



D R A F T (12 January 2007)

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LEIPZIG CHARTER on Sustainable European Cities

We declare:

We, the ministers responsible for urban development in the member states of the European Union, consider the European cities which have evolved in the course of history to be valuable and irreplaceable economic, social and cultural assets.

With the objective of protecting, strengthening and promoting our cities, we strongly support the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, building on the Lille Action Programme, the Urban Acquis and the Bristol Accord. In doing so, all three dimensions of sustainable development, that is economic prosperity, social balance and consideration of environmental aspects must be considered simultaneously and equally.

Our cities possess unique cultural and architectural qualities, strong forces of social inclusion and exceptional possibilities for economic development. They are centres of knowledge and sources of growth and innovation. At the same time, however, social inequity, exclusion and environmental problems can also be found in our cities. In the long run, cities cannot fulfil their function as engines of social progress and economic growth as described in the Lisbon Strategy unless we succeed in maintaining the social balance within and among cities, protecting their cultural diversity and establishing high quality in the fields of design, architecture and environment.

We increasingly need integrated strategies and coordinated action by all persons and institutions involved in the urban development process which reach beyond the boundaries of individual cities and communities. We must improve the coordination of the sectoral policy areas and develop a new sense of responsibility for integrated urban development policy. We need a better coordination of policies between the local, regional, national and European levels.

We strongly welcome the statements and the recommendations set out in the Territorial Agenda for the European Union, the European Charter "Network Vital Cities" and the Commission's communication "Cohesion policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions". We further recognize the importance of the Aalborg Commitments as a valuable contribution to strategic and coordinated action at a local level.

We recommend:

firstly: to make greater use of the integrated urban development policy approaches

For us, integrated urban development policy means simultaneous and fair consideration of the concerns and interests which are of relevance in urban development. It coordinates key areas of urban policy within a specific area in terms of space, subject matter and time. This will make it possible to tap urban growth potential effectively and to remedy development deficiencies.

An integrated urban development policy is a key prerequisite for implementing the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Its implementation is a task with a European dimension.

The reconciliation of interests facilitated by an integrated urban development policy forms a viable basis for a consensus between the state, cities, citizens and businesses. By pooling knowledge and financial resources, the effectiveness of scarce public funds will be enhanced. Public and private investments will be better coordinated with each other. Integrated urban development policy involves actors external to the administration and enables the citizens to play an active role in shaping their immediate living environment. At the same time, these measures will provide more planning and investment certainty.

We recommend that European cities consider developing integrated urban development strategies for the city as a whole. These implementation-oriented planning tools should

- describe the strengths and the weaknesses of cities and neighbourhoods based upon an analysis of the current situation
- define consistent development objectives for the urban area and develop a vision for the city,
- coordinate the different neighbourhood, sectoral and technical plans with each other and ensure that the planned investments will help to promote a well-balanced development of the urban area,
- focus and coordinate the use of funds by public and private sector players in terms of space.
- be coordinated at local and city-regional level.

This also includes strengthening the city-regional coordination. Only by doing so, partnership between cities and rural areas as well as between small-, medium-sized and large towns and cities within city-regions can be achieved.

Integrated urban development policies provide us with a set of instruments which have already proved their worth in numerous European cities in developing modern, cooperative and effective governance structures and are indispensable for improving the competitiveness of European cities.

They facilitate an anticipatory coordination of settlement, economic and infrastructure development by taking account of the existing demographic and energy-policy conditions.

Within the scope of an integrated urban development policy, we consider the following strategies for action to be of crucial importance for strengthening the competitiveness of European cities:

- **Creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces**

The quality of public spaces, urban cultural landscapes and of architecture and urban development play an important role for the living conditions of the urban population. As soft locational factors, they further constitute important locational factors for knowledge industry businesses, a qualified and creative workforce and for tourism. Therefore, the interaction of architecture, infrastructure planning and urban planning must be intensified in order to create attractive, user-oriented public spaces and achieve a high standard in terms of building culture. The strategy of mixing work, residential and recreational use in urban neighbourhoods has proved to be especially sustainable.

Creating and ensuring functional and well-designed urban spaces and infrastructures is a task which must be tackled jointly by the state and the local authorities, but also by citizens and businesses.

- **Modernizing infrastructure networks and improving energy efficiency**

Technical infrastructure networks must be improved at an early stage and adapted to changing needs in order to meet future requirements for urban living quality. Urban transport must be reconciled with the different land-use requirements of housing, work areas, the environment and public spaces. Sustainable urban transport can thus make an important contribution to the quality of living as well as to locational and environmental quality.

Energy efficiency of existing and new buildings, an economical use of natural resources and economic efficiency during operation are key prerequisites for a sustainable public utility service infrastructure. Optimized and efficient infrastructure networks and energy efficient buildings will lower the locational costs for businesses and residents.

- **Proactive innovation and educational policies**

Cities are places where a lot of knowledge is created and also imparted. The full exploitation of a city's knowledge potential depends on the quality of its pre-school and school education, on the transfer opportunities provided within the education and training systems, the opportunities for lifelong learning, the excellence of its universities and non-university research institutes and on the transfer network between industry and the scientific community.

Integrated urban development policy can contribute to improving these factors, for example by bringing the stakeholders together, by supporting networks and optimizing locational structures. Integrated urban development promotes social and intercultural dialogue.

Integrated urban development strategies and cooperative urban development management can contribute towards a purposeful use of the potential of European cities particularly with regard to competitiveness and growth, as well as to reducing disparities within and among neighbourhoods. They provide the citizens with an opportunity for social and democratic participation.

secondly: that special attention be paid to deprived neighbourhoods within the context of the city as a whole.

Within one city, considerable differences may exist in terms of economic and social opportunities in the individual city areas, but also in terms of the varying quality of the environment. In addition, the social distinctions and the differences in economic development are often continuing to increase which contributes to destabilization in cities.

We must aim to offer prospects and support to the residents in urban neighbourhoods which are disadvantaged in economic, social and environmental terms as well as in terms of their physical infrastructure.

Against this background, we consider the following strategies for action, embedded in an integrated urban development policy, to be of crucial importance for deprived urban neighbourhoods:

- Pursuing strategies for upgrading the physical environment

Economic activity and investments on one hand and high-quality urban structures, a sound environment and a modern and efficient infrastructure on the other hand are closely interlinked. For this reason, it is necessary to improve the design, the physical condition and the energy efficiency of the existing building stock in deprived neighbourhoods, too. High quality architecture, urban development and public spaces can strengthen people's identification with their neighbourhoods and thus make these neighbourhoods more attractive.

In order to increase the sustainability of investments into upgrading the physical environment, they must be embedded in a long-term development strategy which also includes, inter alia, the public and private follow-up investments.

- Strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy

Measures to obtain economic stabilisation in deprived neighbourhoods must also exploit economic forces inherent in the neighbourhood themselves. In this context, labour market and economic policies which are tailored to the needs of the individual neighbourhoods will be the appropriate instruments. The objective is to create and secure jobs and to facilitate the start-up of new businesses.

Especially access opportunities to local labour markets must be improved by offering demand-oriented training. Increased use must also be made of the employment and training opportunities in the ethnic economy.

It is the task of the European Union, the Member States and the cities to create better conditions and instruments to strengthen the local economies and thus the local labour markets.

- **Proactive education and training policies for children and young people**

A crucial starting point for improving the situation in deprived neighbourhoods is the improvement of the education and training situation in the local community in conjunction with proactive policies on children and young people.

Keeping this in mind, more possibilities for education and training must be provided and improved in disadvantaged neighbourhoods which are geared to the needs and the deficits of the children and young people living there. By means of a policy on children and young people which is tailored to the social area they live in, we must contribute to improving the possibilities of the children and young people living in deprived neighbourhoods to participate and realize their ambitions and to ensuring equal opportunities on a long-term basis.

- **Promotion of socially acceptable urban transport**

Many deprived neighbourhoods must bear the additional burden of poor transport connections which reduces the amenity value of these areas.

In order to resolve this problem, transport planning and traffic management in these areas must increasingly aim to reduce the negative impacts of transport on the environment and to organise transport in a manner which will better integrate these neighbourhoods into the city and region as a whole. This will also require an efficient public transport system as well as appropriate networks for pedestrian and cycle traffic.

The better we manage to stabilize deprived neighbourhoods economically, to integrate them socially and to upgrade their physical environment and transport infrastructure, the better the chances will be that our cities will remain places of social progress, growth and innovation in the long term.

We emphasize that:

Our cities need enough scope for action in order to perform local tasks in a responsible manner. We would like directives and regulations at European level to be examined closely in the future with a view to obtaining a well-balanced urban development within the framework of the existing institutions and procedures.

The principles of urban development policy must be laid down at national level and the stimuli for innovative solutions should also be created at national level, as well as at other levels. We need a competition for the best urban development ideas and instruments.

Our cities need a sound financial basis which provides long-term stability. Therefore, the European structural funds must continue to form an integral part of public funding of urban development. The use of these funds must be focused closely on the existing difficulties and take into consideration the opportunities and difficulties in the Member States. If not already provided for, the local authorities should develop the necessary skills and efficiency to implement integrated urban development policies.

At the same time, financial and funding instruments should also be optimised and adapted to the changing needs of cities. In this context, it must be examined what contribution public and private financial institutions can make at national as well as at European level. We see further need for action regarding the link-up of state funding instruments for urban development with guarantees and funds from financial institutions.

We must stop considering urban development policy issues and decisions in an isolated manner. Our cities should also be pillars of city-regional development and assume responsibility for territorial cohesion. In order to do so, our cities must network more closely with each other at European level.

We will continue to promote and intensify the exchange of experience between policy makers, practitioners and researchers at local, regional, national and European level in the future in order to reinforce the urban dimension of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy.

We are looking ahead with confidence.

Europe needs strong cities.