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NEWSLETTER

"Every three years, the European Commission publishes its report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, detailing progress in these areas and how the EU, national and regional governments have contributed.

On 9 November 2010, the **5th Cohesion Report** has been published. Its conclusions draw the picture of a post-2013 cohesion policy which allows all European cities and regions to actively pursue smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Most importantly, it **calls for an ambitious urban agenda** of cohesion policy. This not only implies clearly identifying urban actions and related financial resources in regional programmes, but also giving a stronger role to cities.

The coming months will be crucial for translating this call for reinforced urban dimension into (regulatory) practice for post-2013 cohesion policy.

We therefore invite you to **give us your ideas** and to contribute to the public consultation of the conclusions of the 5th Cohesion Report which is open until 31 January 2011: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/5cr/index_en.cfm."

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CONFERENCES

"Peri-urban regions contribute to the sustainable growth of Europe's cities"

"The sustainable growth of Europe's cities cannot be realised fully without the contribution of their neighbouring peri-urban areas," said MEP **Lambert van Nistelrooij** (the Netherlands, EPP), Vice-President of the URBAN Intergroup, opening a hearing, organised on 9 November 2010, as part of the Randstad Region Week in Brussels.

"Long term sustainability in all its aspects – economic, social and environmental – is a shared challenge for Europe's cities together with their peri-urban neighbouring areas," insisted **Michel Grégoire**, new President of PURPLE, the voice of the Peri-Urban Regions in Europe, opening the debate.

A few weeks after the EU "Budget Review"

and at the eve of the presentation by the European Commission of the 5th Cohesion Report launching the debate on the EU regional policy after 2013, **Asje Van Dijk** (Randstad region, Member of the Executive Board, Province of Zuid-Holland) and



Asje van Dijk (on the left) and MEP Lambert van Nistelrooij (the Netherlands, EPP) (on the right) participated to the conference on "peri-urban contribution to the sustainable growth of Europe's cities."

Philip Atkins (West Midlands, Leader of Staffordshire County Council) presented several convincing case studies on behalf of the PURPLE regions.

Both of them clearly showed that Peri-urban regions do provide vital resources which support Europe's urban populations and enhance the quality of life of city dwellers.

"Policy makers need to avoid sectorisation and find ways to create links and relations

between cities and their surrounding areas - whatever we call them," reacted MEP **Jan Olbrycht** (Poland, EPP), President of the URBAN Intergroup.

MEP **Lambert Van Nistelrooij** (the Netherlands, EPP) advised the PURPLE network "to come up with ideas for new solutions for a framework of funding and support better capacities to respond to complex regional situations such as those outlined" during the debate.

"Cities of the Future need European funds"

In the beautiful premises of the Senate Chamber of the Czech Parliament in Prague, a conference labelled "Cities of the Future" was held on 26 November 2010.

This conference was organized on **MEP Oldřich Vlasák** initiative (Czech Republic, ECR), President of the Union of Towns and Municipalities in Czech Republic, and **Luděk Sefzig**, Chairman of the Senate Committee for European Union Affairs, under the patronage of the URBAN Intergroup which was represented by its President **MEP Jan Olbrycht** (Poland, EPP).

This high-level conference was attended by representatives of the European Parliament, European Commission, Czech government, regional and local authorities as well as academia and professionals from the urban field.

The conference highlighted some major obstacles that cities face, but also challenges for the successful development of

larger urban areas. These needs include new solutions to urban unemployment, construction of basic infrastructure with connections to surrounding communities and transnational networks, application of strategic approach to problems beyond administrative city limits and adaptation to new impulses, including the use of information and communication technologies.

The aim was not only to identify which needs and problems cities face today, but also to see how these problems can be better addressed with European and national financial instruments.

The debate also concerned the European funds and their setting, because they are one of the major sources of stimulating urban development.

(More information on the conference: www.smocr.cz/cz/obce-a-evropa/prilis-se-soustredime-na-minulost-dulezitejsi-je-ale-budoucnost.aspx)



The conference "Cities of the Future" was organised by MEP Oldřich Vlasák (Czech Republic, ECR) (picture on the right) in the Senate Chamber of the Czech Parliament in Prague.



"Sustainable planning can reduce social and territorial inequalities"

On 1st December 2010, the Ile-de-France region and the URBAN intergroup, organised a conference on "Sustainable mobility and planning: the European Metropolis challenges" in the Committee of the Regions in Brussels.

For **Anne Hidalgo**, President of Ile-de-France-Europe office, this conference, based on the case of the Ile-de-France region and the experiences of other metropolitan areas, "[gave] the opportunity to share knowledge and good practices on sustainable planning which can reduce social and territorial inequalities in order to ensure a better quality of life."

Vice-presidents of the region **Jean-Vincent Placé** (in charge of transport and mobility) and **Alain Amédro** (in charge of spatial planning), and MEP **Karima Delli** (France, Greens/EFA) who took part in the debate, discussed also how European

metropolitan areas could better anticipate the reform of cohesion policies as urban agenda is becoming one of its main priorities (as it was highlighted in the 5th Report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, recently published by the European Commission). "It is essential that the post-2013 financial perspectives – expected to be drafted during the first semester of 2011 – take into account these proposals," speakers insisted.



MEP Karima Delli (France, Greens/EFA) (in the middle) took part in the debate on "Metropolis challenges" in the Committee of the Regions.

"ERDF can significantly contribute to improve energy efficiency in housing"

The URBAN Intergroup, at the initiative of MEP **Karima Delli** (France, Greens/EFA), organized on 9 December 2010 a conference entitled "Mid term review of the use of European Development Fund (ERDF) to support energy efficiency in existing housing." This conference showed that social housing actors are mobilized to present good and sustainable projects supported by ERDF and to use available funds.

The ERDF measure to improve energy efficiency was adopted in May 2009, as part of a revision procedure of the Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation, and supported by the Intergroup. As said during the conference, it is already used in several Member States, including the United Kingdom (over 70% of the envelope has already been committed), Estonia, Belgium, Poland or France where 70% of the amounts available have already been programmed.

Thierry Repentin, Chairman of the "Union sociale pour l'habitat" and French Senator,

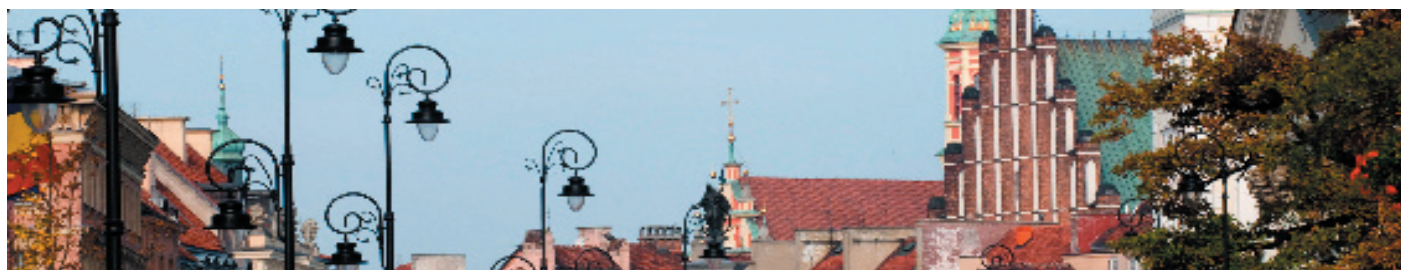
underlined that ERDF support is essential for social housing. He called for the end of the 4% limitation.

On this point, MEP **Karima Delli** proposed to better evaluate regional and local needs in terms of energy performances of housing in each Member State.

She also proposed the REGI committee to organise in 2011 a hearing with all actors involved in the implementation of the European tools for energy performance of housing (ERDF, JESSICA, ELENA, etc.)

Christos Doukeridis, Housing Secretary of State of Brussels Capital Region, on behalf of the Belgian Presidency of the EU, concluded the conference by recalling that European Housing Ministers must continue to advocate for ERDF support to sustainable urban development, in which housing would be fully taken into account, as they did in the Toledo Meeting in June.

(More information on the conference: www.housingeurope.eu/event/1648)



WHAT WE ACHIEVED?

Annual activity report

URBAN Intergroup was actively involved, during the whole 2010, in putting urban needs on the agenda of EU policies.

We sent a letter to Commissioner Oettinger concerning the use of unspent funds from the Recovery Plan for energy efficiency investments in cities.

Moreover, our Intergroup presented its position about the role of cities in the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy referring to the Toledo Declaration in the letter sent to responsible Ministers for Housing in Member States.

Finally, we successfully proposed a preparatory action RURBAN-Partnership for sustainable urban-rural development which

will be implemented by DG REGIO in the years 2011-2012.

We are very pleased to inform you that 150 partners from local, regional, national and European level that represent the interests of Europe's towns and cities follow our daily work and 61 of them decided to become our official partners.

To stay in contact with them and to keep them informed about urban issues, URBAN Intergroup as well as its members organized several conferences in 2010.

Moreover, the Intergroup was invited to participate in several events and conferences to exchange views on urban related issues.

EVENTS AND MEETINGS ORGANISED BY URBAN INTERGROUP

- 17.09.2009: Informal meeting with Jean-Marie Beaupuy (former MEP and President of the URBAN Intergroup), Strasbourg
- 22.10.2009: Informal meeting with ADEUS, Strasbourg
- 17.12.2009: First formal meeting, Strasbourg
- 21.01.2010: Meeting - presentation of organisational matters, Strasbourg
- 27.01.2010: Reception Cities4Europe, Brussels, with EURO CITIES
- 11.02.2010: Meeting - presentation of the conference on 20 years of EU urban policy, Strasbourg
- 24.02.2010: Meeting with partners, Brussels
- 11.03.2010: Meeting with Cecodhas, Strasbourg
- 14.04.2010: Press Conference - presentation of the UN-HABITAT report "State of the World's Cities", Brussels
- 20.05.2010: Meeting with German-Austrian URBAN Network, Strasbourg
- 17.06.2010: Meeting - presentation of Covenant of Mayors, Strasbourg
- 08.07.2010: Meeting - presentation of Betahaus project, Strasbourg
- 14.09.2010: Conference "More urban, More cohesion. The added value of the urban dimension of cohesion policy", Brussels, with EURO CITIES, Brussels Capital Region and EU Belgian Presidency
- 15.09.2010: Conference "Supporting cities for sustainable solutions", Brussels, with the Climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development Intergroup
- 21.10.2010: Meeting with MEP Rui Tavares (Portugal, GUE/NGL) - preparation of cities for natural catastrophes, Strasbourg
- 11.11.2010: Meeting with Edge Cities Network, Brussels
- 25.11.2010: Meeting - presentation of URBAN II and 5th Cohesion Report (DG REGIO), Strasbourg
- 16.12.2010: Meeting - presentation of JESSICA (EIB), Strasbourg

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED BY MEMBERS OF THE URBAN INTERGROUP

Date	Conference	Location	Organized by
22-23.03.2010	IV International Conference "City 2010 - energy efficiency in cities"	Katowice	Jan Olbrycht
04.05.2010	Conference "Financing energy efficiency in housing: a European priority"	Brussels	Karima Delli
12.07.2010	Conference "Smarter Cities as a European Agenda: How could European Union contribute to Integrated and Intelligent Growth of Urban Areas?"	Brussels	Oldřich Vlasák and IBM
09.11.2010	Conference "The peri-urban contribution to the sustainable growth of Europe's cities"	Brussels	Lambert van Nistelrooij, PURPLE Network and Dutch Randstad Provinces
26.11.2010	Conference "Cities of the Future"	Prague	Oldřich Vlasák
09.12.2010	Conference "Midterm review of the use of structural funds for energy efficiency in existing housing"	Brussels	Karima Delli

EVENTS IN WHICH URBAN INTERGROUP PARTICIPATED

Date	Event	Location	Organized by	Participation
07.01.2010	Conference "Sustainably City Finance"	New York	Urban Age Institute and New York Academy of Sciences	Jan Olbrycht
22-26.03.2010	5 th World Urban Forum	Rio de Janeiro	UN-HABITAT	Jan Olbrycht
10.05.2010	Preparatory meeting for the workshop "Sustainable cities and communities" China - Europa Forum	Brussels	European New Towns Platform	Jan Olbrycht
04-06.06.2010	Conference "Healthy Cities"	Shanghai	European Commission	Jan Olbrycht, Piotr Borys, Cristina Gutierrez-Cortines
21-22.06.2010	Informal Meeting of Urban Development Ministers	Toledo	Spanish Ministry of Housing	Jan Olbrycht, Sophie Auconie, Karima Delli
16.09.2010	Meeting of Urban Development Group - Trio and Polish Presidencies on urban development	Brussels	EU Belgian Presidency	Jan Olbrycht
04.10.2010	European Celebration of World Habitat Day	Brussels	UN-HABITAT	Isabelle Durant
16.10.2010	EMI launching event	Brussels	EMI	Jan Olbrycht
09.11.2010	Conference "The challenge of liveable cities in the 21 st century"	Brussels	<i>The Economist</i>	Jan Olbrycht
17.11.2010	Meeting on EU levers to accelerate city actions on climate change	Brussels	Centre for European Policy Studies	Jan Olbrycht
23-24.11.2010	Conference "Sustainable housing: a tool for social cohesion?"	Brussels	EU Belgian Presidency	Karima Delli
01.12.2010	Conference "Sustainable mobility and planning: the European Metropolis challenges"	Brussels	Ile-de-France Region	Karima Delli
02.12.2010	Multilevel Urban Governance Conference	Liège	EU Belgian Presidency, URBACT	Jan Olbrycht



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