The nascent EU Urban Agenda: history, ideas, roles, prospects

Office for Europe and European Institutions,
Brussels, 31 March 2016
Almost 20 years...

• Communication from the Commission “Towards an urban agenda in the European Union” 06.05.1997

“At the European level [...] the Member States and the European Commission acknowledged their common **concern about the future sustainable development of cities at the recent UN Conference on Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat II).”**

• Lithuanian EU Presidency Conclusions adopted at the Informal Meeting of the Directors General of Territorial Cohesion/Spatial Development and Urban Development on 21 November, 2013 in Vilnius

*Member States indicated their interest in building a new **EU Urban Agenda** and have committed to support this process during forthcoming presidencies*
Almost 20 years...

- The “Lille Action Programme” adopted at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for urban affairs held in Lille on 3 November 2000.
- The “Urban Acquis” adopted at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for territorial cohesion, held in Rotterdam on 29 November 2004.
- The “Bristol Accord” adopted at the Informal Council of Ministers on sustainable communities held in Bristol on 6-7 December 2005.
- The “Territorial Agenda of the EU - Towards a More Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions” adopted at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for spatial planning and urban development held in Rotterdam on 24-25 May 2007.
- The “Marseille Declaration” adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for urban development on 25 November 2008.
- Toledo Declaration, adopted at the Informal Council Meeting of Ministers on urban development of 22 June 2010 in Toledo.
- Territorial agenda of the EU 2020, agreed at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development of 19 May 2011 in Gödöllö.
- The “Road map” for the implementation of the new Territorial Agenda was adopted during Polish presidency in November 2011.
- Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 21 September 2011 on ‘Metropolitan Areas and City Regions in Europe 2020’.
- Presidency Conclusions adopted at the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for cohesion policy of 24-25 April 2014 in Athens.
- Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 25 June 2014 on “Towards an Integrated Urban Agenda for the EU”.
- General Affairs Council conclusions of Nov 2014.
- Vienna Declaration by the Mayors of the EU Capital Cities “A strong voice in Europe”, 21 April 2015.
- Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee “The urban dimension of EU policies – Key features of an EU urban agenda”, 23 April 2015.
- The “Marseille Declaration” adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for urban development on 25 November 2008.
- Toledo Declaration, adopted at the Informal Council Meeting of Ministers on urban development of 22 June 2010 in Toledo.
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- Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee “The urban dimension of EU policies – Key features of an EU urban agenda”, 23 April 2015.
- Leipzig Declaration on the urban dimension of cohesion policy in the new programming period (2008/2130(INI)).
- [Added since the Riga Declaration of 10 June 2015]:
  - Commission Staff Working Document / Results of the Public Consultation on the key features of an EU urban agenda (SWD(2015)109 final2);
  - Better regulation for better results – an EU agenda (COM(2015) 215 final);
  - Presidency Conclusions of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meetings on Territorial Cohesion and Urban Policy (26 en 27 November 2015);
  - [Input by the High Level Group on Governance];
  - [Declaration of EU Mayors of Capital Cities];
  - [Referral of the Committee of the Regions (requested by the future Dutch EU Presidency)];
  - [Referral of the European Economic and Social Committee on the EU Urban Agenda, (requested by the future Dutch EU Presidency)];
  - [Manifest of European City Makers Summit].
Riga Declaration “Towards the EU Urban Agenda”

18. To contribute to the UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda process aiming to ensure that the principles of integrated urban development and the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals referring to urban development are well reflected in the Habitat III declaration.
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Member States (European Council)</strong></th>
<th><strong>European Commission</strong></th>
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<td>no legislation - sets the EU's policy agenda through Presidencies; determines national policies and implement national legislation; Urban issues – not in EU acquis, so informal and voluntary cooperation</td>
<td>proposes legislation adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers; enforces European law; set objectives and priorities for action; manages and implements EU policies and the budget; EU-wide data</td>
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**Local authorities**
- Consultative role through e.g. opinions Committee of the Regions

**Various stakeholders**
- non-Governmental, private sector, academia – through public consultations organised by the European Commission
EU Urban Agenda: The Pact of Amsterdam
State of Play March 2016

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EU Urban Agenda: The Pact of Amsterdam
Why EU Urban Agenda?

Increasingly complex challenges in Urban Areas need cooperation with civil society, business and knowledge institutions - shaping the future economic, social, cultural and environmental quality of Urban Areas.

The polycentric structure of European Union and the social, economic, cultural and historical diversity - interdependent Urban Areas should cooperate with their surrounding regions.

Urban challenges are of a local nature, but require a wider territorial solution.
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**Goals**

- Establish a **more effective integrated approach** to EU and national policies and legislation: sectoral policies + different levels of government
- **Ensure coordination** and effective interaction + subsidiarity principle = new form of multilevel and multi-stakeholder cooperation strengthening the urban dimension in EU policy
- Strives to involve **Urban Areas** in the design of policy
- Identifying unnecessary obstacles in EU policy - be they at the EU or national level + make **EU policy more urban-friendly** and more effective and efficient
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Scope

achieving Better Regulation, Better Funding and a Better Sharing of Knowledge:

• regulation on all relevant levels of government for practical implementation of potentially conflicting policy goals / not transfer competences to the EU level, nor affect the current distribution of legal competences and existing working and decision-making structures

• Urban Authorities - key beneficiaries of EU funding = improve accessibility and simplification / no new EU funding sources

• enhance the urban policy knowledge base and the exchange of good practice
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What’s New?

CONSOLIDATED MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

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- determines national policies and implement national legislation;
- Urban issues – not in EU acquis, so informal and voluntary cooperation

European Commission
- proposes legislation adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers; enforces European law; set objectives and priorities for action;
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EU Urban Agenda: The Pact of Amsterdam
Priority Themes

Inclusion of migrants and refugees;
Jobs and skills in the local economy;
Urban poverty;
Housing;
Circular economy;
Air quality;
Climate adaptation (including sustainable water solutions);
Energy transition
Sustainable use of land and Nature-Based solutions;
Urban mobility;
Digital transition;
Innovative and responsible public procurement;
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Cross-Cutting Issues

Good urban governance
Governance across administrative boundaries and inter-municipal cooperation: urban-rural, urban-urban and cross-border cooperation
Sound and strategic urban planning
Integrated approach
Innovative approaches
Impact on societal change, including behavioural change
Challenges and opportunities of small- and medium-sized Urban Areas
Urban regeneration
Adaptation to demographic change
Availability and quality of public services of general interest

**International dimension: link with the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III) of the UN, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN and the Paris Agreement on climate change of December 2015**
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Governance of the Agenda

by informal forum > give guidance on the different actions:
ensure that the actions are transparent, conceived with and supported by Urban Authorities, mutually reinforcing and have the most impact on EU-policy making;
report to the Informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters;
monitor progress on the actions of the EU Urban Agenda;
provide feedback on the Action Plans to the Partnerships;
give informal guidelines for future developments of the EU Urban Agenda;
evaluate the current and future set of actions of the EU Urban Agenda at the latest by 2020
EU Urban Agenda: The Pact of Amsterdam Delivery Mechanism

key delivery mechanism = Partnerships
to develop a multilevel and cross-sectoral governance approach
working method of the Partnerships - in the Working Programme of the Agenda
focus + real impact on the ground > Partnerships: bottom-up approach
+ concrete cases which exemplify bottlenecks and potentials

Each Partnership will formulate an Action Plan with concrete proposals for Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Exchange of Knowledge, which can be regarded as contributions to the design of future and the revision of existing EU legislation, instruments and initiatives

input of the Partnerships > after informal guidance > to the European Commission + working program of incoming EU Presidencies
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Roles of the Actors: Member States

**engage relevant bodies** at all levels of government in the implementation and evaluation of EU policy in accordance with the institutional and legal arrangements of MS;

**dialogue with the European Commission** on improving data exchange on Urban Areas at the EU level (urban audit, Covenant of Mayors, EEA initiative on Integrated Urban Monitoring in Europe) > minimise administrative burdens

**improvement of the knowledge base** and the collection of data on urban development issues > minimise administrative burdens

**engage** with Urban Authorities, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the CoR and the EIB improving effective use of financial instruments by Urban Authorities
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Roles of the Actors: Urban Authorities

insights on needs + expertise on how best to tackle the challenges they face

the exchange of good practices in implementation.

involve the knowledge and dissemination capacity of specialist EU Urban networks in the relevant Partnerships

work closely together with the private sector, knowledge institutions and civil society in bringing forward the EU Urban Agenda

take an active role in the EU Urban Agenda and provide the required expertise for all actions within the framework of the EU Urban Agenda.
align its actions on strengthening the urban dimension of EU policy to the Priority Themes

strengthen its coordination of policies directly or indirectly impacting on Urban Areas in a transparent way

support the implementation of the set of actions of the EU Urban Agenda > the work of the Partnerships

consider results and recommendations of the Partnerships drafting and reviewing EU legislation, instruments and initiatives

provide appropriate resources for its implementation within its existing budgets from 1 January 2017

work with Urban Authorities when developing new initiatives and evaluating existing legislation

explore improved assessments of urban impacts, as part of the territorial impact assessments, using available tools and including stronger stakeholder involvement
cooperate with other IFIs in **financing of investments, in blending loan and grant financing for urban investments**, and in advising Member States and cities about urban project preparation and financial instruments

**support the development of better funding approaches** in the urban context through financial instruments

contribute to the work of the Partnerships with regard to **better funding and better knowledge**

**reflect the priority themes** of the EU Urban Agenda in its urban lending, grant-loan blending and advisory services approach in the urban context
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Roles of the Actors: other

European Parliament,
Civil Society,
Knowledge Institutions and
Business
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What role of UN-Habitat?

Partner in policy dialogue (COM + MS)
Linking to global frameworks (SDGs + NUA)
Expanding sharing of knowledge
Monitoring
Networks