures. These are indispensable for improving the competitiveness of European cities. They facilitate early beneficial co-ordination of housing, economic, infrastructure and services development by taking account, inter alia, of the impact of existing ageing and migration trends and energy-policy conditions.

Within the scope of an integrated urban development policy, we consider the following strategies for action to be of crucial importance for strengthening the competitiveness of European cities:

- **Creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces**

The quality of public spaces, urban man-made landscapes and architecture and urban development play an important role in the living conditions of urban populations. As soft locational factors, they are important for attracting knowledge industry businesses, a qualified and creative workforce and for tourism. Therefore, the interaction of architecture, infrastructure planning and urban planning must be increased in order to create attractive, user-oriented public spaces and achieve a high standard in terms of the living environment, a “Baukultur”. Baukultur is to be understood in the broadest sense of the word, as the sum of all the cultural, economic, technological, social and ecological aspects influencing the quality and process of planning and construction. However, this approach should not be limited to public spaces. Such a “Baukultur” is needed for the city as a whole and its surroundings. Both cities and government must make their influence felt. This is particularly important for the preservation of architectural heritage. Historical buildings, public spaces and their urban and architectural value must be preserved.

Creating and safeguarding functional and well-designed urban spaces, infrastructures and services is a task which must be tackled jointly by the state, regional and the local authorities, as well as by citizens and businesses.



- **Modernizing infrastructure networks and improving energy efficiency**

An essential contribution to the quality of life, locational quality and the quality of the environment can be made by sustainable, accessible and affordable urban transport with coordinated links to the city-region transport networks. Particular attention should be paid to traffic management and interlinking transport modes, including cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Urban transport must be reconciled with the different requirements of housing, work areas, the environment and public spaces.

Technical infrastructure, especially water supply, waste-water treatment and other supply networks, must be improved at an early stage and adapted to changing needs in order to meet future requirements for high quality urban living.

Key prerequisites for sustainable public utility service are energy efficiency and economic use of natural resources and economic efficiency in their operation. Energy efficiency of buildings must be improved. This concerns both existing and new buildings. The renovation of housing stock can have an important impact on energy efficiency and the improvement of a resident's quality of life. Particular attention must be paid to pre-fabricated, old and low quality buildings. Optimized and performing infrastructure networks and energy efficient buildings will lower costs for businesses and residents alike.

An important basis for efficient and sustainable use of resources is a compact settlement structure. This can be achieved by spatial and urban planning, which prevents urban sprawl by strong control of land supply and of speculative development. The strategy of mixing housing, employment, education, supply and recreational use in urban neighbourhoods has proved to be especially sustainable.

Cities must contribute to ensuring and enhancing their residents' quality of life and their attractiveness as business locations by making use of sophisticated information and communication technologies in the fields of education, employment, social services, health, safety and security, as well as means for improving urban governance. Our cities must also be able to adjust to the threat posed by climate change. Well designed and planned urban development can provide a low carbon way of accommodating growth, improve environmental quality and reduce carbon emissions. Cities can achieve these outcomes through innovative prevention, mitigation and adaptation measures which in turn aid the development of new industry and low carbon business.

- **Proactive innovation and educational policies**

Cities are places where a lot of knowledge is created and also imparted. The full exploitation of a city's knowledge potential depends on the quality of its pre-school and school education, and on the transfer opportunities provided within the education and training systems, as well as by social and cultural networks. The opportunities for lifelong learning, the excellence of the universities and non-university research institutes and the transfer network between industry, businesses and the scientific community.

Integrated urban development policy can contribute to improving these factors, for example by bringing the stakeholders together, by supporting networks and optimizing locational structures. Integrated urban development promotes social and intercultural dialogue.

Integrated urban development strategies, cooperative urban development management and good governance can contribute towards a purposeful use of the potential of European cities particularly with regard to competitiveness and growth, as well as to reducing disparities within and among neighbourhoods. They provide citizens with an opportunity for social and democratic participation.

II. That special attention is paid to deprived neighbourhoods within the context of the city as a whole

Cities are faced with major challenges, especially in connection with the change in economic and social structures and globalisation. Specific problems, among others, are especially high unemployment and social exclusion. Within one city, considerable differences may exist in terms of economic and social opportunities in the individual city areas, but also in terms of the varying quality of the environment. In addition, the social distinctions and the differences in economic development often continue to increase which contributes to destabilization in cities. A policy of social integration which contributes to reducing inequalities and preventing social exclusion will be the best guarantee for maintaining security in our cities.

In order to achieve the objectives of social cohesion and integration in cities and urban areas, well-conceived social housing policies can be effective tools. Healthy, suitable and affordable housing can make these neighbourhoods more attractive for both young and old people. This is a contribution to stability in the neighbourhoods.



It is better to spot early warning signs and take remedial action in a timely and effective way. This saves resources. Once an area has begun to decline, the cost of and difficulty in turning it around can be many times more expensive. Government must offer an outlook and incentives for improvement to residents in affected areas. Active involvement of the residents and a better dialogue between the political representatives, the residents and the economic actors is essential to find the best solution for each deprived urban area.

Against this background, we consider the following strategies for action, embedded in an integrated urban development policy, to be of crucial importance for deprived urban neighbourhoods:

- **Pursuing strategies for upgrading the physical environment**

Economic activity and investments on the one hand and high-quality urban structures, a sound built environment and a modern and efficient infrastructure and facilities on the other are closely interlinked. For this reason, it is necessary to improve existing building stock in deprived neighbourhoods with regard to their design, physical conditions and energy efficiency. Improvements in housing standards in new buildings as well as in existing large prefabricated, old and low quality buildings bear the biggest potential for increasing energy efficiency within the EU and thereby combating climate change.

In order to increase the sustainability of investments in upgrading the physical environment, they must be embedded in a long-term development strategy which also includes, inter alia, public and private follow-up investments.

- **Strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy**

Measures to secure the economic stabilisation of deprived neighbourhoods must also exploit endogenous economic forces in the neighbourhood themselves. In this context, labour market and economic policies which are tailored to the needs of the individual neighbourhoods will be the appropriate instruments. The objective is to create and secure jobs and to facilitate the start-up of new businesses. In particular, access opportunities to local labour markets must be improved by offering demand-oriented training. Increased use must also be made of the employment and training opportunities in the ethnic economy.

The European Union, Member States and cities are called on to create better conditions and instruments to strengthen the local economy and thus the local labour markets, in particular by promoting the social economy and providing citizen-friendly services.

- **Proactive education and training policies for children and young people**

A crucial starting point for improving the situation in deprived neighbourhoods is the improvement of the education and training situation in the local community in conjunction with proactive policies focused on children and young people.

More possibilities for education and training must be provided and improved in disadvantaged neighbourhoods which are geared to the needs of, and address deficiencies in provision for children and young people living there. By means of a policy focus on children and young people which is tailored to the social area they live in, we must contribute to improving the prospects of the children and young people living in deprived neighbourhoods to participate and realize their ambitions and to ensure equal opportunities on a long-term basis.

- **Promotion of efficient and affordable urban transport**

Many deprived neighbourhoods have the additional burden of poor transport connections as well as poor environmental influences which further reduce their attractiveness. The development of an efficient and affordable public transport system will give residents in these neighbourhoods equal opportunity to have the mobility and accessibility of other citizens – which they have a right to expect.

In order to achieve this aim, transport planning and traffic management in these areas must increasingly aim to reduce the negative impacts of transport on the environment and to organise transport in a manner which will better integrate these neighbourhoods into the city and region as a whole. This will also require appropriate networks for pedestrian and cycle traffic.

The better we manage to stabilize deprived neighbourhoods economically, to integrate them socially and to upgrade their physical environment and transport infrastructure, the better the chances are that our cities will remain places of social progress, growth and innovation in the long term.



We emphasize that:

Urban development policy should be laid down at national level and the stimuli for innovative solutions should also be created at national level, as well as at other levels.

Our cities need enough scope for action in order to perform local tasks in a responsible manner and a sound financial basis which provides long-term stability. Therefore it is important too that Member States have the opportunity to use the European structural funds for substantial integrated urban development programmes. The use of these funds should be focused closely on the specific difficulties and potentials as well as take into consideration the opportunities, difficulties and specificities in the Member States. If not already provided for, local authorities should develop the necessary skills and efficiency to implement integrated urban development policies, also with a view to achieving overall quality and sustainability in the built-up environment.

The new EU initiatives, JESSICA and JEREMIE, supporting the establishment of urban development funds and funds for SME, using financial engineering instruments to leverage private capital into the implementation of integrated urban development strategies, offer promising opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of conventional national and European funding sources.

At national level, Government Departments need to recognise more clearly the importance of cities to deliver national, regional and local ambitions, and the impact of their policies upon them. The efforts of different sectoral Government Departments working or having an impact on urban issues need to be better aligned and integrated so they complement rather than conflict.

We emphasize the importance of systematic and structured exchange of experience and knowledge in the field of sustainable urban development. We ask the European Commission to present the outcome of the exchange of good practice on the basis of the guidelines of the Leipzig Charter at a future conference under the auspices of the “Regions for Economic Change” initiative. Alongside this we need a European platform to pool and develop best practice, statistics, benchmarking studies, evaluations, peer reviews and other urban research to support actors involved in urban development at all levels and in all sectors. We will continue to promote and intensify the exchange of knowledge and experience between policy makers, practitioners and researchers at local, regional, national and European level in the future in order to reinforce the urban dimension of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the Lisbon Strategy and the European Employment Strategy. Europe needs cities and regions which are strong and good to live in.



ANNEX 2

Territorial Agenda of the European Union





TERRITORIAL AGENDA OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Towards a More Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions

Agreed on the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion in Leipzig on 24 / 25 May 2007.

I. Future Task: Strengthening Territorial Cohesion

(1) The EU looks with confidence at the progress achieved in economic, social and ecological terms. Together the EU Member States operate a combined economy, which is about one third of the world-wide Gross Domestic Product. It is this economic power as well as a territory covering more than 4 million km² and a population of 490 million inhabitants in a variety of regions and cities, which characterises the territorial dimension of the EU.

(2) We, as Ministers responsible for spatial planning and development, present the Territorial Agenda as an action-oriented political framework for our future cooperation, developed together with the European Commission. Through the Territorial Agenda we are contributing to sustainable economic growth and job creation as well as social and ecological development in all EU regions. We are hereby supporting both the Lisbon and the Gothenburg Strategies of the European Council, which are complementary strategies.

(3) Through the Territorial Agenda we would like to promote a polycentric territorial development of the EU, with a view to making better use of available resources in European regions. An important aspect is the territorial integration of places where people live. In this way we will contribute to a Europe which is culturally, socially, environmentally and economically sustainable. It is particularly important to better integrate our newer Member States into this policy of polycentric settlement development. Through the Territorial Agenda we will help – in terms of territorial solidarity – to secure better living conditions and quality of life with equal opportunities, oriented towards regional and local potentials, irrespective of where people live – whether in the European core area or in the periphery.

(4) We see the future task “Territorial Cohesion” as a permanent and cooperative process involving the various actors and stakeholders of territorial development at political, administrative and technical levels. This cooperation is characterised by the history, culture and institutional arrangements in each Member State. EU Cohesion Policy should be able to respond more effectively than it has done so far

to the territorial needs and characteristics, specific geographical challenges and opportunities of the regions and cities. That is why we advocate the need for the territorial dimension to play a stronger role in future Cohesion Policy in order to promote economic and social wellbeing.

(5) Territorial Cohesion can only be achieved through an intensive and continuous dialogue between all stakeholders of territorial development. This process of cooperation is what we call territorial governance. The private sector (especially locally and regionally based entrepreneurship), the scientific community, the public sector (especially local and regional authorities), non-governmental organisations and different sectors need to act together in order to make better use of crucial investments in European regions and contribute to tackling climate change.

(6) The Territorial Agenda presents the product of our cooperation. At our Informal Ministerial Meeting held in Rotterdam (2004) we agreed upon a territorial development policy to better assess the perspectives of the EU. And in Luxembourg (2005) we accepted territorial priorities as the basis of our future common activities and the formulation of an expert report on “The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union” which provides the basis for the Territorial Agenda. Our elaboration of the Territorial Agenda is being supported by a Europe-wide stakeholder dialogue, ongoing since summer 2006. Based on articles 2, 6, 16 and 158 included in the EC Treaty, territorial cohesion has been considered as the third dimension of Cohesion Policy. It has been taken up, for example, in the Third and also the Fourth Cohesion Report as well as in the Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion adopted in 2006. We affirm our commitment to working even more closely together and with the EU institutions in pursuit of this goal – independent of the ongoing discussion about the EU’s reform process (EU Constitutional Treaty).

II. New Challenges: Strengthening Regional Identities, Making Better Use of Territorial Diversity

(7) We are facing major new territorial challenges today. These include:

- Regionally diverse impacts of climate change on the EU territory and its neighbours, particularly with regard to sustainable development,
- Rising energy prices, energy inefficiency and different territorial opportunities for new forms of energy supply,
- Accelerating integration of our regions, including crossborder areas, in global economic competition, and at the same time increasing dependencies of states and regions in the world,

- Impacts of EU enlargement on economic, social and territorial cohesion, particularly with regard to the transport and energy infrastructure related integration of Eastern Europe and the new EU Member States as well as their regions,
- Overexploitation of the ecological and cultural resources and loss of biodiversity, particularly through increasing development sprawl whilst remote areas are facing depopulation,
- Territorial effects of demographic change (especially ageing) as well as in and out migration and internal migration on labour markets, on the supply of public services of general interest as well as the housing market, the development of the settlement structure and how people live together in our cities and regions.

(8) Given these challenges, we firmly believe that territorial cohesion of the EU is prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic growth and implementing social and economic cohesion – a European social model. In this context, we regard it as an essential task and act of solidarity to develop preconditions in all regions to enable equal opportunities for its citizens and development perspectives for entrepreneurship. We agree that regional identities and potentials, needs and diverse characteristics of the regions, cities and villages of Europe gain meaning through a policy of territorial cohesion and through other regional development policies.

(9) Through the Territorial Agenda we are also helping to strengthen the global competitiveness and sustainability of all regions of Europe. This is in accordance with the renewed Lisbon Strategy agreed by Member States in 2005. The diverse territorial potentials of regions for sustainable economic growth and job creation in the EU must be identified and mobilised. Every region and city may, through their engagement, contribute to saving energy and to its decentralized supply and to mitigating climate change, e.g. by supporting the development of low or zero-emissions settlements, developing potential new renewable sources of energy supply and promoting energy efficiency particularly of the building stock. Our cities and regions need to become more resilient in the context of climate change. They should be firmly bound into governance processes for implementing the Lisbon Strategy as well as into National Reform Programmes.

(10) We wish to highlight the increasing territorial influence of Community policies. This should be taken into consideration as on the one hand EU policy-making should have more regard to local, regional and national potentials and the motives of stakeholders by taking a strategic integrated territorial development approach. On the other hand, individual city and regional development strategies

should explicitly take more account of their national and European contexts. It is important that national, regional and local concerns closely intertwine with EU policies. This applies particularly to rural development policies, environmental and transport policies as well as EU Cohesion Policy.

(11) The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities complements the concern of the Territorial Agenda as it raises integrated urban development policy as a task with a European dimension. Therefore, integrated urban development policy and territorial cohesion policy each make complementary contributions to implementing the aims of sustainable development.

III. Territorial Priorities for the Development of the European Union

(12) The Territorial Agenda builds upon the three main aims of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), which remains valid, namely:

- Development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural partnership;
- Securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge;
- Sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage.

It also builds on the CEMAT Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent confirmed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Based on these principles we also want to intensify the dialogue with neighbouring countries adjoining the EU.

(13) In the context of our policy for territorial cohesion we commit ourselves to the following priorities for territorial development in the EU:

1. We Aim to Strengthen Polycentric Development and Innovation through Networking of City Regions and Cities

(14) City regions and cities of varying size are best able to build upon their own strengths in the context of a Europe-wide cooperation with entrepreneurs as well as societal and political stakeholders. If they succeed in implementing networks in a polycentric European territory in an innovative manner, they will create conditions to allow them to benefit global competition in terms of their development.



(15) Cities which function as regional centres should cooperate as parts of a polycentric pattern to ensure their added value for other cities in rural and peripheral areas as well as for areas with specific geographic challenges and needs (e.g. structurally weak parts of islands, coastal zones and mountainous areas). To facilitate this process, infrastructure networks within and between regions in Europe need to be extended and updated on a continuous basis. We therefore support European cooperation between city regions as well as with small and medium-sized towns at the internal borders and also beyond the external borders of the EU.

2. We Need New Forms of Partnership and Territorial Governance between Rural and Urban Areas

(16) A competitive and sustainable Europe comprises in great variety and with different interdependencies city regions of varying size and rural areas. City regions are thereby surrounded by urban centres and rurally characterised areas; rural areas beyond the direct commuting distance of city regions are surrounded by regional centres and small and medium-sized towns. The respective authorities should, as inter-dependent partners, identify their common assets, elaborate joint regional and sub-regional development strategies and in this way jointly lay the foundation for making regions and sub-regions attractive and for enabling investment decisions both by the private and public sector. This is what we call urban-rural partnership.

(17) Regionally oriented investment decisions should be prepared jointly by public and private stakeholders. In this context, it is necessary if, for example, local authorities of varying size form voluntary associations for joint marketing and developing joint strategies to tackle common problems. Against the background of demographic change, authorities facing population loss of young people need to cooperate closely to enable them to maintain attractive services and infrastructure. This cooperation implies a new political dimension. To strengthen this, new forms of territorial governance arrangements may be necessary in European regions. Generally speaking, we would like to create opportunities for innovative economic potential for development, building upon experiences of successful partnership and political cooperation in a functional regional context, also including crossborder areas. We therefore support positive competition between cities and regions.

3. We Want to Promote Regional Clusters of Competition and Innovation in Europe

(18) Growth zones should be enlarged beyond the economic core area of the EU through a policy of cooperation and networking. One way of combining strengths can be through the creation of suitable and innovative clusters where the business community, the scientific community and administrations work together. This also applies across internal and external borders with our neighbours.

(19) City regions of varying size, small and medium-sized towns as well as rural areas are encouraged, to cooperate with other authorities, even in other countries, in order to strengthen their international identity and specialisation as a way of becoming more attractive for investment. It is reasonable to focus on existing centres of innovation.

4. We Support the Strengthening and Extension of Trans-European Networks

(20) Mobility and accessibility are key prerequisites for economic development in all regions of the EU. To meet the requirements for mobility in a polycentric European territory, including our neighbouring countries, and to contribute to enhancing the urban environment, it is important to secure integrated and sustainable development of multi-modal transport systems. We need capable networks both for passengers and goods, of rail, road and air (including networks of viable regional airports), efficient maritime, coastal and inland waterways, and secondary networks linking with respective hinterland areas as well as crossborder transport management. We support the removal of barriers to crossborder rail and road transport and particularly support the use of telematic measures to assist the operation of overloaded parts of road networks.

(21) We support an unhampered and socially fair access to information and communication technologies in all regions, to remove territorially induced barriers to accessibility, especially in peripheral and rural areas, and to enable decentralised working and adequate provision of services of general interest, including health care and education. In order to secure the necessary infrastructure, such as achieving general coverage for broadband connections, considering respective demand, we recommend combining infrastructure such as broadband cables in new transport and communication programmes.

(22) Rising energy demand in the face of limited reserves of non-renewable energy sources, and a growing dependence of the EU on imported energy as well the challenge of climate change, means

that we should further explore and develop opportunities for decentralized, efficient, safe and environmentally friendly production of renewable energy, which is as yet underutilised. In order to make better use of regional potentials in this field, which might generate opportunities particularly in rural areas, we recommend further strengthening networks and harmonising conditions for the energy sector.

5. We Promote Trans-European Risk Management including the Impacts of Climate Change

(23) Joint transregional and integrated approaches and strategies should be further developed in order to face natural hazards, reduce and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. Further work is required to develop and intensify territorial cohesion policy, particularly with respect to the consequences of territorially differentiated adaptation strategies.

(24) In order to improve the efficiency of risk management activity and to guide development appropriately, integrated trans-European and crossborder strategies (e.g. flood protection, drought and desertification prevention, integrated coastal zone and mountainous areas management, technological hazard management, improved forecasting), should be adopted, in cooperation with our neighbouring countries, and new forms of risk governance arrangements should be developed, especially in multi-hazardous areas like coastal zones, lakesides, maritime and river basins and mountainous areas.

6. We Require the Strengthening of Ecological Structures and Cultural Resources as the Added Value for Development

(25) The irreplaceable values of European ecological structures and cultural and natural heritage, especially cultural landscapes and the quality of design and process on architecture as well as the built environment, should constitute, against the background of the respective regional circumstances and potentials, the foundation for environmentally and culturally-oriented development which offers development perspectives, whilst safeguarding diverse cultural identities, particularly in regions that are lagging behind or undergoing structural changes. Coordinated transnational interventions and associated management should promote cultural routes and networks as well as other territorial projects of natural and cultural significance.

(26) We advocate further developing networks of valuable nature areas and cultural landscapes in order to create an integrated and sustainable trans-European green structure with adequate corridors and zones linking protected sites and other areas of European and national importance.

(27) Integrated territorial development policies should also be strengthened in ecologically or culturally fragile areas of the EU in order to address the key challenge of reconciling economic development and environmental, social and cultural sustainability.

IV. Implementing the Territorial Agenda

(28) In order to better incorporate the six territorial priorities in political debates and decision making processes we consider the following actions to be important and recommend them for implementation between 2007 and 2011. We commit ourselves to delivering these actions:

1. Actions by the European Institutions

(29) We welcome the Communication of the European Commission on “The Contribution of Cities to Growth and Employment in Regions” and ask the European Commission to work on a follow up in view of the Territorial Agenda.

(30) We ask the European Commission to continue to include explicit reference to the territorial dimension of the EU in future Reports on Social and Economic Cohesion to activate cities and regions to bring in their development strategies in the European context. This would help to realise the principle of subsidiarity.

(31) We request the Regional Development Committee of the European Parliament, the Territorial Cohesion Committee of the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee to support and implement the priorities of the Territorial Agenda in their activities, thus giving cities and regions a stronger role in implementing EU Policies.

2. Actions for Close Cooperation Between the European Commission and EU Member States

(32) We recommend a continuous and in-depth dialogue between EU Member States (including regional and local authorities) and the European Commission on strategic territorial development issues. The opportunities provided by the existing committees (particularly the Expert Committee “Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters” which was established by the Committee of the Coordination of Funds [COCOF]) should be used efficiently for this purpose.

(33) We ask the European Commission and other European institutions to initiate a dialogue with Member States, based on the principles of subsidiarity, to discuss how the effects of European legislation on sustainable urban and territorial development and planning can be assessed and taken into account and how to improve the coordination of EU policies and initiatives that concern territorial policy areas. This assessment and coordination could take place within the framework of the existing institutions and procedures.

(34) We recommend that the ESPON 2013 Programme, in close cooperation with the European Commission undertake a more in-depth analysis of the effects of EU Policies on territorial cohesion, reveal cause-and-effect relationships and develop operational indicators for a regular reporting on territorial matters. In this context it is important for the ESPON and URBACT programmes and Urban Audit to cooperate closely.

(35) We consider the cooperation, including our neighbouring countries, in the context of EU Programmes for European Territorial Cooperation (Objective 3) to be new and future-oriented funding instruments offering opportunities for strengthening European networks of cities and regions as well as supporting new innovation-oriented European development corridors. We ask the European Commission to support us in developing interregional, crossborder and transnational cooperation as an effective instrument for promoting territorial cohesion.

3. Actions for Strengthening Territorial Cohesion in EU Member States

(36) We will commit ourselves, within our competences, to integrate the political priorities of the Territorial Agenda as well as the territorial aspects of the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 in national, regional and local development policies. In view of the conclusions of the Seminar on Governance of Territorial Strategies, held under the Austrian EU Presidency in June 2006 in Baden, we recommend integration of the territorial dimension in the strategic processes underpinning cohesion policy at EU and national level.

(37) We will ensure that, within the terms of our respective national institutional arrangements, we engage in transparent decision-making processes with public and private stakeholders as well as non-governmental organisations in developing territorially relevant policies, territorial priorities and actions for their implementation.

4. Joint Activities by Ministers

(38) In order to implement the Territorial Agenda we agree to maintain informal structures for cooperation between our ministries, including the respective EU Presidencies, and with the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank. This requires smooth functioning of the Presidencies Group equipped with adequate secretarial resources and supported by the services of experts, additionally from other Member States.

(39) We agree to act jointly in order to continue and strengthen cooperation among ourselves and with the European Commission through a network of territorial cohesion related contact points. We intend the open Territorial Agenda Working Group, consisting of EU Member States and the European Commission, to continue its work in the current phase of implementing the Agenda.

(40) As a first step in our joint activities and as follow-up to the 2007 spring European Council we commit ourselves, within our competences, to contribute to a sustainable and integrated climate and energy policy in the EU.

(41) Our further joint activities will be focused on facilitating the EU-wide debate on EU key dossiers from a territorial point of view. The most important ones include:

- The debate on the Lisbon process post 2010,
- The 2010 midterm review of Cohesion Policy,
- The 2010 midterm review of the EU Rural Development Policy,
- The 2011 redevelopment of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS),
- The ongoing debate of how to implement the recommendations of the Green Paper on Maritime Policies,
- The ongoing debate on the 7th Environmental Action Programme of the EU,
- The debate on the Transport Policy post 2010,
- The ongoing debate on the Research and Innovation Policy,
- The ongoing debate on the Neighbourhood Policy.

(42) We ask the coming EU Presidencies together with all EU Member States, the European institutions, including the European Commission and the European Investment Bank as well as other stakeholders to implement the actions set out in this Territorial Agenda. We welcome the initiative

of the Portuguese EU Presidency to facilitate the implementation of the Territorial Agenda by working out the first Action Programme as well as the will of the Slovene EU Presidency to initiate its implementation through its activities.

(43) We ask the Slovene EU Presidency to take the Territorial Agenda into account in their preparations for the 2008 spring European Council with view to achieving a stronger and more formal political recognition of the territorial conditions for the development of regions and cities and new forms of participation with EU decisions.

(44) We agree that there is a need to encourage public and private stakeholders of territorial development to be engaged in addressing territorial cohesion of the EU. Their specific interests should be recognised. A joint discussion about scenarios for the territorial development of Europe may ease the process of reconciling different interests. We ask the coming EU Presidencies to elaborate this ambition through specific activities in accordance with topical needs for policy development in Europe. We welcome both the initiative of the Portuguese EU Presidency to organize an Informal Ministerial Meeting to be held in November 2007 and of Germany to organize a Conference on Territory and Economy to be held in spring 2008.

(45) We ask the coming Hungarian EU Presidency to evaluate and review the Territorial Agenda in the first half of 2011.

(46) We consider it our political task to raise awareness for the most important territorial challenges for the EU and we will therefore play an active role in implementing the Territorial Agenda at the European level and within our states. We are convinced that through the Territorial Agenda we are taking a further step towards a competitive and sustainable Europe of diverse regions and active citizens.

Leipzig, May 2007.



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