



# **Recent European Experiences on Urban Sustainability Strategies**

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## **PREMISES**

**URBAN DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTS A COMPLEX AND CHALLENGING PROBLEM COMMON TO ALL MODERN CITIES, BUT DIFFERENT FROM MEGALOPOLIS AND METROPOLITAN AREAS TO MEDIUM-SMALL ONES.**

**IN LARGE SCALE URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PHENOMENA AND REASONS ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CONTROL, DEPENDING WIDELY ON EXTERNAL OR MACRO DIVERSE FACTORS THAT WOULD REQUIRE GLOBAL INTERVENTION STRATEGIES.**

**ARE THE MEDIUM -SMALL URBAN SETTLEMENTS THAT CHARACTERIZE MANY EUROPEAN REGIONS AND REPRESENT A DURABLE LONG TIME ESTABLISHED MODEL, HAVE BEEN INSTEAD EVOLVING IN A MORE GOVERNABLE PATTERN THAT CAN STILL BE BETTER REGULATED AND INTERVENED.**

## **PREMISES**

**THE EXPERIENCES CARRIED OUT IN THE PAST DECADES IN MANY UE MEMBER STATES HAS BEEN SURELY SUCCESSFUL TO EASE THE MOST EVIDENT CONSTRAINTS, BUT OFTEN THROUGH SECTORIAL ACTIONS.**

**IN THE LAST YEARS HAS BEEN ARISING THE AWARENESS OF A CLOSE INTERACTION AMONG SEVERAL FACTORS AND PHISICAL SITUATIONS, PLUS THE NEED TO PROCEED JOINTLY IN THE SOCIAL AND URBAN PLANNING ACTIONS.**

**WORLDWIDE EXAMPLES SHOWED UNEFFICIENT IF ORIENTED ONLY TO THE URBAN REHABILITATION AND RENOVATION IF NOT ACCOMPANIED BY AN INTENSE CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL UPGRADING OF RESIDENTS.**

**SIMILARLY A SOCIAL ACTION IS NOT FULLY SUCCESFULL IF IS NOT CARRIED OUT AT THE SAME TIME A GENERAL MATERIAL UPGRADING OF THE MATERIAL PATRIMONY AND PUBLIC SPACES.**



## **U.E. GUIDELINES**

**FOCUS OF UE PROGRAMS, STUDIES AND ACTIONS HAS BEEN ORIENTED ON SOME MAIN IDENTIFIED SECTORS THAT FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF URBAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SOME MATERIAL SOME INMATERIAL.**

**COMPLEXITY OF ACTUAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING AND MANAGEMENT REQUIRE NEW PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND INTEGRATED ROLES, BOTH WITHIN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS AND THE PRIVATE ACTORS.**

**DEFINITION OF UPDATED STRATEGIES, INTERVENTION POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS IS REQUIRED BY EVERY URBAN SITUATION, THEY MUST ADAPT TO LOCAL SITUATIONS, BUT COMMON APPROACH AND METHODOLOGIES ARE POSSIBLE IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT.**

**SHARED OBJECTIVES, TEAM WORKING AND EXCHANGE ALLOW A PRACTICAL GROWTH OF CAPABILITIES IN ANALYSING AND FACING THE NEW URBAN CHALLENGES.**

## **U.E. GUIDELINES**

**URBAN PATRIMONY REHABILITATION AND RESIDENTIAL RE-USE ARE NECESSARY FOR THE MAINTANANCE OF THE DIVERSIFICATION OF SOCIAL CLASSES IN HISTORIC CITY CENTERS AND TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS.**

**THE UPGRADING OF PUBLIC SPACES, THE PROXIMITY OF SERVICES AND WORK-PLACES IS ALSO FUNDAMENTAL TO RETAIN INHABITANTS AND FUNCTIONS TRADITIONALLY SETTLED.**

**URBAN TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY INCREASE FREEDOM OF THE CITIZENS TO LIVE AND USE THE DIFFERENT POLES OF THE CITY AND THE EXTERNAL ACCESSIBILITY ENSURES THE INTEGRATION AND EXCHANGE WITH THE SURROUNDING PRODUCTIVE OR RURAL AREAS**

**LOGISTICS ARE THE NEW NECESSARY TOOL THAT FACILITATE COMMERCIAL AND COMPATIBLE PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES REMAIN IN THE URBAN CONTEXT AND PARTICIPATE TO A INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT**



## **INTERVENTION TOOLS**

**THE ITC TECHNOLOGIES ARE A USEFUL TOOL TO HELP DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ACTIVITIES AND INMATERIAL SERVICES WITHIN THE URBAN CENTRES, CONTINUING THEIR ROLE AND FUNCTION AS COVERED TILL NOW.**

**THIS PRESENCE OF PRIVATE PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES AND A WIDE RANGE OF PUBLIC SERVICES IS ONE OF THE MAIN FACTORS OF QUALIFICATION OF THE CITYCENTRES OR NEIGHBORHOODS.**

**THE MIX-UP OF ACTIVITIES AND RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL CLASSES IS NECESSARY TO AVOID THE ACTUAL PROGRESSIVE DOWNGRADING AND EMARGINATION PROCESSES OF ENTIRE URBAN AREAS, AND THE PUBLIC POLICIES MUST BE ORIENTED TO THIS AIM, IN COOPERATION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.**

**THE RENEWAL - RENOVATION INSTEAD OF DEMOLITION OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PATRIMONY REPRESENTS SURELY A DIRECT COST, BUT GENERAL ADVANTAGES IN TERMS OF SOCIAL COHESION ARE EVIDENT.**

## **CONDITIONS**

**THE FIRST CONDITION AND STEP, FOLLOWING EXPERIENCE, TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL RESULTS IS THE CITIZENS PARTICIPATION AND CONSENSUS ON THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS; THIS NEED LONG TIME AND ADEQUATE SKILLS OF SOCIAL AGENTS.**

**THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL ACTORS, FREE OR FORCED, TO THE DEFINITION OF COMPLEX PROGRAMS AS REQUIRED BY URBAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS FUNDAMENTAL .**

**THE PERMANENT INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION AMONG ALL ACTORS INVOLVED IS ALSO BASIC TO ENSURE THE PLANNED RESULTS, FIRST OF ALL BETWEEN CITIZENS/USERS AND PUBLIC AUTHORITY.**

**THE CREATION OF ADEQUATE AND SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES, CAPABLE TO DEFINE, IMPLEMENT, AND FOLLOW-UP THE ENTIRE PROCESS IS ALSO A CONDITION FOR A DURABLE SUCCESS.**



## **MAIN AIMS**

**ENHANCE FEELING OF BELONGING / PARTICIPATION TO A SPECIFIC CITY OR NEIGHBORHOOD IS SURELY ONE OF THE AIMS TO BE ACHIEVED WITH ALL TYPE OF INTERVENTIONS, AS STRENGTH FACTOR TO IMPROVE SOCIAL COHESION AND IDENTITY .**

**PRESERVE SMALL CITIES OR «QUARTIER» LIFESTYLE TO FACILITATE DAILY CONTACTS AND REDUCE EMARGINATION RISKS FOR SOME CATEGORIES AS ELDERS, THE MIXTURE WITH MIGRANTS REDUCES RISKS OF ETHNIC GHETTOS, AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES ARE NECESSARY TO THE SOCIAL INSERTION OF THE YOUNG.**

**REDUCE CONSIDERABLY PRIVATE TRAFFIC USE NOT ONLY FOR POLLUTION OR ECONOMIC FACTORS, BUT ALSO AS NEGATIVE AGAINST THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS THAT HAVE ALSO A SOCIAL MEAN.**

**CONTRAST THE LACK OF ADEQUATE AND QUALIFIED PUBLIC SPACES OR MEETING POINTS ALSO REPRESENT A SERIOUS HANDICAP TO SOCIALIZE ( OLD « PIAZZA » MODEL IS STILL VALID).**





## **STRUCTURAL ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF URBAN ISSUES**

The majority of European citizens live in urban areas. Cities are centres of economic growth, but can at the same time face concentrations of social, environmental and economic problems. The Community Initiatives is an instrument within EU Cohesion Policy, dedicated to the regeneration of urban areas and neighbourhoods in crisis.

The Community Initiatives are special financial instruments of Structural Funds which the Commission proposes to Member States on its own initiative to help solve problems having a particular impact at European level and are used to consolidate the experiences and innovative approaches pioneered by **Pilot Projects**. (in the 90)

The **URBAN** Community Initiative has been a particularly successful example of this process and is a consolidation of the experience gained through the previous **Urban Pilot Projects (UPPs)**.

Similarly, due also to experience of the URBAN Initiative, **was given a special focus on urban development in the proposed Structural Funds regulations for the period 2000-2006.**



## URBAN PILOT PROJECTS

A funding of EUR 164 million between 1989 and 1999 helped to support **59 Urban Pilot Projects (UPPs)** under the innovative actions of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). These projects promoted urban innovation and experimentation in economic, social and environmental matters on a smaller scale than URBAN, but have produced encouraging results, particularly as regards participative, integrated approaches to **urban regeneration**.

During the period 1990 to 1993, a total of **33 Urban Pilot Projects** were initiated in 11 Member States. This first phase addressed a wide range of urban problems, more often than not through a comprehensive and integrated local strategy aimed at maximizing physical impact and generating public and private investment. Problems addressed include: social and economic deprivation; poor land use planning; neglected historic centers; poor links between research and development activities and small and medium-sized enterprises; and derelict industrial wastelands

The problem areas are not treated as isolated units. By improving accessibility, enhancing communication, and attracting visitors and private investment, programmes



## URBAN I

Four years on from their initial launch in 1994, programmes funded under the **URBAN Community Initiative** reached significant results from integrated approach that took account of all dimensions of urban life.

It applied a package of projects that combine the rehabilitation of obsolete infrastructure with economic and labour market actions. These were complemented by measures to combat the social exclusion inherent in run-down neighbourhoods, and actions to upgrade the quality of the environment.

Each of the **118 projects** funded under the URBAN Initiative has been drawn up in its own local context and reflects the specific problems characteristic of the neighbourhood.

90 % of the projects were located in cities with a population of more than 100,000. The other 10% are accounted for by smaller towns in countries where there are few urban areas over this size.

An analysis of the target areas according to their location characteristics shows that one fifth of projects addressed **problems of historic city centers as the central areas with heritage and cultural value**, but that had been abandoned and left to decline.



## **URBAN II**

**This Urban II Community Initiative presents distinct added value for intervention under priority Objective programmes by supporting the formulation and implementation of especially innovative strategies for sustainable economic and social regeneration in a significant number of urban areas throughout Europe. URBAN II also provides a link between small-scale innovative approaches and the adoption of an integrated participatory approach in the main ERDF programmes.**

**Within this context, Urban II has the following objectives :**

- to promote the design and implementation of highly innovative strategies of economic and social regeneration in small and medium-sized towns and declining areas in major conurbations;**
- to reinforce and share knowledge and experience on regeneration and sustainable urban development**



## URBAN II

**Represents the following Community Initiative of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for sustainable development in the troubled urban districts of the European Union for the period 2000-06.**

**The second round of URBAN consists of 70 Programmes** across the EU, covering some 2.2 million inhabitants and those areas that often faced severe deprivation and specific challenges. For example, the average unemployment and crime rates are both around twice the EU average, in addition, the proportion of immigrants is more than twice of other EU urban areas, finally the proportion of green spaces - an indicator of environment and amenity - is only half the EU urban average.

**Between 2001 and 2006, the European Union invested more than € 728 million of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) money in these areas. Adding local and national cofinancing, including the private sector, this meant a total investment of € 1.6 billion.**





## URBACT

**URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme (\*) promoting sustainable urban development.**

**Enables CITIES to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes.**

**Helps cites to develop pragmatic SOLUTIONS that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions.**

**Enables cities to SHARE good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe.**

**URBACT involves 44 projects 700 cities 29 countries 5000 participants.**  
**among them is as example HerO - Heritage as Opportunity**

**URBACT is jointly financed by the European Union through the ERDF and the Member States with 68.890.739 €**

**(\*) This European programme is part of Europe's cohesion policy: its goal is to help implement the Lisbon –Gothenburg Strategy, which prioritizes competitiveness, growth and employment, risk prevention, patrimony and environment protection.**



## URBACT

To date, **8 thematic areas** have been identified under 3 Thematic Poles, which assemble URBACT projects that are working on similar or complementary projects. These 8 areas of expertise reflect the work being done by active projects, among them we underline:

- **CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CITY DEVELOPMENT**

As the projects advance in the implementation of their work programmes and as new projects are added in following calls for proposals, the configuration of the areas of expertise and the projects linked to them could change.

The thematic areas are not treated as isolated units. By improving accessibility, enhancing communication, and attracting visitors and private investment, programmes explicitly aim to integrate each target into the rest of the city life. The ultimate goal is to establish a local development dynamic that will enable the city to organically assimilate the "problem" areas and assure further growth.



## INTERREG PROGRAMME

This programme is another important tool implemented since 20 years by the EU to facilitate and improve the cooperation and know-how exchange among the regions of all members states in several fields and areas.

The Interreg Community Initiative, which was adopted in 1990, was intended to prepare border areas for a Community without internal frontiers. The aim of the Regen Initiative launched in the same year was to help fill in some of the missing links in the trans-European networks for transport and energy distribution in the Objective 1 regions.

**Interreg II (1994-1999)** combined the functions of Interreg I and Regen. It had three distinct strands with a total budget allocation of ECU 3,519 million in 1996. Strand C concerned “transnational” cooperation over broader areas, as well as in terms of its objective, involving the territory more deeply and specifically on questions of **regional, spatial and urban planning**; was financed from Community funds with around actual €413 and generated together 259 projects.

## INTERREG III

The INTERREG IIIC programme was one of the three strands of the European Community Initiative INTERREG III and was financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as part of the Structural Funds, and co-financed by national project partners. The application period was 2002-2006 and helped to develop about **270 projects** of interregional cooperation with more than 2600 UE institutions.

INTERREG IIIC supported five topics closely related to the implementation of EU regional policy through exchange of experience and networking, among them :

- **URBAN DEVELOPMENT (REPRESENTING THE 21%)**

In addition to actions supported under the URBAN Initiative and the mainstream objective programmes, **this category of operations focused on wider co-operation actions related to urban development issues. This topic was open to all cities and urban areas, including small and medium-sized towns.**



## **INTERREG III**

**This community initiative was divided in 3 strands: cross border cooperation, transnational cooperation and inter regional cooperation with the aim to work together on common projects. By sharing knowledge and experience, these partnerships enable the regions involved to develop new solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges.**

**With a total of 268 approved operations, INTERREG IIIC involved:**

- **more than 2650 partners**
- **more than 190 regions**
- **from 50 participating countries**

**The INTERREG III C strand has funded more than 330 interregional subprojects with:**

- **€ 500 Million – Total eligible budget**
- **€ 300 Million – Total ERDF budget allocated to operations**
- **€ 190 Million – National Co-financing**



## INTERREG IV

The INTERREG IVC programme is part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Fund policies for the period 2007-2013 and is divided into two thematic priorities related to the EU strategy for growth and **sustainable development** known as the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies

The IV edition of this programme is financed with 302 million € is focused in 2 priorities and 8 sub-themes, and strictly related related to urban sustainable development policies are included in :

Priority 2 - Environment and Risk Prevention

- **Energy and Sustainable Transport**
- **Cultural Heritage and Landscape**

As a capitalisation programme, INTERREG IVC contributes to building on the good practices developed under the different regional development policies. Therefore keeps a direct link with the other UE cooperation programmes.



## **URB-AL**

The objective of the **Urb-Al** programme of the European Union, is to develop networks of decentralised cooperation between local authorities on concrete topics and **problems of urban local development**.

Launched in 1995, Urb-Al has already brought together more than **680 local authorities** around projects affecting topics as various as drug, environment, citizen participation, poverty alleviation, transport, safety, town planning, economic development, the information society or democracy.

Urb-Al strengthened the relations between the members of the European Union and the 18 Latin America countries by encouraging direct experience exchange between territorial representatives and technicians of both continents.

During the last 10 years 13 thematic networks coordinate more than 2500 local authorities, associations, NGOs, trade unions, universities and private companies.

More than **180 projects emerged** for a total amount of about 50 mill. €. and now the IV edition finances 12 programmes with 25 mill. €.

## ASIA-URBS

The Asia Urbs Programme was launched by the European Union in 1998/2005 as an initiative in decentralised, (in this case, city-to-city) co-operation, to bring together local governments from the Member States and selected countries in Asia.

Its main aim is to support the **sharing of know-how in urban development** between the two regions and to translate this into practical action involving local governments and their civil society partners. Each co-funded project relies on community participation for its success and sustainability.

Grants are awarded to partnerships, formed by at least two local governments from the EU and at least one in Asia, to jointly undertake studies and/or two-year pilot projects addressing key urban areas. Additional funding in 2003 brought the total programme budget for project funding to €32 million.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the brief overlook on the mentioned main programmes implemented by the as : UPP, URBAN, URBACT, INTERREG, URBACL, ASIA-URBS, that are those focused mostly on urban development and heritage preservation, not considering those belonging to the CULTURE programmes and topics, is emerging the great interest and attention for this sector devoted by the EU and partner countries authorities since over 20 years.

This attention is constantly rising at every level from the UE to the local one and the relevant fundings put at disposal by both the UE programs and national authorities are a clear indicator of the awareness that urban areas and its historic centers and heritage preservation represent one of the main strategies in the last years.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The long term European experience in this field, that as mentioned has been also exported and assisted in other continents, and the successful results achieved in a great number of cities and urban areas with very different context, confirm the objectives of CIVVIH-ICOMOS for the preservation and sustainable re-use of the historic cities and villages.**

**The last global crisis is rising the need to enhance and implement the existing patrimony, to reduce the new land use for edifications, to preserve natural environment and reduce energy consumption.**

**We could therefore to give a qualified contribute to this general and strategic action with a more active participation in the UE and other international programmes and agencies that are related to the CIVVIH specific mission.**





**Thank you for the attention**

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