

November 2013

URBACT PROJECT RESULTS

SECOND EDITION

URBACT II



Connecting cities
Building successes



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(November 2009 – February 2013)

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EDITORIAL

The main challenges faced by European cities and towns are well known: globalisation, economic crisis, climate change and demographic changes. The European Commission, the European Union Member States and two Partner States (Norway and Switzerland) assigned an ambitious objective to the URBACT II European Territorial Cooperation programme: to assist European cities in becoming engines of growth and jobs, while at the same time striving to be attractive and cohesive.

Inspired by the positive experience of the URBAN Community Initiative, URBACT II fosters sustainable and integrated urban development. It enables European cities to work together and to develop effective and sustainable solutions to major key urban challenges. Each network brings together 8 to 12 cities or other partners working together to address a specific urban issue and develop integrated action plans.

Since 2007, more than 500 cities of all sizes from all over Europe have been exchanging and working in the framework of URBACT, mobilising a working community of 7 000 people.

In order to produce a real impact with this transnational exchange and to achieve concrete results in each of the partner cities, URBACT established a strong methodology, now branded as the URBACT method. The URBACT method relies on mutual assistance between cities (transnational exchange), action-orientated (each city commits to elaborate and adopt a Local Action Plan) participative approach (each city co-produces its Local Action Plan with a Local Support Group bringing together all concerned stakeholders), and a strong methodological support (guidance from the URBACT Secretariat and from thematic experts).

Nine Thematic Networks from the second URBACT call for proposals have completed their programme of exchange and learning activities in 2013. You

will find in this second issue of the URBACT Results publication the results and main recommendations of these networks which have been working relentlessly for three years looking for joint, effective and sustainable solutions to major urban challenges:

- **Active Travel Network** - Promoting walking and cycling in small and medium-sized cities. (Lead Partner: Weiz - AT).
- **CASH** - Sustainable and affordable energy efficient housing. (Lead Partner: Echirrolles - FR).
- **ESIMeC** - Economic strategies and innovation in medium-sized cities. (Lead Partner: Basingstoke and Deane - UK).
- **EVUE** - Electric vehicles in urban Europe. (Lead Partner: Westminster - UK).
- **LINKS** - Improving the attractiveness and quality of life in old historical centres. (Lead Partner: Bayonne - FR).
- **OP-ACT** - Strategic positioning of small and medium-sized cities facing demographic changes. (Lead Partner: Leoben - AT).
- **Roma-Net** - Integration of the Roma population in European cities. (Lead Partner: Budapest - HU).
- **SURE** - Socio-economic methods for urban rehabilitation of deprived urban areas. (Lead Partner: Eger - HU).
- **TOGETHER** - Developing co-responsibility for social inclusion and well-being of residents in European cities (Lead Partner: Mulhouse - FR)

URBACT is a living programme. It has been capable of taking into account the consequences of the economic and financial crisis and of incorporating the Europe 2020 Strategy into its objectives. This paper makes a significant contribution to the European Cohesion Policy and provides concrete answers to urban concerns.

Raphaël LE MEHAUTE

Head of the URBACT Managing Authority

INTRODUCTION

Messages from URBACT II Second Call Projects (November 2009 – February 2013)

Welcome to the second edition of the URBACT II Project Results publication. In the following chapters we present key findings from nine projects funded under the second call between November 2009 and February 2013. We also zoom in some of the 90 integrated Local Action Plans, which resulted from exchanges of knowledge, experience, and the use of tools and training within the URBACT framework.



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Meet the Projects

This chapter briefly introduces the nine projects, described in greater detail in the following chapters and presents some complementarities and cross-cutting messages emerging from the global results.

In Active Travel 9 small cities focussed on ways to encourage walking and cycling. Although these active modes have a high potential for positive change to overcome congestion, reduce CO₂ emissions and improve air quality (by cutting the number of short car trips) they are undervalued by transport planners and local politicians. Participation in the network gave cities new insights into push and pull strategies

that both enhance desired mobility behaviour and discourage un-desirable behaviour.

CASH dealt with efficient renovation of social housing. City partners discovered the potential to achieve better progress and longevity of impacts by bringing together different agencies in an integrated approach, underpinned by the URBACT model. The CASH Compendium lists the different elements, including technological, legal, financial, participatory, energy and project management aspects, which need to be integrated for successful energy efficiency measure in social housing.

ESIMeC promoted learning about innovative economic strategies that capitalise on the assets and specificities of medium sized cities. As a result ESIMeC cities are better equipped to cope with economic downturns, to encourage faster economic recovery, and to manage long-term economic growth and resilience.

The cities in EVUE tried to work out the right niche for electric mobility within wider sustainable mobility strategies, and to clarify their role in supporting market uptake of clean technologies. EVUE delivered new knowledge based on the main learning needs for cities in the four interrelated e-mobility themes: infrastructure, procurement, awareness and business models.

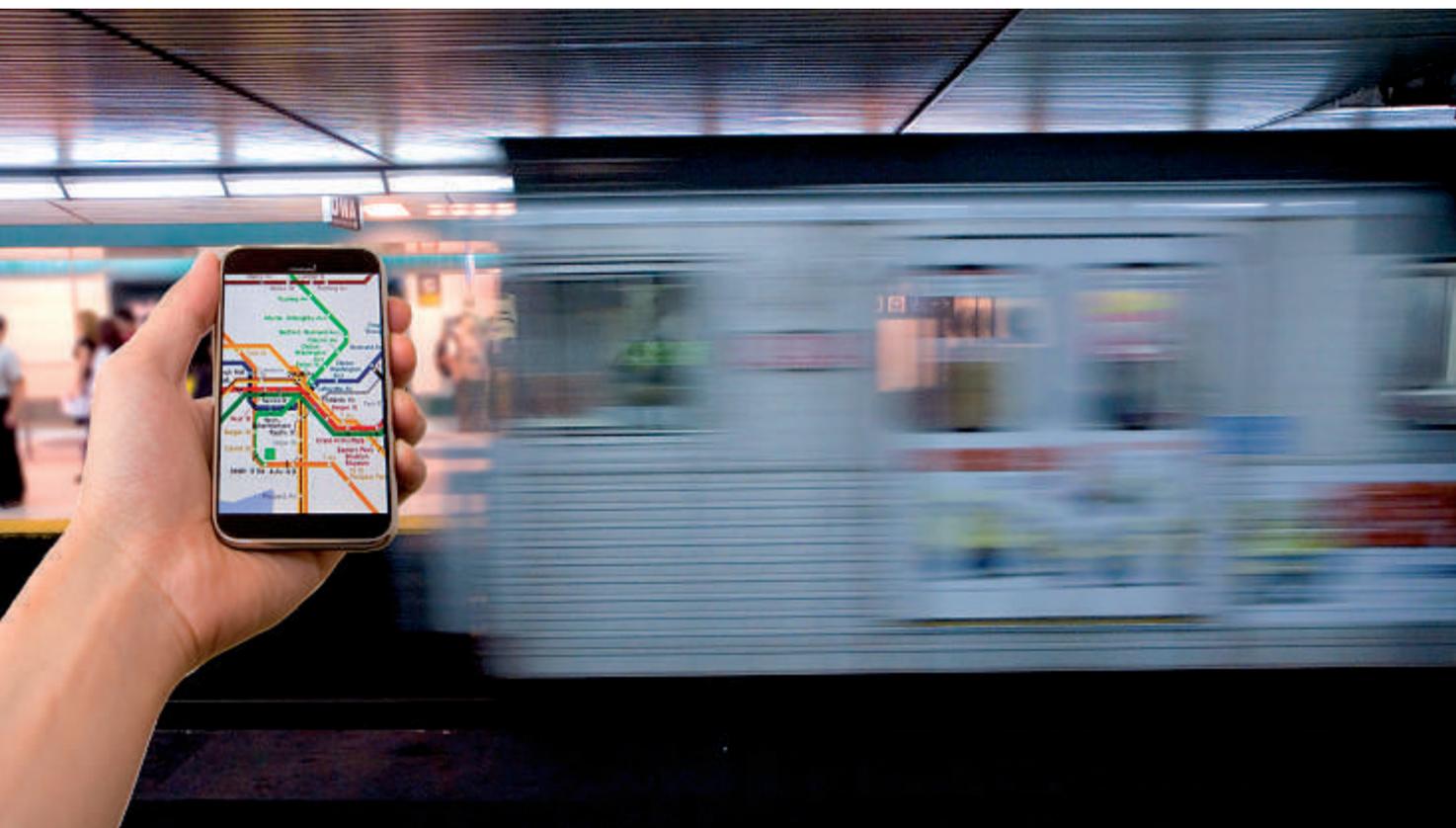
LINKS explored ways in which historic city centers can become attractive to residents while preserving architectural identity, cultural heritage and historical values. The challenge was to improve quality of life in their old centres and to create a comfortable, affordable and sustainable housing taking into

account economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical challenges (including energy efficiency of historic buildings.)

The OP-ACT project brought together small and medium-sized cities affected by the phenomenon of demographic decline. By accepting a paradigm shift away from growth towards stabilisation or reduction of population, the partner cities were able to configure different options for re-structuring.

ROMA-NeT brought together cities committed to improving the social inclusion and community integration of the Roma population living in their cities, including access to education, housing and living conditions, health services, employability and skills. Most of the partner cities were small, and the subject of Roma was still new and difficult. The focus was on working with Roma representatives to find solutions.

SURE supported small and medium sized cities in the development of integrated strategies for the regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods located



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close to town centres. Much of the analysis and good practice on integrated regeneration tends to be based on the experiences of large cities that are not always useful or transferable to cities of a different scale. SURE built capacity to form multi-agency partnerships and develop cross-cutting interventions specific to local needs, opportunities and resources.

The TOGETHER cities sought to put citizens, civic associations and municipalities in a new productive relationship and to mobilise communities to identify and address gaps in local services. Inspired by the thinking behind the Council of Europe Charter for Shared Social Responsibility, it developed in practice a concept of active citizenship, or co-responsibility, summarised as more participative, more engaged and more collaborative.

URBACT Projects Addressing Europe 2020

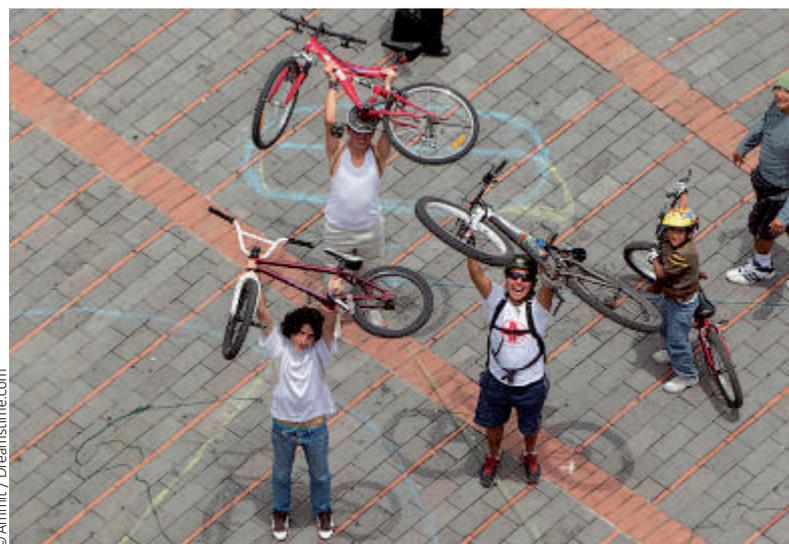
The themes tackled by these nine projects cut across many policy areas reflecting both the complexity of urban challenges, and the solutions needed to address them. Here we present some of the main results in line with the policy priorities of the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy:

- **Making a reality of the low carbon future;**
- **Targeting local economic growth potential;**
- **Building capacity for inclusion;**
- **Developing new governance.**

Making a reality of the low carbon future

Several of the URBACT II Call 2 projects tackled climate challenges related to reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency in both transport and buildings, the two sectors producing the most carbon in Europe. In many cases local stakeholders reached a better understanding of how to combine old and new, how to integrate new technologies with established infrastructures or ecosystems.

Resourcing sustainability: Finding the resources to address multiple urban challenges at a time of austerity



and reduced public budgets was a constant theme in all URBACT projects. Evidence from cities points to a structural lack of finance for energy efficient upgrades or renovations, and complications arise around public and private ownership of buildings. As a consequence many cities were interested in the new generation of Financial Instruments such as revolving funds, especially, Jessica. Public-private partnerships and mobilisation of citizen resources were also explored as ways to achieve low carbon targets. For example, EVUE cities exchanged on the involvement of energy companies in building e-mobility re-charging infrastructure. Active Travel cities showed their ingenuity in finding low-cost and low-tech solutions, for instance, encouraging cycling by lowering the speed limit and painting a cycle lane on the road. A priority for Local Action Plans in the projects dealing with energy efficiency and buildings was to develop the use of new financial tools such as Energy Saving Certificates (ESC) and Energy Performance Contracts. LINKS partners solicited the support of the European institutions, arguing that the reinforced urban focus of the Regional Development Funds was an opportunity to recognise the key role of historic centres for sustainable urban development. They called for a percentage of ERDF for cities to be allocated to energy retrofitting of residential buildings in historic centres. The aim would be to provide exemplary solutions of eco-restoration in order to help municipalities kick-

start the mainstream energy retrofitting of existing buildings. These URBACT cities are now making better use of available resources in spite of the tough economic environment, finding innovative solutions to keep moving towards sustainability.

Soft measures for changing behaviour: The emerging evidence from several cities stressed that technology-based changes, to save energy, for instance, have to be backed up by softer measures to involve citizens and businesses, to educate and motivate behaviour change. This was the case in all of the projects tackling climate change. From Active Travel and EVUE the recommendation was made that future energy efficiency measures should include funding for both hard and soft initiatives in urban mobility. This is a vital dimension of an integrated approach that Cohesion Policy frameworks can encourage. For instance, Active Travel advocated that mobility budgets should not just focus on infrastructure investments. A good example is that 1 out of every 4 Euros of Munich's cycle policy is spent on soft measures like marketing, information or testing new behaviour campaigns. CASH partners came up with a mixture of innovative tools supporting exchanges between all stakeholders, such as independent energy advisors, champions and community ambassadors trained to change behaviour and educate citizens in realising the benefits of energy efficient renovation. Similarly, certain LINKS cities developed guidelines and assistance for the owners of historic buildings to better consume energy and undertake renovation work. Bayonne, for instance, with the involvement of diverse local stakeholders carried out many campaigns, workshops and training to inhabitants about the way of consuming energy and preserving historic buildings (see "Zoom on Bayonne" for more details).

Diversification of energy sources: Projects explored ways for cities to move to cleaner energy sources. Project outputs include checklists for cities to make sure that new technologies harness the potential for greener energy supply and understand in what circumstances district heating, local grid

management or decentralised generation can become viable. CASH recommended using strategic energy planning in order to choose the most suitable energy scenario and most suitable energy sources for a given city. Experiences in EVUE showed that electric mobility is not the only solution for future urban mobility, but that it can make an important contribution in reducing environmental impact, especially when applied to trips that are necessary for the functioning of the city (freight operations, service fleets) but which cannot easily be made in other modes (public transport, walking or cycling). The 'total cost of ownership' of alternative technology models has to be calculated differently (in the case of electric vehicles there is no fuel and lower maintenance costs) but this necessitates a change in thinking and planning to realise the benefits. Other exemplary pilot projects carried out within LINKS showed how traditional low-tech renovation techniques can be combined with high-tech, low-energy retrofitting. LINKS partners also agreed that eco-restoration of old public buildings should be in the heart of an integrated and sustainable plan for urban regeneration. Combining work on public buildings with redesigning public space can only bring environmental, social and economic benefits in the long-term, as shows Veria's example in the following pages.

Targeting local economic growth potential

Many of the projects also looked at the local economy of the future from several perspectives:

Tapping into promising sectors for job creation:

Through their Local Actions Plans, ESIMeC cities targeted sectors that they had identified as having the greatest potential in terms of job creation: the green, white (health and social care) and digital economies. Albacete (Spain) has ambitious CO₂ reduction targets for public buildings. The city has developed a plan to re-skill building workers who have lost their jobs to develop new green construction skills. They hope to use these newly trained people to work on municipal energy efficiency projects thereby achieving a win-win for



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Realism in local economic strategy:

One of the conclusions of the OP-ACT project was that instead of competing with bigger neighbouring cities partners should build on their own strengths. Rather than denying the reality of socio-economic decline and developing overambitious local strategies, shrinking cities need to be realistic and arrest the decline by reinforcing existing assets. Altena in Germany, one of OP-ACT's partners, responded to chronic shrinkage by deciding to take better advantage of its historic castle situated on the cliffs above the town by constructing a lift to connect the castle and its visiting tourists with

the environment and the economy. In CASH there was a focus on how to generate local clusters for the whole supply chain in energy efficient renovation from supplier, planners, architects via installers, to users. Quality management and energy labelling can help promote initiatives like this. LINKS also argued that eco-restoration, including retrofitting, of public building could directly contribute to job creation in the construction sector, and indirectly in related industries in the materials supply chain, education, research and innovation, energy services companies, and waste management.

Social enterprise: In a context of unprecedented austerity in government budgets, businesses which trade with a social purpose are becoming increasingly vital in the provision of public services and economic development. The SURE cities explored both the opportunities and limitations of social enterprise in the socio-economic regeneration of deprived urban areas. One study visit focused on a well-established social enterprise network in Albacete. There, Cáritas Albacete runs shops selling recycled or donated goods, creating volunteering and paid work. One such shop was relocated to the SURE target area.

the city. This ongoing project carried out by a private investor aims to bring economic growth inside the city. ESIMeC emphasised the importance of a thorough understanding of the real needs of local employers and the state of labour market. The project launched a skills forecasting tool to help cities use quantitative and qualitative methodologies to understand employer skills needs, an essential step in any city strategy. The partnership also identified examples of good practice, such as the Job and Training House in Cherbourg, which forecasts economic development trends for job demand and supply.

Building capacity for inclusion

Cities are the level of government closest to citizens, which means they are closest to people's needs and better placed to understand the problems of exclusion faced by certain individuals, families and groups. Several URBACT cities learnt how to use this asset to promote inclusion and better involvement of all citizens.

Building better engagement with excluded groups: Local Support Groups provided a platform



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for cities to work with communities most at risk of urban poverty. Drawing on other URBACT cities' experiences, it appears that many stakeholders benefitted from the Local Support Group mechanism to address politically sensitive problems of marginalised communities. The lack of capabilities among residents or excluded community groups to engage in complex strategy development and

implementation is frequently presented as a barrier. But the lack of capacity within municipalities to work with these communities is rarely mentioned. ROMA-NeT made a recommendation that all hard measures, for instance, for regeneration of neighbourhoods, should be supplemented with soft measures to build the capacity of local residents to be involved.

Participation of Roma communities: ROMA-NeT proved to be a useful vehicle for articulating and promoting the needs of the Roma minority, by the simple fact of getting people round a table for first time to talk with and about the Roma. The experience of ROMA-NeT gave partners knowledge about integrated, community-led approaches of other cities in Europe on Roma inclusion that take a long term view, develop closer ongoing relationships with the community, and do not try to impose a solution of simply moving communities from ghettos to new housing. Participation in the network initiated a debate about who has the right to represent the Roma. It started people moving in a process to better



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manage integration of Roma, together with Roma representatives. The end result was a new realisation for some cities that without community engagement the implementation of policy interventions will fail. The URBACT Local Support Groups provide a model for making this happen. There was also a learning point that in order to effectively articulate what they need to improve their own quality of life civil society organisations, such as those of the Roma, need resources and capacity.

Needs-led collaboration for better services: The TOGETHER project provided a mechanism by which municipalities and their politicians were able to enter into a systematic dialogue with a wider group of citizens for the first time outside of election times. An interesting result was the Social Pharmacy project in Kavala, Greece, in which the city, the health service and volunteers started to run a public service. This model of provision moved from a linear form of welfare, which just goes from the state to the beneficiary, with a service that goes both ways. In Active Travel Audit a self-assessment method was introduced and piloted to bring user needs into planning of mobility. In SURE cities more than half of the participating stakeholders were resident representatives in disadvantaged neighbourhoods working with their Local Support Groups. Participants learnt how to work together with community organisations to develop strategic regeneration actions that ultimately better serve needs and focus investments in areas of deprivation.

Developing new governance

One of the messages from all projects for cities is that even if they do not have enough margins for manoeuvre, they have the possibility to do things differently to achieve results. Replacing traditional governance by new ways of working, involving unusual suspects, citizens, private and public sectors, regional and national authorities should be in cities' agendas for change. Better governance, intelligence and collective consciousness are part of it and can be done in different ways:

Citizen engagement moving to co-responsibility:

Several projects exchanged and experimented with new ways of involving stakeholder groups, especially, citizens and residents, in local action planning. SURE produced a toolkit with tips on participatory planning in medium sized cities. It provides concrete ideas on how to develop a consensus-building approach that helps a community to join together in explaining how they would like their community or organization to develop over the next few years. The approach requires constant communication, so that planning, implementation and feedback are merged into a single process.

TOGETHER produced a 7 point scale to measure progress in citizen engagement which gives some insight in how to rectify the democratic deficit and reduce the distance between government and citizen. Focus groups were held to pose open-ended questions and collect ideas and observations about what citizens see as well-being and ill-being. The feedback provided a rich seam of material to deepen the understanding of the range of issues which are of concern to all sections of the local community. As a result in Botkyrka (a suburb of Stockholm) citizens self organised to negotiate and provide new services in partnership with the municipality to deal with security problems in the neighbourhood. In close co-operation with both local council staff and the police, an initiative for night patrols emerged.

Management of demographic decline: OP-ACT tackled a governance issue faced by some 40% of medium-sized European cities that have lost a significant part of their population. Many Eastern European cities are affected by this shrinkage. The conclusions are that the management of shrinkage is much more complicated and more difficult to accomplish politically than the governance of growth. In parallel to growth processes, creative instruments and solutions for dismantling and/or stabilization must be developed. The OP-ACT project also underlined the importance of changing mindsets – particularly those of key decision makers and thought leaders.



Multi –level governance: In the OP-ACT Mayors Charta civic leaders from the partner cities requested a greater response from regional, national and supranational institutions to the shrinking cities problem. Sharing these results with cities facing declining population is a major contribution to shaping a more realistic approach for territorial cohesion across Europe. LINKS and CASH projects also highlighted the importance of making connections from local to regional and national levels in order to raise awareness and strengthen their local strategies.

by peers in other cities. Thematic expertise and the cross-fertilisation of emerging ideas in thematic poles bring further inspiration. The experience of developing integrated plans over time, and involving multiple stakeholders through URBACT Local Support

The URBACT Legacy

URBACT created a space to exchange and learn. Transnational exchange provides an opportunity to share experiences, to learn how to use processes, tools and new core knowledge, and this is enriched by being accompanied and supported on that journey



Groups proves to cities that, in the face of the complex challenges, a robust and systematic approach can deliver the best way forward.

All of the city experiences documented in this publication highlight the positive impact of the URBACT method, whereby cities create local stakeholder groups to develop integrated plans. For some cities, particularly, but not only, in convergence regions, this was the first time that they had brought local stakeholders together to work on a concrete problem. The URBACT Local Support Group provided a forum in which stakeholders could come out of traditional silos and define challenges together. This in turn created awareness amongst the municipal staff of the need to reach out to other departments, policy areas and stakeholders when making plans or strategies. They began to understand the power of partnerships and the central role of cities in bringing stakeholders together and building relationships. These platforms and processes which create trust with citizens are vital, even though managing them is not an easy task. The URBACT experience led to the realisation for many that when a dialogue of culture and involvement is created, the integrated approach that follows has a much greater chance

of delivering sustainability both in terms of policy impact and in better connections and relationships for future initiatives. A new reality is embedded in local processes as well as an understanding that this is a prerequisite of success. These actions are not headline grabbing, or easy to report and quantify. It is often the low key, long term, hard work of meeting, talking, making efforts to understand each other, and reaching compromises that allows solutions and agreements to emerge.

Looking to the future the URBACT partners involved in the second call of projects build on the lessons learnt during three years of exchanges and results so far are very encouraging. In their closure reports (Spring 2013) more than 50% of partners declare having secured funds for the implementation of their URBACT Local Action Plans, out of which 75% have already started implementing actions. Other cities are still in negotiation with Managing Authorities to fund their Local Action Plans during the next programme period 2014-2020.

Discover more about our projects, partners and Local Action Plans in the following pages and at **www.urbact.eu**.

Active Travel Network

Tackling Transport Problems by Promoting Walking and Cycling in Small and Medium Sized Cities

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION
2009–2012

LEAD PARTNER
Weiz (Austria)

PARTNERS

FUNDING
Total Eligible Cost: EUR 553 267
ERDF Contribution: EUR 395 523



Urban mobility is vital for socio-economic growth, but overwhelming car use in cities causes accidents, urban sprawl, noise, and emissions of CO₂ and other pollutants. In a 2007 Eurobarometer survey *Attitudes on issues related to EU Transport Policy*, 90% of Europeans said their local traffic situation should be improved. For the URBACT project Active Travel Network, the answer is sustainable transport policies that encourage people to use active alternatives to driving. Active travel – such as walking or cycling – is still low in many cities despite being cheap, healthy, non-polluting, and good for local economies. For three years, Active Travel Network’s partnership of small and medium cities focused on promoting active travel for journeys under 5 km, which represent 25–50% of car trips in EU cities.

MAIN RESULTS

Policy Recommendations for Increasing Active Travel

Active Travel Network set out policy recommendations for increasing active travel, drawing directly on experiences of its partner cities in tackling their traffic problems. Actions taken – and analysed – by partners during the project include: a deal with local garages to lend clients electric bikes while their cars are serviced; creating and promoting thematic walking and cycling routes; planning a green, integrated “urban track” linking downtown to the suburbs; a “Hotel Bike System” for tourists; and promoting the health benefits of daily physical activity.

Recommendations apply to all European cities and municipalities. Here are some highlights:

- 1 Active travel awareness raising**
 - Politicians, planners and other authorities must recognise cycling and walking as modes of transport just as important as cars or buses.
 - Inform stakeholders and foster commitment by showing the benefits and impacts of a combined approach to non-motorised transport and mobility management.
- 2 Active travel strategies and accompanying measures**
 - Push and pull strategies are crucial to influence travel behavior, and can encourage a shift from car use to more energy efficient city transport, a main objective of modern transport policies.
 - Lower speed limits, and limited paid parking, if properly enforced, can reduce car use and increase cycling and walking by making short trips safer and more attractive. Parking fees can also raise money, which should be channeled into financing cycling and walking measures. This is a key means to ensure sustainable modes become an “integral part of mobility” in cities, as highlighted in the Transport White Paper COM (2011) 144, Roadmap to a Single European Transport

Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system.

- Measures that reduce emissions by encouraging non-motorised personal transport such as walking and cycling, and public transport (linked to cycling measures), are in line with EU targets to cut carbon emissions in transport by 20% by 2020 and 60% by 2050.

- Other policies such as health, environment, youth and family, tourism, public relations and economy should be combined and co-operate with mobility policy.

- Strategic planning decisions should consider the benefits of active mobility. This is particularly true when allocating space to cars, public transport, cyclists or pedestrians. With indicators like transport capacity, safety, health impacts and costs, decisions should be set on active travel modes and secondly on public transport. A recent study in Helsinki, for example, found that infrastructure investments targeting cycling brought significant health and socio-economic benefits. In fact, their benefit-cost ratio was nearly 8:1 compared with ordinary infrastructure investments.

- Authorities should establish a permanent Local Support Group targeting active travel policy, with representatives from various authorities, and externals and stakeholders such as school children, travel-to-work employees and employers, and tourists.

- Funding for active travel policies, strategies and measures must be guaranteed and not just an appendix to transport planning. Fixed budgets must be set for short, mid and long term projects.

- Active travel budget should not cover infrastructure alone. The city of Munich spends one in four Euros of its cycle policy on soft measures like marketing and testing new behaviour campaigns.

3 Managing active travel projects

- Carry out an active travel audit. When making decisions, politicians and planners must consider the real needs of users, in order to develop integrated policy rather than ad hoc, isolated plans and measures. The Active Travel Audit Scheme, developed within the Active Travel Network project, and based on BYPAD, is a self-assessment method carried out by different groups. It requires an external auditor and an internal

evaluation group of politicians, administrations and users.

- Set clear, measurable objectives. When planning a project or measures, define in advance: expected results; time schedule; and who should do what, when and with which resources and responsibilities.

- Inter-departmental and inter-disciplinary work is key to success. Urban mobility projects should follow an integrated approach, and not be limited to the transport department and engineers. For Active Travel Network, the diversity of knowledge, working methods, external and internal contacts of a range of relevant departments was invaluable.

- People appreciate pedestrian and cycle networks, but separate cycle tracks are not always necessary. There is a belief that cycling can only be promoted once a network of separate cycle tracks has been built. But such construction is often impossible due to limits on space, time or financing. A cost-effective solution is to reduce – and enforce – speed limits for the entire city, to 30 km/h for example; then paint cycle lanes on the roads, not the pavements.

- Pedestrians and cyclists should have highest priorities – above car traffic. The municipality should back this up with year-round, unproblematic cycling possibilities and standardised complaint management.

- High quality, safe, rain-protected bicycle parking next to living areas and other targets such as schools, companies, shops, leisure facilities and train stations.

- People won't cycle simply because a cycle path is available: they need encouragement. A specific communication strategy for walking and cycling is vital, including tailor-made information material (e.g. brochures, flyers) and elements to motivate pedestrians and cyclists to interact with the city.

- Cities should regularly organise events for various groups of all ages, with participation incentives such as awards or prizes. Some examples: bikers' breakfast, accompanied cycling to school, best employer for active travel-awards, joint walking actions, city-wide cycle to work campaign.

- Cycling and walking need data. As for motorised traffic, automatic permanent counting points with feedback-display, household surveys with special analysis and



Prospects

The Active Travel Network project helped partners develop an URBACT Local Action Plan to boost active travel in their own city. All expect to start implementing these plans in the next years. Some budgets are already available. Skanderborg has received national funding, and other partners are submitting proposals to the European Commission.

URBACT Local Support Groups set up by project partners will continue, and may even broaden the range of topics they cover.

Finally, links made during the project will remain, between partner cities and with other projects and professionals working on transport.

periodic evaluation for success control should be carried out and action plans adopted.

- Cooperation with media. Debates on transport, a popular urban issue, can get emotional. To encourage objectivity and reduce negative coverage in the local media – and on social media – the topic must be communicated positively, highlighting benefits such as increased quality of life.
- Decision makers and stakeholders must act as shining role models. Authenticity and credibility are particularly important in transport behaviour, where the advantages are not always obvious, and the switch from driving to cycling or walking can be seen as restrictive or a sign of poverty.

Oswin Donnerer, Town Councillor, Weiz: “All in all, the project was a big success. Not only did we have many international contacts, but we could also learn very much from our project partners. The final phase of the project consists of putting as many ideas as possible from the project into practice, which will lead to an improvement of urban planning for all participating project partners.”



Learn more about Active Travel and download Active Travel Final publication and partners' Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/activetravel

ZOOM ON LJUTOMER SLOVENIA



Ljutomer is a small town near the Croatian border, in the Pomurje Region of north-eastern Slovenia. While the town has a population of about 5500, the wider Ljutomer Municipality covers some 18 000 people. Transport-wise, many people commute to work by car, though Ljutomer also has two railway stations. In fact, the city is surrounded by railways, causing traffic jams at peak times when roads close to allow trains to pass. The local economy is largely based on grape farming and winemaking. With official records going back nearly 800 years, the town today boasts three main squares, and a number of beautiful 18th century buildings.

Local Challenges

Ljutomer joined the URBACT project Active Travel Network in search of solutions to local traffic problems caused by high levels of car-use.

The Municipality also faced a host of related challenges: shop owners were demanding more car parks to improve city centre access; the city centre faced decay as shops and people moved out; citizens saw walking and cycling as leisure activities, rather than as a means of transport;

pedestrians and cyclists were not given enough priority, on the roads or in planning decisions; pedestrians were endangered by poor infrastructure; public transport needed improvement; and, finally, increasing energy costs were making motorised travel expensive.

It was time to improve unhealthy travel habits, raise public transport use, create good conditions for walking and cycling, and promote active, high quality lifestyles.

With URBACT partner cities, Ljutomer could gain the mobility management experience it needed to promote sustainable road transport with an emphasis on energy efficiency, environmental conservation and social impacts.

Added-Value of Transnational Networking

Ljutomer found the project's transnational exchanges particularly rewarding, enabling them to draw on experiences, ideas and good practices from other partners and implement them in their own town. In this way, the "Bike Check" event, described below, is one idea Ljutomer picked up from the Active Travel Lead Partner Weiz.

On a larger scale, plans to build more car parks at the school in Ljutomer have been rewritten to encourage active travel, thanks to lessons learnt in Skanderborg, together with input from local stakeholders. Rather than simply increase space for parking, the plan is now to improve the local road system so children can walk or cycle more safely to school. Some roads will be permanently closed to cars. Benefits should be seen as soon as children start back after the 2013 summer holiday.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

Thanks to the URBACT Local Support Group, a range of previously unconnected stakeholders in Ljutomer now cooperate on a wealth of local issues that involve encouraging people to walk or cycle instead of travelling by car.

Members include people from schools, a kindergarten, the municipality, the police, non-governmental organisations, and a home for the elderly. "Rather than working in isolation, they have now started to function like a team," says Mitja Kolbl, of the Municipality of Ljutomer. "The operation of the Local Support Group began to reveal different views on people's own transport-related problems, and their solutions."



In one 2013 action, for example, the Local Support Group (LSG) is cooperating with the Municipality to make the road leading to the primary school car-free, and build new walking paths, bicycle storage and parking spaces some distance from the school.

"Another thing that our LSG is working on at the moment is the organisation of Mobility Day that was held on 11 May 2013, and they are also preparing actions for European Mobility Week that will be held in September [2013]," adds Mitja Kolbl.

As a result, Ljutomer's URBACT Local Support Group has sparked a new, more integrated approach to tackling local problems. Improving access to the school is just one example of a project where the involvement of a range of stakeholders enabled Ljutomer to have a clear overview and produce a well-targeted, realistic action plan.

With Ljutomer's Local Action Plan including actions up to 2020, the town's Local Support Group will live on after the end of the Active Travel Network project.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

The Local Action Plan (LAP) drawn up by Ljutomer during the project was the first of its kind ever produced in the country, and gained national recognition. In 2012, when the President of the Republic of Slovenia Danilo Türk visited the Municipality and discovered Active Travel Network, the project

gained an ally at the highest national level in the Republic of Slovenia.

The LAP is part of Ljutomer's Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), which was chosen as one of three top European mobility plans in 2012. Specifically, the LAP covers Ljutomer's plans for a series of promotion and awareness-raising actions within the city's wider strategy on urban mobility.

"Our SUMP contains five chapters. Two of them encourage walking and exploit the potential of cycling," explains Mitja Kolbl. "Both chapters are connected with our Local Action Plan that we created during the URBACT programme."

The "Walking chapter" in the SUMP includes five goals to reach by 2020: increase the share of walking by a fifth from 2010 levels; improve Ljutomer's walking network; introduce comprehensive traffic calming, both in Ljutomer and in at least three other settlements in the Municipality; halve the 2005-2010 average number of pedestrians injured in accidents; improve the physical infrastructure serving central and hinterland areas. In this chapter, the URBACT Local Action Plan covers "Promotional and educational activities", alongside two other areas of action: "Infrastructure improvement" and "Improvement of conditions for planning".

The "Cycling chapter" also has five goals: increase the proportion of primary school children cycling to school from 8% to 20% and increase the share of high school students from 7% to 15% by 2020; increase the proportion of employees cycling to work from

10% to 20% by 2020; double the length of the cycle network in the hinterland by 2015 and establish a comprehensive cycle network by 2025; ensure conditions for safe bicycle parking in the city of Ljutomer to 2025; and, finally, halve the 2005-2010 average number of cyclists injured in accidents by 2020. Again, the URBACT Local Action Plan contributes to one of three action areas: "Management of cycling in the municipality". The other two are: "Development of a network of bicycle lanes" and "Providing safe bicycle parking".

As part of the LAP's preparation, Ljutomer URBACT Local Support Group members selected and approved the most relevant promotional and awareness-raising activities from a wider list of suggestions.

Here are some highlights:

- Nurseries – **"Mobility Week: Move Yourself, Have Fun, Drive Me"** (annually, 2013-20): nurseries and primary schools lend children scooters and bikes for the journey home, and the next day children and parents use them to come back.
- Primary schools – **"Traffic Snake Game"**, a campaign in which coloured stickers are given out daily to encourage children to travel to school by foot or bike (annually, 2012-20); and **"Traffic Diary"** - campaign for children and their teachers (annually, 2013-20) aiming to stimulate home-school travel in a safe and environmentally-friendly way for a week (or more).
- Gymnasium – **"Bike Check"** (annually, 2012-20): workshops organised on the proper use of bicycles, meanwhile, bicycle experts make professional inspections of

students' bicycles; and **"Pimp My Bike"** (annually, 2012-20): presentation of bikes spruced up by young innovators with the aim of encouraging other students to use bicycles more often (even old bikes can be repaired and used again).

- Organisations and companies – **"By Bike or on Foot to Work"** (annually, 2013-20): all employees of the Ljutomer Home for the Elderly will participate in a competition for the highest number of kilometres travelled in an environmentally friendly manner. Working with the Primary school of Ljutomer, **new covered and secured bicycle storage** with 40 parking spots are to be built in front of the school (2017).

- General public – **"Active Mobility Day in Ljutomer"** (annually, 2012-20): several awareness-raising campaigns grouped in a one-day event, such as: bike check activity, health check activity, funny bike riding competition, hiking through the city, painted shapes to cycle on, promotion of new electric bicycles; **"Billboards with the City Map"**, showing bus stops and foot-paths to the train station (2018);

"Awareness-Raising Promotional Brochure with a Walking and a Cycling Map of Ljutomer" (2012-future) including maps showing short walks and bike rides of up to 15 minutes across the city-centre.

Prospects

Ljutomer's Local Action Plan includes actions to be implemented every year until 2020, some with funding secured in the municipality budget. For others, they plan to apply to the European Commission's Sustainable Urban Mobility (SUM) fund (further information at www.dotherightmix.com).

Ljutomer aims to be the leading Slovenian municipality of its size in terms of sustainable urban mobility by 2016, and to expand their good practices to other municipalities. They plan to keep their helpful links with Active Travel Network partners and compare progress in the years to come.

Mayor of Ljutomer Olga Karba: "Participating in the Active Travel Network has strengthened our resolve, and empowered us, to take the next step towards an environmentally friendly way of managing mobility within our municipality. The exchange of ideas and experience with partner cities was of great mutual benefit and has yielded solutions which enable and promote a more active daily lifestyle within our local community."

ZOOM ON SKANDERBORG DENMARK



Skanderborg is a historic, medium-sized town in eastern mainland Denmark. Once a hunting retreat for 12th-16th century Danish kings, today Skanderborg is better known for its annual music festival, “Denmark’s Most Beautiful Festival”. Within 30 km of three major cities, including Denmark’s second city Aarhus, the municipality is popular with commuters, and its population of about 58 000 is growing. The municipality comprises several urban areas as well as woods and farmland, and is part of the wider East Jutland metropolitan area of 1.2 million inhabitants.

Local Challenges

When Skanderborg decided to join the URBACT project Active Travel Network, local cycling conditions were relatively good, and almost everybody owned a bike. The challenge was to get more people using their bikes for everyday travel, particularly commuting to work, going to school and other short trips, such as shopping.

Skanderborg is on Jutland's main North-South traffic corridor. While a motorway takes most of the transit car traffic outside the town, extra local traffic is created by the 16 000 inhabitants commuting daily out of the municipality, including 10 000 travelling 20 km to Aarhus.

In terms of public transport, the main railway provides a good train service to the North, South and West. Travelling by bus is also an option. In fact, many commuters could leave their car at home, and cycle to bus and train stations.

In its 2009 Municipal Plan, Skanderborg set as a long-term target the improvement of traffic safety, particularly on school roads and for cyclists and pedestrians in city centres. Other priorities included paths ensuring easy access from homes to schools, jobs, shops, recreational facilities, nature sites, and public transport.

Skanderborg needed to find solutions to encourage people to cycle more in order to reduce car traffic, lower CO₂ emissions, and improve physical and mental health.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

For Skanderborg, working with towns from other countries was "inspirational". Particularly useful was the chance to discuss common challenges, benefit from experiences gained by others, and look for solutions together. Not only did transnational discussions bring new ideas, but it also gave Skanderborg the confidence – and political weight – to apply new solutions. One example was "The Extraordinaries", a campaign that involved shutting major roads around local schools every morning for a week in 2012. People cycled or walked to school instead of driving, and many continued to do so once the roads were reopened.

Drawing up a Local Action Plan takes time and dedication, as well as crucial additional advice

and support from partner towns and the project's Lead Expert.

Asked if participation in the URBACT project helped them find new interesting practices, tools, and policy ideas to address local challenges, Skanderborg answers: "Absolutely!". One example is the "walking bus", based on ideas from Ljutomer and Sebes, which groups of children now use to walk to and from school in Skanderborg.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

A major new approach resulting from Skanderborg's participation in Active Travel Network is the unprecedented cooperation between departments within the municipality. On joining Active Travel Network, Skanderborg set up links between three departments: the Municipal Planning Department, which also works on energy and CO₂ issues; the Road and Traffic Department; and the Health Department. Using this integrated approach, the working group became an important element in achieving the aims of municipality plans.

The URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) in Skanderborg brought new stakeholders on board and built lasting contacts. The national train company DSB and the regional train company Arriva joined local partners in the LSG to work on improving conditions for cyclists at train stations. Others ranged from cycling clubs to politicians, including the chairmen of the Communities Committees for Planning and Roads, and Education and Children, and a member of the Communities Committee for Health.

Joint tasks included identifying problems and solutions, contributing ideas to the Local Action Plan, and making sure actions were relevant and clearly described. Involving stakeholders encouraged their backing for carrying out the actions, and helped promote Active Travel Network in local clubs and organisations.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

For Skanderborg, drawing up a Local Action Plan (LAP) during the Active Travel Network project provided a clear set of measures to help implement the city's 2009 Municipal Plan. Hans Jørgen Bitsch, Public Health Consultant at Skanderborg's Municipal Department of Health Promotion, explains:

"The 2009 plan is a general engagement about, amongst other things, reducing CO₂ emissions, helping people have better health, and improving travelling safety, especially for cyclists. But it's not concrete. The LAP takes up certain objectives of the 2009 plan and answers with concrete actions; it's operational."

Hans Jørgen Bitsch says efforts are now being made to feed parts of the Local Action Plan into the long-term action plans of relevant municipal departments, for example, those dealing with health and roads.

"Working with Active Travel Network made us focus on how to turn our municipal plan into real actions, more quickly and with a broader input than we might have done otherwise," says Hans Jørgen Bitsch.

Here are just a few of the concrete initiatives in the Skanderborg Local Action Plan, some of which have already been implemented:

- "Traffic Safe School Route", with associated promotional elements including "The Extraordinaries" where roads around schools are temporarily closed to encourage families to find healthy alternatives for getting to school (www.deualmindelige.dk) (piloted in 2011, events in 2012, 2013, and beyond);
- More bicycle racks installed at stations, in cooperation with the national and regional train companies DSB and Arriva (2011 onwards);
- More bicycle racks installed at traffic junctions, with air pumps where possible (2011 onwards);
- Lower speed limits enforced in built-up areas, for example, in residential areas, and near schools, kindergartens and leisure facilities (up for political discussion in 2013);
- "Bike Games Corps", a cooperation between the Municipality of Skanderborg and the Danish Cyclist Federation (DCF), supported by the Government's National Cycling Promotion Fund. A one-day course for teachers to become instructors in cycling safety for children (2012);
- "Bicycle Friendly Workplaces", an agreement between the Municipality of Skanderborg and DCF to promote employees' use of bikes for commuting to and from work. Expert assistance from DCF is paid by National Cycling Promotion Fund. The idea is to increase the proportion of bike commuters, and raise the number of healthy, happy employees. If a workplace supports its riders, the urge to cycle can catch on (2013).

Skanderborg has already implemented some of the planned actions, like safe school routes, and others are in the pipeline. For this, the Municipality of Skanderborg has assigned funds of about EUR 400 000 every year for four years.



Active Travel Network

Tackling Transport Problems by Promoting Walking and Cycling in Small and Medium Sized Cities

Prospects

Tackling challenges through the URBACT Local Support Group, the Active Travel Audit, and clear problem analysis has given Skanderborg a durable method for pinpointing its most effective actions. Thanks to Active Travel Network, Municipality staff now consider active travel when drafting plans or strategies.

Skanderborg will continue to implement its Local Action Plan, and build on the experiences it has gained through URBACT. An additional direct result for the Municipality was the invitation to join a major project, Nordic Bicycle Cities II – a pro-cycling cooperation between Nordic cities, funded by the EU programme INTERREG IVA.

As well as enabling Skanderborg to exchange ideas and develop new campaigns with other Nordic cities, the new project will contribute to running campaigns planned in the Local Action Plan to encourage people to use their cars less when travelling to school and work.

And, building on their joint success with Active Travel Network, the Municipality's three relevant departments will continue their cooperation on this new project, together with a new member: the Municipality's Department for Children and Education.

Hans Jørgen Bitsch, Public Health Consultant, Department of Health Promotion, Municipality of Skanderborg: "Denmark is a 'bicycle country', but the share of bikers is decreasing. Only cities that have focused on this issue have got an increase in the number of bikers. Working on this with URBACT, we've brought municipal departments to work together in a way they've never done before."

CASH

Cities' Action for Sustainable Housing

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION

November 2009 - January 2013

LEAD PARTNER

Echirolles (France)

PARTNERS

FUNDING

Total Eligible Cost: EUR 645 469
ERDF Contribution: EUR 461 008



Housing is a priority area for European energy efficiency, not only because it consumes a high volume of energy, but it is also an area where huge improvements could be made. Although contribution of housing to carbon dioxide emissions is high and growing, many residents still cannot access affordable, “clean” energy, and practices remain inefficient. Technologies have been developed that could drastically reduce energy use in housing, but take-up is slow, and much of the related business potential remains untapped. In line with European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2010/31/EU (EPBD), and other EU initiatives like the Energy Efficiency Directive of 22 June 2011, the URBACT project CASH set out to help reduce the energy consumption of buildings and their occupants. Over three years, CASH’s 11 partners focused on improving the energy efficiency of social and affordable housing, proposing new solutions and promoting new policies for sustainable renovation. They also aimed to influence users’ behaviour through citizens’ involvement.

MAIN RESULTS

Because the high technical potential for making energy savings in housing was not being fulfilled, CASH's partners understood there were other factors to take into account, some of them complicated, and some emotional. One is the question of identity, where housing type can play a strong role for cities, neighbourhoods and even individual families. Others concern quality of life and living costs. Unfortunately, the most affordable housing is often of the poorest quality, especially in countries where there is no governmental system for social housing. Renovation costs for individual households have to be affordable, with acceptable costs for the house owners too.

Integrated Green Renovation of Social Housing: A Guide for Cities

The 11 partners in the URBACT project CASH combined their own experiences with input from experts to produce a guide on the integrated energy efficient renovation of social housing, with advice for greater EU support. The partners also took these findings back to their own Local Support Groups, where they fed into the Local Action Plans. Here is a selection of their concrete suggestions.

1 Technological Developments for Energy Efficient Renovation

Technological possibilities are developing fast, and not always used in the most effective way. How to tackle energy refurbishment of social housing in cities:

- Make a survey of the heat energy demand (heating and domestic hot water);
- Look for potentials of reducing demand (through insulation, water saving devices, etc.);
- Calculate the differences between heating systems (boiler only, boiler and Combined Heat and Power, heat pump, biomass heating systems such as stoves or boilers, district heating), comparing not only acquisition, installation and maintenance costs, but fuel dependency and emissions (CO₂ and others).

Keep in mind that prices for different fuels may develop differently in the future;

– Make a long term calculation (15-20 years). To avoid ad hoc decision making, social landlords and house owners should make a structural renovation plan, covering technical, social and economic and environmental aspects. Choices should take into account grey (hidden) energy, including energy required in transporting and recycling materials and technology at the end of their life cycle.

2 Legal Framework for Green Housing Support: National, International and Local

– Create local clusters on green social housing. These can cover the whole supply chain of energy efficient renovation, from supplier, planners, architects via installer, to users. In such a cluster quality management can be developed, using energy labelling;

– Flexible mechanism for rents adapted to local context (deprived neighbourhoods) and a form of protection from rent increase for existing social rents should be ensured;

– In countries with little or no social housing, individual owners are responsible for renovation. Legislation on co-properties and condominiums can stimulate this. In some countries individual owners are obliged to form an association and build a fund for long term maintenance. Regulations should then also cover how the decision making process will be organised.

3 Financial Instruments: Energy, Living Environment, Maintenance and Integration

– National and regional revolving funds (supported by additional fees on rent or energy bills) can be an important instrument, favouring long-term and large-scale projects;

– Independent third-parties should be created or supported to manage technical, financial and organisational aspects and monitor the measures. They could act as a facilitator between landlords/owners of the housing units and tenants. These could be local or regional foundations, energy companies or tenants' organisations;

– All calculations should include running costs for water, electricity and waste – "the second rent";

– European funds such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) should not only be provided for energy measures, but should also be focused on social housing with an integrated approach covering energy, living environment, maintenance and integration.

4 Get Citizens Involved in Urban Climate Policy

Urban climate policy can only be effective with citizen participation, for three main reasons: (1) much energy can be saved in housing using not only technical measures, but also behavioural change; (2) behavioural change is also vital for many technical energy efficiency measures to work; and (3) "investment-behaviour": the choice to invest in buying energy efficient household appliances depends on the public's knowledge and awareness.

It is important to involve citizens at all stages of a policy: use a mixture of innovative tools favouring exchanges between all stakeholders, such as independent energy advisors, trained champions, and ambassadors of energy trained to change behaviour and attitudes and make citizens aware of the benefits of energy efficiency renovation.

6 Use Strategic Planning for Energy Production and Distribution

Use strategic energy planning to choose the most suitable energy scenario, and energy sources, for a given city. Strategic energy planning should cover all buildings in the city, including houses, independent of ownership or the existence of a social housing system. (Naturally, the possible measures and actions will vary considerably.)

– Diversification with several green energy sources is important and should be encouraged;

– Green Combined Heat Power cogeneration should be promoted. A flexible and efficient method for energy transformation, it offers tremendous efficiency and cost savings and can be implemented by energy companies, social landlords, tenants associations or associations of private owners;

– House owners or communities of tenants can be involved in the production and distribution of renewable energy to keep transport lines short and fixed costs low;

– Social housing building blocks and areas may be the nucleus of local energy distribution grids, giving better conditions for the implementation of cogeneration units and transforming the supply from fossil fuels to renewables.

6 Tips for Managing Social Housing Energy Efficient Renovation Projects

It is essential to ensure the adequate participation of all actors in energy renovation and to develop synergies between them:

- Use a systematic approach of energy efficient renovation integrating social, political, environmental, legal and financial components and competences;
- Set up an independent project management body;
- Involve as many strategic stakeholders as possible in the planning phase;
- Take into account the stakeholders' varying timescales and ensure actions in line with various needs;
- Match the funding schemes with the project's timeframe and allow adjustments according to the project evolution;
- Provide the end users with project details at each stage to increase transparency and improve public consultation;
- National policy framework must support, or at least allow, local actions; influence by local actors should be possible.

Nine Policy Recommendations to Help EU Decision-Makers and Managing Authorities Make the Best Use of Structural Funds for Sustainable Social Housing

Drawing on local solutions, CASH worked closely with CECODHAS Housing Europe (the European Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing) to build a series of policy

recommendations for EU decision-makers and Managing Authorities. The resulting brochure of "9 Policy Recommendations" features four sections that reflect what CASH describes as the "ingredients of success" for a programme of Cities' Action for Social Housing.

Better monitor local need and resources and favour local green energy mix

- 1 Adapt the energy production systems to the local specificities and favour green solutions
- 2 Make affordable housing the core of local energy production and distribution grids
- 3 Strengthen the local human capital

Dare citizens' empowerment and participation of civil society

- 4 Strengthen the participatory approach within the cohesion policy
- 5 Use EU funds to enable the participation of tenants in all stages of sustainability programmes in the field of social housing

Provide clear and stable financial options

- 6 Set up long-term, large-scale energy efficiency funds accessible at local levels
- 7 Create intermediary bodies that will coordinate energy efficiency

programmes and help social housing deal with energy companies

Strengthen the skills of local authorities

- 8 Use EU Structural Funds to provide technical assistance to develop long-term sustainable social housing programmes
- 9 Create local clusters on sustainable social housing

Prospects

In cities across the CASH partnership, Local Action Plans are starting to be followed, ways of working have been improved, and lasting relationships forged. Rhône-Alpes, for example, is strengthening working relations with various local partners. For Echirolles, systematic asset management has become a priority. Frankfurt is planning the development of a refurbishment roadmap for the whole housing stock. The situation and necessary renovation of all houses in the city are being analysed and will form the basis of a renovation plan.

As a direct consequence of CASH, Les Mureaux has officially launched the Seine Aval Platform for Energy Efficiency, a completely new concept of taskforce and an innovative process for education and training, research and communication on energy efficiency.

"We, Mayors of the 10 cities and Vice-President of the region partners of the CASH network, have worked during 30 months - with the stakeholders involved in social housing energy efficient renovation - on the major challenges of energy intensive social housing and fuel poverty. The sharing of experiences and the analysis of key obstacles, led to the elaboration of proposals to shape a more favorable future for social housing energy efficient renovation..." **From CASH's 'Declaration of Intent', signed in Brussels, November 2012.**



Learn more about CASH and download CASH Final Publication and partners' Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/cash

ZOOM ON TATABÁNYA HUNGARY



Tatabánya (about 72 000 inhabitants) is situated in the Central Transdanubian region of Hungary, on the Vienna-Budapest transport route. The city was founded in 1947 by the union of four existing villages. Tatabánya became one of Hungary's most important coal-mining and industrial areas in the second part of the 20th century, requiring housing to be built quickly for the employees of the mines and connected enterprises. Today, no active mines remain. The difficulties of social and economic change after 1990 were ironed out by the municipality's systematic economic development policy, and Tatabánya is now one of Hungary's most rapidly developing settlements. However Tatabánya, and Hungary as a whole, still suffer from high energy costs and unemployment despite various successful programmes set up to tackle these problems in recent years. A lack of past renovation efforts, together with increasing energy costs, mean the city now faces a real need for home reconstruction and building. In response, the city has recently started an efficient Energy Efficiency (EE) programme and fund.

Local Challenges

Some 40% of energy consumed in Hungary is used in buildings, two-thirds of which goes on heating and cooling. Meanwhile, 70% of Hungary's approximately 4.3 million homes fail to meet modern functional technical and thermal engineering requirements, with a similar ratio for public buildings. These figures come from Hungary's *National Energy Strategy 2030* (published 2012), which aims to reduce, by 2030, the heating energy requirements of buildings by 30% through energy efficiency programmes in accordance with European Union targets. This will enable a more than 10% reduction in the overall primary energy demand in Hungary.

At city level, Tatabánya's Local Climate Change Strategy and the Integrated Town Developing Strategy (both published 2008), aim to stimulate energy efficiency and promote the use of renewable energy, and reduce local CO₂ emissions. In 2010, when the city joined the URBACT project, it was searching for solutions to a number of problems related to the energy efficient renovation of housing stock.

- **Aging buildings:** The housing stock's average age was 35 years; most needed complex renovation.
- **Mixed ownership:** Most municipalities owned dwellings were for social housing, often in blocks of flats shared by a number of owners, complicating the renovation process.
- **High energy costs:** 75% of housing stock used district heating provided by a local company. Heat was produced by the local power plant using foreign gas. High gas prices and the relative inefficiency of the district heating system were increasing heating costs for local people and social housing tenants.
- **Technological complications:** Blocks of flats and houses were made of a variety of materials, including breeze blocks, bricks, tunnel sheeting and reinforced concrete. Each material and technology available for renovations requires specialist's knowledge, to be adapted to the type of building.
- **Social aspects:** Several buildings needed renovation in deprived neighbourhoods, with problems such as the inability of low-income tenants and owners to finance renovations themselves.
- **Financing aspects:** Although large renovation projects require large, often external funds, financial mechanisms were lacking at national or regional level. Funds change, and application forms are complex, requiring financial guarantees, declarations and insurances. Additional costs for the municipality could be brought on by the requirement to gain consent from 80-90% of owners before applications could be made and renovations implemented.



The intervention area of *Kertváros project*

- **Communication problems:** Tatabánya's population had an insufficient understanding of the advantages and technical possibilities of EE renovation. Owners and tenants were unaware of funding available for renovations.
- **Behaviour:** Lack of interest from tenants or owners. Fear of change.

The term social housing is used here to describe the part of Tatabánya's municipality owned housing stock (more than 2000 pieces) that is rented by social base applications.

Due to the complexity of EE renovation of social housing, and with various reconstruction activities underway, Tatabánya faced a multitude of questions: What was the best way to modernise the social housing stock, finance energy efficient renovations, and reduce energy costs and CO₂ emissions? How could modernisation activities be promoted and propagated? How could local people be informed about achievable energy efficiency solutions?

In this context, the city joined CASH as a way to gain insight into creating an effective and useful tool for EE renovation of social housing in Tatabánya. This would involve planning a pilot project in Kertváros, a district with particularly high levels of social housing in poor condition, to implement a scheme named "Town rehabilitation project for social purpose in the district Kertváros of Tatabánya", or *Kertváros project* for short.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Through a series of transnational seminars on the renewal of social housing, Tatabánya learnt about good practices and EU policies from its partner cities, representatives of other EU projects and EU organisations. Certain themes were particularly beneficial:

techniques, projects and procedures for involving citizens in housing reconstruction projects and informing them about relevant local, regional, national and EU funds; collaboration between reconstruction actors (e.g., owners, tenants, municipalities, investors, architects and coordinating body); and district heating systems using renewal energy sources.

This was particularly useful in Tatabánya's drive to change the behaviour of flat-owners and tenants, a key local challenge. As part of CASH, the city learnt best European techniques, projects and procedures for involving citizens in housing reconstruction projects and informing them about available funds. Solutions include energy ambassadors, energy campaigns and information activities with volunteers, social workers, NGOs, insulation manufacturers, as well as exhibitions explaining various insulation techniques. Another benefit was to see locally important and complex projects already implemented or started by the host partners of CASH thematic transnational seminars. A significant good practice revealed in a series of seminars on renewal energy sources (biogas, biomass, geothermal energy, wind, etc.) was the "green" energy production and distribution system of Sonderborg and its ProjectZero for reducing the Danish city's CO₂ emissions.

Tatabánya fed these best practices from other cities and specialists into their Local Action Plan for *Kertváros project*. New ideas will also improve the implementation of the District Heating Modernization Program of the city. This programme is managed by the District Heating Development Nonprofit Ltd, which was set up in 2010 to manage a heating modernisation fund with the aim of encouraging all Tatabánya citizens (within five to eight years) to install measuring and control appliances on their radiators. Heating costs have been reduced by an average of 30% in the more than 2500 flats involved, a sign of the initiative's success. The programme was extended in 2013 with a housing reconstruction fund.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

Tatabánya's URBACT Local Support Group involved a range of stakeholders, from representatives of housing associations to the local power plant and district heating company. A number of people took part from the Mayor's Office of Tatabánya, including specialists in environmental and energy-saving subjects. As Managing Authority, Hungary's National Development Agency was also involved.

The Local Support Group brought together diverse points of view on Tatabánya's local challenges, and, specifically, on the Local Action Plan's *Kertváros project*, tackling issues such as energy production and distribution, tenants and owners, architecture and energy, and finance and funding. Another benefit was the active collaboration with *Kertváros project's* management body (Economic Development Organisation Nonprofit Ltd) and the executive body of the local District Heating Modernization Program (District Heating Developing Nonprofit Ltd), both owned by the city.

Certain group members – including the Mayor of the City Council of Tatabánya, the President of a Federation of Technical and Scientific Societies, the Coordinator of *Kertváros project*, managing directors of Tatabánya Power Plant Ltd and District Heating Developing Ltd, and relevant officers of the Mayor's Office – also took part in CASH's transnational thematic seminars, described as very useful and efficient.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

As part of its objective to address city-wide EE challenges, a central function of the Local Action Plan was to set out clear actions for implementing *Kertváros project*. This scheme was first mentioned in Tatabánya's 2008 Integrated Town Developing Strategy and aims to renovate buildings and stop deprivation through both EE renovation and social measures. *Kertváros'* 4 600 inhabitants make up 6% of Tatabánya's population. Of the 1 633 dwellings in the target area, 26% are municipal owned. *Kertváros project* aims to renovate 449 homes, 144 of which are owned by the municipality.

With a total budget of about 4.2 million euros, *Kertváros project* involves a range of integrated activities planned over two years. Here is a summary:

- **Improve living conditions:** modernise heating, insulation (heat and water related), renovate and change facade windows and front doors, renovate staircases and entrance doors, improve access for disabled people;
- **Develop public places** (install new bus stops, and EE street-lighting system);
- **Develop infrastructure** (install street cameras at a new children's play area and playhouse – see below);
- **Strengthen public services** (kindergarten modernisation, relocate the local office of Family Care Service to a new office within the target area);
- **Strengthen community functions** (build a new Maltese playhouse and playground providing free children's activities and assistants. The City of Tatabánya already supports a Maltese playground, one of 14 set up across Hungary thanks to the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service – www.facebook.com/maltajatszotertatabanya);
- **Social activities for the reintegration and reactivation of local disadvantaged and unemployed people** (labour market reintegration programme, training for unemployed people, programmes and events for children and youth, community strengthening programmes).

Drafting a detailed Local Action Plan during the CASH project enabled the City Council of

Tatabánya to make a well-defined proposal for *Kertváros Project* in response to a regional call named *High priority urban rehabilitation project proposals of unitary authorities* (code: KDOP-3.1.1/D2-13). This ERDF funding, co-financed by the Hungarian State, is destined for actions focusing on specific social topics and dedicated to certain cities in the region. This project has been approved, and started on September 2013. The funding covers the core activities of the Local Action Plan.

Prospect

The initiation of *Kertváros project* is a next step for Tatabánya in achieving its EE objectives involving the reconstruction of social housing and reduction of CO₂ emissions. In 2013, the city contracted its service related companies in one holding structure (including the local district heating company and District Heating Developing Ltd). This new structure will allow more effective, low-priced implementation of EE housing reconstruction projects at city level, benefiting both the city and its citizens. New projects related to the development of the local power plant and the reconstruction of the local heating pipe system increase the efficiency of the heating system and reduce costs – for the customers too.



A reconstructed block of flat (2013) performed in the framework of District Heating Modernization Program

Csaba Schmidt, Mayor of City Council of Tatabánya : “The CASH project of the URBACT II Programme was a good opportunity for Tatabánya to see social housing reconstruction related problems from different points of view and at various EU levels. The city could learn a lot about the experiences from the transnational thematic seminars and energy efficiency related EU projects presented by the project partners. We got answers for a reconstruction connected concrete question and also elaborated models, projects for reducing CO₂ emission at city level. The added values of CASH project can help us to achieve our middle- and long-term EE objectives.”

ZOOM ON BRIDGEND UNITED KINGDOM



Bridgend County Borough (135000 inhabitants) lies in the heart of South Wales, in an area dominated by coal-mining since the 17th century. Closure of the coal industry in the late 20th century generated considerable unemployment. Much of Bridgend's older social housing was built for miners as terrace and semi-attached houses. New house building has been consistent since the 1980s. Significant growth includes the 1980s Brackla Housing Estate, which in the 1990s became Europe's largest privately owned estate.

Local Challenges

The M4 motorway between South Wales and London cuts through the County Borough of Bridgend, marking the county's north-south divide. North of the M4 are Bridgend's most deprived areas, where the old coal-mining communities exist, and where levels of fuel poverty are highest. Properties are of solid construction and are mainly terraced houses.

Bridgend joined the URBACT project CASH to look into innovative new ways to meet government targets to reduce CO₂ emissions, to take people living in deprived areas out of fuel poverty and to share good practice and ideas with European partner cities.

Early in the project, a workshop with key URBACT Local Support Group members identified a series of main issues, summarised below to give an idea of the local challenges Bridgend set out to tackle.

1 Fuel poverty and its causes (high fuel prices, low income households and inefficient heating systems).

2 The need to change households' attitudes and behaviour so they can understand energy efficiency's benefits.

3 How to operate controls, measure consumption and identify cost savings? This is complicated by the existence of a range of energy tariffs and lack of coordination between energy providers. While data collection is reasonable, it is not being used fully to identify gaps in provision and plan accordingly.

People did not understand heating controls, too much energy was being consumed, and heating products were expensive. As a result, certain households were choosing not to heat their homes, due mainly to debt and no money to pay bills.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Through the CASH experience and attending six thematic seminars in partner cities across Europe, Bridgend learnt how local authorities in other countries were improving energy efficiency (EE) in social and affordable housing. Elaine Williams, Senior Housing Strategy Officer at Bridgend County Borough Council, recalls: "It was interesting to see how cities had progressed for different reasons.



For example, Sonderborg have areas of low level housing and seemed to be at the forefront in technology and energy production, and in comparison Yambol have a higher concentration of flats and tenements that are privately owned and more difficult to undertake energy efficiency renovation."

Participation in CASH enabled the partners to identify situations, problems, causes and effects. It helped them find solutions and develop tools together to meet different circumstances. In some cases, new ideas were found for integrating the activities of the URBACT Local Action Plan (LAP) into existing corporate priorities, policies and strategies.

As part of their LAP, Bridgend developed two pilot operations, one for District Heating, using examples taken from Frankfurt and Yambol, and the other to develop the Green Deal. This scheme aims to take people out of fuel poverty by carrying out EE renovation and charging the renovation costs through the meter. The charge stays with the meter if the occupier moves out, with the new occupier continuing to pay through their energy bills. Other tools Bridgend are considering include developing a charging policy with housing associations for EE renovation to be charged through rents, as in Tatabánya, Hungary.

The URBACT project stimulated Bridgend to use new approaches in managing projects, such as involving citizens right from the inception of an idea, where previously they would only have been included in later stages of the process and aftercare. Elaine Williams explains: "For example, past schemes under the Community Energy Savings Programme involved citizens once a project had already been decided, and citizens had little choice in what renovation work was to be undertaken.

At the thematic seminar in Yambol, Bridgend learnt new ways from partners of involving citizens from the inception, through the planning stages and completion and in managing and operating controls, monitoring and identifying savings."

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

For Bridgend, setting up an URBACT Local Support Group had the added value of bringing together people and organisations with expertise and experience in a broad range of fields, as Elaine Williams describes. "Prior to setting up CASH, organisations were working in isolation. The network benefited from the Housing Association's experience in energy efficiency renovation, helpful in identifying and addressing local problems. Also involved was the Centre for Regeneration Excellence in Wales (CREW) that produced information on up-skilling and education. They were also good for networking with the Welsh Government, the Welsh European Funding Office and Central Government to enable a shared vision."

In a mission statement, the URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) signed their commitment to "a reduction in emissions from poor energy-efficient housing" and agreed to "encourage and implement actions and experiments that will increase the energy efficiency of dwellings".

Continuing the LSG's work, two groups will ensure the implementation of the Local Action Plan until 2015. A Working Group, committed to delivering Local Action Plan priorities and activities, and the Bridgend Energy Efficiency Network, a wider group

that will spread the good work, integrate planned actions into policies and strategies and publicise progress. The network was established through CASH's closing seminar in January 2013. It consists of some original LSG members and stakeholders, and other partners added throughout the project, including the new Vibrant and Viable Places Section from Regeneration in Welsh Government, and a community-led organisation named Groundworks.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

Bridgend's Local Action Plan (LAP) for sustainable housing was developed by the Working Group, which will continue to deliver the LAP until 2015. The group includes Housing Association members, CREW (looking at up-skilling and local employment), and Bridgend Council's housing, regeneration and sustainable development officers. The plan has two main goals:

1 Reduce fuel poverty in deprived areas and low income households,

identifying the households in fuel poverty, and seeing what extra help is available, working with a range of specialist bodies in Wales such as the Climate Change Commissioner for Wales, Community Housing Cymru and the Energy Saving Trust (UK).

2 Change attitudes and behaviour of tenants and residents so they understand the benefits of energy efficiency to reduce their energy consumption and save money.

Using controls, with information and advice from energy suppliers and local authorities.

Bridgend started implementing the plan as soon as it was developed in 2012. Over half a million pounds grant funding was secured in 2012-13 to deliver EE renovation from the Welsh Government's Arbed programme (meaning 'Save' in Welsh) together with funding from energy companies through the UK's Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) and Energy Company Obligation (ECO). Elaine Williams says: "A great deal has been undertaken through these schemes. Bridgend are looking at innovative ways to deliver the LAP and the pilot operations, for example, the next phase of Arbed which is largely funded by ERDF could fund a district heating scheme. The Energy Savings Trust has also received funding to develop localised

databases to support the local authority's Green Deal schemes. Discussions are underway with the scheme manager for South Wales Arbed/ERDF scheme to link in with their project to change behaviours by training citizens to become energy ambassadors."

Local authorities in Wales have to apply for European funding through their Managing Authorities, which for Bridgend is the Welsh Government. Bridgend cannot apply directly to the EC through the 2014-2020 EC Cohesion Policy for funding activities in the LAP or the Pilot Operations and is waiting for further guidance on how projects will be managed and funded by the Welsh Government.

Bridgend's work with the CASH project has already sparked a multitude of actions. One is the city's adoption of an Energy Management Action Plan including promotion of advice to residents and development of affordable warmth programmes. Initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint are also being developed in cooperation with Cardiff University. Energy consumption of the city's housing stock is monitored and policy monitoring is undertaken in a systematic way.

Prospects

The network and the working group set up to continue the good work undertaken by Bridgend throughout CASH and the implementation of the Local Action Plan will sustain a busy calendar of exchanges locally and regionally until 2015 at least.

At a CASH workshop in early 2013, working group members confirmed that actions had been taken to reduce fuel poverty in Bridgend's deprived neighbourhoods, but that more work was still needed to change attitudes and behaviours. Elaine Williams says: "Since the workshop, we've established a working relationship with Groundworks who work with communities and have the capacity to help train citizens to become energy ambassadors. Also negotiations are underway with the Arbed scheme manager in South Wales to use some of their community benefits to train citizens to use controls and reduce energy consumption."

Bridgend will continue to source and leverage funding to reduce fuel poverty further and celebrate and publicise results and achievements.



Mattbuck

Andrew Smith, Head of Procurement and Assets at not-for-profit housing association V2C, and an active member of Bridgend's URBACT Local Support Group, describes his involvement in the URBACT project: "For me this has been a valuable opportunity to see how the challenges we all face with retrofitting energy efficiency and new technologies to older properties are being tackled across Europe."

ESIMeC

Economic Strategies and Innovation in Medium Sized Cities

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION

November 2009 – January 2013

LEAD PARTNER

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (UK)

PARTNERS

FUNDING

Total Eligible Cost: EUR 634 968
ERDF Contribution : EUR 460 200



As home to the vast majority of people in Europe, medium sized towns and cities have a key role to play in economic development and competitiveness. But economic recession tends to hit them harder than larger metropolitan areas. This is the case for the eight medium sized cities who formed the URBACT project ESIMeC to find innovative, people-based approaches to economic recovery, growth and resilience. Over three years, the partners explored how medium sized cities can generate new employment opportunities, prepare workers for jobs, and address mismatches between the supply of labour and demand for workers.

MAIN RESULTS

ESIMeC's "Cookbook" of Workforce Development Recipes for Economic Recovery

Based on their joint exploration of eight key areas of workforce development, ESIMeC's partner cities published a set of particularly useful approaches, or "Recipes for Success", for other cities to try. The eight themes fit in well with the Europe 2020 flagship initiative *An Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment* and the subsequent *Employment Package* (April 2012). Towns looking for ways to unlock their people's potential through jobs and skills will particularly appreciate the recipes in ESIMeC's Cookbook:

- Recipe 1: Effective Partnership working;
- Recipe 2: Municipality-University-Business cooperation for workforce development;
- Recipe 3: Green growth and green jobs;
- Recipe 4: Preparing young people for the world of work;
- Recipe 5: A marinade for destination marketing;
- Recipe 6: Cultural and creative growth and jobs;
- Recipe 7: Integrated approaches to economic and workforce development;
- Recipe 8: Skills forecasting at city level.

ESIMEC's Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

ESIMeC's partners identified a number of fundamental approaches that all medium sized towns and cities can follow to support job creation and growth.

Understand the needs of employers and the state of labour market: ESIMeC launched a skills forecasting tool (November 2012) to help cities use quantitative and qualitative methodologies to understand

employer skills needs, an essential step in any city strategy. The partnership also identified examples of good practice, such as the Job and Training House in Cherbourg, which forecasts economic development trends for job demand and supply. This informs a structured approach to adapting and using training availability in the city and helps match training and skills with employer demands. Employers are regularly asked for information on the jobs they are having trouble filling. Drawing on their answers, MEF analyses the availability of training, and develops new training where appropriate. MEF has created job data specifications for 20 occupations. These describe the roles, outline required skills, and identify any relevant training available locally. This has been collated into a booklet focusing on "industrial jobs of tomorrow".

Foster entrepreneurship: Convinced that "entrepreneurs are made, not born", ESIMeC says teaching entrepreneurship and developing an entrepreneurial attitude in young people is vital. An example is Gävle, which has developed a range of entrepreneurial learning initiatives and a programme of employer engagement in education at all levels. Entrepreneurship is explained to teachers, and young people are matched with employers through a mentoring programme.

Engage stakeholders from sectors with greatest potential: The 2012 EU Employment Package identifies the green, white (health and social care) and digital economy sectors as those with the greatest potential for creating jobs. ESIMeC's partners drafted their Local Action Plans with this in mind. Here are some examples:

– In Albacete, where the Municipality has ambitious CO₂ reduction targets for public buildings, the city plans to help unemployed construction workers to develop new green construction skills. New approaches will also be developed for vocational training in schools and companies. Albacete hopes to employ these newly trained workers on municipal energy efficiency projects, a win-win for environment and economy;

– Besançon plans to maximise the economic potential of its cultural and creative industries by developing a skills and business support ecosystem linked to its new Art Area;

– In Debrecen, the Municipality, university and businesses are working together to foster a business environment, which encourages innovation and knowledge-based industries. Actions include internship programmes, various cluster initiatives (ICT, Food, Pharmaceuticals) and industry-led lecture programmes in local companies.

Develop and deliver a whole system approach to employment and economic development: Here too, ESIMeC identified good practices from its partners' experiences, including:

– In Basingstoke, a structured but flexible strategic partnership covering all areas of urban development has helped break down "policy silos" to deliver integrated policy and action. A series of groups focuses on the town's various issues. Each group brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including health and community agencies, local authority departments (at county and district level), employers and employer representatives, the police, education and training organisations and third sector groups;

– Sabadell's municipality has outsourced its employment and economic development functions to a single, arms-length organisation. This is a way to integrate services and strengthen links with local businesses. The organisation works with employers to determine their skills needs, and helps unemployed people to develop their skills. It also works with training agencies to develop new training programmes that answer the needs of the labour market, and to match the skills needs of employers with the skills of unemployed people more effectively;

– Bistrita has, for the first time, engaged multiple stakeholders in developing a strategic approach to skills and employment development, linked to the long term development of an industrial park.

Make more of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF): ESIMeC's findings will help medium sized cities position themselves for future structural fund programmes. Medium sized cities could do more to take advantage of the resources available from ERDF and ESF. At the time of publishing these conclusions, while operational programmes

for 2014–2020 were not yet confirmed, ESIMeC said towns would benefit from using Community Led Local Development (CLLD) and Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) to develop integrated approaches to work-force development and economic growth.

ESIMeC's Skills Forecasting Manual and Tool – Helping Cities on the Road to Recovery

ESIMeC's partner cities developed a practical tool and manual to help EU cities on their path to job-rich recovery and growth. City practitioners can use the *ESIMeC Skills Forecasting Manual and Tool* to gain a clear, in-depth picture of skills shortages and demand in their local area. This information can help them develop and implement skills development strategies that are based on real local needs and address real local issues, as well as responding better to employer needs.

Prospects

ESIMeC's partners believe the project will help them to develop effective integrated

strategies under future structural fund programmes, through CLLD or ITIs, for example. Several partners hope their Local Action Plans will provide a useful starting point for dialogue with Managing Authorities on this issue. However, the Local Action Plans were produced at a time when structural fund programmes were in a period of transition, and funding opportunities uncertain.

Although ESIMeC has ended, Sabadell, Gävle, Bistrita and Basingstoke are actively exploring opportunities to continue working together on workforce and economic development issues. Some of ESIMeC's partners have secured funding for parts of their Local Action Plans and further international links. For example, the Lead Partner Basingstoke will develop a plan to regenerate its central

business park within the INTERREG IVA Channel Programme project GreenFit. Sabadell will develop its skills forecasting with support from the European Social Fund. During the ESIMeC project, a Leonardo project funded staff exchanges between local authorities in Basingstoke and Gävle. And Sabadell and Gävle both got involved in a new INTERREG IVC project called CCIC (Complex Challenges: Innovative Cities) which explores the role of innovation and social innovation in economic recovery.

One lasting impact in all partner cities – and a major legacy of the project – is the positive change in working practices, in particular multi-agency collaboration and a joined up approach to economic development and employment.

“ESIMeC has shown the value of workforce development as a key tool of economic development. An array of examples, good practices and practical tools have been produced that help make workforce development both more ‘demand led’ (i.e., able to meet the changing needs of the labour market) and more closely integrated into the economic development process, through closer partnership working.”
Professor Mike Campbell, an expert in skills and employment, who has worked for URBACT as well as the OECD, European Commission, ILO and the World Bank.



Learn more about ESIMeC and download ESIMeC Final publication and partners' Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/esimec

ZOOM ON **BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE UNITED KINGDOM**



The borough of Basingstoke and Deane (population - 165 000) comprises a large urban centre surrounded by small villages and beautiful North Hampshire rolling countryside. The old market town of Basingstoke grew rapidly in the 1960s when it was designated as an “expanded town”, and many people moved in from London. The town capitalised on this influx, and its strategic location, to attract multinational companies. A strong, diverse local economy developed, with a wide variety of jobs. Sony, Thales and Motorola are just a few of the large firms with headquarters in Basingstoke today. Although Basingstoke’s economy has weathered the recession fairly well, a number of big businesses have moved out, and the area has suffered from public sector spending cuts. Still, Basingstoke is home to a world-class concert hall, an award winning shopping centre and nationally recognised museum.



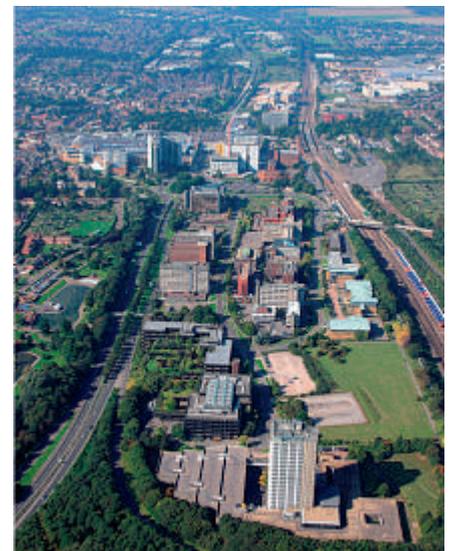
URBACT Local Support Group Experience

From the start, ESIMeC gave the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council the boost it needed to set up a strategic URBACT Local Support Group made up of about 20 people it had already worked with directly or through partnerships such as the Basingstoke Business Partnership and Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership. The group identified key local economic development issues, and provided a clear overview of local skills and employment. This formed the basis for a more strategic and coordinated approach, and decided on the focus of the Local Action Plan. The Local Support Group was then replaced by three smaller action groups who would turn these plans into reality. They are Skills and Employability; Engineering (skills and employment issues in the engineering sector); and Sustainable Regeneration (making the Basing View business park redevelopment as green and attractive as possible).

Over time, the Skills and Employability group broadened its scope and took on more member organisations, such as housing associations and local charities, to become the “Basingstoke Employment and Skills Zone Partnership”, which has as one of its objectives the implementation of the Local Action Plan.

Highlights of Local Action Plan

The Local Action Plan focused on the regeneration of Basing View, a large town centre business park built in the 1970s, and only



Local Challenges

Basingstoke joined the URBACT project ESIMeC just after the onset of economic recession. Companies were closing or leaving town, and unemployment had risen over five years from near zero to 4.9%. Basingstoke needed to act to ensure it remained a vibrant, attractive business centre. But tackling the unemployment problem was difficult for a number of reasons. The district lacked a strong strategic and coordinated approach for addressing skills issues at local level. There was also a perceived mismatch between skills supply and skills demand in the labour market. And finally, local authorities, education providers, businesses and other relevant organisations, lacked robust, shared information about the local skills landscape.

When Besançon suggested forming an URBACT partnership tackling economic decline, Basingstoke seized the opportunity to learn from other similar EU cities. Together, the partners worked out that for them, the answer to economic strength lay in workforce development, and above all, people.

Added-Value of Transnational Networking

Through ESIMeC, Basingstoke picked up interesting new examples of how cities in

other countries were tackling unemployment, and saw how partner cities were working with their Local Support Groups and developing their Local Action Plans. Basingstoke also benefited from the broader perspectives of external experts from organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the UK Skills Commission.

Basingstoke and its seven partner cities developed a skills forecasting tool to help anticipate future skills needs in order to reduce skills gaps. In Basingstoke, the tool brought a more focused understanding of how businesses were struggling to recruit locally. Two main skills were lacking: basic skills such as timekeeping and presentation, on one hand; and high-tech engineering skills, on the other.

Stimulated by lessons learnt from partner cities, Basingstoke is starting to apply new approaches at home. For example, the Job fair in Cherbourg inspired Basingstoke to organise its own joint jobs and careers fair, which attracted 1000 visitors in 2012. The *Convention Bureau* model in Gävle is also something Basingstoke aims to take on. The idea is to promote Basingstoke as a great city for holding conferences, with a designated bureau to help conference organisers, generating revenue for the city as a whole. The way education and business interact in Gävle is also something Basingstoke aims to copy, as well as some of their activities aimed at promoting engineering careers, such as kits for primary schools, or partnerships with business mentors.

60% occupied today. The Local Support Group believed this project had the potential to bring broad new economic and employment opportunities to the whole area. Taking around 15 years, this would be Basingstoke's most fundamental commercial regeneration since the 1980s.

Basingstoke drew on the rich experiences of its ESIMeC partners to inform its decisions during the Basing View redevelopment planning. Particularly important questions were: how to prepare young people for the world of work; how to prepare the workforce for the green economy and jobs; how to anticipate future skills needs; and how to connect work on employment with economic development. With this understanding, Basingstoke could make the most of the redevelopment's multiple and long-term opportunities to improve the town's economy. Priorities include:

1. Develop a clear vision for the occupation of Basing View (2012-2014);
2. Market Basing View and Basingstoke as a modern and vibrant business location (ongoing);
3. Understand and anticipate the skill needs of employers; identify and address skills gaps (ongoing);
4. Work with businesses and education providers to improve the level of skills for employment (2012 onwards);
5. Raise the profile of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) and promote careers in engineering (2011 onwards);
6. Raise aspiration and educational attainment of local young people (2013 onwards);

7. Ensure Basing View offers relevant and flexible accommodation to suit businesses of varying sizes and sectors (long-term project, 2013-2025 and beyond);
8. Explore the potential of turning Basing View into a sustainable and 'super green' low carbon business area, a possible selling point (analysis 2012-2015, followed by implementation).

The Local Action Plan includes organising events to help residents find jobs locally, particularly, in engineering. Some have already taken place, including the *TeenTech* event which brought businesses and young people together for a day in 2012, and again in 2013; and the first Basingstoke Jobs and Careers Fair, organised in 2013, following the success of a similar event in Cherbourg.

The local authority obtained some funding from the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme to set up *Engineering+*, a 2011-2013 partnership with six other EU

cities to look specifically at the engineering sector and how to promote careers in engineering.

Using the Local Action Plan defined during ESIMeC as a basis, Basingstoke has obtained ERDF funding from the INTERREG IVA Channel Programme project GreenFit to work on making the regeneration of the Basing View business park as sustainable as possible.

Prospects

Basingstoke is very keen to build on the links it made through the ESIMeC project. In particular, they are exploring opportunities to work with Gävle and Sabadell, towns that have similar economic development challenges, in order to compare the implementation and results of their respective Local Action Plans.

Andrew Finney, local entrepreneur and Cabinet Member for Economic Strategy and Development, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council: "ESIMeC taught us that workforce development is key to ensure medium sized cities have a skilled and adaptable workforce to respond to the current and future need of our employers. ESIMeC also helped us strengthen our partnership working between the public, private and academic sector. A skilled workforce able to meet the needs of our businesses will not only help Basingstoke ride the recession but also ensure long-term economic growth. Our residents are our main asset and we need to ensure we invest in their development."

ZOOM ADELL ON

SABADELL

SPAIN



Sabadell (population - about 208 000) is the Catalonia Region's fifth largest city. Just 20 km from Barcelona, Sabadell is surrounded by technological centres and universities. Although dominated by industry for more than a century, in recent years the local economy has evolved, and today most of the workforce is employed in the service sector. Nevertheless, industry is still prominent, particularly, the textile and metallurgy sectors, but also in machinery, food processing, paper and graphic arts. The medical technologies subsector has also grown markedly in recent years; as a result Sabadell leads the Catalan Medical Technologies Cluster. Small and medium sized companies play a large role, and some 21% of the total workforce is self-employed, although this figure is declining.

Local Challenges

When Sabadell joined the URBACT project ESIMeC, the economic downturn had brought rising unemployment, particularly, among young people, immigrants and low skilled workers, a reduction in the number of businesses, and a huge decline in the construction sector. Still, Sabadell aimed to become a knowledge economy city for the 21st century, and in 2009 set itself the following objectives, among others, in a Local Pact to recover from the economic crisis:

- Develop strong and effective links between businesses and research, contributing to the development of the knowledge economy;
- Develop mixed business centres housing industry and services, combined with public sector business support and training services;
- Increase the number and effectiveness of innovation projects in the town;
- Facilitate better education and skills within Sabadell's workforce;
- Adapt the town's economic model in order to promote innovation in processes and products;
- Promote and secure funding to support cluster development.

Sabadell's Business Support Unit had suggested the city could generate more reactive and adapted services for businesses, in answer to a need detected among companies. Meanwhile, reports – such as *Valles informa 2009* by the county's Local Economic Development Consortium COPEVO, and ESIMeC's baseline study (2010) – showed in most European medium-sized cities there

were not enough appropriate professionals to meet employers' future needs, and the Sabadell area was no exception.

In this context, Sabadell chose to focus its ESIMeC work on developing an integrated approach to business support, incorporating workforce development and skills. The priority was to improve communication between education providers and the city's business sector, to achieve economic recovery and resilience.

Sabadell was represented in ESIMeC by its Local Development Agency, Vapor Llonch, a municipal organisation responsible for the city's development since 1991. Open to all citizens, the body aims to promote the territory's development and correct social and economic imbalances.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

The Department of Business Support at Vapor Llonch found two aspects of URBACT transnational networking particularly useful: learning about practices developed by partner cities; and gaining a multitude of helpful contacts with plans for future collaboration.

Through ESIMeC, Sabadell discovered new practices, tools and policy ideas for improving its business services. Particularly useful was the Skills Forecasting Manual and Tool,

developed jointly by ESIMeC partner cities with support from an expert. This tool helps city practitioners forecast local skills needs by producing tables and figures based on local economic and occupation data. Sabadell's Local Action Plan foresees using the tool at county level, introducing the skills forecasting concept to the policymaking process.

Another lasting benefit of transnational networking is Sabadell's planned adoption of a new approach to organising its local economy by sectoral networks (details below), a method ESIMeC partners studied in Antwerp.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

The URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) was based on a local group that already participated in Council decisions. During ESIMeC, new stakeholders were brought in to ensure a broad range of Sabadell's relevant economic and social entities were represented, including the Chamber of Commerce, trade unions, SME organisations, local universities specialising in design and other fields, vocational centres, and a voluntary organisation. Other public offices were also involved, such as Vapor Llonch's Employment Brokering Department and the City Council's Education Department.

The URBACT method introduced a new, more dynamic approach to discussions. It focused the group on specific local problems to draw up a clear plan of actions for improving Sabadell's business support services. Gerard Mayol, European Projects Officer, Department of Business Support, explains, "Rather than discussing general actions, our Local Action Plan focused on concrete actions, especially, for the health sector, which the LSG agreed was a strategic sector for the city." Members of the Local Support Group will continue their work together on implementing various aspects of the Local Action Plan (see below).

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

Building on the experiences of international partner cities and input from the URBACT Local Support Group, Sabadell's Local Action Plan (LAP) focuses on developing an integrated approach to business support in the city. It defines clear actions for addressing imbalances between labour market needs and workforce skills so that companies will be



able to find the employees they need, and people can find relevant training and jobs.

The LAP stresses the need for active business sector involvement: “Much of the success of the plan’s implementation will be based on effective collaboration with the region’s companies. The relevant training can only be developed if the needs of local companies in terms of job profiles and skills are compiled and analysed in an effective and systematic way.”

Actions are planned around three objectives.

1 Develop a coordinated network of local organisations providing services to companies

Sabadell’s 2009 Strategic Plan for Improving Employment and Competitiveness, had already proposed to transform the existing “Municipal Business Support Office” into a “one-stop-shop” providing a range of services from licensing to recruitment support. The ESIMeC project helped define plans to develop this business support unit, engaging other stakeholders in the service offer and building a coordinated network of business support agencies (2013). Funded by the Municipality, these actions involve Sabadell’s Local Development Agency, a Business Union, the local Chamber of Commerce, an SME association, and a network for senior business people. Together, they will work on the effective use of the “one-stop-shop”, to improve links between Sabadell’s business support organisations, and compile a contact list of all the bodies involved. The organisations will also combine their information on the skills needs of local businesses to give one clear overview. The improved service will benefit small businesses and the self-employed, as well as international companies, such as IKEA or McDonalds, seeking to set up in Sabadell.

2 Broaden services offered to the business sector by integrating services related to training needs arising from new business recruitment demands

One main step here is to design an improved services chart for Sabadell’s Business Support

Unit (2013). Business support organisations will use the new chart, published online, to share information, reduce duplication, and achieve a more concerted and targeted response to business needs. The work involves strong coordination between departments within the Local Development Agency, together with workers and business unions, banks, a number of local universities, and permanent contact with the City Council Informatics Department.

Other actions focus on “Better identification of needs of businesses and enhanced planning through skills forecasting” (2012–2014), based on improving the way Sabadell prospects businesses. This includes designing a more complete business questionnaire and a better coordinated system for compiling business demands to answer skills needs and respond to shortages of workers for certain jobs. Involving the same actors as the “one-stop-shop” project, the aim is to produce a joint picture of business demand for skills and skills needs in Sabadell.

3 Work with educational institutions to build a better, faster response to new business demands in terms of workforce development by integrating new demands in educational and training programmes

Here, Sabadell’s Local Development Agency worked with the city of Antwerp to explore Antwerp’s “Sectoral Networks Model” involving a permanent business–education partnership, and assess the feasibility of following a similar model in Sabadell (2012–2014). Whereas Antwerp’s sectoral initiative

focuses largely on raising skills levels in construction, Sabadell’s concentrates on the health sector. With support from ESIMeC, Sabadell’s Local Development Agency held two workshops with LSG members, health companies, and education, training and research institutions (2012). The result was a thorough discussion of the feasibility of setting up a health sector network, leading to a positive response from the bodies involved. A pilot project will be implemented thanks to ESF regional funds (2013). Vapor Llonch is looking for further funding from ESF regional funds or other European programmes such as PROGRESS, related to training and business.

Prospects

In parallel with business support improvements planned in the LAP, Sabadell aims to adapt the ESIMeC skills forecasting concept to enable local educational centres to prepare for study plans that link with local economic needs, helping prevent future shortages of workers in certain fields. To do so, Vapor Llonch – using ESF regional funds – plans to test the skills forecasting tool at county level together with the Local Economic Development Consortium at Valles Occidental County, COPEVO (2013).

Depending on the success of the planned health sector network in helping match workforce supply and demand and develop innovative training programmes, Sabadell may transfer the approach to other sectors in the future.

Montserrat Capdevila Tatché, Deputy Mayor of Sabadell Municipality: “Through Sabadell’s Department of Business Support we try to help local business and enhance the business environment in order to attract new companies. In parallel we work with citizens in order to improve their skills. The URBACT project has put these two goals together in a Strategic Plan.”

EVUE

Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION

November 2009 – January 2013

LEAD PARTNER

Westminster (UK)

PARTNERS

FUNDING

Total Eligible Cost: EUR 493 615
ERDF Contribution : EUR 352 709



How can cities answer their need for transport while respecting stringent European and national environmental standards? As part of a balanced response, electric vehicles can be a way for cities to introduce clean, energy-efficient and sustainable mobility. To reduce dependency on oil imports, greenhouse gas emissions and local air and noise pollution, a 2011 White Paper by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport goes as far as encouraging conventionally fuelled cars to be phased out of urban transport. But electromobility does have certain downsides. For example, it brings high initial costs, and risks attracting people away from active or collective transport. Cities need to learn how to exploit the potentials of e-mobility and overcome difficulties. They must also clarify their role in supporting its uptake. These are some of the challenges EVUE’s partnership of European cities tackled over three years to develop sound e-mobility strategies that fit into their wider sustainable mobility policies.

MAIN RESULTS

Policy Messages for Cities Using Electric Vehicles

Based on their work in four key areas, EVUE's partners defined a set of policy messages for cities to ensure the best use of electric vehicle technology, in optimal conditions. The aim is to enhance, rather than skew, transport operations and the use of space in the city. Here are some highlights:

- 1 Procurement of Electric Vehicles**
 - **Facilitate bulk and group procurement of electric vehicles and charging points** (in public, private sectors and joint ventures) for market attraction and efficiency. Given the current limited supply of vehicles, group procurement has little impact on price, but that may change;
 - **Use public procurement of electric vehicles to make municipal fleets cleaner;**
 - **Introduce clauses relating to CO₂ emissions to encourage suppliers to use electric vehicles** in their own fleets.

Note: When the right policy levers are used, fleet operators can save money by using electric vehicles. This can also significantly improve air quality and reduce CO₂ emissions in a city. It also enhances visibility of electric vehicles.

- 2 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure**
 - **Develop a vehicle charging infrastructure programme that is appropriate for local conditions** in terms of technology use, interoperability, location of charging points, procurement of equipment and energy, parking charging policies;
 - **Calibrate the installation of charging infrastructure with the market and consumer uptake.** This is harder than it sounds! Ensure there are enough charging points so drivers of electric vehicles are confident they will not run out of juice, but make sure this does not lead to too many empty electric vehicle parking places, which can frustrate other drivers and create a backlash;
 - **Locate charging infrastructure where people park regularly, especially overnight at home, depots and workplaces.** Research shows that drivers of private

electric vehicles mostly charge overnight, and the fear of not being able to charge the vehicle elsewhere is much greater than reality. Most drivers quickly adapt to the vehicle's charge levels, and plan journeys accordingly;

- **Harness renewable energy and use the electrification of transport to develop renewable energy markets and supply chains.** The overall benefits of e-mobility are maximised when vehicles use renewable energy alone. Meanwhile, using existing energy sources for e-mobility significantly improves urban air quality;
- **Work with grid operators to manage capacity and develop the smart grids of the future.** Grid operators and energy suppliers need to plan for increasing demand on the grid, and smart solutions such as bidirectional grid-to-vehicle solutions. It is worthwhile for cities to be partners in these initiatives as they can help achieve climate targets;
- **Facilitate private-public-partnerships in charging infrastructure.** Private sector investment and expertise are needed, and new business models are making this possible.

- 3 Raising Awareness of E-Mobility**
 - **Lead by example.** Get the Mayor driving an electric vehicle;
 - **Enhance the visibility of electric vehicles,** for instance, by locating charging points in central places with lots of pedestrians. Organise media events around the inauguration of charging points or new fleets of electric vehicles;
 - **Use branding, celebrity endorsement and lighthouse projects,** such as electric vehicle taxis or shuttle services;
 - **Get people to touch, try-out, feel, drive, and ride in** electric vehicles to experience how great they are. Evidence shows that drivers really like electric vehicles and will champion the technology.

- 4 Business Models**
 - **Various business models, partnerships and investment strategies are needed to kick-start the electric vehicle market.** Be open to new business models and ways of working;
 - **Be a reliable partner for the private sector by creating stable regulation** in the medium and long-term, and **be willing to enter into a dialogue** to establish

common interests, cooperation frameworks and good working relationships, for example, in car sharing, smart grids and charging point schemes.

- **Include electric vehicles in moves towards mobility services, car and bike sharing schemes, and integration with public transport systems.**

City Measures to Encourage Take-Up of Electric Vehicles

EVUE's suggestions for low or no-cost policy measures include: zero emission zones; electric vehicle use of bus lanes; incentive packages at national and city levels; free parking and charging for electric vehicles; procurement; promotional activities such as test drive sessions, promotions in the media; building regulation that includes requirements for charging points and electric vehicle parking in new developments or redevelopments. They must be carefully targeted, monitored and communicated. Part of a transition phase to encourage uptake of electric vehicles, they may not be sustainable in the longer term.

Urban policymakers should take a long-term view, and create a stable framework that generates the confidence that electric vehicles are here to stay, and gives private sector partners reassurance that their long-term investments will reap rewards.

Electric vehicles can be a part of innovative approaches to mobility, such as encouraging shared rather than owned transport. It requires fresh thinking, integration between city departments, and multi-stakeholder cooperation with grid operators, energy companies, public transport authorities and the media.

Cities should encourage a switch from combustion engine vehicles to cleaner models, but not draw people away from public transport, walking or cycling. The aim is to reduce cars in cities. Land-use planning in city centres must consider the location and space given to electric charging points and parking places. Road-use



several new partners from the private sector and research organisations. Funded through FP7, the new EUR 14.2 million project lasts four and a half years. Each city will have its Local Support Group, along the lines of the URBACT model used in EVUE.

As for EVUE's legacy in each partner city, here are a few examples:

- Frankfurt's 'Allianz Elektromobilität' was announced in February 2013 with EUR 469 000 from the Ministry of Transport for infrastructure. It includes an intelligent reservation and sharing system for an electric vehicle fleet with 30 pedelecs, 18 cars and 4 transport-vehicles;
- The Madrid Electric Mobility Forum will become the institutional framework and key tool to encourage innovation and competitiveness of e-mobility services and technologies;
- Lisbon City Council has signed an agreement that at least 20% of all new vehicles bought should be electric. The municipality fleet already included 36 electric vehicles in 2011;
- Oslo City Council announced that its municipal fleet would be totally electric by 2020;
- Finally, both Katowice and Suceava expect to submit funding applications to Structural Funds in the next programme period based on their Local Action Plans.

hierarchies should favour active modes (such as walking and cycling), then public transport, before personal motorised transport. **One new electric vehicle should replace many combustion engine vehicles.** Electric mobility alone will not solve urban mobility problems, but it can help reduce environmental impact, especially on trips necessary for the city to function, such as freight operations or municipal service fleets.

Larger cities in more developed parts of Europe are more likely to invest in electric mobility, for now. Among the wide variety of cities – and e-mobility experiences – in EVUE's partnership, smaller cities learnt from others through observation and exchange, so now they too will be ready to develop sound e-mobility strategies, and avoid mistakes.

Prospects

Building on experiences with EVUE, a new project has been born... FREVUE, which looks at electric freight vehicles and how they can be optimised in the urban environment. Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Milan will participate together with most EVUE partners and

Matthew Noon, EVUE Lead Partner: "The URBACT-funded EVUE project not only helped the participating cities learn about new ways of working and implementing e-mobility, it enabled the cities to secure over EUR 14 million in implementation funding. That would not have occurred if not for URBACT!"



Learn more about EVUE and download EVUE Final publication and partners' Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/evue

ZOOM ON KATOWICE POLAND



The City of Katowice (about 300000 inhabitants) is the capital of a vast agglomeration of 2.1 million inhabitants in the Upper Silesian Industrial District, one of Europe's biggest industrial centres. Owing much of its existence to the 19th century industrial boom, Katowice is today a major commercial and cultural centre, easily accessible by air, rail and road. In fact, road traffic is heavy; Katowice lies near the junction of two highways (north-south and east-west), at the centre of the region with the most developed road network in Poland. The city is trying to change its image, promoting Katowice's large areas of forests and other natural sites and its steps to reduce air pollution. But the fact remains that the area has suffered extensive mining damage; the agglomeration today contains 14 existing and disused mining areas. Most people in Poland still see Katowice as a dirty, polluted city, according to recent analysis for the creation of the Strategy for Promotion of Katowice City (published by City of Katowice, 2013).

Local Challenges

Katowice was searching for new transport solutions when it decided to join the EVUE project at the invitation of Lead Partner the City of Westminster in London. The city's main challenges were environmental. Improving public and private transport could improve air quality, reduce oil dependency, and strengthen sustainable mobility.

"We needed to make the air healthier for those who live here as well as those who work here," explains Adam Lipinski, Projects Coordinator for Katowice City Hall. Katowice wanted to encourage the use of electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce traditional motor pollution, but the authorities faced a number of hurdles. These included the relatively high cost of electric cars, the need for vehicle-charging points, and the lack of common standards and financial support. Consumer resistance would be addressed by demonstrating the benefits of EVs. The idea was that increased uptake of electric transport would also bring tangible environmental benefits.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Katowice saw URBACT as a unique opportunity to work with and learn from other European cities facing similar challenges, in order to incorporate e-mobility into its city transport and environment policy.

"Even in these times of rapid global information flow, nothing can replace a personal conversation, meeting someone, seeing how they work," says Adam Lipinski. "Even the negative experiences of our project partners had some positive aspects for us: we can avoid the mistakes they have committed; it's one of the benefits of participating. One reason for projects like EVUE is that after they have formally ceased, the results can live on."

Examples of particularly useful practices Katowice picked up from partner cities include Oslo's approach to providing free parking space for electric cars, and Beja's ideas for promoting electromobility.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

Katowice had already experienced URBACT in a previous project NODUS (2008-2012). On

joining EVUE they knew whom to involve in their URBACT Local Support Group (LSG). "The regional energy supplier, energy regulator, the region's largest transport operator, public and research bodies, and the Managing Authority of the Silesian Voivodeship Regional Operational Programme. We invited these institutions to designate someone to work at the LSG, and so it began," recalls Adam. The group grew to include participants ranging from potential electric vehicles users to the Municipal Board of Roads and Bridges.

"Although some members were less interested than others, the group provided good support during the project, and in creating the Local Action Plan (LAP)," he explains. "Two LSG members participated in the URBACT Summer University in Krakow (2011). It was an extraordinary opportunity to work with knowledgeable experts, learn how to create the LAP, and a very interesting exchange of experiences between participants from different cities."

"An example of the active involvement of our Managing Authority is the fact that its representative participated not only in LSG meetings, but also in the EVUE project meeting in Frankfurt (2011) and the final conference in London (2012)."

Katowice's Local Support Group produced a case study on its experiences in developing policy, a novel method for Katowice, which it plans to use again in other areas.

Highlights of Local Action Plan

With its URBACT Local Support Group, Katowice analysed the motivation of

stakeholders, and potential problems and solutions, following the URBACT methodology. This helped define the Local Action Plan's three key areas of action, contributing to certain priorities of the City Development Strategy "Katowice 2020" (published in 2005).

1 Support for potential operators of vehicle recharging infrastructure

Recharging infrastructure was included in the rebuilding of a car park at the Silesian University of Technology's Faculty of Electrical Engineering (2013).

2 Creation of system of incentives for electric vehicles

This plan is based on Katowice's analysis of actions by other EVUE cities, as well as the national Ministry of Economy's "Conditions for the implementation of an integrated system of e-mobility in Poland" (2012). The new system includes exemption from parking fees for electric vehicles and hybrid cars, as a result of a change in city regulation made in April 2013.

3 The promotion of electric vehicles

Much of the LAP focuses on promotion and awareness-raising, as for electric vehicles to be taken up on a large scale, people need to know their benefits. About 10 electric vehicles are currently registered in Katowice, some of which are older vehicles. According to Adam Lipinski, getting more on the road will require "much work, and goodwill from the producers to reduce prices". A few actions by Katowice in this area are highlighted below.

One promotional need defined by Katowice's URBACT Local Support Group was for the



city to set a good example by promoting its own eco-responsibility. To do so, they bought their own “innovative electric vehicle” – a Mitsubishi i-MiEV – in late 2012, branded it with easily recognisable colours and the slogan “eco-responsibility”, and sent it on awareness-raising missions. The electric car will also be tested by various municipal services such as the police, the Board for Green Areas and the Board for Roads and Bridges to assess its capacity and investigate, which departments are most suited to using EVs (2013). The findings will inform Katowice’s future decisions on purchasing electric vehicles.

To prepare young people to consider using electric vehicles when the time comes, the city held a series of talks in local schools on energy efficiency and the benefits of electromobility (2012). Lesser known aspects were presented, such as the wider environmental implications, and the way electric vehicles can “lend their power” to other vehicles or devices, useful in a power cut, for example.

Other actions include the introduction of a new criterion to purchasing procedures of City Hall vehicles to reduce emissions of CO₂ and other pollutants (2012); and a joint study with the Silesian University of Technology, Poland’s second technical university and a member of the Local Support Group, to improve knowledge on the economic and ecological aspects of electric

vehicle use (2012). Students from the same university will also monitor the activity of the City Hall’s Mitsubishi i-MiEV, sending continuous data on its location, charging-times and runs – as well as information such as average speed and energy consumption – to a database accessible online (planned for 2013). These actions do not require any additional funding.

Prospects

“I must admit that it was not easy, but we did it. Our work, however, did not end with the end of the project: we keep in touch with partner cities, consulting on issues concerning e-mobility,” says Adam Lipinski.

Katowice will use its new understanding of e-mobility from EVUE to improve its overall approach to green transportation, which is a key element of the City Development Strategy “Katowice 2020”. This broad project

on integrated urban transport combines: reconstruction of the city centre as a hub, walking and cycling trails, and electromobility infrastructure, as well as replacement of the public transport fleet to prioritise trams, supported by buses.

Katowice expects to submit Structural Funds applications in the next programming period, based on the Local Action Plan. Building on EVUE’s work, the Managing Authority plans to support electromobility in the Regional Operating Programme for the 2014-2020 programming period, with perhaps some support under the complex projects framework.

For the City of Katowice, participation in EVUE has led to further European cooperation, this time in the framework of the INTERREG IVC project Sustainable Urban Mobility (2012-2014). Experiences from EVUE will feed into studies and interregional exchanges on e-mobility, biofuels and intelligent transport systems.

Adam Lipinski, Projects Coordinator for Katowice City Hall:
“Participation in the URBACT project EVUE has given Katowice insights, inspiration, technical experience, information, and connections to more advanced cities in promoting the use of electric vehicles.”

ZOOMAVOON

SUCEAVA

ROMANIA



The north-east Romanian city of Suceava (population about 107 000), one of Romania's oldest settlements, has been the capital of Suceava County since 1388. Suceava lies 450 km from Romania's capital Bucharest, on a main European highway. The Government is making efforts to improve the region's transport network as part of a broader urban regeneration using EU Cohesion Policy grants. Figuring on UNESCO's World Heritage List, Suceava is home to orthodox monasteries and churches, and a 14th century castle. The local industry is based on glass and wood manufactories, textiles and construction materials.

Local Challenges

Suceava faces the combined challenges of increased motorised traffic, and stringent European environmental and energy targets.

The Municipality, which owns the local public transport company, has already taken part in initiatives to encourage sustainable urban mobility, including the CIVITAS II (2005-2009) Smile Project, and MIDAS (2006-2009), part of the Intelligent Energy for Europe's STEER Programme.

When buying new public vehicles, their life-time energy consumption and pollution must now be considered. Meanwhile, Romania's new Environment Fund grant system "Program for National Fleet Renewal Stimulation" encourages the sale of hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs).

Suceava joined the URBACT project EVUE looking for ways to promote the replacement of inefficient, polluting vehicles with cleaner electric alternatives, ensure suitable charging infrastructure, and encourage a reduction in the consumption of non-renewable energy. This, it hoped, would reduce the city's air and noise pollution, increase energy efficiency, reduce vehicle operating costs, boost the local economy, reduce CO₂ emissions, and preserve historic sites.

Hurdles included: the expense of electric vehicles; limited public sector resources and political support; lack of charging infrastructure, and after-sales assistance; lack of consumer support and knowledge; and poor legislation.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Suceava's exchanges with EVUE partner cities were "a source of inspiration". Transnational discussions helped Suceava take a strategic approach to their Local Action Plan (LAP) for e-mobility, by enhancing the visibility of electric vehicles and targeting potential early users. Suceava's planned actions, such as installing electric vehicle charging points in public car parks, also drew on examples studied in partner cities.

Study visits enabled members of Suceava's URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) to test the functionality and interoperability of electric vehicles and charging technologies. Mayor of Suceava, Ion Lungu, recalls, "The visits helped strengthen the trust of Suceava LSG and enhance their imagination in local meetings in terms of development of practical ideas applicable locally. This is a value added to the already indisputable initial value of working groups and joint activities within the project."

With delays at national level on adopting electric vehicle technology, another key benefit of EVUE's transnational meetings was their involvement of the national Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, Managing Authority of Romania's ERDF Regional Operational Programme for 2007-2013. One representative attended e-mobility talks organised by Oslo and Stockholm. Another attended EVUE's final conference in London. This gave extra weight to Suceava's plan to modernise its urban mobility using electric transport.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

The Mayor launched Suceava's URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) in 2010 to develop an e-mobility strategy. "With representatives from local authorities, the motor industry, electricity generators/distributors and retailers as well as academic institutions and private consultancies, the LSG has provided a focused approach to looking at the challenges while incorporating the experience of other EVUE partner cities, in developing an approach that can be taken forward in Romania," notes the Local Action Plan.

LSG members "conscientiously responded to all calls to local and transnational meetings, roundtables and seminars organised by Suceava Municipality".

The URBACT process improved the quality of decisions by identifying – and agreeing on – Suceava's controversial issues through consultations in the planning phase, preventing opposition later in the decision-making process. It helped prevent delays and reduce costs during implementation, and obtained enthusiasm and confidence in planned measures. The LSG made decision-making more democratic, putting the power to influence decisions in the hands of local communities. "As a consequence," as reported in the Local Action Plan, "they become responsible."

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

Suceava's Local Action Plan (LAP) for e-mobility builds on knowledge gained

throughout EVUE, from transnational study visits and capacity-building events to Local Support Group work on analysing the local context and defining objectives.

Described as "a strategy to promote and implement electric vehicles and charging infrastructure in the city", the LAP will be adapted to embrace economic and legislative changes, new opportunities, citizens' proposals, and experience gained through further projects. Any change "must have the support of the decisional board of Suceava Municipality – Suceava City Council."

Within Suceava Municipality's overall ambition to establish its approach for stimulating EV-use as a model for other Romanian cities, the LAP specifies eight objectives achievable by 2020, outlined below. For the first three, in addition to local funds and, possibly, the 2014-2020 Cohesion Fund, preparations are underway to receive grants from the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme.

1 Install charging infrastructure, with uniform charging points in highly visible parking spaces near downtown shopping areas, raising public awareness and stimulating business (2014-2015)

Later, public-private partnerships or concession contracts could provide installation, maintenance and operation of technological equipment in further designated parking spaces. Two clearly marked electric vehicle charging points will be included in underground parking facilities developed as part of broader efforts to upgrade the city centre and gradually transform it into a pedestrian area (2014).

2 Plan a specific operating system for electric vehicles

Through smart technology, link electric vehicles to other services – mobile phones,



internet, smart cards, GPS, surveillance cameras, and intelligent maps showing locations and charging points. Following advice from a Local Support Group for Electric Vehicles (2014-2015), the operating system's design will be subcontracted, for installation by 2018-2020.

3 Buy two promotional electric vehicles for Suceava City Hall (2014-2015)

Suceava Municipality uses its 10 vehicles predominantly for short trips. The first two electric vehicles will be used by local government staff, and appear in local events, helping popularise electric vehicles among public institutions, local equipment manufacturers, electricity suppliers and consumers.

4 Modernise local public transport, so 85% of its total capacity is electric, reducing operating costs and CO₂ emissions, answering green local public transport requirements, encouraging a reduction in car traffic (2014-2018)

Introduce 40 electric buses (financed by the Municipality and 2014-2020 Cohesion Fund). This EUR 12 million complex project proposal includes a charging infrastructure and real-time passenger information system in stations and buses, a smart card payment system, technical training, and improved accessibility. It also includes installing solar panels and closing contaminated land.

5 Introduce electric transport in 15% of authorised urban taxis (2014)

While current taxi licensing regulations disadvantage electric vehicles, new criteria will give electric vehicles top scores for engine capacity and pollution, and the weight of carriers' seniority in the overall score will be reduced. Priority places will be assigned for electric taxis in waiting stations.

6 Promote legislative and financial measures favourable to the purchase and use of electric vehicles to stimulate private sector interest in electric transport

Introduce a system of parking charge provisions (2014), free electric vehicle parking, and fines (2018), helping discourage city-centre car travel, as today only 5% of parking is paying. Electric vehicles' selling price should include maintenance throughout vehicles' lives, reassuring potential buyers, and creating a new market for electric vehicle maintenance and management services. The Municipality will look for grants for purchasing green vehicles. Other plans include introducing 10 private electric vehicles (private sources and possibly grants; 2018-2020), and new legislation granting local tax



reductions or exemptions for electric vehicle purchase (2016-2020). County Council and environmental officers will lobby national government to prepare a coherent, favourable framework for EV introduction, including tax cuts.

7 Support public and private investments in sustainable energy to create public electric vehicle charging facilities that use renewable energy

Despite Romania's potential for alternative electricity generation, its national distribution system makes no distinction between energy sources in its pricing. Suceava proposes these changes: ease the electric vehicle charging-place approval and access for intermittent charging; impose preferential tariffs and funding, card metres and pre-pay facilities in supermarkets and restaurants; use wind power. At least 5% of energy consumed by electric vehicles should be from renewable sources; a system will be developed to monitor this ratio in Suceava (2019-2020).

8 Public information on the environment, electric vehicles and active transport

E-mobility projects with schools and the University of Suceava's Faculty of Electrical

Engineering (local budget and sponsorship; 2014-2016), following a successful trial with a team of 15 year-olds. Other actions include a "Green Energy Day" promoting e-mobility (local funds and grants; 2014), e-bike contests and environmental projects (with prizes including visits to technical museums in major European cities, electric scooters and bicycles).

Prospects

Through the URBACT project, Suceava developed a better understanding of how electromobility can support sustainable transport. Building on this, the Local Action Plan will feed into Suceava's broader schemes for integrated urban transport and city centre reconstruction. The Managing Authority plans to support electromobility in the 2014-2020 Regional Operating Programme.

Work started during EVUE will continue with Local Support Group members, and through European projects including the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme for implementing a sustainable energy strategy.

Dan Dura, Head of the European Integration and Development Strategies Office, Suceava City Hall: "Through URBACT, diverse local stakeholders have come together to build a strategy for electric transport in our city, by identifying issues of concern and seeking ways to overcome them. It has boosted confidence - both in e-mobility, and in local decision-making."

LINKS

Future-Proof Historic Centres

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION

November 2009 – January 2013

LEAD PARTNER

Bayonne (France)

PARTNERS

FUNDING

Total Eligible Cost: EUR 596 536
ERDF Contribution: EUR 431 510



Historic city centres are a crucial part of Europe’s cultural heritage, and a potential force for economic development and social cohesion. How can they be turned into sustainable, diverse and attractive places to live, while preserving the architectural and cultural heritage, and respecting the environment? How to improve rundown areas in historical city centres without displacing fragile residents? And how to reach the right balance of residential, commercial and tertiary functions? These are some of the questions that drove nine European cities to form the URBACT LINKS project and search together for practical solutions. Over three years, they analysed urban, social and cultural challenges, environmental and technical challenges, and economic opportunities. Their shared conviction is that the high density, architectural quality, diversity and proximity of facilities in historic city centres offer the perfect sustainable urban model.

MAIN RESULTS

Actions for Making Historic Centres Future-proof

Drawing on pilot projects, transnational exchange and discussions with their URBACT Local Support Groups, LINKS identified an array of practical solutions for historic city centres to adjust to modern comfort standards.

This fundamental advice runs through all LINKS solutions for making historic centres future-proof

- Relate eco-renovation to the urban context;
- Develop knowledge on eco-renovation and disseminate it widely;
- Include inhabitants in the process;
- Look for funding opportunities for private owners and public projects;
- Work with local stakeholders, who are particularly helpful in overcoming legal barriers;
- And in each policy, find a balance between the city centre's economic development, its use as a public meeting place and the needs of its inhabitants.

Put eco-restoration at the heart of urban development

The eco-restoration of old public buildings can form a focus for redeveloping city centres. Examples include: the low-energy renovation of the Vet School (administrative building) in Anderlecht; the renovation of St Mary's Church in Kilkenny; and the eco-restoration of a cultural cluster in Budrio, which combines work on public cultural buildings with a redesign of the connecting public space. Veria will also redesign streets so they connect scattered historic areas. The regeneration plan of Delft over the last 15 years is a good example of how an integral approach of renovation and governance can stimulate the re-use of central historic buildings.

Social developments and city regeneration – you can't have one without the other

A city's regeneration is deeply linked with its social structure, so will only work if it meets the needs of its inhabitants. Citizens took

part in building the Local Action Plans of all LINKS cities. Good examples include the eco-restoration of Roma House and the school to learn craftwork in Almeria. Here the social inclusion of the Roma population is related to the area's future development. In Brasov people are involved through socio-cultural and artistic public events like the Fatxada project. Veria citizens participated via a door-to-door questionnaire.

Help people know the techniques, and the advantages, of high-quality renovation

Quality renovation of historic centres implies an understanding of traditional building techniques and the cultural value of heritage. Certain LINKS cities developed technical guidelines and assistance for the owners of historic buildings. In Bayonne, heritage gift shop and thematic workshops whetted appetites for training in traditional techniques (see "Zoom on Bayonne"). In Veria, the university assessed the performances and technical characteristics of typical historic buildings and materials. Exemplary pilot projects showed how traditional low-tech renovation techniques can be combined with high-tech, low-energy retrofitting. Examples of "learning by doing" include the Vet School pilot project in Anderlecht, the White Rose Foundation in Delft, and Bourgneuf Street 22 house renovation in Bayonne.

Use eco-restoration to boost the local economy

The experiences of LINKS cities proved that eco-restoration through handcraft and tailor-made solutions can help boost local economies. High-tech innovations for low energy interventions can be stimulated and promoted by exemplary retrofitting of public buildings, but the large majority of buildings in city centres are privately owned. Hence, the need for actions targeting small owners, small enterprises in the building supply chain, and related professionals. A good example is Bayonne (see "Zoom on Bayonne").

LINKS investigated funding opportunities, particularly, for small private owners with low spending power and limited access to sophisticated financial support mechanisms. For Brasov, micro-financing is a way to stimulate private owners to improve their buildings.

Anderlecht, Budrio, Kilkenny and Veria have involved their Managing Authorities in exploring possibilities for European funding. Pilot projects can support lobbying for an integral approach to eco-restoration at national level.

Improve governance: try to catch the missing voices

As private property makes up a good part of old town centres, private owners must be involved, whether the priority is pedestrianisation, renovation of iconic buildings, cultural vitality or attracting families to the centre. Their participation is vital, from their input to development policies through to the implementation of planned actions. LINKS cities noted a wide variation in governance structures, with some room for improvement. They encourage integrated and inclusive urban policies that always try "to catch the missing voices" (Kilkenny), and turn constraints into opportunities.

Policy Recommendations for the Revitalisation of Historic Centres

LINKS partners shared the belief that, "a sound revitalisation of European historic centres is a key driver for a resource efficient Europe, an urgent social need, a source of new economic opportunities, but requires deep changes in professional practices, as well as a clear and stable financial support".

Recommendations for retrofitting

- Adapt current energy efficiency assessment methods to existing buildings;
- Consider the reduction of the global environmental footprint of renovation works as a criterion for a resource efficient policy;
- Support the necessary change of practices by giving specific attention to traditional building characteristics within the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive;
- Foster the use of renewable energy.

LINKS saw European energy savings commitments as an opportunity for economic development, employment, innovation and social cohesion. The thermal renovation of existing

buildings represents a potentially lucrative market. Improving energy performance is a real technical challenge, but the main source of energy efficiency lies in using less.

A strong retrofitting market would need a stable regulatory framework, exempting historic buildings from energy regulations, and providing specific measures to guarantee compatible, long-lasting energy performances. To ensure the retrofitting challenge is met across the EU, new regulations must be accompanied by local support to structure the offer and stimulate market demand.

For this, LINKS partners solicited the support of the European institutions, arguing that the reinforced urban focus of the Regional Development Funds was an opportunity to recognise the key role of historic centres for sustainable urban development. They called for a percentage of ERDF for cities to be allocated to energy retrofitting of residential buildings in historic centres. The aim, to be clearly identified, would be to provide exemplary solutions of eco-restoration in order to help municipalities kick-start the mainstream energy retrofitting of existing buildings. This also represented a key opportunity to support recovery from the current economic crisis.

Recommendations for more and better construction sector jobs, particularly, in renovation

- Accompany measures to generate job opportunities;
- Facilitate access to the market for eco-materials to create opportunities for SMEs;
- Raise awareness among practitioners and decision-makers.

Improving energy efficiency and environmental performance of buildings could boost the economy and substantially contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy, and EU 2050 roadmap targets. Jobs would be created directly in the construction sector, and indirectly in related industries in the materials supply chain, education, research and

innovation, energy services companies, waste management.

However, LINKS says that to trigger renovation across Europe that would deliver significant societal, economic and environmental benefits, practices need to change fundamentally. Such changes – as well as widespread training of employers and professionals – will only be achieved by adapting regulation and providing effective financial support.

LINKS also voiced the need for a sustainable business sector, with support for local SMEs in eco-material manufacturing, in order to stimulate local job creation and develop a more labour intensive sector.

Recommendations for more innovative governance and better use of public funds

- Overcome obstacles hindering the effective cooperation of stakeholders;
- Ensure provision of clear and stable financial support;
- Disseminate good practices.

Though the LINKS partner cities acknowledged that progress had been made in eliminating conflict between heritage value and energy efficiency, they noticed differences between the rules and standards promoted by various legal actors. In response, they called for a common frame of methodologies,

regulations and technical specifications, requiring agreement by the various legal representations. They said demands of different operations should be clarified, helping procedures run more smoothly and improving the use of scarce financial resources.

Although the multiple benefits of energy efficient retrofitting of buildings and urban infrastructure are evident even in the short and medium term, budgetary constraints are blocking certain actions to kick-start retrofitting.

Prospects

URBACT Local Support Groups have become established and Local Action Plans well rooted in the local policies of all LINKS partner cities, so are set to be carried out over the next years. Most municipalities have either adopted the plans or are preparing to do so.

LINKS partner cities believe their exchange and learning should continue, and plan to meet in 2014. This will be the occasion to compare progress on implementing their planned actions, and to share approaches for overcoming obstacles such as financing, inconsistent regulations, and getting the right materials, advice and techniques onto the market.

Frédérique Calvanus, Lead Partner of LINKS: “After nearly three years of exchanges, the diversity of the approaches and solutions to a common problem – the project for the future of historic centres – will have been a most interesting experience. I think we have taken the best of each other’s ideas to feed our own reflections and to apply new solutions to our cities. ... Now, I’m curious to see how our different projects will take shape in reality and I’m looking forward to seeing the LINKS partners in a year’s time to continue all these fruitful and enriching exchanges.”



Learn more about LINKS and download LINKS Final publication and partners’ Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/links

ZOOM ON BAYONNE FRANCE



In Southern France, on the coast near the Spanish border, the city of Bayonne has a population of 45000 and is growing steadily. Part of a wider urban area of 120000 inhabitants, Bayonne is a centre for tourism, administration, commerce and culture, and a university site. The town was fortified from Roman times, when a fortress was erected on the headland overlooking the rivers Nive and Adour, until the early 20th century, when the ramparts were partially removed to allow the city's expansion. In recent decades Bayonne has worked to revitalise its historic centre, with its coherent ensemble of 17th to 19th century domestic buildings.

Local Challenges

When Bayonne joined the URBACT project LINKS, its historic centre was recovering from 30 years of decline. The population had fallen to a record low of 5000 in 1990, leaving buildings empty and decaying. Meanwhile, the city centre lacked affordable housing. The old buildings, which tended to be fragile, dark, noisy and too densely packed together, needed work to improve their energy performance and meet modern living standards.

Bayonne realised the solution involved radically changing the way its historic buildings were restored.

As part of a broad, integrated urban approach, developing eco-restoration could solve a number of problems simultaneously. It could bring high-yield results in terms of comfort and energy savings. It could ensure durable results, thanks to the use of materials compatible with old buildings. And it could save traditional building techniques, build opportunities for local jobs and help the local economy by supporting the local production of eco-materials.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Frédérique Calvanus of the Municipality of Bayonne's Sustainable Development Department was Lead Partner representative for LINKS. She says that transnational exchanges with other cities in the LINKS network brought Bayonne into contact with an enriching diversity of techniques, governance and ways of working, which considerably accelerated their collection of technical knowledge on energy saving in old buildings.

Exchanges with other European cities also fed into improving Bayonne's approach to encouraging the eco-restoration of its own traditional buildings, and brought new practices, tools and policy ideas. Frédérique Calvanus recalls: "The consultation organised by the city of Veria to analyse inhabitants' satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, with their old buildings compared to others in modern buildings was particularly inspiring."

One of the interesting benefits of LINKS' balanced geographical spread of cities was that it ensured a broad, representative panel of climatic conditions. This means, says Frédérique Calvanus: "The technical conclusions are valuable for most of the geographic

situations and a whole range of building techniques." Useful for giving meaningful recommendations at EU level.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

"Thanks to the URBACT Local Support Group, different groups, people and institutions are now cooperating on changing the way historic buildings are restored in Bayonne. A strong local partnership has developed," says Frédérique Calvanus. Members include public bodies, like the Municipality of Bayonne, the *Espace Info Energy*, and the CAUE (Resource Centre for Town Planning, Architecture and Environment), and other groups such as the CAPEB (Confederation of Craftsmanship and Small Enterprises in the Building Sector). Businesses also take part, like Ouateco, a local cellulose wadding producer. Another key URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) participant is the *Ecole d'Avignon*, a centre for learning about the rehabilitation of architectural heritage, and a reference in the field.

Setting up the LSG and following URBACT methods, as well as attending the 2011 URBACT Summer University, inspired Bayonne to test new methods and tools. The creativity of the Local Support Group led to innovative, friendly approaches, just right for boosting interest in this new topic of eco-restoration. Now well established, the LSG will continue to complete the actions it has planned.

For broader actions aimed at influencing public attitudes, the group was enlarged to involve more local associations. An example is Bayonne's annual event on energy saving, which shows techniques for construction and renovation, says Frédérique Calvanus: "The association Txirrind'Ola joined the group to prepare and animate the Positive Energy Days. This association promotes cycling and organises workshops to teach people to repair their own bicycles. They also collect old bikes, recycle them and sell them at very attractive prices."

Overall, the integrated URBACT approach enabled local stakeholders to reach a shared diagnosis of the situation in Bayonne's historic



centre and how to improve it. It also meant the feasibility of planned actions could be checked, obstacles identified, and solutions adapted. In one such case, LSG members noticed builders were avoiding official training in eco-restoration, seen as an unnecessary use of three days. As a result, feedback and discussion in the group led to the set-up of the popular *Form'actions* (see below).

Main Actions of Local Action Plan

"Conviviality has been the guiding principle of the Local Action Plan," says Frédérique Calvanus. "It's all about changing attitudes and behaviour." To reach their target audiences, whether it was the general public, owners, architects, or craftsmen, Bayonne used "novel, playful activities". The Local Action Plan is mainly about:

- Developing skills and contributing to the evolution of crafts, overcoming reluctance to eco-restoration;
- Increasing demand for eco-restoration through an adapted aid policy and an awareness-raising programme;
- Supporting small companies in the eco-construction industry in the long term, implementing administrative simplification procedures and favouring the creation of local networks.

Some examples:

Form'actions, an idea brought up by Bayonne's LSG to spread technical knowledge on planning and implementing the thermal renovation of historic buildings, and incite people to sign up for official training in green building techniques. The *Form'action* days mix training with networking and experience-sharing, theory with practical group exercises, and are open to anyone linked with the local restoration sector, from project managers and craftspeople to city employees. Sessions in 2012, for about 35 people, investigated: the reasons for eco-restoration; the indivisible triptych: air tightness, ventilation and indoor air quality; and acoustics.

"These *Form'actions* became kind of fashionable *rendez-vous* – the place to be – for professionals of the restoration sector in Bayonne," explains Frédérique Calvanus. "We plan to continue with them."

Thematic Cafés, a now well-established, friendly event for local craftsmen. Over coffee, several experienced craftsmen educate about 30 of their fellows on market trends, introduce new techniques and materials, demonstrate their experience, and provide practical advice. Two themes were tackled in 2012: airtightness; and thermal corrections using hemp-lime coatings.

Technical guidance on energy performance and comfort (2013-2014). The idea is for two thermal engineers to provide technical assistance throughout the whole restoration process of old buildings, from an initial analysis of the building when a restoration application is made, through to on-site advice during construction. This will help all actors in the construction chain: the city during the instruction authorisation phase; operators for their investment choices; architects, in design and implementation; and craftsmen in providing high quality work.

The experts will suggest improvements and create a learning resource with implementation prototypes, pictures, and factsheets, for other professionals to use. Over two years, some forty home restorations could be supported in this way, with long-lasting knock-on benefits as knowledge spreads throughout the sector.

Public challenges such as Positive Energy Days, with a game that encourages people to reduce their daily CO₂ emissions, and the *Village of Sustainable Development* temporary exhibition, held at the Bayonne market.

The LAP also proposes the *Pavillon des Berges*, an innovative EUR 240000 scheme to develop a riverside area with small modular, low-energy buildings, although this option has not yet been validated.

Though most actions in Bayonne's Local Action Plan are low-cost or free, the total cost is about EUR 30000 for 2013, quite significant for a medium sized city like Bayonne. Funding is mainly provided by the Municipality, with some co-funding from ADEME, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency.

Prospects

"Thanks to LINKS, most renovation of Bayonne's historic buildings now use eco-materials to insulate them. But we can go further to improve the benefits for the local economy and try to develop the supply chain for local materials," says Frédérique Calvanus. "LINKS, with our LSG, showed how eco-restoration can improve thermal, acoustic and general comfort in Bayonne's historic buildings. Now each builder, architect, and member of the public who learns about eco-restoration will play a part in encouraging these improvements go on beyond the lifetime of the LINKS project."

"Opening perspectives to other cities, LINKS removed the traditional conflicts, which had poisoned the management of the historic centre for years, and the project showed that it is possible to conciliate heritage protection and modern way of life," Martine Bisauta, Deputy Mayor of Bayonne, Sustainable Development and Citizen Participation.

ZOOM ON **VERIA** GREECE



Veria (population – 47500), the capital city of the Prefecture of Imathia, in Central Macedonia, has kept the same name and location over more than two thousand years. Today, a considerable number of monuments and sites remain, dating from the Hellenistic period onwards, including 48 Byzantine and post Byzantine churches with frescos. About 1500 people live in the old centre, where the architecture is as varied as the city's multicultural history, characterised by narrow streets twisting among two and three-storey buildings with courtyards behind, many with overhanging upper floors. Running through the town is the Tripotamos river, a stunning natural feature.

Local Challenges

Previously a prosperous city based on agriculture, Veria now faces economic decline. Though the city is rich in cultural assets, with a strong potential to develop cultural tourism, many old buildings are badly preserved or abandoned as they do not meet modern living standards. Extensive areas of the historic centre have been demolished, and fragmentation, desertification and segregation are common. Veria faced an urgent need to develop both restoration techniques that answered the specific characteristics of its historic buildings, and training for all involved in the building sector.

When Veria joined the URBACT project LINKS, it was looking for new ways to bring more life back into the city's historic centre, improve its image and function, and restore its identity. Eco-restoration was an answer, representing an opportunity to improve the historic centre aesthetically and reconstitute its unity. Properly restored and adapted, old buildings in protected areas could provide high quality housing that would raise standards of living in the heart of the city. This would also boost the local economy by developing cultural tourism.

Through LINKS, the Municipality of Veria set out to develop an action plan detailing methodologies and proposals to:

- Reconstitute the unity of the historic centre;
- Develop environmentally friendly techniques for the restoration of historic buildings;
- Explore administrative and financial tools;
- Answer needs for proper training;
- Encourage the active participation and support of inhabitants and actors involved throughout the protection and restoration process.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Central to LINKS, explains Kleopatra Theologidou, Scientific Associate for the Veria Mayor, is “the idea of different people from different countries, with different culture and backgrounds working together and trying to exchange ideas and best practices to face the range of challenges involved in reviving their cities’ historic centres”. Kleopatra Theologidou adds: “Solidarity and understanding were developed among

partners. And we got the understanding that at European level we have more things in common than differences.”

URBACT events, such as the Summer University (Krakow, 2011), conferences and thematic seminars, helped Veria apply the URBACT method to develop a plan for reviving the old city centre. Transnational exchanges with LINKS partner cities, and strong support from Lead Partner Bayonne, brought Veria new policy ideas, knowledge and approaches for tackling its own challenges. Here are some examples:

- Creating the URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) from the start, with a range of stakeholders. Bayonne was particularly helpful during the development phase, contributing ideas on how to organise the LSG and who to involve.
- Involving citizens, using good practices from other cities, and participatory tools proposed by thematic expert Brecht Vandekerckhove. Almeria, for example, has encouraged citizen participation for years. The residents’ association in the district of La Chanca is a particularly strong driver of change.
- Techniques for the eco-restoration of historic centres, discussed during transnational thematic seminars with the help of best practices, experts and site visits. Veria appreciated examples and knowledge from all partner cities, particularly helpful in the development of its Local Action Plan.
- Methods to raise awareness and dissemination of knowledge, drawing on good practices from Bayonne, such as the creation of a “Restoration Shop” and “Nights of Thermography” in Bayonne. Freiberg citizens took part in an “Ideas Competition” for the future of their city’s central market square.
- Taking a truly integrated approach to drafting a Local Action Plan, following Delft’s experiences.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

A vital element of the project has been the URBACT Local Support Group’s (LSG) creation from the beginning, involving a range of stakeholders, such as the Managing Authority, the Chamber of SMEs, the local Union of Architects, universities, elected representatives and municipal officials who worked together on producing a Local Action Plan (LAP) to revitalise their historic city centre.

“The LSG enabled the creation of an integrated policy to accomplish our targets by

setting goals, defining actions, examining strategies and risks, investigating financial tools. It brought new ways of looking at local problems through the different roles and background of its members. It brought a new shared vision, developed during the elaboration of the Local Action Plan. And it helped plan more targeted and mostly more integrated actions to address problems in our city’s historic centre.”

The LSG helped promote broader citizen participation in preparing Veria’s Local Action Plan, with actions such as door-to-door questionnaires for people living in the historic centre, online questionnaires for citizens, and invitations to specific stakeholder meetings.

Veria’s Municipal Council approved the Local Action Plan in April 2013 and decided the URBACT Local Support Group would be continued to further elaborate and implement the Local Action Plan.



Highlights of the Local Action Plan

Based on the approach above, Veria’s Local Action Plan (LAP) to revive the historic centre focuses on three main objectives, each involving a broad range of actions. A selection is highlighted below:

OBJECTIVE 1 - The urban dimension: make the historic centre attractive for residents and visitors by improving its image and function and restoring its unity and identity

– **Restore unity and identity of the historic centre** (architectural competition concerning open public spaces, conducted by the Unification of Archaeological Sites and Renewals SA, end 2013, EUR 100 000; works to be implemented in the 2014–2020 programming period.) This includes the urban regeneration of protected areas with interventions to increase green spaces, minimise cars and use eco-materials and techniques, improving comfort, especially, during summer. Actions also include creating a cultural route connecting these areas, installing energy efficient public lighting and putting electricity cables underground.

– **City-wide traffic study** enabling reduction of car traffic and other improvements in the historic centre (conducted by the Region of Central Macedonia, completion expected 2014, EUR 150 000).

– **Regenerate Mitropoleos Street and enhance the ancient Roman road across it**, highlighting antiquities and unifying protected areas on each side (application for funding in preparation for a 2013–2015 project). This street, in the heart of Veria’s city centre, has existed since Roman times or earlier. Extended rebuilding and street widening has transformed it into a road splitting the historic centre in two. A preliminary study has been made, contributing to plans to highlight the ancient road revealed by excavations, reduce traffic and increase green areas.

– **Refurbish blind facades of high-rise buildings in the periphery of protected areas** that impact negatively on their surroundings (implementation during the 2014–2020 programming period).

– **Define the historic centre’s uses to ensure its multi-functional character** (end of action and official approval expected 2014).

OBJECTIVE 2 - Buildings: stimulate demand for eco-restoration in the historic centre – financial, administrative and technical support

– **Eco-restoration and energy performance improvement of protected**

buildings and traditional buildings in the historic centre – identifying grants and financial tools (implementation during the 2014–2020 programming period).

– **Eco-restoration and energy performance improvement of the municipally-owned Chatzikou House, and conversion to a cultural centre to promote folk culture** – identifying grants and financial tools (funding application under preparation for a 2013–2015 project).

This was a Local Action Plan pilot project. Chatzikou House, a typical early 20th century building, has shops on the ground floor and housing above. Its outside walls are stone on the ground floor and brick above, strengthened with timber beams. The floors and roof are timber. A restoration study is in progress following the rules and techniques of eco-restoration, with restoration works programmed to act as a good example, helping boost demand for eco-restoration. Experts examined the building’s energy performance and ability to survive earthquakes, as well as the composition and characteristics of the building materials, and made proposals for its eco-restoration. Based on these findings, guidelines and recommendations will be drafted for the eco-restoration of similar buildings.

– **Technical and administrative support** Thematic workshops for engineers, technicians, stakeholders and owners, defined by the LSG (2013–2020); creation of a digital platform (end 2013, EUR 3000); production of information material (2013–2020);

simplification of bureaucratic procedures (in progress until 2014).

OBJECTIVE 3 - Raise awareness, empower citizens’ participation – includes organising events, regular meetings with citizens, and further synergies within Veria and with other cities facing similar challenges (on-going).

Prospects

Veria City Council has adopted its Local Action Plan in local policies and plans to implement as many actions as possible. The LAP’s timescale is 2013–2020 in order to secure funding from the 2014–2020 programming period. Low cost activities, such as awareness-raising, empowered participation, dissemination of knowledge and administrative support, will continue using Municipality resources.

National funding has been secured for the architectural competition and traffic study, and ERDF Operational Programme funding is being sought for actions to regenerate Mitropoleos Street and enhance the Roman road, and restore Chatzikou House.

To continue international exchanges, Veria is looking for opportunities to take part in further European programmes, such as Intelligent Energy, Life, and Europe for Citizens.

Charikleia Ousoultzoglou Georgiadi, Mayor of the Municipality of Veria: “Our participation in the LINKS project gave us the opportunity to examine the problems of our historic centre in depth and develop actions and strategies in an integrated way. Our methodical preparation, in the effort to respond to the high values and importance of our heritage will help determine the city’s future. Our Action Plan is also a substantial tool to ensure benefits from the new programme period 2014–2020.”

OP-ACT

Options of Actions Strategic Positioning of Small and Medium Sized Cities

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION

November 2009 – January 2013

LEAD PARTNER

Leoben (Austria)

PARTNERS

FUNDING

Total Eligible Cost: EUR 553 526
ERDF Contribution: EUR 405 067



For centuries Europe has seen widespread urban growth, but deindustrialisation, and the recent economic crisis, have sparked a decline in the economic strength, populations and employment levels of many cities. Forty per cent of medium sized European cities experienced a decrease in population in recent decades, according to the EU funded SHRINK SMART research project (2009-2012). These cities are faced with a decision: continue trying to regain growth; or opt for sustainable management of shrinkage, a process often more complicated to govern than growth.

The URBACT project OP-ACT is the reaction of ten small and medium sized cities to the challenges of demographic change and population decline. As such towns face the dual dilemma of an increasing need to act and diminishing financial means, OP-ACT's partners focused on the most urgent issues. Together they identified a set of strategic actions for the successful restructuring of shrinking and stagnating cities.

MAIN RESULTS

Five Priority Actions to Boost Small and Medium Sized Cities

OP-ACT's partner cities defined five main overlapping and interlinked priority areas, which informed their search for solutions to demographic change and population decline:

Priority 1: Stabilise communal revenues. Tackle decreasing communal revenues in order to stabilise the financial situation. Improve the city image and to attract new inhabitants and investors.

Priority 2: Address social services and social inclusion, the sector most hit by budget reductions. Partners reported that many planned projects for young people, senior citizens and migrants had to be postponed or cancelled completely.

Priority 3: Boost the local economy. Boost the local economy to break the vicious circle of "economic stagnation – closing of local businesses – falling employment – outward migration".

Priority 4: Adapt urban development to demographic change. Measures to deal with vacant premises and brownfields, as well as changed technical and social infrastructure

requirements. In this context "reduction" can also lead to the creation of a greener, less polluted and more liveable city.

Priority 5: Promote existing local advantages. Partner cities tried to (re-)discover and focus on their own qualities rather than compete with the advantages of larger metropolitan areas.

Core Approaches to Making Cities Smaller, Greener, More Attractive

If the inevitable refrain from growth is accepted, the planning of future, smaller cities can start. Steps include "re-naturising" depopulated areas, re-using brownfields or vacant buildings, restructuring economic development and adapting social infrastructure. With a smaller population and geographical area, a town can be a greener, more enjoyable and attractive place to live. This can have a positive impact on the regional competition for new inhabitants and investors.

Two core approaches proved essential for OP-ACT's partner cities during the

development and implementation of their measures:

- **Plan and implement projects in a holistic manner.** In most cases integrated projects are more adequate than sectoral projects;
- **Involve the general public in the planning and implementation process and choose the right stakeholders.**

OP-ACT Actions for Towns to Tackle the Challenges of Demographic Change

Understanding that every city needs to deal with demographic change in its own way, the OP-ACT partners defined some key actions for small and medium sized towns to choose from. Here are some highlights:

Raise awareness, gain political leadership and acceptance. City councils should accept the paradigm shift away from growth to stabilisation or reduction, and develop their integrated urban renewal concept accordingly. Avoid negative connotations: highlight the chance for active transformation. The urban renewal concept should cover the urban area and all factors influencing urban development. Managing such a restructuring process needs the commitment and skills of all involved actors much more than handling growth. Active planning and steering are required more than ever.

Involve local and regional stakeholders and citizens, a vital instrument in the restructuring process. Administrative departments, local actors such as enterprises and business, real estate developers, social institutions and NGOs, and citizens, should all take part, right from the development of an action, through the decision-making, and up to implementation. This is the only way to guarantee identification with the project and sustainable modification according the policy "Let's plan together with the citizens and not for them!" Many volunteers worked in OP-ACT's partner cities, proving that citizens are willing to support public administrations, especially in providing social services. It is vital to establish a culture of dialogue and



interaction, to ensure strong communication with all people involved.

Choose to cooperate, not compete, with neighbouring municipalities. This is one way to share communal tasks and costs, to ensure a coordinated city-hinterland development and to reduce competition within a region. This needs an atmosphere of trust, equal rights and transparent structures.

Re-use abandoned areas and brownfield sites. A positive city image must be supported by the local population and must reflect reality. As well as a city's "hard" location factors, promote its increasingly significant "soft" factors. These include quality of life, a safe environment, a range of sports, leisure and cultural activities, and the availability of green spaces. It is precisely this improvement in quality of life that can be reached by re-using abandoned areas and brownfields as open or green spaces.

Match social measures with intended populations. Inward-migration can be enhanced by promoting the advantages of "urban life". Creating affordable and family friendly living spaces and initiating integration programmes for foreign immigrants can help attract new inhabitants.

Adapt the local infrastructure and services to the changed age structure, both for the increasing percentage of senior citizens, and for the young people to keep them in town. Some possible actions are: make pavements near retirement homes barrier-free; offer free transportation to social clubs; build more-generation houses to reduce barriers between senior and young citizens; offer adequate education facilities, and creative and sport activities for the young, as well as good meeting points.

Create incentives for investment. Build one "eye-catcher" building in the area, to be revitalised with city funds or through public-private-partnership. This can stimulate private investment in further development in the area. Special incentives can be offered for investors and entrepreneurs, such as tax relief, cuts in red tape, reduced rents.

Strengthen links between education and labour markets for local needs. Do not forget the importance of cooperation between local educational facilities and local businesses to offer the education and training required by the labour market. Self-employment can be promoted as an alternative job opportunity for young people with

the help of coaching programmes and adequate workplaces.

Reorientate the local economy, enhance old traditions. Restructuring should also be implemented in the local economy. New sectors such as creative industries, as well as culture and historic handicrafts, can be developed supplementing the traditional ones.

OP-ACT concludes that demographic change and population decline, rather than representing a sad road to despair, should be seen positively as the beginning of a new "slim town" era. Creating realistic visions should be central to urban planning. Local, regional and federal public authorities are now asked to provide an appropriate framework to secure the right direction of restructuring, so that the urban structure does not lead to social polarisation. Integrated and holistic strategies as well as national funding programmes are needed to implement the transformation to a well-tailored urban fabric.

The OP-ACT Charter

Formulating the partner cities' demands at various political levels, the OP-ACT Charter has been signed not only by the mayors of all ten partner cities, but also by cities outside the OP-ACT project. The Zealand Denmark EU Office, for example, has recommended other cities to support and sign the OP-ACT Charter. The range of requests includes calls for:

- The adjustment of financial allocations to specific solutions, not just to population numbers;
- More flexible support and funding programmes for small and medium-sized cities;
- No cutbacks to social facilities or infrastructure arrangements. Avoid devolving welfare and social support costs to cities;
- Targeted migration and family policies;
- The launch of a European award for innovation and sustainable approaches in the field

of demographic change in small and medium-sized cities.

Prospects

OP-ACT's partnership has decided to work together on creating new strategies beyond the project's closure. Smaller partnerships have also formed between OP-ACT cities. For example, Dabrowa Górnicza and Medias agreed to work together on the specific topic of "mobility", with some involvement from Notodden.

URBACT Local Support Groups in most partner cities will continue to apply an integrate approach to demographic change as associations, linking the target groups with city administration departments, and often with elected city representatives. They will support and evaluate the implementation of measures defined in their Local Action Plans.

Almost all OP-ACT's partner cities have integrated their Local Action Plans into strategic planning documents for the coming years. While implementation is politically approved, the financing of many actions is still to be discussed. Here are just a few examples of actions already implemented, as part of each city's wider approach to tackling demographic changes. The library in Ancona has opened. An "experience elevator" in Altena will be ready by late 2013 to serve as an incubator for positive development and help revitalise the old town (see "Zoom on Altena"). In Leoben, many events for young people were organised in 2012, new events are integrated in the 2013 cultural programme, and actions for senior citizens and migrants are in preparation. Dabrowa Górnicza put some initial short-term solutions into place in 2012 and 2013, and started preparations for long-term actions such as the social and infrastructural revitalisation of urban public spaces, in particular, Zielona Park.

Hanns-Uve Schwedler, OP-ACT Lead Expert: "It took some time of mutual discussions and exchange of views amongst partner cities to overcome the perception that present shrinking processes are of temporary nature and that growth is only hidden behind the horizon. This opened the view to the fact, that 'shrinking' and 'demographic change' do not have to carry only negative connotations. They can be seen as opportunity to break down traditional structures and to adapt them to actual demand. The OP-ACT partner cities are certainly on their way to do this."



Learn more about OP-ACT and download OP-ACT Final publication and partners' Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/op-act

ZOOM ON ALTENA GERMANY



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The city of Altena (population about 18 000) in South-Westphalia, is 40 km from Dortmund. While the area is highly industrialised, it is also 65% woodland. Altena's two main attractions, an unlikely pair, are: its stunning castle, built on a hilltop in the early 12th century, home to the world's first youth hostel; and its steel wire industry (no surprise that this is the site of the German Museum of Wire). The city of Altena was built soon after the castle, near the river Lenne in the valley below, and it prospered thanks to local iron sources and a blossoming wire industry. Today Altena supplies 18% of the world's steel wire, particularly, for automotive products. Special steel sheets are produced for Airbus and the Ariane Rocket.

Local Challenges

Altena was hit hard by deindustrialisation and the recent economic downturn. Over a number of decades, major businesses, including Nokia, have left the city, resulting in a marked drop in population. Properties were left empty, and the housing market went into decline, as did the provision of public and private services and trade and industry.

The City Council knew something must be done. Altena already had a tourist magnet: its hilltop fortress, one of the most beautiful in Germany and a monument of national significance. But of the 100 000 people visiting the castle every year, only 10 000 made the short trip down to the historic city centre. So, in 2007 the City Council agreed on an "integrated urban development concept" named *Altena 2015*, which identified tourism as a main area for action. It involved the building of an elevator linking the castle with the emptying old town centre. Altena's plan was that this would improve connections between the castle and the city, and tempt visitors into the old town, even those visiting the castle by bus. Stimulating sustainable tourism would help create much-needed local jobs, particularly, for women.

For support in planning a successful, integrated tourism concept in line with *Altena 2015*, the city decided to join the URBACT project OP-ACT. This enabled Altena to develop a strategy for sustainable tourism (the Local Action Plan), by drawing on the experiences of similar European cities in tackling local tourism challenges.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Being part of OP-ACT broadened the perspectives of the small town of Altena, opening up invaluable access to the approaches and best practice examples of other European towns. "It was important to see how other towns have the same problems. It makes you stronger, and by learning from each other, it helps make things better locally," says Gundula Schulze, of the Mayor's office of Altena.

Particularly fruitful exchanges were with other towns developing sustainable tourism: Medias, Dabrowa Gornicza, and the Lead Partner Leoben. Gundula Schulze describes how in one case this led to Altena's Mayor, Andreas Hollstein, learning from a city in Austria: "Graz, near Leoben, already has an

elevator similar to the one we are now building. They have some very good experiences. Our mayor has visited the elevator in Graz to see how such a construction can be part of a wider project to benefit the whole town."

As well as sparking a multitude of useful ideas, this was a capacity building experience for city administration staff. The mayor was among those to see the added-value of OP-ACT. Andreas Hollstein said: "With OP-ACT and the final declaration we succeeded in stressing the concerns and needs of small and medium sized cities, but also to emphasize their potentials and innovative strength."

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

Small working groups on housing, or inner city development, for example, had already been set up to implement *Altena 2015*. Within the framework of OP-ACT, the Working Group for Culture and Tourism was broadened to become the URBACT Local Support Group, which in cooperation with the Town Council, had enough weight to take useful action. New partners such as shop-owners and a marketing group for tourism joined the group. In total there were some 15-20 members, including citizens, local politicians, City Council staff, chairpersons of private associations and Altena civic forums as well as representatives of the press, cultural, educational and social groups.

Having developed the Local Action Plan, the members of the URBACT Local Support Group also went on to contribute to the project's success by communicating its benefits for the town to the local newspaper and a broad range of people and organisations. This all contributes to promoting the old city as a lively centre, and an attractive investment for the tourism sector.

"People who met during the Local Support Group will carry on working together," says Gundula Schulze. "And the main lasting effect will be the success of the Local Action Plan."

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

Altena's URBACT Local Support Group discussions fed into a Local Action Plan (LAP) to make the city more attractive for inhabitants, employees and visitors, and boost the town's economy through sustainable tourism. This LAP fits in with the City Council's broader *Altena 2015* concept by helping the city plan an integrated tourism concept around its new elevator, whose construction started in 2012.

Actions around two strong points for Altena

The "Altena Experience Elevator", when finished in 2014, will connect the castle with the town centre, offering visitors a combination of education and entertainment.



Copyright - Stadt Altena

Altena decided to put its main advantage – the castle – at the centre of its tourism strategy. With this in mind, the Local Action Plan aims to market the city centre and establish tourism as the second largest contributor to the local economy. The goal is to increase the annual number of tourists to the castle – and the town – from 100 000 to more than 140 000. Many of the planned actions involve developing urban areas in terms of retail, city centre development, and quality of housing. Others aim to enhance Altena’s image and get local people involved.

The second major task, based on suggestions from inhabitants, is to fill over 20 empty shops to turn the city centre into a crafts village (*Krämerdorf*) where tourists can buy souvenirs. An association was founded in 2011 to promote real estate in the city centre, and manage the sale of shops. And,

as Gundula Schulze explains, progress is already being made: “For ten years, shops in the centre were empty – no one was buying. And now, something is changing. During the last two years, about ten buildings with shops have been sold near the elevator site. Everyone knows something is changing in our town, and people think they can make money with tourism increases.”

Additional actions and sub-projects involve making Altena more lively and welcoming.

These include a medieval market, which now attracts 25 000 visitors each year, with performances on the new river Lenne promenade. Developing Altena as a centre for walking and hiking is another plan, started in recent years. This involves building up tourism infrastructure, such as a town trail, new souvenir shops, higher quality hotels, and sign-posting for tourists. There will also be a ‘quality offensive’ aimed at retailers, employees and owners of hotels, restaurants, cafes and bars.

Andreas Hollstein, Mayor of Altena: “The exchange with partner cities from other European countries greatly contributed to the capacity building of the city administration’s staff. The participation in OP-ACT allowed us to gain valuable experience – technically as well as in regards to international cooperation.”

ZOOMÁLLÓN HUNGARY



Nagykálló (population about 10 000) lies less than twenty minutes' drive from the county capital Nyíregyháza in north-eastern Hungary. With the Romanian border 47 km away, and Ukraine 70 km to the north-east, international traffic speeds through a nearby motorway intersection. Meanwhile, Nagykálló's quiet local economy revolves around a number of micro, small and medium-sized companies involved in agribusiness – processing local and micro-regional produce such as maize, wheat, sunflowers, peppers and apples – and farming-related trades. Nagykálló managed to stave off population decline until recently, but selective migration and aging are now making their mark.

Local Challenges

Nagykálló joined the URBACT project OP-ACT during a massive overhaul of Hungary's public administration structure, in which the town became the district centre – the first level of state administration – of a micro-region of seven settlements.

With an aging population in Nagykovács and its rural surroundings, small family agricultural enterprises are closing. This, together with high numbers of young children, and low education and skills among working aged inhabitants, means trouble for the local labour market and a growing burden for the active population. Official sources put the unemployment rate at over 18% in 2011. Meanwhile, there is a lack of local part-time jobs and support for entrepreneurship. People are unwilling to start their own businesses. Young adults tend to look for work in the province's capital, move to Budapest, or leave the country.

Though Nagykovács has gone through dynamic development in recent years – involving over 40 national and European development projects with a total value exceeding EUR 15 million – a number of areas still need major improvement to prevent the city losing its young, well-educated workforce. Through OP-ACT, Nagykovács defined its main challenges:

- Limited employment opportunities;
- “Ordinary” city image, un-attractive for young people;
- Uninteresting, functionless public city spaces;
- Lack of high quality dwellings attractive to young families;
- Insufficient attractive local cultural and leisure activities;
- Pressing social problems.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

With its partners of similarly sized European cities, Nagykovács investigated urban development issues such as governance and financing, social and economic integration, quality of life and territorial competitiveness. Marianna Diósi, Quality Management, Benchmarking and Applications Assistant, Nagykovács, explains, “We found useful the exchange of experiences through OP-ACT: the project contributed to identifying common solutions which can be built into the strategies of partner cities; it helped complement economic and environmental strategies

with cohesion and social elements. Partners could use OP-ACT as a city-marketing tool, too.”

OP-ACT's transnational workshops and other exchanges provided Nagykovács with best practices, innovative approaches and ideas to strengthen their own Local Action Plan. Discussions on economic growth, social inclusion and improved living conditions were particularly useful. Partner cities focused together on growth tools and strategies at their workshop in Altena. In Legazpi, partners shared their draft Local Action Plans, and Nagykovács learnt about urban development and planning to cope with the challenges of demographic change.

“The support and experience of the international partners constantly provided useful guidelines and orientation for our Local Action Plan development process,” recalls Marianna Diósi. This helped Nagykovács define focused objectives for becoming a liveable and attractive small city (see the five priority areas below).

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

Nagykovács developed a core URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) consisting of the City Council, the local urban development company, citizens, businesses, non-profit organisations, urban development specialists and journalists. Supported by OP-ACT's transnational partnership, this group was central to the extensive consultation process involved in preparing a local plan to revitalise Nagykovács.

One initiative where the community's active involvement was particularly valuable was in forming an agricultural cooperative to supply local institutions and sell produce in neighbouring Nyíregyháza. Others ideas were building a strong brand for local products and encouraging low-cost housing in climate-friendly residential areas (details below).

- The URBACT method enabled Nagykovács to:
- Develop common thinking with local stakeholders on the town's development;
 - Access information on changes and new trends, mainly in economic and town development, social needs and communications;
 - Find the best way to encourage the active inclusion of local decision-makers and target groups;
 - Organise local meetings with concrete, clear aims addressing key issues for Nagykovács's citizens;
 - Promote and strengthen communication between local actors, find new tools for improving communication channels;
 - Set up personal meetings and discussions with stakeholders, LSG members and local decision-makers;
 - Encourage stakeholders to contribute their own experience and professional knowledge to defining local problems and solutions;
 - Ensure local actors participate in relevant international workshops and seminars.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

With input from URBACT Local Support Group members, and support from European partner cities at each step of the process,



Nagykálló developed a flexible, strategic Local Action Plan for becoming a liveable and attractive small city.

“We tried to create a living Local Action Plan, open to amendments,” explains Marianna Diósi. “We drew up specific solutions which can be continuously adapted to respond to new challenges, following the basic principles of: creativity and innovation; cost-efficiency; involvement of the local community; climate-friendly development projects and operation; information technology.”

These guiding principles, known as “Urban Development 2.0”, were proposed by an external expertise team supporting the Local Action Plan’s creation.

The five priority areas for revitalising Nagy­kálló are outlined below. Requiring little initial capital investment, pilot actions started during the URBACT project are already making perceivable improvements to life in Nagy­kálló.

1 Competitive local economy and quality jobs for local citizens

a) **Attract new enterprises** to Nagy­kálló, primarily, to the industrial park area.

b) **Set up a local social cooperative:** With three main elements, this was developed as a pilot action during OP-­ACT, creating jobs and finding markets for local, high quality agricultural products:

i. Agricultural Public Work Programme employing 50 people, including Romas, in farming Hungarian paprika. Wages and tools were financed by the Hungarian Ministry for Home Affairs’ public work programme, materials were sponsored by KITE company, and the municipality provided agricultural land for growing the vegetables. The executor is Kállai Duet Farmer Ltd.

ii. Kállai Duet Public Foundation collects locally grown products from traditional farmers and small agricultural enterprises, labels them with the farmer’s name, and sells them at nearby county markets (non-­profit). The programme is self-­supporting, and tries to help 15-­20 small and medium sized agricultural enterprises every week.

iii. Fruit and Vegetable Farmer Organisation (launched 2012, seven members) – Local traditional farmers and small and medium sized agricultural enterprises from the town and micro-­region of Nagy­kálló joined to form a cooperative which also included Kállai Duet Farmer Ltd. As well as helping farmers find new markets, the organisation is using a HUF 1 billion (about EUR 3.4 million) grant to build a freezing, manufacturing and packing site (2013). In addition, Kállai Duet Farmer Ltd’s marketing activities are helping raise awareness of Nagy­kálló’s local products brand.



2 Attractive, lively urban spaces

Develop creative, interesting urban public spaces through low-­budget, creative and community-­based developments. **Climate-­friendly residential areas:** Build new affordable small houses with low running costs, using local materials in an attractive environment. Preparations are underway for a “Summer University” involving the construction of a cheap, energy efficient and sustainable model house from local materials. The project associates: educational institutions specialised in architecture and construction, professors and students, local labour force experienced in building, an environmental organisation, the municipality and town development company.

3 Active community and cultural scene Develop a unique cultural programme:

for a vibrant cultural life to retain young and educated people. Use public spaces in creative ways, and make more of existing events such as Kállai Duet Folk Dance Festival, “Nagy­kálló Days”, Christmas, New Year and national events. **Create quality conditions for** leisure and sports activities: Building on existing potential and infrastructure, encourage a range of leisure and sports activities for local citizens, citizens of the neighbouring settlements and visitors. Long-­term plans include the redevelopment of a local lido.

4 Social inclusion Establish the key conditions for sustainable social employment, and build the foundations of a

social economy to support integration and improve the living conditions of disadvantaged people.

A dedicated Local Action Plan for Roma integration was developed to tackle the housing, employment, and educational problems faced by many local Roma people.

5 Develop a communication strategy to promote the city brand and local products Build a strong brand for the city...

very few people outside the city know about the positive changes that have taken place during Nagy­kálló’s recent major development. ... **and for local products,** to market the social cooperative’s range of high quality, mainly, agricultural, products.

Prospects

While part of OP-­ACT, Nagy­kálló was also partner in another URBACT project, Roma-­Net, which focused on the integration of Roma populations. Then, in 2012, the city joined a third URBACT project, Jobtown, which aims to ensure that “today’s youth become effective and successful members of tomorrow’s workforce”. Nagy­kálló hopes these partnerships will help sustain further international cooperation. In the meantime, the Council aims to strengthen existing cooperation with the Local Support Group, building on the benefits of the URBACT process, and make further efforts to involve a broader range of local actors.

Zoltan Juhasz, Mayor of Nagy­kálló: “While working as a mayor, I have learned that in urban development – as in many other areas of life – there is nothing more valuable than learning from the real-­life experience – successes and mistakes alike – of other city leaders. And that is exactly what we have received from the OP-­ACT project.”

ROMA-NeT

Integration of Roma Population

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION

November 2009 – January 2013

LEAD PARTNER

Budapest (Hungary)

PARTNERS

FUNDING

Total Eligible Fund: EUR 622 918
ERDF Contribution: EUR 459 549



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With 10-12 million members, the Roma population is Europe's largest minority. Their communities vary in terms of culture and religion, legal status, language, settlement models, and periods of migration. But, despite efforts at local, national and European levels, in many countries Roma show high levels of social exclusion from employment, education, health and social services; high rates of illiteracy; and poor school attendance. Many Roma people live in segregated, isolated districts where overcrowding and a lack of basic facilities contribute to poor health. The URBACT project ROMA-NeT was set up by nine European cities to help improve the social inclusion and community integration of their Roma populations. They built ROMA-NeT on the conviction that the integration of Roma populations is vital in a cohesive society, in line with the European Commission's long-term goals, and that cities have a critical, central role to play if Roma inclusion is to move from a concept to a functioning reality.

For three years the partner cities investigated how to overcome negative attitudes and improve consultation and engagement with the Roma community. They worked to identify ways to improve community cohesion and engagement, employment and education, social, healthcare and housing, as well as governance and community policing. Much of their work focused on a step-by-step inclusive approach, particularly, for young Roma and their transition into active adult citizens.

MAIN RESULTS

Each ROMA-NeT city set up a Local Support Group bringing together for the first time stakeholders from services such as education, healthcare, employment, housing, policing and political organisations, as well as local Roma organisations, to discuss Roma inclusion actions. In addition, and linked to this, a series of transnational “learning clusters” focused on three main themes: active community engagement and local empowerment; integrated approach to housing and local service provision; and Roma employability – understanding the barriers to employment.

Recommendations for Roma Inclusion in EU Cities

The project concludes: “ROMA-NeT cities have already begun a journey that has the chance to really make a difference across all the important themes and to spread the message to other cities on how they might begin to achieve this too. For many European cities that have to confront the fact that they have a Roma community facing problems of exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination, the reality is the same as for ROMA-NeT cities. They should listen to the experiences of ROMA-NeT.”

Four key messages for cities

One step at a time

Roma inclusion takes time and effort. A step-by-step approach is needed. Initiatives forcing too big an “integration leap”, such as moving Roma families from ghettos to blocks

of flats, are doomed to fail. A gradual integration process needs to be in place with active, individual support and communication along the way.

More than one piece

Roma integration is a process that should integrate a number of key elements. There is no quick fix solution. Simply providing a job, or a better housing environment, is far from sufficient.

Together – in equal partnerships with the community

Institutions offering support should work in partnership. The integrated, community-led approach is the only way forward for social inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups.

Involve Roma at an early stage – “nothing about us without us”

Only Roma people have the power to change their lives; you can only support this process. Adopt innovative ways to involve them from the start - traditional participative methods will not work! If they seem disinterested, you are not trying hard enough!

Wider Recommendations – Some Highlights

Longer term programme-based funding over project-based funding.

Projects aiming at improving social inclusion do not achieve their potential in two or three years: much longer periods are needed. Moreover, the results tend not to last long, unless continuity is ensured.



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Cities, and all development actors, must trust the Roma community to articulate what they need to improve the quality of life and living conditions in their community.

Working with Roma at local level throughout policy development, action planning and implementation is critical for successful Roma inclusion measures. To allow funds to be allocated for active Roma community engagement and community participation interventions, Managing Authorities must ensure such measures are included in the partnership contracts and operational programmes.

Continued capacity building is necessary for the Local Support Groups (LSG) in ROMA-NeT cities.

Further training and support is needed to help the LSGs develop to ensure each city prepares a successful funding application for the necessary EU Structural Funds to support implementation of their Local Action Plans. There is a need to cover continued LSG capacity building activities that will prepare cities to develop integrated proposals focusing on the new measures being introduced in the 2014–2020 Common Strategic Framework.



Civil society organisations are critical in the implementation of Roma inclusion measures, so actions must continue to support, strengthen and build the capacity of those seriously lacking resources. To this end it is necessary that not only large organisations and large projects are funded through the Structural Funds, but that local organisations and the realisation of local ideas become components of larger urban development activities.

Cities should not be afraid to confront racism and discrimination issues head on. They should use communications to explain the current situation and change behaviour – both in Roma and wider communities. To allow funds to be allocated for such interventions, Managing Authorities should ensure relevant anti-discrimination measures are included in partnership contracts and operational programmes.

The EU, cities and other public sector organisations should look at ways to cut through the bureaucracy to make the development and implementation of Roma inclusion measures easier to take from idea to successful interventions.

Local authorities, in partnership with Roma populations and key local stakeholders, should follow the example of ROMA-NeT cities in developing evidence-based Local Action Plans which include integrated measures as the basis of a future application for EU Structural Funds in the 2014–2020 programming period. The European Commission's Common Strategic Framework 2014–2020 makes provision for 'community-led local development' measures, which offers real opportunity for cities to develop integrated local actions.

ROMA-NeT calls for a significant increase in Roma inclusion actions across Europe, particularly, through new initiatives from many more cities. These actions will reveal what really works, enable the creation of good practices, and most importantly, contribute to improving living conditions and life circumstances of Roma populations across Europe.

Eight Thematic Guides

"All Roma inclusion strategy documents ask for an integrated, meaningful, cross-sector approach, but this has only just begun to happen through projects like ROMA-NeT with proven, tangible results," states ROMA-NeT.

To help other cities learn from these results, and the experiences they gained during the project, the partner cities produced a set of thematic guides available online. Presenting case studies from across the EU, useful contacts, and other resources, the ROMA-NeT guides clarify eight key issues facing Roma communities and their cities, as follows:

– **An introduction to the challenges of Roma inclusion**

A background to working with Roma communities, this guide introduces the four key themes of education, employment, health-care and housing, that underpin all issues affecting Roma people across the EU.

– **The education challenges of Roma inclusion**

The scale of this challenge is highlighted with figures from Greece where under 10% of Roma children go to kindergarten, pre-school or school. The guide provides tried and tested educational practices for improving inclusion, with actions encouraging zero tolerance of prejudice, harassment and racism in schools. Features interesting examples of how Roma parents are involved with kindergartens in Torrent and Nagykallo.

– **The health and social care challenges of Roma inclusion**

With life expectancy for Roma populations in Eastern Europe about 10 years less than the overall population, "negative experiences from the past and exclusionary attitudes from 'public authorities' make many Roma reluctant, even afraid, to approach doctors, health care professionals or to engage with social care providers". Many of the innovative approaches to health and social care selected for this guide involve outreach work and health mediators. A case study shows how Glasgow is helping families to claim free school meals.

– **The housing challenges of Roma inclusion**

"Most Roma people want to be part of a legitimate economy and to contribute to the wider community of which they are part," explains this guide. But residential segregation of many Roma communities, sometimes resulting from deliberate past public policies, represents "a significant barrier" to providing adequate housing, healthcare, education and employment services. An example from Madrid shows how an integrated and inclusive approach to housing and regeneration, led by a regional public authority, can significantly improve social integration and community cohesion.

– **The employability challenges of Roma inclusion**

Just one in three Roma are in paid work, which is not only critical for Roma individuals, but also a drain on national, regional and local economies. Proposing a set of practical responses for cities, this guide calls for greater investment in educational support,

skill development and other employability measures. It features a case study of the "START UP" Budapest Municipality Trainee Project for Young Roma, involving trainee placements with the Mayor's Office, schools, hospitals and other municipal institutions.

– **The policing challenges of Roma inclusion**

ROMA-NeT's partner cities draw here on their experiences of how various policing approaches affect social cohesion between Roma and neighbouring communities. It outlines how police can engage better with other public sector partners and with Roma communities, helping protect Roma against crime as well as enforcing when appropriate. Many solutions lie in improving communication and understanding. This is reflected in an informative case study of Strathclyde Police's work in Govanhill, Glasgow, a central area where many Roma people live in poverty.

– **Roma on the move in Europe – The challenges for inclusion**

Understanding that the main reason Roma change countries is to find a better life, ROMA-NeT's partner cities present possible solutions for tackling the "extraordinary discrimination" faced by Roma people when they exercise their right to move freely within the European Union. As well as clearing up some of the myths about the way Roma families live, this guide investigates how movement affects Roma and two example cities, Kosice and Glasgow.

– **The planning and governance for Roma inclusion**

This guide outlines the ROMA-NeT cities' varied experiences of the URBACT methodology, including Local Support Groups of key service providers and organisations working with Roma communities, and the development of a Local Action Plan in each city. This approach, they resume, "gives stakeholder groups the tools to develop a positive partnership approach for specific local actions". A case study on Torrent reveals "How URBACT ROMA-NeT planning processes helped create intelligent schools".

Prospects

Although the project has finished, ROMA-NeT's partners see this as the beginning of a path towards Roma inclusion and integration.

"ROMA-NeT cities continue to face big challenges in improving access to education; housing and living conditions; health services; employability and skills for Roma populations, but they are better organised and better equipped to face the challenges of the future. ROMA-NeT cities know most importantly



that they must find and invest in innovative ways to engage and to work in partnership alongside Roma communities,” states ROMA-NeT.

Beyond the transnational, learning and local outputs originally planned – and the Local Support Groups, which will continue involving Roma in planning and delivering local actions – ROMA-NeT has generated spin-off activities in each partner city. In Karvina, for example, a new Roma Mentor position was created, enabling the municipality to have discussions with Roma people, not just about them. Kosice has undertaken the first in-depth analysis of municipal Roma integration policies over the last 20 years, identifying questions that need answering to overcome the unsatisfactory situation of Roma in

the city. In Nagykallo, discussions have started with the Regional Operational Programme Managing Authority in Hungary to launch a EUR 0.7 million pilot project on social urban rehabilitation.

Building on their work with ROMA-NeT, Glasgow, Budapest, Bologna, Kosice have

joined the Roma Matrix project co-funded by the European Union’s Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme (2013-2015), a 19-strong partnership formed to combat racism, intolerance and xenophobia towards Roma and to increase integration.

A recommendation in ROMA-NeT’s final report: “Roma integration is not a project that only has one element; it is a process that should integrate a number of key elements. The integrated, community-led approach is the only way forward for social inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups. Involving Roma people from the beginning is key! If the local Roma seem disinterested: you are not trying hard enough!”



Learn more about ROMA-NeT and download ROMA-NeT Final publications and partners’ Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/roma-net

ZOOM ON UDINE ITALY



Udine (population 100 000) is an ancient city in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region of north-east Italy, between the Adriatic Sea and the Alps, less than 40 km from Slovenia. The Province of Udine has an unemployment rate of 5%, and its relatively healthy economy is dominated by the tertiary sector. Foreign citizens make up 14% of Udine's growing population. Almost 400 Roma people live in Udine and the surrounding area. Although most live in town, in 2008 about 100 Roma lived in Udine's largest unregulated camp, where more than half were under 21 years old. By 2012, efforts including relocation to social houses and help with buying land had reduced the number of people in this camp to 43.

Local Challenges

Unlawful occupation of state land, unhealthy living conditions, poor education, social exclusion, internal conflict, and limited access to training; these are some main challenges faced by Udine's Roma community, the city's most seriously disadvantaged citizens.

Dubbed "Campland" by the European Roma Rights Centre (Country Report, 2000), Italy has a reputation for Roma segregation—whether they be citizens of Italy or other countries, refugees or stateless. Despite promises to stop isolation in camps in its National Strategy for Roma Inclusion (2012), Amnesty International noted in the same year "the exact opposite is still happening" in the country.

Udine's commitment to solve Roma issues was reflected in its 2008–2013 Administrative Mandate, which includes the appointment of a dedicated councillor to liaise with the Roma community and relevant organisations. This 2008 administrative programme included work on Roma integration in areas such as education, jobs, and housing.

Udine joined ROMA-NeT looking for new ways to associate the various institutional and social actors working with and for Roma, and establish a framework for sharing information and operational strategies to tackle exclusion and discrimination. Udine also needed solutions for promoting and enhancing the participation of Roma in initiatives that targeted them.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

"Being part of a transnational network is important in terms of learning from other cities, comparing contexts, and seeing new ideas and different perspectives on experimented initiatives," explains Antonella Nonino, Udine's Deputy Mayor for relationships with the Roma community. "Sharing plans and projects during ROMA-NeT Steering Committees around Europe helped us discover what can and cannot work in our context." A weaker element, however, was comparing actions in cities that were so different, including Lead Partner Budapest, with its more than 1.7 million inhabitants and politically-represented Roma.

However, Udine did learn from its partners. Budapest, Almería and Karviná provided

examples of inclusion practices in education, professional training and social housing, which Udine transferred to their URBACT Local Action Plan. These included strengthening the involvement of voluntary associations in educative interventions within and outside the Roma camp. To plan the promotion of self-management of Roma settlements, Udine drew on examples from Budapest and Glasgow.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

Forming an officially-recognised URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) in 2011 for public institutions and social actors to cooperate on Roma issues was one of the most meaningful preliminary actions of Udine's participation in ROMA-NeT. The group involved the Health Prevention Department, Ministry of Justice, voluntary organisations, UNICEF, a migrants' association and a women's association. Some Roma/Sinti people attended LSG meetings and participated in Udine's ROMA-NeT Steering meeting and the local final conference (2013).

One advantage of the LSG was its promotion of Roma participation, a real challenge for the municipality. Involving the Roma community as a whole in planning and realising actions for its members is among Udine's core strategic issues for the coming years, building on strong foundations laid during ROMA-NeT.

The Local Support Group's main tasks were to explore Roma issues such as education and training, health, housing and labour market inclusion, and draft a Local Action Plan. Introducing this plan, Udine's mayor Furio Honsell stated: "...many isolated and fragmented actions and programmes had been repeatedly attempted and put into action in the past fifty years in Udine, but never before had all the stakeholders defined a coordinated joint action plan. ROMA-NeT has involved members of the various Roma settlements in Udine, social and health public officers and workers, voluntary workers from various non-profit associations, urban planners, policymakers both at local and regional levels. For more than two years they have discussed and planned together an integrated action."

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

Based on their study of Udine's Roma, municipal initiatives, and local associations' actions,



the URBACT Local Support Group identified principal challenges and developed a Local Action Plan (LAP): an integrated strategy for addressing the needs of Udine's Roma community. The plan fits in with Italy's 2012 "National strategy of inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities – European Commission Communication n. 173/2011", with its strategic axes: education, employment, health and social services, and housing.

Designed as a flexible document, the LAP is a concrete vision of actions in six main areas to improve social inclusion for Roma people and avoid discrimination and racism. Udine's Managing Authority in ROMA-NeT, who works in the regional department dealing with vocational training, looks out for funding to implement the plan, mainly from the European Social Fund. Private sector support or – more often – municipal co-financing is also needed.

1 Education and Training, to promote pre-schooling, schooling and vocational training for Roma children and youngsters by facilitating non-discriminatory access to schools and tackling drop-out phenomena. Actions include enhancing the Municipality Social Department's Territorial Socio-Educative Service for Roma children (regional and municipal funding allocated for 2012–2015). Designed for youngsters in difficult situations risking psycho-social distress, this preventive activity was rarely used by Roma in the past. Efforts will be continued to enhance cooperation between public institutions, schools, voluntary associations, families and the Roma community.

2 Health, improving Roma access to local socio-sanitary services, especially for women, children and the elderly, and reinforcing preventative medicine,

particularly, in reproductive health and motherhood. Two main actions: first, during Udine's yearly anti-flu vaccination campaign, dedicated sessions are planned in the Roma camp or other easily-accessible structures (starting 2013). Second, informative meetings about healthy eating are planned and funded by the Health Department, working with schools, to prevent obesity and tooth decay (starting 2013), in connection with other international projects such as Healthy Cities.

3 Housing. Facilitate inter-institutional cooperation to improve housing opportunities for Roma people; promote lawful housing solutions to answer Roma families' specific needs; enhance housing mediation; reinforce information on financial support and housing solutions managed by public institutions. Actions here include: providing mediators in social tenements to prevent conflicts and facilitate communication; promoting legal self-management of Roma settlements and enhancing institutional and public-private networks.

4 Work, encouraging access to better training, employment and entrepreneurship. Also to develop ways to regularise unlawful or provisional work, and accompany young Roma starting work. Actions include promoting joint projects with training institutes, enterprises and cooperatives (regional and private funds). Administrative experts will accompany Roma in experimental projects of enterprise creation and self-management. Municipal and regional funds will be allocated to implementing educational support for Roma youngsters searching for jobs and starting work, cooperating with the private social sector.

5 Legality, encouraging lawful behaviour through education and awareness-raising, promoting exchanges between Roma and non-Roma people, favouring anti-discrimination measures. Crime-prevention projects will be supported, especially those improving links with jobs or training. Education in citizenship and legality will continue with schools.

6 Professional training, improving public and private social workers' understanding of Roma issues, supplying social and anthropological data on Roma, good practice from other professionals, and tools and methodologies in education, health, housing and work. A training course "Social work with Roma people" for public and private professionals, will be co-financed by



the municipality, with EUR 3 504 from the European Social Fund, Regional Operative Programme "Continuous training for socio-sanitary professionals", 2012.

Prospects

Udine found the URBACT methodology "extremely effective" in building a sustainable framework for its actions to integrate Roma people.

In his foreword to Udine's Local Action Plan, Mayor Furio Honsell writes: "Thanks to this project, we can claim that all the children of the various Roma settlements in Udine receive compulsory vaccinations, and attend school; all our Roma citizens who previously lived in camps and, who have agreed to apply

for social housing, have had the opportunity to settle in public tenements; after-school school support services have been provided in the largest Roma camp, and finally we have streamlined the programme for providing vocational training and working experiences for Roma youths."

He says ROMA-NeT was "extremely beneficial" for all Udine's Roma citizens, social workers and volunteers, who will work together with more awareness, motivation, and effectiveness. "I am confident the impact of the project is likely to improve the quality of life for the whole Udine population. Of course a lot more has to be done to overcome the prejudices against Roma, that have been built in decades, but the active citizenship that this project has stirred will have long lasting effects across all sectors of our society."

Furio Honsell, Mayor of Udine: "The impact of the URBACT project ROMA-NeT was huge and will continue to be extremely beneficial for all the citizens of Udine. ROMA-NeT has made it possible, for the first time, to bring together and develop an integrated action to address the needs of the most severely disadvantaged members of our community, the Roma minority."

ZOOM ON GLASGOW UNITED KINGDOM



Situated on the river Clyde in Western Scotland, Glasgow is a major cultural and tourist destination, known for its shops, museums, Victorian architecture, and thriving music scene. The city of Glasgow has a diverse, relatively young, population of around 588 000, and is part of the Greater Glasgow conurbation of more than a million inhabitants. In the 1960s, the area was marked by large-scale relocation of people to new towns and peripheral suburbs. While Glasgow was historically a centre for heavy industry, famous worldwide for its shipbuilding and marine engineering, today the economy is dominated by the service sector. Boosted by the International Financial Services District and its status as a major European conference venue, Glasgow is the powerhouse of the Scottish economy.

Local Challenges

Glasgow joined ROMA-NeT in 2010 when the city was adjusting to an influx of Roma that had started around 2004. The Roma were, and largely still are, concentrated in Glasgow's south-east neighbourhood of Govanhill, a traditional area of 'first settlement' for migrant groups, where around a third of residents are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Though numbers are difficult to calculate, various studies have estimated that around 2500 to 3000 Romanian and Slovakian Roma lived in Govanhill in 2012. Most of these people are concentrated in four or five streets, often in housing officially described as "Below Tolerable Standard". While many statutory and non-governmental organisations were working with Roma, their actions focused mainly on immediate issues of poverty. Some service provision was a little disjointed and the smaller organisations lacked funding. There was no official city-wide strategy linking the multitude of services dealing with Roma integration.

As the Roma were concentrated in one neighbourhood, there was a lack of awareness at city level of the issues faced by the Roma and related local organisations. Glasgow joined ROMA-NeT recognising a need for stronger engagement and collaboration between service providers and the Roma community. The city was looking for ways to improve the Roma population's access to health services, housing, employment, vocational training and education. Glasgow wanted to develop "trusted intermediaries" in the Roma community, to help connect members of the community with existing services and build new, specially tailored services where necessary.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

"The transnational exchanges added great value to the work of ROMA-NeT in Glasgow and gave the city unprecedented insight into how partner cities were responding to the challenges faced by their respective Roma populations," explains Glasgow City Council's Marie McLelland. "The different attitudes, both positive and negative, and different approaches, enriched the development of our own Local Action Plan and enlightened our development of future policy."

One such change was sparked by members of Glasgow's Local Support Group visiting Kosice in the Slovak Republic. Many of the



Roma in Glasgow have travelled from the Kosice region and Michalovce district. Marie McLelland says: "The high levels of poverty witnessed made Glasgow more determined to improve the standard of living for the Roma here. We have developed vital links with this region that will benefit both our policy development and our service provision, especially, given the number of Roma we receive from there."

Each ROMA-NeT partner city has its specific problems. For Glasgow, whose Roma population is not indigenous to the area, language is a particular challenge. "We've had to invest a lot of money and time into translation services, which is making an impact on some already stretched services," explains Marie McLelland. "For example, there are over 50 languages spoken in the local primary school attended by some of the Roma community." However, Glasgow found many issues to be strikingly similar across the European partnership. Engagement and reaching out to the Roma is an issue in almost all ROMA-NeT cities, as is sustaining services in times of financial crisis.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

"While partnerships had existed locally to address the overall regeneration of the area, this was the first to specifically look at the Roma community, its challenges, and the

services it was receiving as a community," says Marie McLelland.

The URBACT Local Support Group set up in Govanhill brought together a group of stakeholders with varying degrees of experience of working with the Roma community. While not involving Roma directly in discussions, the group ensured that organisations interacting with Roma at community level were represented. It was a way to address a lack of engagement with the Roma and the need to empower this community more. Members include several departments of Glasgow City Council; Govanhill Housing Association; community-based activities involving Roma, such as the Govanhill Youth Project, Govanhill Law Centre and Oxfam; Strathclyde Police, whose work involves building better community relations; Community Health Partnership; Romano Lav, the area's first organisation to be set up by Roma; West of Scotland Regional Equality Council; and the Glasgow Regeneration Agency, which helps people move into jobs or training.

Despite a slow start, the Local Support Group soon grew, tapping into existing networks and constantly communicating with key organisations and service providers already working with the Roma community. Marie McLelland recalls: "It was an interesting time to start such a project, and ROMA-NeT benefited from the build-up of interest in Roma migration that was beginning to manifest in the city. It was also vital to ensure that all participants in the project were fully aware of the benefits of working in this transnational manner. As a result the Local Support



Group became an important vehicle for collaboration of local stakeholders and the development of the Local Action Plan”.

Designed to complement the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategy and the overall targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Local Action Plan was developed through a highly interactive process involving a mix of stakeholders. While led by the local authority, an independent facilitator was appointed to ensure all stakeholders could contribute to the Local Action Plan.

Glasgow’s Local Support Group agreed to continue beyond the end of the network, with the city committing officers to facilitate the process, and ensure resources are available to source funding to implement recommendations. People now see the benefits of working together and taking a more strategic approach to funding local activities. The Local Support Group will be supported by four working groups covering the European Commission’s four key areas for Roma integration efforts: education, health and social care, housing, and employment. They will follow a set of guiding principles adopted during ROMA-NeT: Roma representation is essential; all working groups should identify and gather data in order to shape services for local Roma residents and they should seek input from Roma service users into the shape and delivery of services; the Local Support Group should seek participation from key agencies such as Education, Housing benefit, Social Work and the Job centre; the Local Support Group should engage Leadership within Glasgow City Council and locally elected members.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

“It was important that our Local Action Plan contained actions on both influencing policy and implementing practical solutions,” explains Marie McLelland. The main purpose of Glasgow’s Local Action Plan (LAP) was to provide a set of recommendations for Roma integration – such as awareness raising, projects and funding applications – under the themes of education, health, housing and employment. Below are some highlights of recommendations detailed in Glasgow’s Local Action Plan, which draws on the city’s transnational and Local Support Group experiences with ROMA-NeT:

Education:

- Greater support for language and translation services, including an easy-to-access interpreting hotline, intensive English

language programmes for new arrivals and the employment of more bilingual staff;

- Increasing nursery school provision with initiatives targeted at improving school attendance and retention at both primary and secondary school;

- Increasing the provision of more community-based education for both children and adults as well as community activities, for example, arts, music and sports.

Employment:

- Greater provision of interpreting services for local organisations providing employment advice combined with active English language classes for adults;

- Encouragement of young people to stay in school to increase future employment prospects;

- Create a training and employment programme for Roma to work as mediators/intermediaries in the areas of health, social work, housing, education, welfare benefits and employment.

Health and Social Care:

- Maintain and improve links with health services in the Slovak Republic, Romania, and the Czech Republic;

- Ensure adequate funding and support to sustain community-based support services that provide day-to-day advice to the Roma community.

Housing:

- Greater enforcement of private landlords to improve properties while encouraging wider policy debate on Roma access to good quality social rented housing;

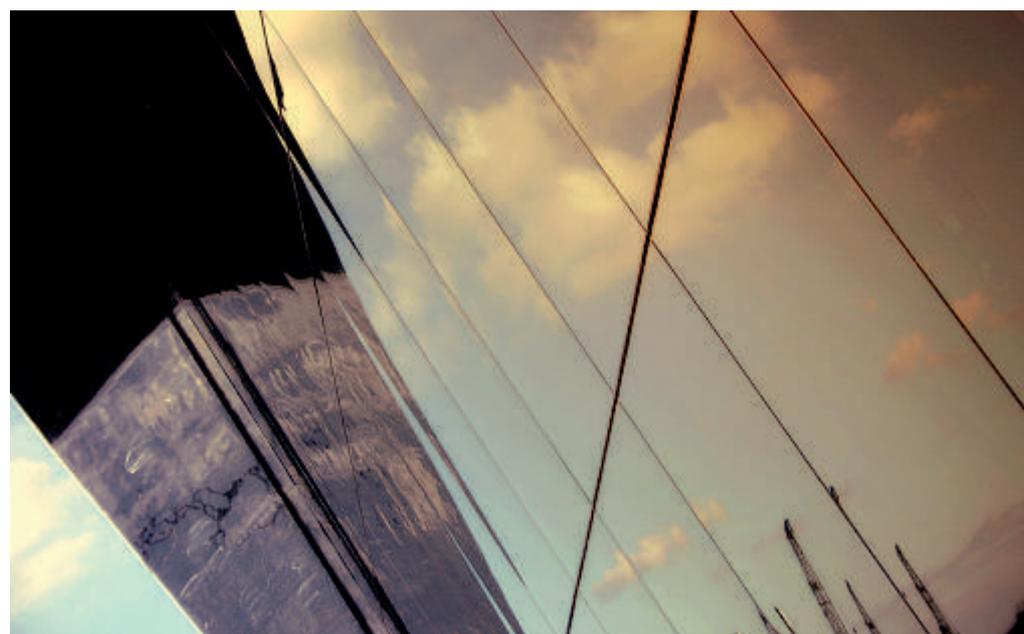
- More discussion needed on the potential re-housing and wider integration throughout the south of the city to ensure access to better quality housing.

How will these recommended actions be funded? Marie McLelland explains: “We are actively looking into funding sources to implement our action plan, working closely with the Scottish Government through the technical assistance programme to capitalise on funding opportunities from the 2014-2020 funding period.”

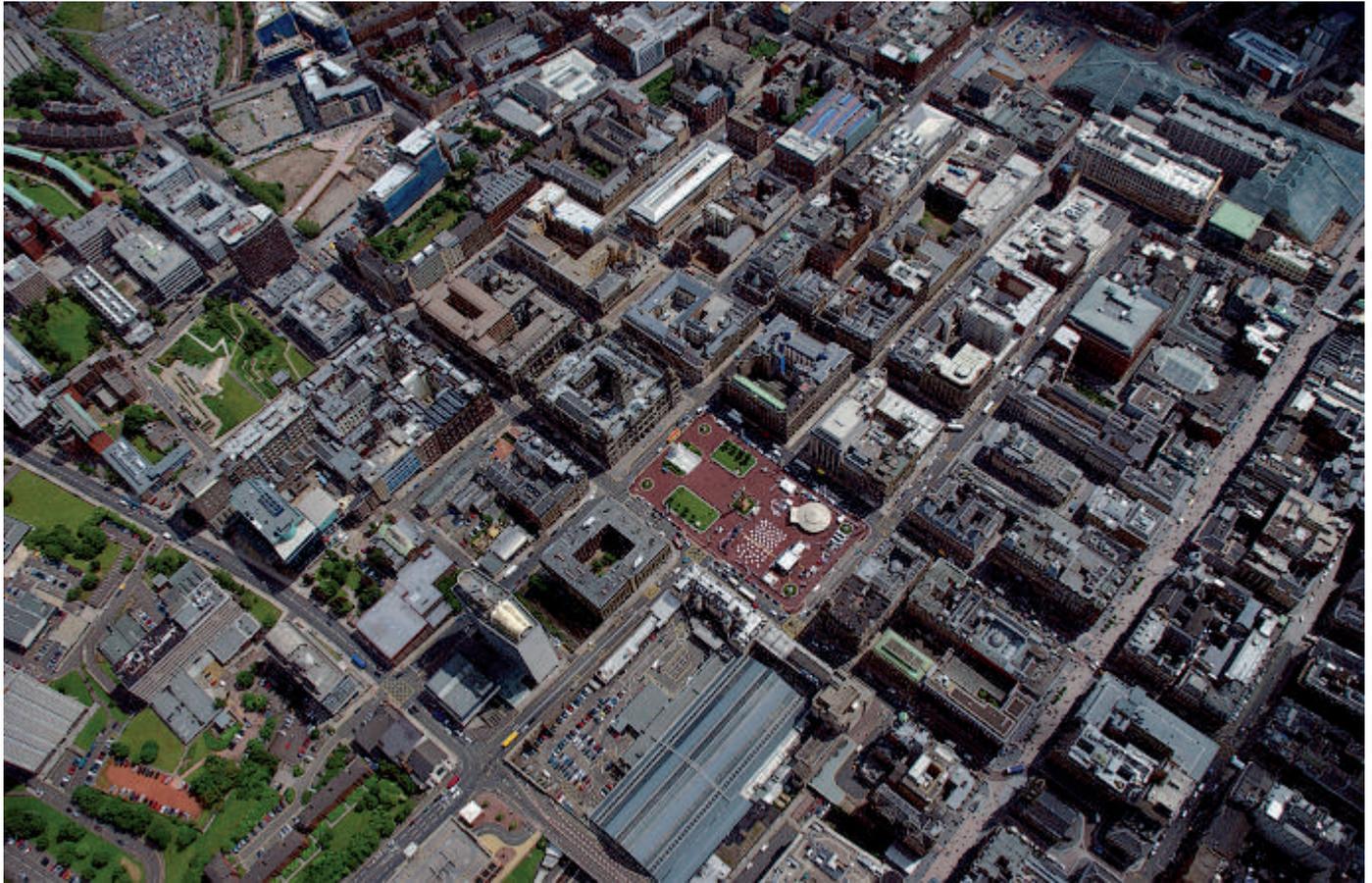
Prospects

Building on experiences and partnerships developed with ROMA-NeT, Glasgow joined the transnational Roma Matrix project led by Leeds City Council (see ROMA-NeT project Main Results). Glasgow City Council have also received approval for a new EURO CITIES initiative on social services with the Slovak Republic, Romania and Northern Ireland, while the EURO CITIES Roma Inclusion Task Force carried out a peer review on Roma employability projects in Glasgow in June 2013. The city is also awaiting news on a lifelong learning bid led by ROMA-NeT partner Almeria.

Glasgow successfully secured technical assistance to map the Roma population and provision of Roma services across Scotland, a project now underway. The plan is to deliver the findings to the Scottish Government in



This photo is a result of West of Scotland Regional Equality Council project called EmbRace (empowering Roma communities). Denisa, (16) Shawlands Academy, Glasgow



August 2013 with a view to aiding their development of Scotland's Operational Programme for the next round of European Structural Funds.

All these initiatives are a direct result of Glasgow's involvement in ROMA-NeT.

Keith Moore Milne, Team Leader, Roma Children and Families Team in Glasgow's Social Work Services, and LSG Member: "We would never have made our connections with Arad and EURO CITIES without ROMA-NeT. Also connections with Rotherham (I visited there and got some great ideas) came out of ROMA-Net. ROMA-NeT has an extremely powerful influence on agencies and NGOs in Glasgow and has definitely influenced thinking and policy in social work, education, health and housing."

SURE

Socio-Economic Methods of Urban Regeneration in Deprived Urban Areas

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION

November 2009 – January 2013

LEAD PARTNER

Eger (Hungary)

PARTNERS

FUNDING

Total Eligible Cost: EUR 478 493
ERDF Contribution: EUR 359 657



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The URBACT project SURE helps small and medium sized towns build strategies for the social, economic and physical regeneration of their deprived central neighbourhoods. Smaller municipalities can lack the expertise and resources to tackle the complex web of issues that cause urban areas to decline. SURE's partnership of small and medium sized cities found much of the 'good practice' available on integrated regeneration to be based on the experiences of large cities, despite European Commission's calculations that 56% of Europe's urban population lives in small and medium sized cities (*Cities of Tomorrow*, 2011). In response, for three years the partner cities exchanged experiences and investigated ways for smaller municipalities to develop integrated socio-economic regeneration strategies that build on local strengths and opportunities to answer local needs. Core themes included tourism, enterprise, physical improvements and community.

MAIN RESULTS

Five topics provided the focus of analysis, learning and exchange during the SURE project.

1 Strategy Development

Analysing a target area's challenges and opportunities, assessing resources available, identifying and choosing options. SURE approached this topic both from a high level strategic perspective, on the development of a town within a European context (study visit to Larnaca); and from a local perspective, on developing a strategy to improve the physical fabric of the town centre and its links to the local tourism industry (study visit to Gheorgheni).

2 Social Enterprise

As government budgets are squeezed, SURE explored social enterprise contributions to socio-economic regeneration, focusing on a well-established social enterprise network in Albacete. There, Cáritas Albacete organisation runs shops selling recycled or donated goods, creating volunteering and paid work. One such shop was relocated to the SURE target area.

3 Placemaking

Unlike institutionalised, top-down development of urban spaces, placemaking is an ongoing process in which local communities express their desires and aspirations then participate in their realisation. Many public agencies struggle to invest in such community engagement and high quality urban spaces. A SURE study visit saw how placemaking worked in Louvain-la-Neuve's Wallons Square, with its complex mix of interests. While the area's institutional stakeholders had participated in SURE's strategy process, private property owners stayed away. However, placemaking soon changed this, and the previously chairman of the private landlords associations approached the Local Support Group to discuss how he and other investors could get involved in the area's regeneration.

4 Social Inclusion

The inclusion of Roma communities presented a particular challenge for a number of SURE partner cities, who confirmed a widespread difficulty in turning European policy intentions into actions that really

benefit excluded communities. This was explored in a study visit to Komotini.

5 Community Development

How should neighbourhoods and their inhabitants be 'regenerated'? One widely accepted approach is to build deprived communities' capacities so they can help themselves. But according to SURE this often accentuates differences in values, norms and expectations, encouraging fragmentation and isolation. SURE explored community development as a way to enable local people to accept differences and to benefit from them (study visit to Dún Laoghaire).

SURE Participatory Planning Toolkit

SURE's partner cities put their experiences into an easy-to-use toolkit that helps small and medium sized cities understand and adopt the methodology of participatory planning. It encourages local governments, communities and local stakeholders to cooperate on urban development issues.

SURE describes the Participatory Strategic Planning process as "a consensus-building approach that helps a community to join together in explaining how they would like their community or organisation to develop over the next few years". The approach requires constant communication, so that planning, implementation and feedback are merged into a single process.

Designed as a catalogue to support the work of cities and Local Support Groups in ensuring extensive participation in Local Action Planning, the SURE Toolkit includes tips, tools and practices identified by partner cities in three key phases of the Participatory Planning Process: "Community Engagement"; "Strategy and Programme Development"; and "Developing and Disseminating Local Action Plans".

The Guide warns that before choosing a tool it is crucial to analyse the target area's local environment, relations and processes. Tools must be adapted to local contexts using

creative approaches. "While these tools might seem like simple things to do, they are well developed and structured techniques. In well adopting the techniques success can be achieved easily, and members begin to cooperate, share ideas that can be visible for all within a short period of time," states the SURE Toolkit.

The Toolkit also features an evaluation system for categorising participative tools. Using this, SURE's partner cities analysed a wide range of tools for each step of the planning process, and set out six basic "recommended" participative tools to be used by Local Support Groups and cities:

1. Organise a minimum of 10 forums for Local Support Groups during the life of the project;
2. Organise an award competition to gather ideas from youth about the target areas;
3. Send out regular newsletters for local stakeholders to promote and disseminate results of the programme and upcoming events;
4. Inform the public and gather feedback and ideas through press conferences;
5. Organise a local dissemination event to publish outcomes and Local Action Plans, feedback, and network development;
6. Hold a transnational study visit in each partner city, encourage international knowledge sharing.

SURE Model of Integrated Strategy Development

SURE's partner cities built a model of integrated strategy development covering three stages of strategic planning – analysis, development and implementation – as well as three key tasks, all involving Local Support Groups:

1. Research and ideas generation;
2. Consultation and benchmarking (Local Support Group members compare an initiative in another city against their own needs and capabilities; SURE's exchange visits enabled this, but local residents rarely benefit in this way from

regeneration resources available to municipalities);

- Examining and prioritising options (often this decision-making stage is led by municipalities, but a Local Support Group /Local Action Plan focus can involve local communities more closely).

The SURE model represents strategy stages and tasks as 'building blocks' of the strategy process. While these blocks vary in the time and effort they require from the Local Support Group, high level inputs on some "A" blocks might support decision-making processes in blocks "B" or "C". The principle underpinning this model is that all the blocks should be in place before any project is released for implementation.

SURE partner cities found their model of integrated strategy development can provide a number of useful strategy-making aids, including: a checklist for sequencing and assigning strategy development tasks; a tool for monitoring and evaluating progress; and a framework for exploring the complex processes of interactions between officials, citizens and institutions.

SURE says its model offers a valuable alternative to project-level case studies. Although the facts and figures in typical case study interventions are certainly helpful as each city can adapt ideas to local circumstances, SURE found exchanges of practice between



cities tend to miss a higher level conceptual framework that allows citizens and officials to understand each stage and task of strategy-making. SURE says its model might fill this gap and support cities to learn more effectively from each other in future.

Key Policy Messages

The experience of the SURE project supports the argument that small and medium sized cities have distinctive features which should be taken into account when designing policy and funding programmes for urban regeneration. Surprised that policy makers have not invested more heavily in targeted capacity building initiatives for small and medium sized cities, SURE underlines the importance of URBACT having such cities among its core constituents. The SURE project demonstrates that this capacity can be quickly developed and the SURE model of integrated strategy development would appear to be well suited to support such capacity building initiatives in future.

"The SURE project, and many other reports on the renewal of deprived neighbourhoods, suggests community development remains a significant problem for many municipalities. Local politicians and municipality officers publicly accept that there is no shortcut to achieving community engagement, but in practice they struggle to deliver such goals. While residents' lack of ability to engage in complex strategy development and implementation is frequently presented as a barrier, the lack of capacity within municipalities to work with their communities is rarely mentioned. The time has come for small and medium sized towns to be open about their development needs and demand capacity building support to enhance their ability to

	VISION	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	
STRATEGY MAKING TASKS	Prioritising + Decision-making	A3	B3	C3
	Consultation + Benchmarking	A2	B2	C2
	Research + Idea generation	A1	B1	C1
	Strategic analysis	Strategy development	Action planning	
STRATEGY MAKING STAGES				

The SURE Model of Integrated Strategy Development



engage local communities through structural policy instruments.

“We need more research and less evaluation about the way in which small and medium sized cities approach strategy development and implementation. Evaluations suggest we know what should happen, yet even this relatively small SURE project points to a diversity of possible approaches to strategy development which defies meaningful evaluative assessment. We need to learn more about the processes that lead to desired outcomes. Here we could build on the approach taken by the SURE project in designing and learning from study visits. These are important messages for policy makers, particularly in the light of the strong CLLD focus contained within the new Structural Fund plans.”

Prospects

In most cases the strategy development process initiated through the SURE project will continue to lead to tangible, integrated

regeneration interventions. These processes will be embedded in municipality-led strategic planning frameworks, such as in Pori or Eger. Elsewhere, partnership-based organisations will continue to work on specific project ideas, such as the European Business and Innovation Centre (CEEI) in Albacete, the *Gestion Centre Ville* in Louvain-la-Neuve or

the Target project in Dun Laoghaire. The SURE project has broadened the perspectives of many participants, particularly in recognising that socio-economic regeneration goals can only be achieved through multi-agency partnerships and genuine integration of citizens' interests in the strategy process.

Municipality Officer, Dún Laoghaire: “We find that every study visit impacts on our work, and the benefits are wide ranging for us. For example, our local enterprise board is developing three other European projects because of how well the SURE project is going. One example is the Erasmus programme for young entrepreneurs. This idea was initiated by CEEI during our SURE visit in Albacete, and the idea came just at the right time, with the recession and the need to support our young entrepreneurs. The presentation on placemaking in Louvain-la-Neuve also had a direct impact on us. We decided as a result to hold an international conference in our own municipality and we also held a two day training programme for our senior staff on placemaking and that now influences our strategic public spaces project.”



Learn more about SURE and download SURE Final publication and partners' Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/sure

ZOOM ON PORI FINLAND



Pori (population 83 000) is Finland's eleventh largest city, and home to one of the largest commercial bulk ports in the country. The city centre, on the banks of the Kokemäenjoki River, is about 20 km from the coast of the Bothnian Sea. Following a severe recession in the 1980s, significant changes provoked a varied economic structure that has enabled Pori to fare reasonably well during Europe's economic crisis compared with similarly sized cities. Since 2003, a renovated former cotton factory has provided space for the University Consortium of Pori and dozens of entrepreneurs in media and communications, and other service industries. The Pori National Urban Park was established in 2002, helping gain publicity and support for the natural and cultural landscape of the Kokemäenjoki River Delta and nearby urban areas.

Local Challenges

Pori's work in the SURE project focused on drafting a long-term development vision for the city's old industrial district of Karjaranta. Unlike the target areas of Pori's partner cities, Karjaranta showed no visible signs of social exclusion or physical, environmental deterioration. Instead, the interesting aspect here was the area's strategic role in the city's future development. The goal is for Karjaranta to evolve into an integrated residential city district, in line with Pori City Master Plan 2025 (published in 2007) and Pori City Strategy 2016 (published in 2010).

Pori needed to define a coherent vision for Karjaranta, involving multifaceted cooperation between stakeholders. Local challenges included: reducing traffic and the barrier effect of Karjaranta's main street; attracting a diverse population with young families; improving local services; harmonising industrial and residential areas reinforcing the sense of community; and addressing residents' demands for car-parking. Pori needed to create diverse new housing as most accommodation is currently in high-rise apartment blocks; develop new uses for vacant buildings; and phase multiple ongoing detailed city plans into the district's long-term development. All this, while capitalising on the district's positive aspects, not least its industrial history, relatively high variety of enterprises, and proximity to the city centre, riverside and islets.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Pori saw a huge variety of approaches to governance and urban policies during SURE's work on integrated regeneration. Daniel Nagy, City Planning Architect for Pori, recalls: "Examples seen in partner cities demonstrated the beneficial results of cross-sectorial cooperation and the contribution of creative ideas and voluntary activity. Study visits gave us better understanding of the challenges we face in our own target area. The transnational learning we experienced in the SURE process was exciting and can hopefully go on in the future."

Contributing to SURE's Participatory Planning Toolkit, which was developed by external expert Anna Demeter with help from the partner cities, was particularly productive for Pori, who harvested a range of useful ideas to apply at home. As a result of the Irish partner's 2011 presentation of its work on the

temporary use of vacant premises, Pori investigated the Dún Laoghaire example. It then organised – with help from volunteers – its own "Pop-Up Photo Exhibition" in a long-empty office that has since been put back into use. Photos of Karjaranta were taken by Media and Communication students of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK). During the exhibition, a questionnaire investigated attitudes towards the premises' future use. Pori also used citizen engagement practices from Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve. Daniel Nagy acknowledges the external expert: "Thanks to Anna's experience, encouragement, and high level of commitment to the participatory planning issue, we tried out new methods".

Both Pori and Larnaca used local history and its documentation to strengthen local identity, with different results in each city. Larnaca planned to establish a folklore museum. During a peer-review discussion in Pori (2012), Pori's URBACT Local Support Group suggested Larnaca could present local heritage to visitors using guided tours and signs. As very few architectural elements remain from Karjaranta's old industrial period, here they concentrated on stories and other immaterial heritage with a "Memory Park and Story Path" (details below).

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

Pori's Daniel Nagy describes URBACT's Local Support Group (LSG) process as "a very fruitful experience of how to establish an open, interactive platform, where conventional officer-citizen relationships and political power relations did not play a dominant

role". He added, "Of course, participatory engagement is not unknown for us, but approaching the planning task by integrating the points of view of numerous local actors and municipal offices is something completely new."

The group included people from Karjaranta Home Owners' Association, assisted living facilities, and the Pori Blue Ribbon Rehabilitation Centre for former drug-addicts. Representatives of universities, such as SAMK, contributed with a wealth of studies and research. On business development issues, Pori Entrepreneurs Association, Priztech Ltd, and two entrepreneurs in a local property, Karjapiha 2, were particularly active.

The LSG helped Pori focus on user-expertise, understanding that local residents or entrepreneurs know their own environment best. Pori set up user-oriented research with Social and Health Care students from SAMK University. One study focused on accessibility assessment in Karjaranta by interviewing residents. Another SAMK course assessed the impact of future land-use changes on "vulnerable" user groups.

A particularly important outcome of the group's work is that the LSG helped the Pori Youth Workshop carry out its planned relocation to unused buildings in the privately owned former engine sheds in Karjaranta.

In a target area with relatively new housing and little interaction between residents with diverse lifestyles, Pori's city authorities particularly appreciated the way the Local Support Group helped create a multifaceted view of the city district and anticipate future tensions.



Highlights of the Local Action Plan

The Local Action Plan (LAP) addresses strategic aspects of Karjaranta's evolution from industrial to residential, encouraging future residential constructions to contribute to an urban environment that is even more resident-friendly, multifunctional and socially sustainable.

Daniel Nagy explains: "Our main task in the Local Support Group was to draft a model of progress which tried to anticipate future changes and opportunities. Highlighting strategic aspects was the result of fruitful discussions with SURE Lead Expert Hans Schlappa. During the project we managed to extend our scope of exploration to cover not only traditional planning issues on physical environment, but also social and economic aspects. The Finnish Land Use and Building Act already applies an integrated approach, but concrete tools for achieving larger participation or more socially and economically sustainable solutions are not "taken for granted". In my view, in this sense, by providing the SURE Toolkit and applicable experiences, this URBACT network produced added-value for our organisation as well."

Following the URBACT method, the Local Support Group summarised its future image of Karjaranta in two points that would shape the Local Action Plan:

- "A new, unique, unified and lively city district that utilises its different areas, offers a wide range of services and the riverside area of Kokemäenjoki to be enjoyed by all citizens."
- "When constructing new buildings and designing the environment, the industrial history of the area should be brought out by harmonising various business activities and housing."

Karjaranta's LAP covers four areas of planned actions. The first boosts local business activity and diversifies neighbourhood services for residents and small enterprises. Here, the idea of a "pilot project for residential construction" on partial industrial wasteland, envisaged for 2015–2020, led to the

preparation of Pori's successful application to organise the Finnish Housing Fair in 2018.

"Improving traffic connections" and "Making the recreational areas more varied" reflect on land-use, landscape and urban structure, including improving infrastructure with a new railway-side recreational route. Other actions anticipate and support significant long-term development investments, such as a new bridge to the islets, indicated in Pori City Master Plan 2025. Municipal funding has been secured to research car-parking issue raised by certain residents.

During the SURE project, work started on the "Memory Park and Story Path", and "Memory Walks", promoting Karjaranta's history to strengthen local identity, drawing on expertise from local universities. Students and teachers of media and communication studies at SAMK University produced an e-book exploring visual and emotional aspects of Karjaranta's industrial landscape (<http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-2011062112373>). One Turku University masters thesis in Cultural Production and Landscape Studies focuses on the local history and collective memory of Karjaranta.

Actions under "Strengthening the sense of community" animate the residential area and make it a more attractive place to live, including diverse activities promoting social interaction. Events already organised include SURE's version of the Finnish throwing game **Mölkky** with wooden pins resembling buildings in the target area (2012). A **knitting graffiti workshop** brought locals together to embellish outdoor public places with dozens of knitted artworks, led by local

resident Sirkku Laine. The "Knitting Team" now plans further events. As well as reinforcing the sense of community, these events helped citizens initiate informal discussions on local needs and develop new ideas for tackling them.

Prospects

As well as producing a coherent 2012–2015 Local Action Plan for Karjaranta district, and strong partnerships for implementing planned actions, Pori's involvement in the URBACT project SURE sparked a range of further activities and lasting improvements in participatory planning.

Cooperation with universities remains particularly vibrant. In spring 2013 an Aalto University masters course in Visual Culture produced alternative ideas for using urban space in Karjaranta. SAMK Media and Communication students created a homepage for the district (www.karjaranta.fi) in cooperation with the Karjaranta Home Owners' Association, who will maintain the site.

Certain Local Support Group members aim to run an unofficial volunteers' team to monitor the Local Action Plan's implementation, including the development of a new riverside residential area.

Having modified its approach to public discussions during the SURE project by combining participative workshops with the gathering of ideas and feedback, city planning expects to extend these participative methods to other public forums.

Daniel Nagy, City Planning Architect for Pori: "Pori City Planning considers the URBACT Local Support Group model applicable and relevant in preparing the planning of larger urban areas. What we learned in SURE we will promote, and try to apply in our future work. The fact that now we have a coherent vision of Karjaranta city district is due to our participation in the SURE network."

ZOOM ON OTTIGNIES- LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE BELGIUM



Ottignies-Louvain-La-Neuve (population - 30000), 30 km south-east of Brussels, consists of historic Ottignies and new town Louvain-La-Neuve (LLN). The SURE project focused on LLN, built in the 1970s to accommodate part of the Catholic University of Leuven. The university owns most of the town's land and property. LLN is predominantly pedestrian, with a car-free centre – popular with shoppers and families – and residential areas designed to keep traffic impact to a minimum. It also has parklands, lakes, good transport links and a wide range of services. Some 8500 students make up LLN's growing population of 18500. The university, a large science park, and 350 retail outlets together provide over 12000 jobs, many of them filled by people living outside the city. With 21 000 students, university staff and employees of international companies on the science park, LLN's community includes 128 nationalities.



Added Value of Transnational Networking

“We were starting from scratch, so transnational exchanges through URBACT enabled us to approach work on Wallons Square from angles we may not have otherwise used. By comparing the scope of problems encountered by SURE project partners, we were able to tackle our own case with a more “macro” view, and, above all, identify our own internal resources that could be used to solve local problems,” recalls Jean Christophe. “Through the URBACT method – setting up a representative, active URBACT Local Support Group, discovering local participation tools, and visiting partner cities – we saw a range of practices in participatory planning”.

Transnational links also boosted progress at home. He says: “Following predefined work stages over the project’s three years created an incentive for the Local Support Groups to follow a planned schedule. Observing the other partners motivated Louvain-la-Neuve’s local actors to complete each step on time.”

The problems – and solutions – of SURE’s partner cities varied enormously, so LLN could not easily integrate new practices directly into its own Local Action Plan (LAP) for the Wallons Square area. However, discussions with partner cities sparked certain crucial aspects of the LAP. Jean Christophe Echement highlights an example: “Where we tended to look at the problem of our ‘target zone’ in isolation, the partners made the essential point that links must be recreated with other parts of the town.” This broadened reflections to take into account the

Local Challenges

Louvain-la-Neuve’s (LLN’s) designers favoured functional and social diversity, walkability, and non-linear urban rhythms. Squares like Wallons Square – the new town’s original centre, and target area for this project – was designed to welcome new residents and students, and combine residential, commercial and cultural roles. As LLN’s construction continued through the eighties, residents remained predominantly students. This changed during the 1990s as non-students finally gained the majority. A relatively good balance has since been maintained during the city’s continued growth.

Despite plans for social diversity, differences between neighbourhoods have widened. Single social groups dominate many areas, including central squares. Students tend to stay in older houses, while other residents occupy newer areas further from the pedestrian axis with its strong university tradition. This provokes questions such as: “How to build urban citizenship?”; and “How can groups coexist in certain town spaces, sharing common ground in spite of their differences?”

These issues are especially pertinent in the once bustling Wallons Square, LLN’s core in the seventies and eighties. The commercial centre has since shifted, non-students have left, and the weekly market has gone. In addition, the area’s buildings, infrastructure and public spaces are deteriorating. Most shops are let, but serve the less lucrative end of the market, and the high turnover of retailers

makes them reluctant to invest in improving the area’s attractiveness.

Jean Christophe Echement of Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve’s Town Centre Management Unit, explains: “The focus on LLN’s expansion meant developers tended to overlook the fact that certain central areas, constructed at the beginning of the project with poor quality buildings, were starting to age, and in certain places had lost their function and needed to be rethought. Analysis and enquiries showed these problems were becoming more and more obvious to the population. The target area aims to serve as an example of how things could work elsewhere in our city.”



university's project to install the LLN museum in a science library near the Wallons Square, as well as plans for new street signs (2013-14).

URBACT Local Support Group Experience



An initial working group – a local private-public partnership – was broadened in 2012 to form an URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) for Wallons Square. Open to all, the LSG mobilised the neighbourhood association, students, co-owners and property management agents, the Mayor and university services, who met every few months to define the project's strategic and operational guidelines.

As a sign of the complexity of interests involved, the square has almost as many private landlords as houses. Jean Christophe says: "The URBACT LSG process enabled us to bring local actors into discussions together for the first time to find solutions for Wallons Square. The city authorities often handle this sort of renovation project, but private property owners rarely wish to engage with public services. The idea here that renovation would not be an imposed project, but one built by all, was greatly appreciated in a town whose inhabitants are fond of participatory processes. Their enthusiasm enabled our meetings to gather isolated local people who were initially persuaded their views would go unheard."

For Louvain-la-Neuve the way this project was developed by the beneficiaries themselves, bringing a sense of belonging and involvement for stakeholders of all sizes, was main added value of the LSG.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

Current efforts to improve Wallons Square were sparked in 2010 when a survey confirmed the town centre's strong commercial growth was not reaching the area. The City Council was convinced new actions could be taken to restore a feeling of identity and centrality to Wallons Square.

Through the URBACT project SURE, Louvain-la-Neuve galvanised Wallons Square's divergent interests into defining a clear vision of their area's future function, and set out a joint Local Action Plan (LAP).

Three key aspects were analysed during the LAP's preparation.

1 Use of space

Photos and videos showed people walking along one side of the square, leaving the rest empty. People questioned by Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve's Town Centre Management Unit found the square dirty, shabby and monotonous, but appreciated its size and central location, and believed it could be made more attractive.

2 "Student territory or urban neighbourhood?"

Types of people in and around Wallons Square changed through day and night, revealing potential sources of conflict such as noise from students. Views were gathered on the square's future use.

3 "High-cost poor quality habitat?"

Aging infrastructure and problems with cold, noise and damp were found in the predominantly student-occupied houses adjacent to the square, despite high rents.

The LAP's main aim was to define a coherent joint vision for the square and its users. It also covers the following actions:

1 Renovate the urban fabric. Rather than making major renovations, the LAP envisages improving Wallons Square's

visibility and transforming its appearance so people want to "come and see". Graffiti artists painted a wall of the square when LLN hosted the internationally renowned Kosmopolite Art Tour festival (2012, City Council funding and sponsors). A green wall is planned for 2013. Most modifications favour using the square to relax and socialise, so tables and chairs, games and newspapers were put out (2013). Local landlords and tenants pledged to clean up their buildings – rooves have been repaired. Other actions encourage new business investment, through INESU, the limited company with a social purpose responsible for much of LLN's urban development. Plans for 2015 include improving vehicle access, and renovating the square (city and regional funding).

2 Renew the site's image: events such as music, games, expositions, organised by the Local Support Group.

3 Regular monitoring by local actors, of new opportunities to maintain the site's attractiveness and evaluate actions as they unfold.

4 Strategically develop and position a "brand" for Wallons Square (2013-14).

The LAP's implementation will require new funding. Jean Christophe Echement says: "We're now trying to set out a plan of the most pertinent concrete actions taking into account the SURE project's results. A big difficulty is the absence of resources directly available for making planned changes. We've secured some funding from our Town Centre Management Unit to mark the area's renewal soon with an unexpected event, the planting of mature trees, which will be publicised through the media."

Prospects

Work on reviving Wallons Square will continue with a local group using the approach generated through URBACT. Drawing on the exchange of ideas and good practices made possible through SURE, Louvain-la-Neuve aims to make real local improvements, and communicate their results to other cities.

An URBACT Local Support Group member was surprised when the Chairman of the Association of Private Landlords phoned to ask how he and other property owners could take part in the regeneration of the Wallons Square: "He said 'I spoke to our members and we decided we must start investing in the square...'. I had to pinch myself, I thought I was dreaming. This phone call changed everything."

TOGETHER

Territories of Co-responsibility

OVERVIEW

PROJECT DURATION

November 2009 – January 2013

LEAD PARTNER

Mulhouse (France)

PARTNERS

FUNDING

Total Eligible Cost: EUR 546 120
ERDF Contribution: EUR 410 151



With Europe in economic crisis, unemployment and social exclusion are increasingly common. Eight cities set up the URBACT project TOGETHER under the conviction that such problems can only be tackled properly by public authorities, citizens and economic stakeholders working better together, in an approach known as active citizenship, or “co-responsibility”. Sharing a resolve to reduce the distance between government and citizens, TOGETHER’s partnership of municipalities looked at how to improve social inclusion and well-being through actions that involve people at grass-roots level – whether as parents, service users, patients, tenants, residents or passengers. Drawing on the Council of Europe’s extensive work on co-responsibility, including the draft European Charter for Shared Social Responsibilities (2011), TOGETHER’s partners investigated new ways for building productive relationships between councils, civic associations and citizens, and – by analysing their various experiences – contributed to the development of new ideas in co-responsibility.

MAIN RESULTS

Co-responsibility: An Open Method of Engaging with Citizens

The URBACT project TOGETHER applied a particularly open approach to helping citizens speak for themselves and identify actions to be taken in each city.

The process involved each of the URBACT Local Support Groups organising a series of local focus groups throughout their municipalities, 147 in total across the eight partner cities. All participants were asked three open-ended questions: “What do you understand by well-being?”, “What do you understand by ill-being?” and “What do you do, and can you do, as a citizen to ensure your own well-being and the well-being of all?” Each answer was coded in an indicator database developed over recent years by The Council of Europe to reflect the enormous range of responses to questions on well-being and ill-being. The TOGETHER project’s Lead Partner says the partner cities “tested a consultative computer tool for citizen engagement which, if simplified, could be used widely by public authorities across Europe.”



To tackle the issues arising from focus group discussions, pilot actions were then set up in each city, starting in late 2011. They varied enormously in scope, but all involved new, active relationships between the municipality, civic associations and citizens. One example is a Social Pharmacy set up in Kavala in 2012, prompted by the economic crisis. More than 150 volunteers help collect unused medicines from people’s homes, manage the shop and provide administrative support. The Council arranged for the use of vacant premises in a shopping market. Doctors and pharmacists check the medicines, organise their storage, and give advice. The project has attracted interest from other Greek cities. Another pilot project is the Children’s Parliament in Braine l’Alleud, where local school children make proposals on health, respect and solidarity, culture and leisure and environment. And in Botkyrka, council staff, police and local groups set up night patrols (see “Zoom on Botkyrka”).

Inga Jekabsone from TOGETHER partner city Salaspils says: “The methodology has helped the Municipality to unite its community. For the first time people from different social groups came together to discuss different topical issues.”

TOGETHER’s partners found that the wide range of responses was not easy to code and compute, precisely because their approach did not pigeon-hole people and their answers. However, they state: “When utilised with good policy discussion, the material from the focus groups provides a rich seam of material which can deepen the understanding of the range of issues, which are of concern to all sections of the local community. In particular, the focus groups show that people’s concerns are not just restricted to the bread and butter issues – work, health, housing and education. A whole range of ‘softer’ or ‘wicked’ issues emerge – such as discrimination, loneliness, isolation, bureaucracy, police behaviour, personal relations, stress, self-esteem, exclusion, community and solidarity. This broadens the traditional political and cultural agenda and requires new political skills and approaches from local authorities.”

TOGETHER concludes: “For councils and public bodies across Europe who are keen to

listen more closely and engage more effectively with their citizens, here is a method that they could valuably use. They will need to fit the method to their circumstances. But there is no doubt that this approach can help public bodies who are committed to extending citizens’ participation.”

A Seven Point Scale of Citizen Engagement

A number of the partners in TOGETHER had already experimented with approaches to testing citizen engagement. Building on this, and in light of other researchers’ work in the field of citizen engagement, the seven point scale developed under the TOGETHER project grouped various aspects of citizen engagement and suggested a ladder of attainment. During the project, each partner city used this new scale to identify the type and extent of participation in its pilot projects, as well as the character of its Local Support Group, and the wider ambition of its municipality.

TOGETHER presents the scale as an instrument that could enable citizens, non-governmental organisations and councils across Europe to measure the extent of citizen engagement on a project, programme or strategic plan in their city.

1 Minimal engagement

The Municipality consults citizens or voluntary organisations on a few topics or in an occasional survey, but appears to take little notice of the results. This is pejoratively known as tokenism.

2 Formal partnership

A formal relationship with a number of organisations outside of the municipality is established. These partners sit around the table but the local authority or the government agency chairs the meeting and takes all the key decisions.

3 An engaged partnership

Has the feel of a much more equal arrangement with the partners/voluntary organisations having some real influence on agenda and decision-making. However,

ultimately the Municipality retains the decisive influence.

4 Co-governance

The strategic planning of a service or a project or a programme. Actors from different organisations and sectors determine shared policy priorities and may translate these into strategic plans.

5 Co-management

Different organisations work alongside each other to coordinate the delivery of a service or project. Actors from different sectors and organisations use their respective resources to contribute directly in practical ways to the delivery of a specific project or service.

6 Co-production

Citizens produce, at least in part, the services they use themselves.

7 Co-responsibility

The elements outlined in points 4-6 are combined across a whole sector, for example, within the education system in a city, or its economic regeneration. The ultimate goal would be to achieve this across an entire territory, in other words, across all the services within a neighbourhood or district.

Prospects

A range of small-scale, imaginative pilot actions have been generated across the partner cities. Each Local Action Plan includes a variety of initiatives using co-responsibility methods, some with specific funding or staff resources. Partners have indicated important shifts in service practice and process; moves towards greater citizen and civic engagement; and certain areas of the municipality's work where new practices would be embedded.

However, by mid-2013, none of the Local Action Plans had been able to chart a convincing strategy for embedding new

approaches to co-responsibility within major areas of their service, or territorial provision in the immediate future. TOGETHER concludes that the biggest obstacle remains how to bridge the gap between running limited pilot actions and embedding the approach in the mainstream, even for cities like the Lead Partner Mulhouse that have relatively strong histories of encouraging co-responsibility. Financial crisis and austerity makes this challenge all the more daunting.

In terms of an ongoing international engagement, two of the partner cities, Braine l'Alleud and Kavala, have agreed to work with a third city, Lisbon, on sustaining the Territories of Co-responsibility Network for the period 2013-2015, together with the Council of Europe.

URBACT Lead Expert Jon Bloomfield: "The URBACT TOGETHER project has focused on new ways by which public authorities can engage with ordinary people and citizens. At its root lies a simple principle: it is better to involve and engage with people in the development of their town or city rather than just inform them once decisions have been made. This is a concept of active citizenship, or as it is termed in the project, co-responsibility."



Learn more about TOGETHER and download TOGETHER Final publication and partners' Local Action Plans on www.urbact.eu/together

ZOOMAON

SALASPILS

LATVIA



Salaspils is in central Latvia, 18 km from the centre of the capital Riga. This proximity to Riga is attracting more and more young families – Salaspils' population of 22500 is growing. The town is surrounded by forests, agricultural land, villages and farmsteads. Situated on the river Daugava, Salaspils includes the island of Dole, and nearly 16% of its territory is occupied by a water reservoir serving Riga Hydroelectric Station. Salaspils has been hit hard by the economic crisis, and municipal budgets are severely squeezed. When the social budget was doubled between 2008 and 2009, resulting reductions in other expenditures included a 15% cut in municipal salaries.

Local Challenges

Salaspils' main challenges are linked to the economic crisis and reductions in public financial support. Some crucial programmes have been delayed, such as the construction of a new high school. Social housing is in demand, with only 200 houses available for 486 low-income families, but the Municipality cannot afford to construct any more. The city also needs to reduce heating costs, and improve links with its Russian community.

On joining the URBACT project "TOGETHER - for Territories of Co-responsibility", Salaspils was facing low levels of local patriotism, as residents turned to nearby Riga for work, schools, services and leisure activities. There was insufficient dialogue between the Municipality, local groups and citizens, a hangover from the Soviet era, and people had little faith in the administration. NGOs were relatively weak, and citizens rarely set up their own local initiatives.

Through the TOGETHER project, Salaspils engaged in an approach that would promote social inclusion and well-being for all, involving the whole population, especially those risking social exclusion such as the unemployed, poor families, the elderly, large families and single mothers. In this way, the people of Salaspils would look for solutions to local problems.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

Reflecting on URBACT's transnational networking, Inga JĒkabsons, Project Manager of Salaspils Municipality Council, says: "It was a great experience exchange, especially with cities where co-responsibility approach has been used for years and where civil society is very strong, with great capacity of local community and NGOs. Especially this was a great experience for our URBACT Local Support Group members who went to all transnational project meetings; they returned more confident and active."

Participating in the TOGETHER project helped Salaspils discover interesting new approaches for encouraging co-responsibility. Inga JĒkabsons explains: "There were many conceptual and practical ideas, like involving citizens in the budget planning of the Municipality, improving communication channels with citizens using social media – Facebook, Twitter, a non-official webpage, an interactive map, etc. – and organising

different events. We included all these activities in our Local Action Plan."

Here is an example of transnational exchange in action: Braine-l'Alleud created a "Baby-Council" in the Municipality that meets regularly with the "Adult Council" to discuss local issues and develop projects. Salaspils investigated this idea, and then set up their own Youth Council. The result, says Inga JĒkabsons, is "a very strong NGO for youngsters, full of initiatives. Practically no event in Salaspils has been organised without those youngsters."

Also, having seen how Pergine Valsugana had organised a successful youth centre in an abandoned building, Salaspils believe they too could breathe life back into a neglected building in a similar way.

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

In Salaspils, the URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) process boosted the involvement of social groups previously "invisible" to the rest of the Municipality, such as young people, scientists, young families, and people in rural areas. For the first time, different groups came together to discuss topical issues in the Municipality.

The LSG involved council representatives and a wide range of associations. Initially, all major civic associations in Salaspils were invited. University of Latvia specialists then identified missing sections, such as youth groups, who were also invited to participate. This produced a broad Local Support Group representing the young and old, three churches, two associations for people with disabilities, a number of major institutes and a family association.

Providing a platform for improved relationships with citizens and civic associations, the main added-value of the LSG was a new, more open outlook from the Salaspils administration. Inga JĒkabsons explains: "Municipal employees realised they should take into account society: it's like in a business, citizens are your clients, so you should communicate with them to satisfy their needs. There can't be any gap between citizens and municipality." A youth specialist has been recruited, and staff are being trained in communication skills.

Perceptions have changed among Salaspils' inhabitants too, thanks to local government participation in the URBACT Local Support Group and the 25 focus groups set up by LSG members across the Municipality. "Citizens are realising that employees of Municipality

are not so bad, they are working hard and try to help people," says Inga JĒkabsons.

As TOGETHER's European partners remarked after meeting the Salaspils LSG in 2011, the project has enabled "for the first time in a systematic way, the Municipality and its politicians...to enter into dialogue with a wider group of citizens outside of election times."

The URBACT Local Support Group's structure remains, holding regular meetings to discuss citizens' everyday issues, as well as sports tournaments, city events and bigger plans such as a new Science Centre and school.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

The main actions of the Salaspils Local Action Plan (LAP) are to improve communication channels with society and organise a variety of events with citizens. In addition, the TOGETHER project helped the 25 spin-off focus groups plan actions for solving their own problems, launching new developments across the Municipality.

The URBACT Local Support Group set up a series of pilot actions to answer key concerns raised by 25 focus groups in the TOGETHER project's first phase. The LSG, as well as Salaspils' partner cities, then monitored the implementation of these actions, contributing ideas. On its "scale of citizen engagement", the TOGETHER project defined Salaspils' actions as "engaged partnership", with some "elements of co-production". Here are some highlights:

1 Coordination Centre for NGOs. Focus groups revealed a lack of local meeting places for community groups and voluntary organisations. In response, a working group – involving associations for Russians, and retired people, a school for mothers and babies and Salaspils Council – defined a plan for transforming an existing social centre (2011). The Council allocated a budget for renovation in January 2012. Renovation was finished a month later, and regular NGO meetings have taken place ever since. Future plans include organising a creative programme for NGOs.

2 Local newspaper. To improve information exchange, transparency and communication between citizens and institutions. Focus groups said the Council newspaper was too formal and dry, and suggested featuring more news stories, material from the NGO sector, room for small advertisements and greetings, and improving distribution to rural areas. In response, the Council



5 International Day for Disabled People (2011). Social services, the Student Council, the Roman Catholic Church, and groups involving Russians, large families, and children and young people with disabilities, organised events with Salaspils Council to improve dialogue, respect for others, engagement in civic life, collective organisation and social inclusion.

Prospects

Taking part in URBACT has sparked numerous changes in Salaspils. Improved communication with the science community is just one, fully supported by Salaspils Council. Its Development Programme 2012-2018 includes strengthening the “Salaspils – Science City” concept as a medium and long-term priority. The relevant work group helped apply for financing for further research into cooperation between science, education and entrepreneurship.

Overall, the project has prepared a basis for improving communications between society and Salaspils’ Municipality, making way for more social, co-responsible government. Building on this, the city plans to join other EU projects to strengthen the co-responsibility approach and citizens’ engagement, and is applying for funding from the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Public Administration together with Swedish partner city Botkyrka.

increased the paper’s size, and circulation from 10,000 to 15,000 (2012). Future plans include encouraging more NGOs to submit news; and appointing a journalist to improve the publication’s attractiveness.

3 Cooperation between science and education. The scientific and environmental work of Salaspils’ five national scientific institutions is largely unknown within the city. To change this and promote Salaspils as a science city, a working group was set up. Members included science institutes, student councils, various civic groups, an association of entrepreneurs, artists, science communicators, entertainers and the Council of Salaspils. Together, these people organised an annual event – Science Week – with Council funding (April 2012 and 2013). The Local Action Plan includes making Science Week a Salaspils tradition.

4 Annual city festival. Designed to bring the Salaspils community together (May 2012, June 2013, and beyond). A broad range of organisations prepared the 2012 event with Salaspils Council – including the Dole Island Initiative Citizens’ Group, a Russian Song Ensemble, an Association for Large Families, the Lutheran Church, Salaspils Board of Retired People, and a Sports Club.

Raimonds Cudars, Mayor of Salaspils, said during a City Council meeting: “If URBACT people (members of LSG) are saying this, then this is serious and we should take it into account.”

ZOOMAON

BOTKYRKA

SWEDEN



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Botkyrka (population 87 000) is the fifth largest municipality in the Greater Stockholm Region, and one of Sweden's most international municipalities. Botkyrka includes more than 160 nationalities, with many recent immigrants from Syria and Iraq. It is a young municipality, both in terms of population, whose average age is 37, and its urban fabric. Botkyrka grew rapidly as part of Sweden's "One Million Houses Programme" in the 1960s and early 70s, turning quiet countryside into the agglomerates of densely populated suburbs we see today, which are connected to Stockholm's city centre by underground and commuter trains. The municipality is in constant social change, partly due to international migration, and partly due to its peripheral position within a growing metropolitan area.



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past and present. “We gained insight into how local problems were tackled in other countries,” says Ingrid Ramberg, from the Multicultural Centre, which represented Botkyrka in the TOGETHER project. “It was interesting to see political solutions in Latvia or the economic solutions in Greece and Portugal.”

For Botkyrka, another interesting feature of TOGETHER was the involvement and support of the Council of Europe, with their philosophy that the active participation of all citizens is necessary to evaluate a situation and choose actions that can help improve well-being for all, and their development of criteria and indicators. The Council of Europe methodology was tried out in all the TOGETHER project partner cities, and the results fed into defining local pilot projects.

Ingrid Ramberg sums up: “The transnational exchanges opened up new perspectives, which was an added value. It opened windows. And although at the end of the project, there was no concrete transfer of actions between partners, it may have stirred ideas in the long term. For Botkyrka international exchange will definitely remain an interesting source of inspiration.”

Local Challenges

Sweden’s local municipalities are relatively independent from central government, and have relatively strong links with their citizens. Botkyrka is one of Sweden’s most progressive municipalities in conducting and developing participatory methods for democratic involvement of citizens.

Meanwhile, there is a growing consensus that the state might not be able to continue answering citizens’ needs, such as care for children or the elderly. In light of the economic recession and this weakening welfare state, more attention is turning to the co-responsibility approach.

When Botkyrka was invited to join the URBACT project TOGETHER, it welcomed the opportunity to gain insight from cities in other countries, and encouraged open discussions on needs and values locally. As their final report says, “If people are able to voice their ideas and negotiate a common good, this probably paves the way for a sustainable balancing of equality and diversity.”

For its work in the TOGETHER project, Botkyrka focused on Alby (population 12000). This is the district in Botkyrka with the highest percentage of inhabitants wishing to leave (in 2009 one in three inhabitants, compared with a municipal average of 20 per cent). Alby is socially unstable, as many people have just arrived, or are planning to move out. Insecurity is one of the neighbourhood’s toughest issues, with 2009–2010 figures showing increasing violence. Since then the situation has improved and Alby has

also seen substantial social mobilization among residents over the last few years.

Alby’s key problem of segregation has been targeted by various national schemes, in particular the “Urban initiative” (1999–2005). But over the years, the municipality has learnt that dealing with complex problems demands long-term mainstreaming strategies that involve the whole infrastructure of the municipality. Still, not all issues can be tackled on the local level alone.

Added Value of Transnational Networking

TOGETHER’s partnership of European cities brought Botkyrka into contact with a rich variety of citizen involvement experiences,

URBACT Local Support Group Experience

The URBACT Local Support Group (LSG) in Alby was a chance for Botkyrka to build on existing citizen involvement, and contribute to a strategic development programme already in progress. “In Botkyrka we were already following the whole process of having a systematic dialogue between citizens and politicians, focus groups with inhabitants, etc. URBACT had the same kind of approach,” explains Ingrid Ramberg.



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The TOGETHER project's LSG reinforced existing approaches by addressing citizens with open questions, rather than simply consulting them on predefined topics. It also brought local groups into contact with their counterparts in the other network cities.

As a result of their participation in the LSG, two local associations, The Alby Youth Club and Fanzingo, formed focus groups. They also took part in a youth exchange project arranged by TOGETHER's Belgian partner, Braine l'Alleud.

In line with the TOGETHER experience, the municipality has reinforced its emphasis on facilitating arenas for discussions between local actors, rather than running the meetings itself. This was the case for a series of meetings involving local entrepreneurs and NGOs in early 2013.

Highlights of the Local Action Plan

"URBACT was one piece in a big jigsaw," says Ingrid Ramberg. "The Local Action Plan helps to revitalise the development plan of Alby. Rather than adding new, parallel plans, it was important to connect the actions in the LAP to ongoing processes."

The district's development programme, "Future for Alby", was formulated in 2009. Its five key objectives, already developed with inhabitants and stakeholders, were further elaborated and tested within the framework of the TOGETHER project. They are:

- Ensuring a decent setting for girls and boys to grow up in;
- Improving the employment opportunities of women and men;
- Renewing the urban environment;
- Modernising Alby's identity;
- Trying out new working methods within the municipality.

Participation in the TOGETHER network infused new energy into certain local processes, opening them up to the perspectives of other European cities and URBACT Local Support Group members. This, together with dialogues with focus groups across the municipality, was connected to the launch of a number of pilot actions. These are not linked to additional funding; the aim was rather to improve the way existing resources are used.

Action 1 – Together for a more secure Alby, with night-patrols (since 2011)

City departments, Alby's Council of Associations, the associations "Organisation for poverty alleviation and development"



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(OPAD) and X-cons, the Police department, and Alby Youth Club, joined forces to reduce violence and improve neighbourhood security. Night Patrols became a central activity. The number of people patrolling rose from 8-10 to 35-40, attracting interest from other parts of Botkyrka. Difficulties have since included tensions between stakeholders, and maintaining participants' enthusiasm. Still, there is broad support for the initiative. Dennis Latifi, the District Development Officer explains: "People have been behind this initiative because they know that in our communities with such heterogeneous communities, security becomes a shared concern."

Action 2 – Finding practical ways to implement social economy at neighbourhood level (since 2011)

The aim was to review the municipality's procurement process to increase the chances for civil society organisations to be hired by the municipality, based on the idea that a sense of community and a readiness to share the responsibility for managing common tasks can benefit all. Discussions between municipality departments, the Public Housing Company and Alby's Council of Associations have focused on a redirection of the budget for cleaning and security within the municipal housing company. But as the regeneration of the million programme block houses is likely to take preference over social economy, the future of this action is unclear. If it does not go to plan, it may be developed as a multi-organisation agreement without changing the procurement rules.

Action 3 – Intercultural Alby (launched 2011), an engaged partnership with elements of co-management, promoting interaction and exchange between up to fifty ethnic groups in Alby. This action involves the District Group, the local Anti-Discrimination Agency, Alby's Council of Associations, and local associations OPAD and Fanzingo. What began as an anti-discrimination seminar developed into a network for tolerance and for an intercultural Alby, with activities like workshops, film productions with young people about tolerance, as well as intercultural evenings, with strong local engagement and political support.

Prospects

Alby was Botkyrka's first district to produce a Strategic Programme for Development, which was launched in 2009. This Programme, with the experiences of co-responsibility as expressed in the URBACT project TOGETHER, working to improve quality of life through citizens' participation in initiating, planning and implementation of activities, will be a source of inspiration in other districts. The neighbouring district of Fittja, for example, published its Strategic Programme in 2012. The District Group in Alby has proposed a workshop evaluating its early experiences of implementing its Development Programme, together with the Mayor's office, providing valuable knowledge for Fittja and other districts.

"It is not difficult to think in new ways. What is difficult is to stop falling back into old ways of thinking...", says **Dennis Latifi, District Development Officer in Botkyrka**. This notion is central to Botkyrka's work on co-responsibility. "Taken as a whole, the TOGETHER project opened new approaches for the promotion of a sustainable community. The open-ended questions about well-being and ill-being, the co-responsibility basis for groups' formations, actions and activities, became complementing parts in existing structures."

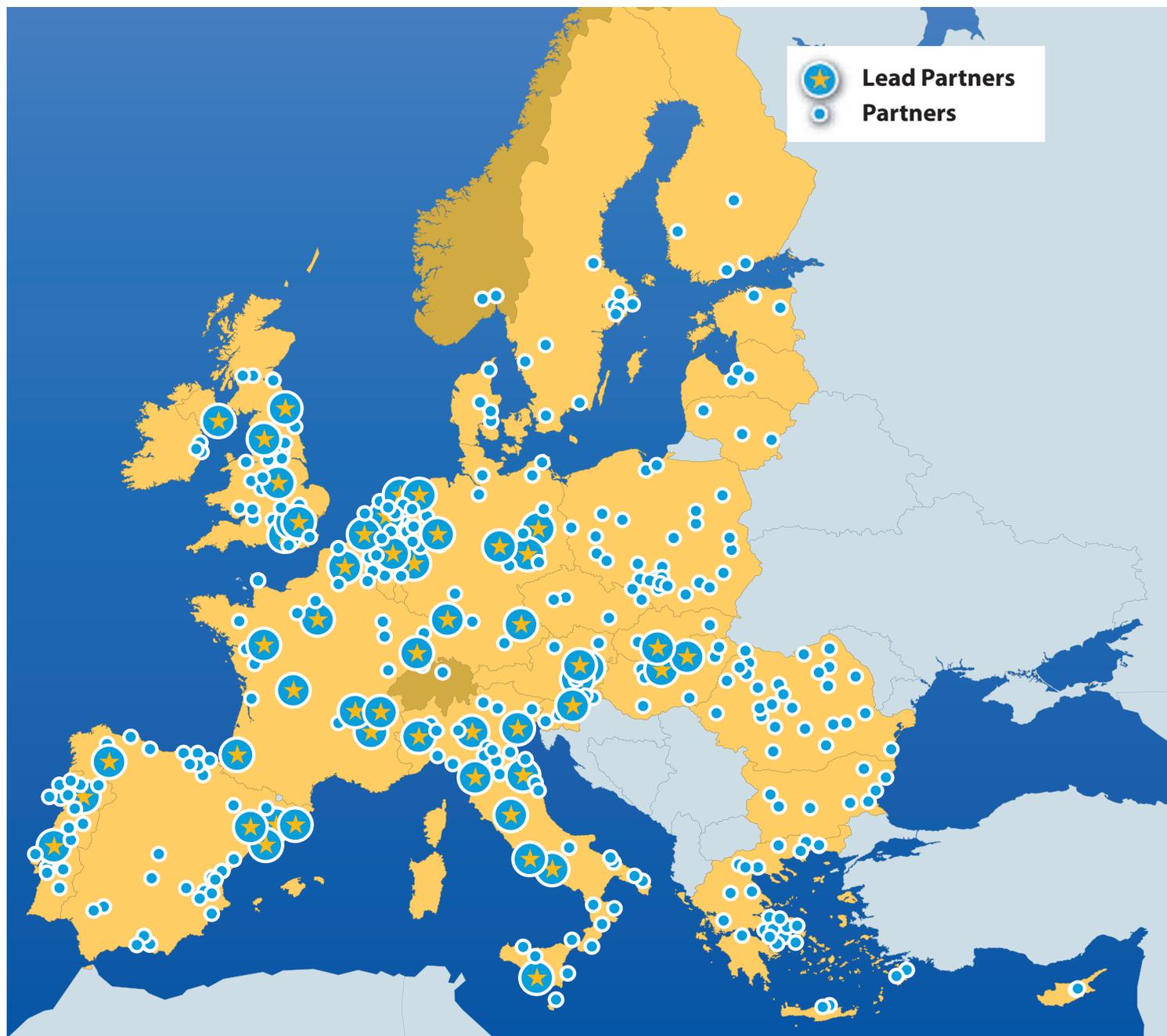
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