

SUSTAINABLE HIGH RISE BLOCKS

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EUROPEAN
PROGRAMME
FOR
SUSTAINABLE
URBAN
DEVELOPMENT



An URBACT project



Re

SUSTAINABLE HIGH RISE BLOCKS

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European Union
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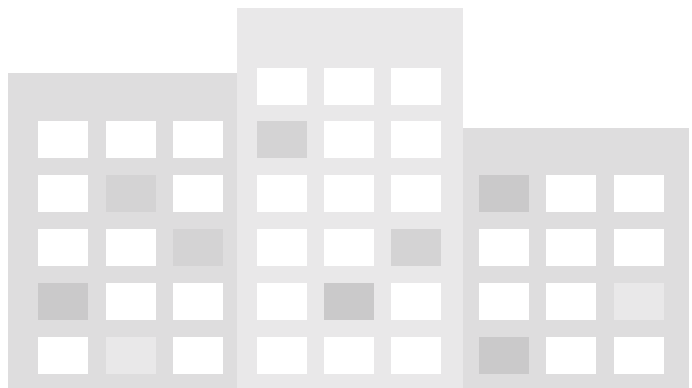


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Re **BLOCK**

SUSTAINABLE

HIGH RISE

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WELCOME

1st Edition of the RE-Block Newsletter

This is the first edition of the RE-Block newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to keep interested parties up to date with information and news about the RE-Block project being carried out as part of the URBACT II Call.

Throughout the project implementation, the RE-Block newsletter will provide easy to read information about the main project activities being carried out in all of the partner territories, along with information about project events, the project consortium and other news related to the URBACT Programme as a whole.

We look forward to keeping you informed over the upcoming months!





A WORD FROM THE EXPERT

Hello, My name is Agnes Bohonyey, and I am the Lead Expert for the RE-Block project. With the background of a planner and having experience in the management of Structural Funds and transnational projects, it is a very special opportunity for me to take part in the formulation of the RE-Block project. I began my work on this project together with the partners back in May 2012.

All too often the image of high rise housing estates is one of monotonous blocks of flats, in poor physical condition and with significant social and behavioural problems. I have now visited all of the partner cities and have seen that although the 10 different partners of the RE-Block project represent different countries with different historic and urban backgrounds, the housing estates which form the target areas for the project all have similar problems and at the same time, a poor reputation.

Housing estates in the partner countries were built between the late 1960s and early 1980s. Although diverse urban initiatives have taken place in the past 20 -30 years to improve either the physical or the social situation in these areas, no lasting results were achieved.

The aim of the RE-Block project is to find ways to rehabilitate the housing estates by improving the physical fabric and enhancing the level of social cohesion in the context of the cities as a whole. By creating a synergy between the physical and the social actions it should be possible to achieve sustainable improvements. This will require developing methods of involving the community and local stakeholders and most importantly, the private sector. The partners decided to enter the RE-Block project in order to share good practices with each other. This will be our task during the implementation of the project and I look forward to continuing to work together.



HUNGARY



ROMANIA



SPAIN



GERMANY



GREECE

PARTNER OVERVIEW

Here is a brief introduction to the five partners involved in the development phase of the RE-Block project:

HUNGARY

Budapest XVIII District Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre

Budapest, the capital city of Hungary, consists of 23 districts. The 18th district is the fourth largest and lies South-East of the city centre on the outer edge of the current city's administrative boundary. The 18th district is now a residential suburb which has an estimated population of 100,000 but one third of the population is living in housing estates. The Havana housing estate, with a population of 17,000 people, is rather isolated within the district, primarily due to the social problems concentrated there. The low energy efficiency of the blocks and the high cost of the heating are the biggest problems at Havana contributing to both the physical and social deterioration of the area. The 18th district started to build up this URBACT network on the need to find new tools and solutions to give a boost to the integrated rehabilitation of the Havana housing estate.

ROMANIA

City of Iasi

Iasi is the fourth largest city in Romania, with a population in 2011 of 263,410. Besides the difficult social and financial situation of people living in buildings block, the ethnic conflicts are becoming recurrent. The Municipality aims at finding a sustainable solution for the rehabilitation of these areas. However, it is a challenge for the Municipality to define a planning process in which the social issues are integrated with physical improvements. Furthermore, the experience gained in this process should be applicable to other deprived areas, and housing estates in the city. Iasi is aiming at finding tailor-made solutions through RE-Block.

SPAIN

City of Malaga

Malaga is situated in the South of Spain and has 560,000 inhabitants. One of the problems facing the City with regards to Urban development is the rehabilitation of deprived high-rise building areas such as "La Palma", which currently face serious social and economic problems. Malaga would like to capitalize on its substantial experience in European urban rehabilitation projects (URB-AL, CAT-MED) and implement smarter governance methods involving citizens through the RE-Block project.

GERMANY

City of Gelsenkirchen

The city of Gelsenkirchen is situated in North-West Germany, in the Ruhr area. The former heavy industrial city, due to its restructuring, faced a serious decline in population (today 267,000 inhabitants) accompanied by social conflicts. The Tossehof housing estate was built at the beginning of the 1970s to reduce the housing shortage at the time, but it gradually lost its good reputation. In 2005, the Urban Restructuring programme started and will be completed by the end of the year. The main question for the Municipality is: how to maintain the results achieved by investing a significant amount of public resources and how to continue the work on making the Tossehof area a sustainable place to live. Through the project and through transnational knowledge exchange with the rest of the partners, the city wants to get smart and innovative ideas in the framework of RE-Block.

GREECE

City of Komotini

Komotini is the administrative centre of the Region of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace in north-east Greece with the total population of 55,812. The population in Eastern Macedonia -Thrace is significantly different from other regions of the country due to the mix of the Muslim religious minority, Greek re-settlers and the Roma population in the area. Today major problems are related to the rehabilitation of the old degraded area where Roma minorities live near the city centre. As an experienced URBACT partner, the Municipality and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace would like to learn new approaches from RE-Block.



KICK OFF MEETING, BUDAPEST

13th-15th of June 2012

From the 13th to the 15th of June, the RE-Block project held its kick off meeting in Budapest, organised and hosted by the Local Government of Budapest XVIII District Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre.

The meeting started with an introduction to the URBACT Programme from the Head of the URBACT Secretariat Mr. Emmanuel Moulin. Mr Moulin highlighted the fact that RE-Block was a special project due to the fact that it is the only project approved in this year's call that has a Lead Partner from a new member state. He went on to stress the key things that the partners should take into account when participating in an URBACT project and presented the URBACT video.

During the course of the rest of the meeting, key activities included: the presentation of the partners, the structure and work plan for the development phase, discussion on the state of the art report, the local support group and local action plan, the RE-Block logo and management issues. The next steps of the project were also discussed including the extension of the original partnership and the final conference in Malaga.

After the technical meeting, a site visit was planned to the Havana high rise blocks, where project partners could see at first hand the Hungarian pilot project site and meet key actors. Once there, the partners visited the local Community Centre, a museum which tells the history of the Havana blocks, and a local child care centre.



URBAN LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS IN PARTNER TERRITORIES

The Urban Local Support Groups or ULSGs form one of the key tools in any URBACT project. The idea is that these ULSGs are comprised of private and public stakeholders, including respective managing authorities and political representatives from the local regional level.

During the development phase of the project, all cities involved in the RE-Block network have held their first ULSG meetings where they have presented the RE-Block project to the stakeholders and how they will be involved in the implementation phase.

During the project implementation phase, approximately 4-5 ULSG meetings will be organised a year scheduled in accordance with the major project milestones 1) Launching workshop 2) Peer review session 3) Two-step elaboration of LAPs. The conclusions of which will be summarised in meeting reports.



FINAL CONFERENCE MALAGA

20th-21st of September 2012

On the 20th and 21st of September 2012, the City of Malaga hosted the RE-Block Final Conference, held at the Urban Environment Observatory (OMAU). The meeting started off with a welcome from the hosts and from Mr István Hunyadi, representative of the 18th District of Budapest (Lead Partner) and an introduction by Eddy Adams, the Thematic Pole Manager. Partners also gave a warm welcome to the Mayor of the 18th District of Budapest and to the new members of the new and enlarged partnership (see Item 7 "Extending the partnership...").

The meeting had a very dynamic approach including various working sessions moderated by Mr Eddy Adams such as a Speedy Networking session, a Give and Get session and a workshop focussed on the introduction of the Local Action Plan (LAP) and Urban Local Support Group (ULSG) concepts. In this workshop, participants had to present posters with details of their city, the focus of their LAP and the ULSG members that will be participating in their city. At the end of the workshop, all participants did a gallery walk to view and discuss the posters that had been presented.

The second day focussed on the identification of priority themes for the final partnership and on more practical issues such as project management, the budget and the project monitoring system PRESAGE.

To end the final Conference, project partners visited the Palma Palmilla District of Malaga, the pilot site for Malaga City Council. Here they met with City Councillors from both the Area of Citizen Participation and Social Services and from the District itself. A press Conference was held presenting the RE-Block project, its objectives and its possible impact in the District. Shortly afterwards, partners were taken on a tour of the area in order to highlight the main problems that the area faces and the progress that have been made. Stops were made to see key initiatives that are underway such as the "Urban Orchard". In this initiative, an old dump site has been converted into an urban orchard where plots of land have been distributed between the most troubled families and residents of the area as a place where they can grow their own food. Any surplus of food or produce is distributed to the local schools or charities. We were lucky enough to have the project explained by a local resident who insisted that apart from the more obvious benefits of the project, it has also served as a place to bring together the community.

The meeting closed with partners having a better understanding of the overall focus of the RE-Block project and the tasks that lay ahead, should the project be successful in securing funding for the second phase.



EXTENDING THE PARTNERSHIP

As we reach the end of the development phase, we would like to inform you of the new partnership that will progress into the implementation phase, should we be successful.

The new partners that have been invited to join the RE-Block project include:

- **GREECE:** in the course of the development phase, the Municipality of Komotini was replaced by Region of East Macedonia and Thrace, but the target area for the project has remained the same.

- **ITALY:** University Tor Vergata of Rome.

Whilst Rome, the capital city is also Italy's largest and most populated international cultural and business centre, there are neighbourhoods around the periphery area which remain isolated. Although diverse urban initiatives have taken place in Rome in the past 20 years, there are still many urban issues waiting for solutions. One of the most urgent issues is how to design and prioritize interventions in deprived areas like Tor Sapienza and the Morandi high-rise blocks.

- **LITHUANIA:** City of Vilnius.

The capital city is the largest political, administrative, social, economic and cultural centre in the country with a population of 554,000. Zirmunai, the target area for the RE-Block project is the residential area of 9-12 storey blocks, which was built in the 1960s. Nowadays, the blocks have become rundown and the energy efficiency of the buildings is an issue, along with other things such as the neglect of public green areas and the lack of parking space. The Municipality wants to find ways the target area can be rehabilitated and become attractive to younger families. The plan of integrated rehabilitation of the Zirmunai area will serve as a methodology of rehabilitation for 5 other similar housing estates.

- **UK:** City of Salford.

Salford city is part of Greater Manchester. Salford's population is 233,600. The city is the 18th most deprived of the 324 English local authorities. There are 50 residential high rise blocks in Salford, constructed in the 1960s and 70s. Most of them are used as social housing. The Islington Estate is part of Central Salford where the two tower blocks of 230 flats/properties subject of the current project is situated. There is an active Tenants and Residents Association working for the community of Islington Estates. Primarily their focus is on building up interaction with the community of other housing estates and on establishing connections to start developing social cohesion between districts.

• **SWEDEN:** City of Sodertälje.

Södertälje is situated about 40 kilometres South-West of Stockholm. The town has nearly 88,000 inhabitants, of which nearly 50% have a foreign background. In the 1960s the town expanded quickly primarily due to the immigrants who arrived to make use of the attractive labour market. Four suburban housing areas were built - Ronna, Fornhöjden, Hovsjö, Geneta - most of them were blocks of flats for rent. Nowadays, these are the housing areas which are heavily segregated from the rest of the town. The city's intention is to turn Fornhöjden, the target are for the RE-Block project, into an ecological urban model of a safe and pleasant neighbourhood, through transnational knowledge exchange.

• **GERMANY:** City of Magdeburg.

Magdeburg situated on the Elbe River has been the capital city of the Lander of Saxony-Anhalt in Germany since 1990, the year of German reunification. It now has a population of 230,000 which is declining and ageing. As the population of Magdeburg is forecast to decrease steadily, the approach of the city's integrated urban development concept was to carry out deconstruction of the city, from the periphery areas towards the city centre. The Neu-Olvenstedt housing estate is situated in the outskirts of the city. It was built in the 1980s and its population reached 30,000 in 1990, but has subsequently declined to less than 11,000. The challenge for the Municipality is to establish a sustainable future for the estate, now that it has a much smaller population and fewer people use the infrastructure (public utilities, public transport, playgrounds, social and sports facilities). Furthermore, the estate has a poor image, characterised by social segregation and a certain level of urban degradation as well. **WELCOME ABOARD!**

WELCOME ABOARD!



THE LEAD PARTNER TEAM

Partner Institution	Budapest XVIII District Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre Local Government
Address	400 Üllői út
Postcode	1184
City	Budapest
Area	Közép-Magyarország
Country	HUNGARY

CONTACT LIST

Mr. István Hunyadi

Type · Project Coordinator

Service · Municipality of Budapest District 18,
Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre

Function · City Director

Phone number · (36) 1 296 1325

Mobile number · (36) 30 9701878

Fax · (36) 1 296 1479

Email · hunyadi@bp18.hu

re_block@bp18.hu

Mr. Krisztián Dombrádi

Type · Communication officer

Service · Municipality of District 18,
Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre

Function · Communication officer

Phone number · (36) 1 296 1300

Fax · (36) 1 296 1479

Email · re_block@bp18.hu

krisztian@dombradi.com

Mr. László Sallai

Type · Financial Officer

Service · Economic and Financial Office
of the Municipality of Budapest District 18,
Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre

Function · Office manager

Phone number · (36) 1 296 1410

Fax · (36) 1 296 1411

Email · sallailaszlo@bp18.hu

Mr. Attila Ughy

Type · Legal Representative

Service · Municipality of Budapest District 18,
Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre

Function · Mayor

Phone number · (36) 1 296 1320, (36) 1 296 1330

Fax · (36) 1 296 1321

Email · polgtit@bp18.hu

Ms. Ágnes Böhönyey

Type · Lead expert

Service · HitesyBartuczHollai Euroconsulting Kft.
1054 Budapest, Vértanúk tere 1. felemelet 7

Function · Consultant

Phone number · (36) 1 319 1790

Mobile number · (36) 20 332 7296

Fax · (36) 1 319 1381

Email · bohonyey.agnes@hbhe.hu



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