JOINING FORCES
Final outputs – Fact sheet
May 2010

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION IN A NUTSHELL

JOINING FORCES has explored how strategy-making and governance arrangements at the city-region level can help to address effectively the main challenges faced by urban Europe: competitiveness, cohesion and sustainability. All over Europe, metropolitan areas or city-regions are increasingly recognised, even by local authorities, as the "real city" level, the right one for designing and implementing more effective development strategies and governance mechanisms. Achieving successful cooperation between cities and their surrounding areas is obviously crucial to improve local cohesion, but even more to increase territorial competitiveness and sustainability.

2. JOINING FORCES

Project launch: April 2008
End of the project: May 2010

3. PARTNERS

LEAD PARTNER:
Lille Metropole - Agence de développement et d'urbanisme de Lille Métropole (France)

PARTNERS:
City of **Burgas** (Bulgaria)
City of **Brno** (Czech Republic)
Brussels-Capital Region - Agence de Développement Territorial (Belgium)
Eindhoven - Samenwerkingsverband Regio Eindhoven (SRE) (Netherlands)
City of **Florence** (Italy)
Krakow - Instytut Rozwoju Miast (Institute of Urban Development) (Poland)
City of **Seville** (Spain)

LEAD EXPERT:
Tamas Horvath - University of Debrecen (Hungary)

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

At the working group level, the project has described and analysed partners' concrete situations in order to propose conclusions and suitable recommendations to the local / regional / national / European authorities on why and how to develop metropolitan governance mechanisms. In order to effectively exchange experiences and thus be able to draw relevant conclusions, the working group had to work on the basis of practical examples (case studies) and therefore to consider the single theme of metropolitan governance through different aspects.

One focus: Which cooperation mechanisms are / can be developed at the city-region level
Analysis of current situations through seven main dimensions:
- Strategic and Spatial Planning
- Mobility management and Transport
- Main environmental issues: air and noise pollution, waste disposal, water supply, etc.
- Knowledge economy (Creativity, Research & Education)
- Private sector involvement in metropolitan Governance (public / private arrangements)
- Social inclusion, participation and empowerment
- Attractiveness & competitiveness (including Promotion / Marketing)

At local level concrete challenges were addressed by project partners through Local Action Plans.

BRNO: "The cooperation in elaborating strategic documents and developing common projects" *through six key areas: suburbanization / transport and mobility / labour market and knowledge economy / environment and technical infrastructure / tourism and recreation / social sphere - with strategic planning as common theme for all these areas. The aim is to improve cooperation between the municipalities of the*

metropolitan area.

BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION: "To improve attractiveness of the Brussels-Capital Region and of its metropolitan area". *Cooperation between Regions should be foster through concrete projects developed at metropolitan level. Following the members of the Local Support Group, the first fields of cooperation should concern mobility and culture / tourism.*

BURGAS: "Social Inclusion" - Deinstitutionalization and Social Inclusion Strategy - *The LAP outlines the specific measures needed to be undertaken in the process of transition from institutional care to alternative services provision in the community as well as developing of social services for people at risk of social exclusion.*

EINDHOVEN – SRE: "A spatial vision on the region and a strategy - how we can realise this vision." *What spatial measures can be taken to strengthen southeast Brabant as international high-tech knowledge and innovation region?*

FLORENCE: "The creation of an integrated and participative approach to sustainable metropolitan mobility". *Florence aimed at establishing a stakeholder's consensus on an Integrate Mobility Plan for the Florentine Metropolitan Area.*

KRAKOW – IRM: "Detailed recommendations on integrated strategic plan*" that is likely to be used when updating planning documents (a regional strategy and regional spatial development plan for Malopolskie Region) - Increasing the significance of cooperation and understanding of the importance of informal cooperation for metropolitan areas.*

LILLE MÉTROPOLE: "Draft of the medium term strategic programme for the association "Aire métropolitaine de Lille". *It is a new step in the cooperation process, to strengthen the partnership and the commitment to the cooperation process and the awareness of the city region scale.*

SEVILLE: "The Seville 2020 Strategic Plan" - *The challenge is to allow a progress from the single gathering of variably significant projects and build up an instrument that should improve the area city-governing / government and extend to the development of citizenship in all its dimensions.*

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

Introduction

Cities are the front line in addressing some of the major European challenges:
- competitiveness
- sustainable build environment
- cohesion
- "organic" urban culture
- empowerment and governance

Cities are also the place where to secure and / or restore citizens' confidence into the European integration process **but the definition and delimitation of urban areas tend to become more and more difficult, hence the need for metropolitan co-operations.**

The need for a new vision of urban territories

An increasing mismatch between the real city and political definitions
- the built up areas, generally larger than the municipalities / communes
- the realty of the ecosystem is larger than the built up area
- the one of the economic system is even larger
- and catchment areas for higher education, services etc. probably even more

Fast-moving urban reality
- urban sprawl – growing built up areas, low density and urban / rural mix
- higher mobility, not only commuting flows but also in jobs themselves and way of life
- wider use of IT – de-localisation of some activities

The relative failure of top-down attempts to change the definition of boundaries
Many national governments have tried for decades to redraw local authorities' limits and / or boundaries.
- they have not proved to be effective enough: metropolitan authorities, "Communautés urbaines", "città metropolitane", etc.
- and have not often been accepted by citizens

A changing world: from a closed to a more open society / economy
- towards a new attitude between competition and cooperation: "coopetition"

On the relevance of City-regions / Metropolitan areas

A. Developing policies on the most effective scale

Not "one fits all" definition of metropolitan areas
- City region / metropolitan areas: a sole definition for – at least - two different realities: Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) & Morphological Urban Areas (MUAs)
- Cities have different shape: size of the central city, monocentric versus polycentric systems (MUAs and obviously FUAs)
- Cities are in different contexts:
    - difference between capital cities / regional capitals / others, mono / polycentric regions
    - political and legislative framework
    - resources and local tax system

The right scale is obviously not always the metropolitan one, the neighbourhood and / or municipal level can be more operational in some fields. **But the metropolitan scale is more effective for dealing with a wide range of issues:**
- Public transport (both MUAs & FUAs with different solutions?)
- Mobility (FUAs)
- Land use (both MUAs & FUAs)
- Water supply (FUAS or larger)
- Waste disposal (MUAs)
- Local economic development (MUAs)
- Clustering and the Knowledge society (FUAs)
- Territorial marketing (both MUAs & FUAs depending on the context)
- Social (MUAs)
- Major facilities (FUAs)
- Health (both MUAs & FUAs depending on the level of provision)
- Culture (both MUAs & FUAs)

B. An overall need for pooling the resources of Local Authorities

In the context of shortage of public money and competition between territories

The need to reach a certain critical mass
Reaching a certain territorial critical mass is important for both the quality and quantity of the services provided by local authorities.
- investing capacity
- ability to negotiate with the private sector
- comprehensive approach to the economic system
- sufficient importance and diversity to play at global level - *capacity to develop relevant tools but also events with an international significance.*

To avoid sterile competition between local authorities
Global competitiveness is not to be based on local competition (between cities or between core cities and their suburbs), although some emulation between local authorities can help. In any case, it is of mutual interest to prevent misuse of resources.
- risk of duplication: relevant use of public money
- careful use of land as a resources

To provide citizens and business with relevant services
- diverse and important enough in size and quality
- at the right geographical level

Facing the mismatch between levels of tax collection and service provision
In most city-region / metropolitan areas, taxes are not levied and collected at the place and at the level where the corresponding services have to be delivered.

On metropolitan governance

C. Some basic principles are to be met for successful metropolitan cooperation

Building mutual trust is the main condition, as solidarity is required
- Need to define common interest versus specific ones
- Need to design a common vision
- And to up date it in common
- Acting in common is the right way of developing cooperation: project comes first and then structure can be created when required

Time and continuity are required: the process has to be sustainable
- The cooperation process should not be a matter for politics but led by the actions to develop in priority
- Even if informal the arrangements need to be publicized to maintain continuity

Involving citizens is crucial
- Their residential choices are creating the FUAs
- Their commitment is essential for the process to be supported by politicians

Gaining the support of the economic sector is of similar importance

D. Innovation is required in governance

Particular solutions are to be found on basis of local, regional and national culture

Involving all the relevant actors: private and voluntary sectors
- private sector but also leaders from the civil society : academics, artists, …
- but recognising the risk of democratic deficit
Non-formal methods should be added to the existing local democratic institutions, particularly when initiatives are taken that clearly lack the constitutional legitimacy conferred by elections.

Involving all the relevant actors: vertical integration / multi-level governance
- metropolitan cooperation is not a matter of unravelling the national states or competing for leadership with regional authorities

Flexible and / or structured systems?
- tension between flexible adaptable but only voluntary systems (memoranda of understanding, contracts?)
- and legally established "government type" systems
- both possible depending on the theme and / or on the scale

Legitimacy versus effectiveness?
It is necessary to recognise the existence of conflicts of legitimacy. Different models can be considered:
- Public authority model?
Boards / councils directly elected by citizens; Second degree boards / councils made of local politicians; with private / voluntary sector advisory committees
- Association / development agencies model?
Board made of both public and private decision-makers; with national authorities?
- Corporate model?
Role of chambers of commerce

Recommendations

What help from the national & regional governments and from the EU

Better recognition and more involvement in policy-making and delivery
Whatever the governance system favoured regarding the local context, the recognition of metropolitan areas / city-regions as a relevant level for dealing with a wide range of political challenges should lead to their participation in the design and implementation of:
- National and regional development strategies
- EU cohesion policy operational programme
- Other EU policies

Additional Resources
For the strategies implemented at a metropolitan level to be effective, new additional resources are also required:
- Relevant Tax system, with incentives for developing better cohesionthe urban area
- EU Funding at the right level, as development strategies cannot be effective at a too small level
- Openness to resource allocation and re-allocation

Innovation in public processes
A new orientation should be favoured in public processes.
- Public procurement & Public Private Partnerships
- Communication: media & open events – and active involvement from the local community

Development of knowledge and awareness
Any further development of metropolitan governance mechanisms in Europe supposes that metropolitan systems in their complexity should be more precisely analysed and outcomes from existing experiences better assessed.
- Academic type surveys (specific ESPON project and / or revised Urban audit?)
- In depth exchange of experience (a new improved URBACT?)

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

The Joining Forces project benefited to all partners. This happened both collectively as a group of partner cities and at local level through Local Support Groups (ULSG) and Local Action Plans (LAP). Partner cities have to face very specific and quite different situations, both locally and nationally. These differences are reflected in the diversity of the experiences that apply as effectively as possible to a specific context. These differences enrich discussions between partners and were added value for the working group and at local level.

"The Joining Forces project is significantly contributing to improvement of the Brno agglomeration competitiveness, permanent sustainability of its development and it ensures social cohesion as well. It has been done through transfer of know-how necessary for implementation of the first steps. … Thanks to communication with our European colleagues, we have gained a lot of important pieces of knowledge which were subsequently used not only during the LAP and other documents and project preparations, but also as a basis for a discussion concerning the form of regional cooperation."
City of BRNO

"The members of the LSG learn thanks to the exchange of best practices that metropolitan governance had good results in other countries and convinced them to pursue their efforts. Moreover, the dimension of citizen's participation appears in the partner's examples and shows that it should be taken into account to improve attractiveness. The project of a metropolitan region would have more legitimacy if the civil society and the population are part of the debate."
BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION

"Participating in an URBACT project was a new experience not only for the Municipality as and administrative structure but also for the stakeholders involved. Especially interesting and beneficial were the cases shared between partners related to issues at metropolitan level, most of which Burgas is still to encounter and respond to."
City of BURGAS

Some aspects could be underlined - they concern at the same time the working group and local partnerships:

About COOPERATION:
- The cooperation process requires a lot of time (development of a "cooperation culture").
- Building trust is an essential element of the cooperation process.
- It is very hard to develop a programme that is satisfying for each partner / stake holder. This is an ongoing process...

About WORKING TOGETHER:
- Working together in the field – organizing seminars and meetings between the partners or with the Local Support Groups is a good instrument for motivating the local stakeholders to participate and be involved actively in the project implementation.
- The international learning moments / meetings between Local Support Group and Joining Forces members were very useful.
- A good organisation of workshops and regular moments for meetings are important.

About TIME:
- Time scale is an important element: long electoral term could stop the perceived effectiveness of the governance process and arrested a project; staff continuity of the project could change and be insufficient due to external circumstances, etc.

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

The topics of project seminars became the key inspiration for the partners' LAP:

 "**1.** Suburbanization and spatial planning: inspired especially by the seminar in Eindhoven and Krakow – "So much planning but nothing to do"; differences in status of small and large municipalities in the agglomeration area (advantages are clearly on the side of small municipalities) demonstrated in the example of the Krakow agglomeration area and the Niepolomice municipality.

2. Transport and mobility: inspired by the seminar in Florence – the Firenze Futura Initiative in Florence did not only bring experience in the area of transport. It even served as the fundamental model for the setup of the future cooperation among the academic, business and public spheres in Brno. It was also a good example of an efficient cooperation of several cities where mutual competition was suppressed in order to strengthen solidarity and competitiveness of the entire region.

3. Labour market and knowledge economy: inspired especially by the seminars in Brno and Brussels – attractiveness and city identity are key factors in the regional development.

4. Tourism and recreation: inspired by the seminar in Brussels – Experience Brussels! – an interactive presentation for Brussels visitors is an inspiration for the future development of the Urban Centrum in Brno. (http://urbancentrum.brno.cz).

5. Environment and technical infrastructure: particularly inspired by the seminar in Seville – the issue of environment is sufficiently handled at the national level. The issue of technical infrastructure is generally resolved at the national level, however individual steps are in the authority of individual agglomeration actors, therefore should be solved in common.

6. Social area: inspired especially by the seminar in Burgas – the issue is sufficiently addressed at the national level."
City of BRNO

"The project was a good opportunity to summarize and recognize the bottom – up and participatory approaches as basic and compulsory ones in the process of planning and policy making. The Municipality has already been approbating the approach in different projects and planning initiatives but the Joining Forces was a step forward to establishing concrete instruments for communicating decisions at local level."
City of BURGAS

"Exchange of experiences formed the basis of the joint meeting of the working group and LSG. This workshop was one of the starting points for the developing of the LAP. The central question for the workshops and LAP was the same. Were do we need to devote our collective energy on? The good examples from abroad are included in the program. The innovative ideas of regionalism and governance in a Knowledge Economy were an important input for the document."
EINDHOVEN - SRE

"Thematic seminars were held during the work on the project. The best practice of different metropolitan areas were presented during seminars and discussed how it could be used in Polish case. LSG also actively take part in a meeting with participants of the project from different cities."
KRAKOW - IRM

8.   AVAILABLE OUTPUTS

Joining forces has produced different surveys and reports:

- a baseline study, (Volume 1 / Volume 2 / Annex) analysing the metropolitan governance issue from a European perspective and describing each partner city's specific context

- working reports from the seven thematic seminars held in the different partner cities
> EINDHOVEN seminar – October 2008 – "Strategic and Spatial Planning"
> FLORENCE seminar – February 2009 – "Mobility and Transport"
> SEVILLE seminar – April 2009 – "Externalities and Environmental Issues"
> BRNO seminar – June 2009 – "Knowledge economy / creativity, research & Education"
> KRAKOW seminar – October 2009 – "Public / Private Arrangements"
> BURGAS seminar – January 2010 – "Social Inclusion, Participation, Empowerment"
> BRUSSELS seminar – March 2010 – "Attractiveness and Competitiveness"

- a compendium of information on local support groups and local action plans, which describes the impact the common activity has had on each partner city's local development

- a synthesis of conclusions and recommendations, summarizing the main outcomes of the Working group activity

- a communication document

More information on the project website:
www.urbact.eu => Project JOINING FORCES

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