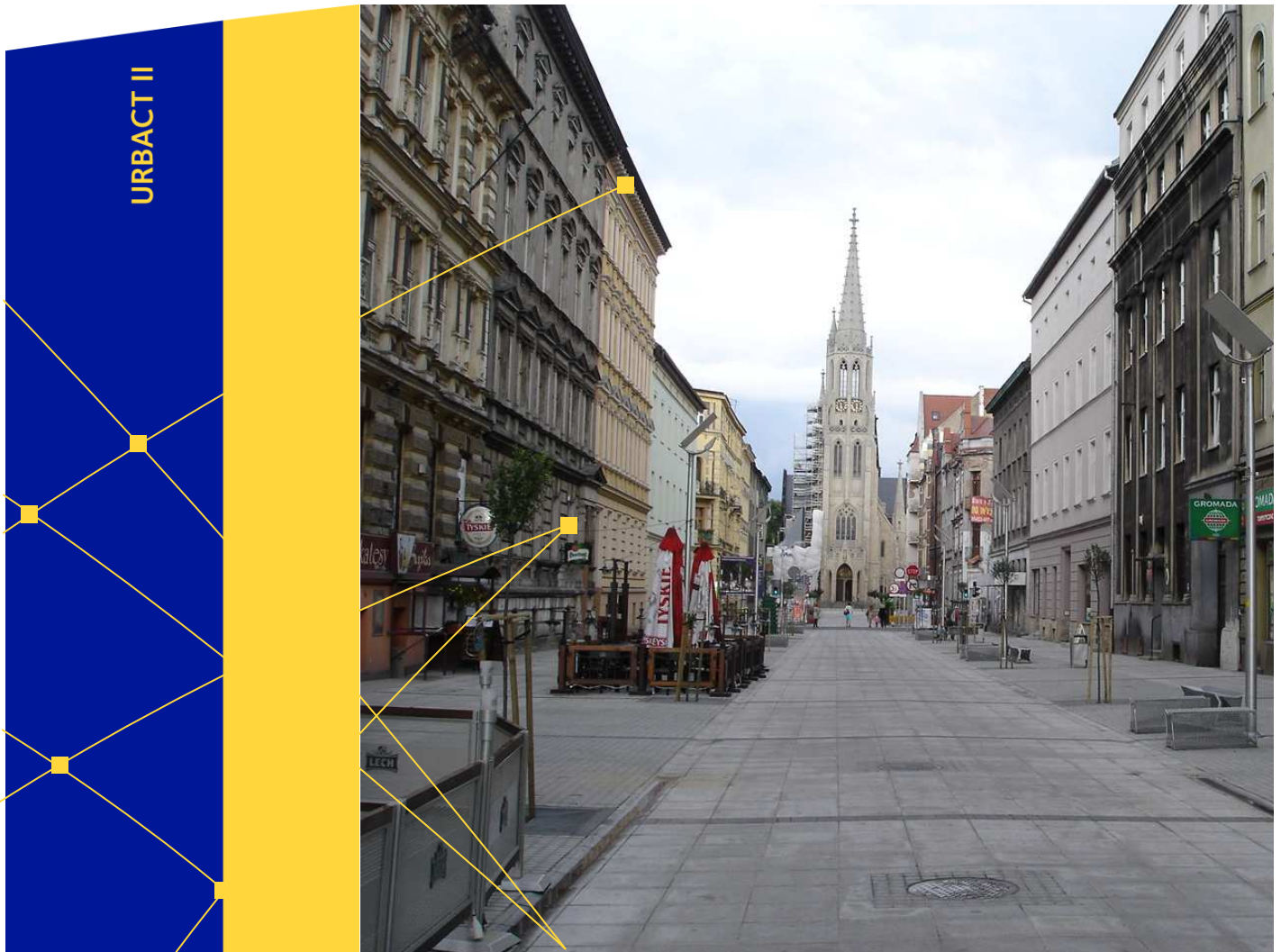




NODUS

Final outputs – Fact sheet

May 2010



Connecting cities
Building successes



2. NODUS

Project launch: September 2008

End of the project: may 2010

3. PARTNERS

- Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Política Territorial i Obres Públiques– Region of Catalonia - SPAIN
- Programmazione territoriale e negoziata Regione Emilia-Romagna – Region of Emilia-Romagna - ITALY
- Samorząd Województwa Mazowieckiego – Region of Mazovia - POLAND
- City of Katowice - POLAND
- City of Amsterdam - NETHERLAND
- The Alba Iulia Intercommunity Association for Development – City of Alba Iulia – ROMANIA
- City of Dobrich - BULGARIA

4. WHAT WERE THE CONCRETE CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY PROJECT PARTNERS?

European urban development is largely affected by social exclusion and socio-spatial segregation challenges, which are related to the decline of certain areas of cities. These problems can not be considered just as a local phenomenon. The causes, forces behind segregation processes, which result in physical decline and the concentration of deprived population within certain areas, are to a large extent determined at supra-local level. The evolution of real estate and land markets and their demographic and economic impacts, having strong effects on the inequalities, are metropolitan and regional area level processes.

Despite these wide-spread negative territorial effects, public interventions against social exclusion and urban deprivation usually concentrate exclusively on the worst areas. There is a very little understanding regarding the need for supra local (metropolitan or regional) planning as co-ordination mechanism above the localised area-based interventions, aiming to steer and regulate local urban development processes.

In the evolution of European urban renewal policies the 'internal integration' of area based interventions was a very important step, aiming at connections between the different policy fields in the selected neighbourhoods (e.g. URBAN programme). The need for vertical multi-level governance links, i.e. functional connections to broader policies, and for spatial connections between the selected neighbourhoods and other (better included) areas of the city are still less emphasized. All these would constitute the 'external integration' of area based policies which has to get increasing importance as a reaction to the supra-local causes of and determinants to the local problems.

Through the 'external integration' of area based policies (the re-integration of area-based interventions on higher territorial levels and in broader functional sense) important goals can be achieved, that of

- territorial balance (a selection process organized from higher territorial level should ensure not only that the worst areas are selected but should also deal with the links of these areas with each other and with opportunity areas)
- social balance (through supra-local level monitoring the external effects of area-based interventions can be explored and handled).

NODUS focuses on the external integration of area based policies, concentrating on the links between supra-local level planning, governance and local area-based urban regeneration. The aim is to improve the coordination between these planning and policy-making activities in order to achieve more balanced urban development.

The topic is part of the wider attempts to create links between territorial and urban development, regarding planning and implementation of programs and projects (Slovenian Presidency, 2008). Besides, the topic of NODUS might be interesting in the perspective of multi-level governance, as well as regarding the regeneration of deprived urban areas.

In a narrower sense, the methodological aspect of NODUS is to develop a methodology how to act on supra-local level to assign the worst neighbourhoods as local renewal areas, how to implement area-based interventions and how to ensure that such interventions (combined with other public policies) lead to balanced results from supra-local perspective.

5. WHAT CONCRETE CONCLUSIONS DID YOU ACHIEVE? WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS DO YOU PUT FORWARD?

NODUS had a large diversity in its partners: some were regions (Catalunya, Emilia-Romagna and Mazovia), while the others were cities (Amsterdam, Katowice, Alba Iulia, Dobrich). Some of the partners were quite experienced in urban regeneration and in participation in international projects, while others could be considered as beginners in one or both of these aspects.

It was partly due to this diversity of experience, strengths, interest of partners that it was difficult to achieve a Europe-wide universal model which would describe the link between urban renewal and regional spatial planning. At the same time it was precisely the diversity of the situations of partners that called the attention to the huge differences which exist across European regions and cities, making generalization very difficult.

As a consequence of the internal discussions between the project partners in the course of the NODUS project even the topic went through interesting changes,

1) The original idea was to study supra-local level public control over local area-based regeneration, from the perspective of negative externalities.

2) Later the supra-local level seemed to lose on importance as it turned out that not all area-based renewal programs have strong external effects. If no significant external effects exist, integrated interventions can be achieved through local spatially relevant strategic planning, as well.

3) In the second year of the project the importance of the supra-local level increased again with the view that such a control is needed not only to avoid external effects but because deprived areas have to be linked to opportunity areas – and the latter are best defined in supra-local strategic (spatial) plans.

Thus the local and supra-local level has important role: higher level strategic plans are needed to decide which type of urban renewal is needed and this influences also the selection of action areas. These strategic plans have to aim to connect the deprived areas to opportunity areas. Regarding the content of renewal planning, opportunity-type interventions are part of larger scale strategic plans while interventions in problem areas are usually locally determined.

Simultaneously, these plans should also monitor the external effects of the area-based interventions. The strengths of externalities depend to a large extent on the level of public control over urban renewal. This control can be achieved by public investments but also through control over the land market and public institutions

To fulfil both functions of the supra-local level, monitoring should be performed on this broader territorial level.

In the course of NODUS we have dealt with the question, what is the optimal supra-local level? Needless to say, there is no universal answer on this question, not last because of the difference in the size of cities and regions, in the strengths of the external effects, etc. In the case of monocentric urban areas the optimal supra-local level can be close to the functional urban areas (covering the job and housing market), called in many cases metropolitan regions.

To ensure effective supra-local control over urban regeneration metropolitan regions have to be strengthened in their functions. This leads to power-game, as usually the administrative regions and the local city authorities are suspicious about the creation of a new entity with power. In the case of strong region and strong city, the FUA level (e.g. in the form of planning association) could only play planning and monitoring role. If this is the case, the new function could be accepted by both other levels.

Countries are in different positions whether such FUA level planning association can be built up bottom-up (as reaction on incentives provided from the national and/or regional level), or compulsory national legislation is needed.

An integrated monitoring system is needed and for that a new unit should be set up on city-region level for coordinated monitoring of different plans (renewal, strategic, spatial) which should apply all possible methods of monitoring for the whole urban area, not only to the action areas.

The knowledge gained through NODUS can be found in the Local Action Plans of the partners. These plans can evoke the establishment of the needed institutional and regulatory framework for integrated planning, implementation and monitoring of urban regeneration actions. In that way NODUS might contribute to the development of the new generation of integrated urban renewal planning.

Besides local and regional application, the results of NODUS can be put into wider, European perspective. The approach/methodology applied refers to the regeneration part of integrated development planning and implementation. Thus the four-stage approach is important as a tool to achieve cross-sectoral and cross-territorial development/regeneration planning. The latter, on the other hand, is crucial for the "localization" of the EU2020 strategy and can help its successful implementation.

6. WHAT WAS LEARNT BY THE PROJECT PARTNERS DURING THE PROJECT?

The expectations of the working Group Partners are collected into the final publication, in the Appendix 2. Here are a resume of the contributions

Catalonia

The initial expectations of Catalunya have not been finally fulfilled. From the point of view of Catalunya there is no one to blame for this. On the contrary, we think that every partner did its best and the Lead Expert did more than its best to deal with these circumstances. Nodus partners were simply too different, they had different capacity and, overall, they had too different interests.

On the other hand, however, there have been many expectations that have been fulfilled indeed and also unexpected lessons that have been learned.

First, we have checked the state of urban regeneration in several cities and regions, and have known which are their interests regarding a possible link with the spatial planning practice. This is useful not only to pick up valuable ideas, but also to compare your own experience with other regions and cities, and to evaluate it.

Second, we have understood to what extent the real situation of some cities and regions in Eastern Europe differs from ours. This remark, far from being conceited, aims to send a message of optimism to these cities and regions, as their situation is not different to the Catalan two or three decades ago. The shortage of material resources, the lack of political interest in some topics, the passive attitude not just of stakeholders, but also of some people directly involved in public policies was usual in Catalunya not so much time ago. And also was the existence of some other people, eager in their work, interested in improving their city, their region or their country, and looking at external references to obtain the necessary knowledge to start to make it progress.

Third, the diversity of interpretations of concepts like urban deprivation or spatial planning has forced us to be more open (if not more cautious) when using them. This diversity has helped us to enrich of our interpretation of these topics, adding new meanings in some cases and making them more complex in some other. Adding complexity to a topic forces you to make an extra effort to understand it. And from this new understanding arise new and better answers to the previous challenges.

Finally, the obligation to explain our plans and project to others, especially when they do not know many of the topics deeply assumed in our country, has forced us to a strict exercise of revision and analysis even of those concepts usually taken for granted that has led us to approach to our own plans and projects from another point of view.

Emilia Romagna

Participation in the Nodus project has moreover allowed us to compare the experience of the Emilia-Romagna Region with that of the other partners, whose case studies presented different approaches. We believe that the method of comparison can help to identify valuable suggestions. Across the different cases, several recurring features can be observed, such as the factor of decline and social problems in neighbourhoods built in the 1960s-1970s.

The possibility of intervening in these cases relates to the ability to coordinate multiple lines of action, often belonging to different levels of administration. To these we must also integrate the function of private

enterprises to reach a “critical mass” of functions that turns these districts into pieces of real city. Since the effect of changes constitutes a sustainable balance, the process must be constantly monitored and subjected to the necessary corrections.

As far as the Emilia-Romagna Region is concerned, this “guided planning process” is the Nodus project’s most important achievement.

Mazovia

Project has fulfill the most Mazovia expectations. Actions taken during implementation phases of the project has brought greater benefits than was initially anticipated. The main benefits was to acquire knowledge and experience about importance of integrate renewal process at the Regional point of view. The most important result of the project was to create Local Support Group and establishment of MAZOVIAN REGIONAL URBAN RENEWAL COUNCIL. The council's mains functions will be advising the Mazovian Regional Government in matters concerning urban renewal projects in the region and coordination of this projects.

Katowice

Thanks to the NODUS Partners diversity (cities- and region-partners), different approaches and different experiences, the project gave an opportunity for the fruitful exchange of case studies, problems, new ideas and recommendations. Engaging people from various domains in the Project and setting a Local Support Group in each of the partner cities, allow to desseminate the Nodus's goals and influence the growth of interest in this field. By elaborating the Katowice Local Action Plan as the results of NODUS works the city hopes to give the first, coherent and integrated model for area based interventions and its further implementation in the urban renewal programme

Amsterdam

Did Amsterdam meet its expectations? Yes and no. It would have been easier if the partners were more alike. This would make a comparison much easier. But on the other hand, Amsterdam had to evaluate its own situation and position. Is it good or can it be better. And of course it can be improved. One could conclude that on Urban Renewal, but also on many more topics, the region as a governing body would not be of added value to the Amsterdam and the Dutch situation. But contact and agreement on especially spatial planning topics with the towns and villages around Amsterdam is important. Not by installing an extra political body, but by cooperation. This is what Amsterdam learned

Alba Iulia

Through NODUS project, Alba Iulia Municipality identified both from the statistical and the sociological points of view the detailed carachteristics of the deprived area and the community who lives there. It is the first time in Romania when such a detailed, complex survey is applied at a specific neighbourhood scale, and not at the entire city level. More, although in Romania can be identified problematic communities, with a well represented Roma population, it is the first time when an action plan based on clear rules and procedures, publically debated and agreed by the beneficiaries is implemented. All the renewal plan actions are based on the target community participation, who assumed all the successes and failures.

Dobrich

Dobrich Municipality would like to express the satisfaction in taking part in NODUS Project as a partner. This cooperation during the implementation and development of the NODUS idea and achieving its objectives, gave us the opportunity to be part of such kind of project as a new EU member. 1500 words max.

7. WHAT ARE THE CONCRETE SOLUTIONS DEVELOPED BY PROJECT PARTNERS?

All the Urbact Local Action Plans developed by the NODUS Partners are described in the final publication. Here, you will find a resume of each experience

Catalonia

The Local Action Plan produced by the Local Support Group NODUS Catalunya will consist of four different final outputs.

Two of these outputs can be considered as long-term, if not permanent, in the sense that they do not consist of a specific result to be obtained in a specific moment. They are used in the setting-up of a Group of Analysis and the development of the instruments necessary to provide this group with the necessary information that are expected to be working for a long period of time.

The other two expected outputs, on the other hand, are oriented to a specific document, the Spatial Plan of the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona, and therefore, their contents are more precisely defined.

These products will not aim, in any case, to replace existing policies or entities dedicated both at the regional and at the local level to urban renewal, nor to be a parallel structure. On the contrary, the aim is to become an instrument to help these administrations in their work.

Mazovia

The Mazovian Regional Action Plan, created as part of the NODUS project, focuses on increasing the influence of regional policy on local authorities' urban renewal activities. The plan includes the creation of a Mazovian Regional Urban Renewal Council. The goal of the plan is to specify the legal basis for such a council, who it should consist of and according to what procedures it should function. Formulating the correct answers to these questions should ensure the optimal influence of the council on the Region's development.

The creation such a legal body was the idea of the Local Support Group, whose members believe it to be necessary to improve the coordination and coherence of local governments' urban renewal actions. The main goal of the council would be to ensure such coordination and coherence between individual urban renewal policies and the Mazovian Region's development policies.

Katowice

The overall aim of the Katowice Local Action Plan is to elaborate the first integrated and cross-sectorial urban renewal programme for a deprived area on the example of Nikiszowiec area. It will be the first programme for a city district prepared with the full involvement of the local community and significant engagement of regional authorities' representatives.

The worked out approach will be used for preparing other integrated development programmes for the deprived areas indicated in the Katowice Revitalisation Programme 2007-2013.

Amsterdam

The Amsterdam LAP will consist in elaborating a Long term Development Program for renewal in the Amsterdam Area, in collaboration with other institutional and academic entities (urban districts, housing corporations, tenants' association, various municipal services in the city and the Ministry of Housing).

Alba Iulia

The plan proposes an integrated urban regeneration through community participation. Urban regeneration project is defined as literature, as "a collective project, which correlates multiple aspects of urban development and different scales of intervention, conducted at several levels of intervention: punctual, in the neighbourhood with problems, related to logic overall development of the city and many areas of intervention - economic, social, environmental and regional policy".

The Alba-Iulia Local Action Plan will focus on the new governance in a regeneration area (Cetate neighbourhood), high-lighting the role of the population involved in the project, with local authorities.

Dobrich

The ULSG drew up and approved a work-schedule of urgent reform and actions, which fights against problems in deprived areas. LAP has been designed to update Dobrich 2020 Plan in the sections of the spatial development and urban planning.

Special Focus on the LAP of Emilia-Romagna

The Local Action Plan for the area-based (Bolognina area) might enable the existing city (space and society) to answer some of the questions arising from urban regeneration intervention and associated building works. Indeed, the LAP would provide a solution to the problem that many urban regeneration works or transformative building work projects will be activated at the same time and in the same area, though effects of this process will not be visible for quite a long time.

Connected to this is the most important housing-related problem, and that is that the area is predominantly residential with housing that is dated or degraded, and yet many of the projects envisaged for the area involve non-residential solutions. For example, in addition to the new residential areas planned for the Bolognina district (1), projects also include the new railway station (2) in which is to be found a shopping mall, offices and a congress centre, and the new headquarters for the municipal administration built on the site of the ex-fruit and vegetable market (3), whilst new university faculties (4) and the region's Technopole (5) surround the old working class district and thus generate significant spatial and social changes.

The aim of the LAP is to monitor the long process of urban regeneration in order to create equilibrium across the range of works and to gradually introduce them to avoid negative effects and the inevitable conflicts that will arise.

The LAP could mitigate such conflicts by interpreting the will and desires of the old and new residents, directing the new functions towards a reasonable mix and one which is full of new opportunities to revitalise the area. One example might be to avoid concentrating too many wholesale commercial activities in the area, or activities lacking any attractive features.

Vital to the success of this working hypothesis are on the one hand the study and collection of data influencing degradation indicators, and on the other the continuing consultation meetings with local residents. This requires that we find a permanent meeting place and structure that residents will recognise as being a "public sphere" where their citizens' rights will be fully exercised.

8. AVAILABLE OUTPUTS

Final Publication will be available:

- Paper version (June 2010)
- CD-Rom (June 2010)
- miniwebsite: <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/metropolitan-governance/nodus/homepage/>

Hot Topic Article

Dilemmas of integrated area-based urban renewal programmes, Iván Tosics, NODUS LE, September 2009
http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/NODUS/outputs_media/URBAC_Hottopic_final_090920_2_.pdf

Also available in the "Urbact Tribune – November 2009"

Newsletter

http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/NODUS/documents_media/Stockhom.pdf

Brochure

http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/NODUS/documents_media/Brochure_Montpellier.pdf

URBACT II

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 255 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

www.urbact.eu/project



EUROPEAN
PROGRAMME
FOR
SUSTAINABLE
URBAN
DEVELOPMENT

