

Working Programme of the Urban Agenda for the EU

The Working Programme of the Urban Agenda for the EU describes the Operational Framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU in detail: the working method, concrete actions and the themes of the Urban Agenda for the EU. It supports the Pact of Amsterdam agreed at the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters on 30 May 2016.

The DG meeting on Urban Matters will review the Working Programme and suggest amendments to the Ministers responsible for Urban Matters for approval. A report on the amendments made will be submitted to the General Affairs Council (GAC).

Table of Contents

- A) Governance of the Urban Agenda for the EU**
- B) Initial list of Priority Themes**
- C) Description of actions under the Urban Agenda for the EU**
- D) Working method of the Partnerships**

A) Governance of the Urban Agenda for the EU

In addition to Part III of the Pact about the Operational Framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU, the Working Programme gives a further description of the Governance of the Urban Agenda for the EU:

DG meeting on Urban Matters: The activities of the Urban Agenda for the EU will be coordinated by the DG meeting on Urban Matters. When discussing matters related to the Urban Agenda for the EU, the DG meeting will include Member States, the European Commission, the CoR, CEMR, and EURO CITIES as members in order to reflect the multilevel character of the Urban Agenda for the EU. Partner States, EESC, EP, EIB, URBACT, ESPON and EUKN participate as observers in the DG meeting. Other stakeholders may be invited by the Council Presidency as observers.

When discussing urban issues related to the Urban Agenda for the EU, the DG meeting will be prepared and organised by the EU Member State holding the Council Presidency, who will co-chair the meeting with the Commission.

Urban Development Group: The Urban Development Group (UDG) is an informal advisory body to the DG meeting on Urban Matters. In order to both ascertain the autonomy of the Council Presidency to table its own priorities and ensure the continuity of the Urban Agenda for the EU, the Urban Development Group will have a dual purpose: to discuss urban issues in general at the intergovernmental level and to give advice to the DG meeting about the Urban Agenda for the EU. When deemed necessary, the meeting of the Urban Development Group will be divided in two different parts in line with the abovementioned objectives.

In the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU, the UDG will work both as an advisory and monitoring body for the DG meeting.

When discussing matters related to the Urban Agenda for the EU, the Urban Development Group will include relevant representatives from Member States (urban national experts), the European Commission, the European Parliament, the EU Advisory bodies (CoR, EESC), EIB, representatives of Urban Authorities (CEMR, EURO CITIES), in order to reflect the multilevel character of the Urban Agenda

for the EU. Partner States, URBACT, ESPON and EUKN participate as observers in the Urban Development Group. Other stakeholders may be invited by the Council Presidency as observers.

When discussing urban issues related to the Urban Agenda for the EU, the Urban Development Group will be prepared and organised by the Council Presidency, who will co-chair the meeting with the Commission.

Guidance: The DG meeting will provide non-binding guidance to the actions of the Urban Agenda for the EU upon advice of the Urban Development Group. This informal guidance is formed by consensus.

B) Initial list of Priority Themes

The list was established based on a survey among Member States and representatives of urban and regional authorities in July 2015 organised by the Netherlands and under consideration of the Commission Staff Working document ("Results of the Public Consultation on the key features of an Urban Agenda for the EU, SWD(2015) 109 final/2), published on 27 May 2015 as well as the results of three thematic workshops on this matter (organised by the European Commission in September 2015). The Priority Themes are in line with the intergovernmental documents mentioned in the annex.

The list was presented to the DG meeting on Urban Matters in Luxembourg in October 2015 and agreed with in principle.

The themes were selected based on the following selection criteria:

- Themes must require integrated action at the EU-level and multi-level cooperation.
- Clear support of Member States, European Commission and Urban Authorities.
- Themes address the major challenges in Urban Areas.
- Themes have the potential to generate concrete results in a reasonable timeframe.
- Themes which promote the EU 2020 objectives.

This list may be reviewed by the DG meeting by consensus and will be revised by the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters. The DG meeting will review the list of themes yearly and provide guidance. Any member of the DG meeting can submit a detailed advisory proposal for a revision of the list based on the abovementioned criteria. In all cases the work of each Partnership will be focused on measures to make better use of existing EU regulations and funding in relation to Urban Areas and to showcase and share best practice, knowledge and evidence of what works. Partnerships will not generate actions which result in new EU regulations and new or increased funding.

The following introductions of the initial list of Priority Themes (in no particular order) are for illustrative and discussion purposes only. The descriptions will not in any way restrict future work or place limitations on future partnerships.

1. Inclusion of migrants and refugees;

The objectives are to manage integration of incoming migrants and refugees (extra-EU) and to provide a framework for their inclusion based on willingness and integration capacity of local communities. This will cover: housing, cultural integration, provision of public services, social inclusion, education and labour market measures, chances of second-third generations, spatial segregation.

2. Air quality;

The objective is to realise systems and policies to ensure a good air quality for human health. This will cover: legislative and technical aspects linked to a wide range of polluting sources such as cars, industries, agricultural activities, etc.

3. Urban poverty:

The objectives are to reduce poverty and improve the inclusion of people in poverty or at risk of poverty in deprived neighbourhoods. Urban poverty refers to issues related to structural concentration of poverty in deprived neighbourhoods and solutions that need to be designed and applied with integrated approach:

- *Place-based solutions*: urban regeneration of deprived neighbourhood;
- *People-based solutions*: socio-economic integration of people living in neighbourhoods.

The focus will be on: spatial concentration of structural poverty in deprived neighbourhoods (and regeneration of these areas) and child poverty.

4. Housing:

The objectives are to have affordable housing of good quality. The focus will be on public affordable housing, state aid rules and general housing policy.

5. Circular economy:

The objective is to increase the re-use, repair, refurbishment and recycling of existing materials and products to promote new growth and job opportunities. For instance, additional measures to increase resource productivity by 30% by 2030 could boost GDP by nearly 1%, while creating 2 million additional jobs. The focus will be on: waste management (turn a waste into a resource), sharing economy, resource efficiency.

6. Jobs and skills in the local economy:

The objectives are prosperity and low unemployment. The focus will be on: (a) attracting and keeping enterprises; (b) creating new enterprises; (c) producing and consuming locally; (d) supporting new ways of working; and (e) ensuring that skills meet the needs.

7. Climate adaptation (including green infrastructure solutions):

The objectives are to anticipate the adverse effects of climate change and take appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage it can cause to Urban Areas. The focus will be on: vulnerability assessments, climate resilience and risk management (including the social dimension of climate adaptation strategies).

8. Energy transition:

The objectives are to have a long-term structural change in energy systems i.e. shift to renewable energy and energy efficiency. The focus will be on: improving energy efficiency (also in buildings), fostering innovative approaches for energy supply (e.g. local systems) and increasing the local production of renewable energy.

9. Sustainable use of land and Nature-Based solutions:

The objective is to ensure that the changes in Urban Areas (growing, shrinking and regeneration) are respectful of the environment, improving quality of life. The focus will be on: urban sprawl, development of brownfields and on renaturing / greening Urban Areas.

10. Urban mobility:

The objectives are to have a sustainable and efficient urban mobility. The focus will be on: public transport, soft mobility (walking, cycling, public space) and accessibility (for disabled, elderly, young children, etc.) and an efficient transport with good internal (local) and external (regional) connectivity.

11. Digital transition:

The objective is to provide better public services to citizens and create business opportunities. The focus will be on: data collection (including ownership), better use of open data, data management (including the capacity of citizens, Urban Authorities and privacy issues) and digital services (incl. new technologies) and accessibility of digital public services to disabled and elderly citizens (in accordance with international WCAG 2.0 standards).

12. Innovative and responsible public procurement:

The objective is to use this powerful tool to address social and environmental objectives and to do more with less. This will cover innovative approaches in procurement.

C) Description of actions under the Urban Agenda for the EU

The Urban Agenda for the EU will be implemented through a coherent set of actions. Under paragraph 15 in the Pact of Amsterdam four categories of actions are mentioned: Themes, Vertical and Horizontal Coordination, Impact Assessments and Knowledge. The different concrete actions under these four categories, aimed at improving the urban dimension of EU-policies, are the following:

1. Partnerships (see section B).
2. In line with the Commission Staff Working Document¹, improvement of the coordination by the European Commission of existing instruments and initiatives by:
 - a. Mapping the urban related Commission initiatives in the selected Themes of the Urban Agenda for the EU with a view to identifying gaps, overlaps and synergies;
 - b. Identifying the main actors, networks and platforms within the selected themes with a view to streamlining cooperation and exchange of good practice.
3. It will be explored, when assessing territorial impacts, if better methods as well as specific tools can be used on issues relevant for Urban Authorities by taking the possible impact of EU legislation on Urban Areas into account more, both in EU policy making and the legislative process.
4. Alignment of the Urban Innovative Actions with the selected Themes for the Urban Agenda for the EU by the European Commission.
5. Contribution of URBACT to the Priority Themes with its activities of exchange and learning through transnational networking, capacity building, capitalisation & dissemination of urban knowledge and know-how.
6. Alignment of the work of the Urban Development Network (UDN) of the European Commission to the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU by the European Commission.
7. The scientific work and solutions developed by the Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe in the area of research and innovation will be used to promote and exchange evidence based proposals for urban policy and urban projects.
8. Contribution of specific research activities of the European Observation Network, Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) to the selected Themes, where deemed relevant.
9. Organisation by the Presidency of the Council of the EU of the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers for Urban Matters about the progress of the Urban Agenda for the EU, to be held preferably at least once during every Trio Presidency, with the participation of the Commission, the European Parliament, European Advisory Bodies, EIB, representatives of Urban Authorities and relevant stakeholders.
10. Continuation of the organisation of a biennial CITIES Forum by the European Commission to debate and report progress on the Urban Agenda for the EU to a wider audience.
11. Development of appropriate tools and formats to implement a transparent, inclusive and effective implementation of the EUUA.

The set of actions can be reviewed by the DG meeting. The Ministers responsible for Urban Matters will revise the set of actions.

D) Working method of the Partnerships

I ORGANISATION

1. Membership: Each Partnership is made up of Urban Authorities (cities), the European Commission, EU organisations (EIB, EESC, CoR), Member States, Partner States, experts,

¹ Commission Staff Working Document, 27 June 2015 (SWD(2015) 109 final/2)

umbrella organisations (e.g. EUROCITIES, CEMR), knowledge organisations (e.g. URBACT, ESPON, EUKN) and stakeholders (NGOs, business, etc.). Participation is voluntary and open to all those interested, committed² and ready to dedicate resources, taking into account the need for balanced composition indicated below. It is important that all members of the Partnership have extensive experience and expertise on the topic.

Advisable composition of the Partnership: a partnership is composed of about 15 to 20 partners (balanced composition³).

Partners representing Urban Authorities

- a. Five Urban Authorities to be nominated by the following parties:
 - i. Member States, URBACT (upon approval of the Monitoring Committee) and the Committee of the Regions can propose Urban Authorities for nomination to the DG meeting, which will select up to three Urban Authorities.
 - ii. EUROCITIES and CEMR can propose Urban Authorities for nomination to the DG meeting, which will select up to two Urban Authorities. In order to facilitate transparency and balanced representation in the nomination process, nominations of Urban Authorities for the partnerships will be presented by EUROCITIES and CEMR to the DG meeting before becoming final (if deemed necessary through a written procedure).
 - iii. If insufficient Urban Authorities are nominated, the Coordinator of the Partnership may propose Urban Authorities for nomination to the DG meeting, after consulting with other partners, (if necessary through a written procedure).
- b. EUROCITIES and CEMR may each nominate one representative of the secretariat of their own organisation.

Partners representing Member States

- c. Five Member States to be agreed upon by the DG meeting on Urban Matters.⁴

Partners representing the European Commission

- d. Commission representatives of the relevant DGs (number of representatives depends on number of DGs which need to be involved on the specific theme).

Partners representing stakeholders

- e. The coordinators of the Partnership may propose others for nomination to the DG meeting⁵ such as:
 - I. Managing Authorities of ESIF;
 - II. EIB;
 - III. Experts (e.g., Universities etc.);
 - IV. NGOs/ economic and social partners (at European level) notably the EESC/ civil society organisations;
 - V. Private sector representatives.

Observers

- f. In addition, the Partnership may include some observers (e.g. URBACT, EUKN).

² commitment refers to endorsement, active involvement and leadership by people in positions of authority

³ Balanced geographically and between Commission, Member States, Urban Areas and other stakeholders. With regards to the Urban Areas, there should be a representation of both 'bigger' and 'small and medium' cities.

⁴ It should not be the members of the UDG, but persons from the Member State with expertise in the Priority Theme and sufficient authority to take decisions (typically someone from a Ministry which is in charge of the theme concerned).

Regions, Partner States, city consortiums or national city umbrella organisations can also be nominated instead of an Urban Authority as partner in the partnership through any of the routes set out above under 1.a.

If a Partnership is not complete at the start, during their first meeting, partners will decide on how to proceed on finding the additional partners. This could also be the case if members of the Partnership fail to contribute actively to the work.

Duration: The timeframe of each Partnership to achieve results is about three years. After these three years, the Partnership will present its results to the DG meeting. Thematic Partnerships may then be terminated or continued, if deemed necessary and on decision by the partners. The DG meeting shall be informed about any institutional changes in their Partnership.

2. New Partnerships:

Proposals for new Partnerships have to be presented to the UDG. The UDG will then advise the DG meeting about the proposals for new Partnerships. The DG meeting will decide on which theme a Partnership will start and when deemed necessary by the DG meeting the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Matters will decide on this.

3. Coordinators:

A Partnership will choose one or two of its members as coordinator(s), immediately after its establishment. The coordinator(s) will chair the meetings of the Partnership. Coordinators are the key actors to make the Urban Agenda for the EU operational. They are the main point of contact for members of the Partnership and other interested Urban Authorities, the Commission and Member States. Partnerships may ask the Commission to facilitate the process, among others concerning the coordination between Partnerships, and to provide assistance for Secretariat duties and for expertise at EU level. The coordinators are expected to cover the cost of their work.

Responsibilities of the Coordinators:

- a. Organising the Partnership meetings: preparing the agenda, sending the invitations, providing the meeting rooms (in their Ministry, City Hall, etc.), inviting (external) speakers where appropriate, drafting the minutes, etc.;
- b. Chairing the Partnership meetings;
- c. Organising the work between Partnership meetings (e.g. written consultation, asking for contributions, preparing documents, etc.);
- d. Being the link between the Partnership and the Urban Authorities, the Commission and Member States, including the UDG and DG meetings, (including drafting a concise annual report) as well as a wider range of interested parties such as Urban Authorities, Member States not involved in the specific partnership and other stakeholders (in particular inform on the progress and offer the possibility to contribute e.g. through consultations, e-mails, updates, conferences, etc.);
- e. Cooperation with the other Partnerships, when deemed of added value;
- f. Participating and contributing to other working groups/ networks;
- g. Coordinating the drafting of the Action Plan;
- h. Monitoring and reporting on progress (through inter alia the website (see chapter III, paragraph 2 of the Working Programme));
- i. Coordinating the work (e.g. ensuring that the contributions are prepared on time and at a good quality, mediating if there are different positions with a view to arriving at an acceptable position, etc.);
- j. Coordinating the communication on actions and results (visibility);

- k. Responsible for transmitting results from the Partnership to the DG meeting.

4. The Role of Partners:

The partners in a Partnership have specific roles and responsibilities:

- a. Contribute to the implementation of different actions of the Action Plan;
- b. Participate in the technical work of the Partnership with own resources;
- c. Contribute to the Partnership through their own individual expertise but also the wider knowledge of the organisation they represent;
- d. Assist in the debate about the Partnership within their territory.

II PHASES & DELIVERABLES

Step n°1- Stocktaking

In the first step, the members of the Partnership would identify the existing work carried out on the Priority Theme (strategies, actions and working groups/ networks covering these issues at EU level). As the aim is to avoid duplication but rather ensure coordination and reinforce what is already being done, this step is crucial to decide how to move forward in building the Partnership (for example: adjust the topic of the Priority Theme and assessing the relevance of main cross-cutting aspects (as mentioned under C.1); limit the scope of the Partnership; organise active participation to existing strategies, actions and working groups/ networks to ensure that the urban dimension of all Member States is taken into account; etc.). In this stocktaking step, the members of the Partnerships would also identify the sources of funding and expertise which could be made available for the functioning of the Partnership. The Commission will contribute by providing the stocktaking at EU level.

Step n°2- Preparatory actions (Identifying bottlenecks and potentials)

In the second step, the members of the Partnership would identify the bottlenecks and the potentials to identify the areas on which the Action Plan should focus. This will require in depth-research and analytical work. These could be at EU, national or local level. It would lead to a list of preparatory actions that are needed to define the final actions. The Partnership will take into account and respect the available data from Member States whose representatives are not included in the Partnership.

Step n°3- Define the objectives and deliverables

In the third step, the members of the Partnership would agree on a set of actions that address the issues of the Priority Theme (Action Plan). The proposed actions need to respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. This should ideally be done in the first 6-12 months of the Partnership. A model Action Plan is available for each Partnership and should include:

- a) Actions which could be, for example:
 - a. Developing a proposal for better use of or adaptation of existing EU legislation and funding instruments;
 - b. Implementing a research project to find possible solutions and/or fill EU wide knowledge gaps.
- b) Roadmap of each action indicating deliverables, target dates and the responsible organisation (e.g. Commission, participating Member States, Urban Authorities, etc.).
- c) If appropriate, indicators and targets could be set (but only if there is a direct link between the Action Plan and the target).

Step n°4- Implementation of the Action Plan

In the fourth step, the members of the Partnership should coordinate the work (aimed at Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge) on the implementation of the Action Plan with partners of the partnership and other interested parties i.e. other Member States, Urban Authorities and existing Urban Networks concerned, etc. (once the Action Plan has been designed and agreed). It is important that the members of the Partnerships develop links with the relevant authorities/ organisations/ enterprises/stakeholders and work in full transparency.

Step n°5- Evaluation of the Partnership

The DG meeting will coordinate the evaluation of the work of the Partnership after three years or earlier if deemed necessary by the DG meeting. Its outcomes should be presented to the DG meeting. The evaluation will provide input for other existing and new Partnerships and should, if appropriate, contain general suggestions for further exploration.

III PRACTICALITIES

1. **Meetings & Gatherings**: Each Partnership will decide how often it convenes. During the stocktaking phase, the Partnership may meet once every two months. In other stages, the Partnership could meet at least every six months to debate progress on the Action Plan. Meetings should preferably be held back to back with other meetings or events (for example a thematic event organised by one of the working groups of EURO CITIES) in order to generate synergies with other initiatives and to inform a broad public on the state of play of the partnership.

Additionally, once a year, the Commission intends to organise a meeting with all the Coordinators to discuss the progress of the work, identify synergies between Partnerships and raise organisational issues which the Commission and Member States could facilitate.

Also, the Commission intends to facilitate a yearly gathering where all partners of the Partnerships and others interested in the Urban Agenda for the EU will meet to exchange views and to network.

2. **Website**: A website has been created (www.urbanagenda.nl) where general information on the Urban Agenda for the EU can be found as well as information on each Partnership, such as participating partners, working documents, gatherings, outcomes of actions, news, dates of meetings, etc. The website will create an opportunity for other interested stakeholders to provide an input to the ongoing work of partnership or the Action Plans, as well as express their willingness to join / contribute to the Partnership. The coordinators are responsible for updating the website. It is imperative that each Partnership keeps this website up to date to guarantee transparency.
3. **Monitoring and reporting of progress**: The partnerships will monitor the progress of their work and submit a concise annual progress report to the UDG. On this basis, a concise annual summary report about the progress of the partnerships shall be drawn up by the UDG (to be coordinated by the rotating EU presidency in cooperation with the European Commission). After approval by the DG meeting, the Presidency, based on the outcome of the DG meeting will inform the Ministers responsible for Urban Matters, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Union's Advisory Bodies (CoR, EESC) about the progress of the Urban Agenda for the EU.
4. **Financial support for the Partnerships**: In 2016 the Netherlands has financially supported the first four (pilot) Partnerships: Air Quality, Housing, Urban Poverty and Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees.

To give an initial impulse to the first pilot Partnerships the Netherlands reserved € 50.000,- for each of the four pilot Partnerships to support their work (for example hiring of experts, conducting research a.o.). Even though travel and accommodation costs should be at the expense of each partner itself (i.e. participation should be seen as their normal tasks and is a condition for a real commitment to do some work), the pilot Partnerships revealed that some partners find it difficult to participate without financial reimbursement. If needed, the supporting budget can be used to (partly) reimburse partners.

In the Pact of Amsterdam the Member States call upon the European Commission to provide basic technical assistance to the Partnerships from 1 January 2017 onwards

Some actions in the Action Plan may require funding. Therefore, it is important that the members of the Partnerships decide on their funding sources and maintain close links with the Funding Authorities and financing institutions (banks, public authorities, EIB, Managing Authorities of ESIF etc.) and keep a close eye on relevant EU calls for projects such as under the Urban Innovative Actions, HORIZON, COSME, LIFE etc. If actions in the Action Plan require funding, the way of funding should be described in the Action Plan.