Procedure file

Basic information

COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1997/2097(COS)	Procedure completed
Urban development: guidelines for a urban agenda in the Union Subject 4.70.04 Urban policy, cities, town and country planning		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	REGI Regional Policy	PSE NAPOLETANO Pasqualina	15/07/1997
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	PSE POLLACK Anita Jean	22/07/1997
	LIBE Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs	PSE TERRÓN I CUSÍ Anna	08/07/1997
Council of the European Union			

Key events

06/05/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0197	Summary
29/05/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/04/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
22/04/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0172/1998	
01/07/1998	Debate in Parliament		
02/07/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0398/1998	Summary
02/07/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
20/07/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2097(COS)

Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 050; Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/4/08923

Documentation gateway

Motion for a resolution		B4-0591/1995	19/07/1995	EP	
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1997)0197	06/05/1997	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0117/1998 OJ C 095 30.03.1998, p. 0089	28/01/1998	ESC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0172/1998 OJ C 167 01.06.1998, p. 0004	22/04/1998	EP	
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0316/1997 OJ C 251 10.08.1998, p. 0011	13/05/1998	CofR	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0398/1998 OJ C 226 20.07.1998, p. 0011-0036	02/07/1998	EP	Summary

Urban development: guidelines for a urban agenda in the Union

OBJECTIVE: Presentation of a general document on the future of European urban policy seeking to: - open dialogue with all parties concerned prior to the reform of the Structural Funds in 1999, - outline an 'integrated development strategy' for cities encompassing regional transport environment employment and research policies SUBSTANCE: The communication indicates that cities are the main source of economic growth, competitiveness and employment in the Community (20% of Europeans live in urban centres with more than 250 000 inhabitants). At the same time, cities are being affected by growing problems: unemployment, pollution, congestion, poverty and exclusion, sub-standard accommodation, crime and drug addiction. In response to this the Commission recommends an integrated approach involving decision-making authorities at all levels (local, regional, national and European) and all European policies concerned: The objective is not to develop urban policies at European level but to improve the quality of urban development by making existing methods (mainly structural) more efficient and achieving better coordination between initiatives adopted at all decision-making levels. It is also necessary to concentrate less on cities as a reference framework for the public and in favour of local democracy which is the political level closest to the citizens. It is also necessary to replace the city at the centre of the European social model based on instances of discrimination of grounds of sex and ethnic origins. Concerning the measures to be taken the Commission indicates how the Structural Funds can be used more effectively by targeting high unemployment in city centres and densely populated suburbs or improving infrastructures and public transport services to make outlying areas more accessible and more attractive. Greater attention to urban development and the reform of the Structural Funds in 1999 could result in an integrated strategy involving measures for urban areas and their surrounding regions. Promotion of 'sustainable local communities' could be developed in this framework as part of the new URBAN and INTEGRA. The Commission also proposes a number of measures seeking to promote in the longer term a European Union urban policy: - development of clear targets with specified timetables for the improvement of the urban environment taking into account sustainable development variables, - development of accessible and economically viable trans-European networks (as far as possible), - targeting of RTD activities on the problems facing cities (integrated transport, sustainable construction, new urban vehicles), - strengthening the commercial function of cities, - resolving issues relating to immigration (third pillar), - the fight against social and economic exclusion as part of the European strategy for employment and the fight against racism, - development of public health policy (particularly in relationship to poverty), - creation of relationships based on confidence between those involved at local level and the public. Finally, from the political point of view, the Commission communication will contribute to the discussions which have been planned since 1997 on cities and regions organized by the Committee of the Regions. The Commission also indicates its intention of engaging in a wider debate on urban issues on the basis of this communication. A dialogue will be sought between the Commission and all the other institutions and the local authority organizations and other interested parties. The outcome of this dialogue will be brought to an urban forum to be convened in 1998.?

Urban development: guidelines for a urban agenda in the Union

Firstly, the Committee feels that some priorities for the urban agenda - relating to competitiveness and employment, economic and social cohesion and sustainable development - should be spelt out in more explicit terms than is done in the Commission communication. Conservation and management of the urban cultural heritage should be paramount. There must be a serious commitment to the regeneration, restoration and conservation of the centres of major historic cities and of smaller towns with a strong cultural identity that must be preserved and strengthened. Secondly, sustainable and integrated development also presupposes a commitment to improving outer suburbs. In the large metropolitan areas in particular, this could provide an opportunity for multi-centred development. This would help to relieve pressure on inner cities, and would give a precise role and socio-economic identity to neighbourhoods which are currently in decline. The problem of how to

enhance the quality of city life should also be tackled by boosting new telecommunication and transport technologies to link cities with the rest of their metropolitan area. The role which cities are able to play in the new global economy will depend partly on the ability of the individual administrations to organize strategies for development, provision of infrastructure and services in a competitive manner. At all events, coordination policies will be needed in order to ensure that the pursuit of economic excellence does not prejudice the objectives of social equity and quality of life. Competitiveness should help to find practical solutions to a number of pressing social problems such as youth unemployment and the integration of immigrants and the socially excluded. Special attention should be paid to the structural problem posed by the situation and role of the elderly, whose numbers are set to grow in the next few years throughout the EU. In conclusion, a new "sense of citizenship" must be forged, based on participation and social solidarity. ?

Urban development: guidelines for a urban agenda in the Union

This was the main conclusion of the report on an urban agenda for the EU drawn up by Pasqualina NAPOLETANO (PES, I) and adopted by the Committee. The report calls for the creation of a balanced, ecologically sound, urban environment. In adopting the report, which follows on from a public hearing held on 5th February 1998, the committee has endorsed the following demands: -account should be taken of calls by local, regional and social leaders for the development of a European urban strategy based on the principles of subsidiarity and closer partnership and designed to harmonise and coordinate the impact of EU policies on the urban environment; -urban policy should be based on social justice and environmental sustainability, in order to make the urban environment an effective tool for combatting exclusion, unemployment and speculation in environmental and energy resources and the housing stock; -there should be unrestricted application of the Treaty provisions on the right to vote for EU residents and (with due regard for Member States' national laws) third-country nationals; -the URBAN initiative should be continued rather than abandoned as proposed by the Commission. URBAN has been extremely useful in terms of the regions it reaches (of 49 regions which have received support under the programme, 15 have an unemployment rate of over 30%) and the funding it has provided (Ecu 850m for 115 towns between 1994 and 1999). Contrary to the Commission's wishes, the amount of funding should be increased; -the drafting and adoption of the European Spatial Development Perspective should be speeded up; -the Structural Funds (new Objective 2) should include a specific emphasis on urban issues, with priority for integrated urban measures (mainstreaming); -pilot projects and innovatory measures, currently financed under Article 10 of the ERDF, should be continued and strengthened; -a monitoring centre for spatial development should be set up to provide reliable and comparable data on the Member States.?

Urban development: guidelines for a urban agenda in the Union

In adopting the report by Mrs Pasqualina NAPOLETANO (PSE, I) on the communication from the Commission, 'Towards an urban agenda in the European Union' , Parliament noted the urgent need to formulate a European urban strategy which, in addition to economic and social aspects, would be concerned with sustainable development. Such a strategy was an indispensable part of a broader spatial planning policy. By seeking a new equilibrium between urban centres and the countryside, a contribution should be made to the implementation of a balanced regional policy which would combat the rural exodus and ensure the vitality of the countryside. It was vital to improve knowledge of the true situation of Europe's cities; Parliament therefore reiterated its call for the creation of a monitoring centre for spatial development, which could gather the necessary information. In order to gain a better understanding of environmental aspects of urban policy, Parliament called on the Commission to devise and develop comparable sustainability indicators and promote activities of networks active with regard to the urban environment. Criteria regarding efforts to combat levels of environmental pollution which pose a danger to public health should be included in the Structural Fund regulations. Parliament stressed the urgent need to develop public transport systems accessible to all which could persuade the public not to use private transport. In the social field, the Structural Funds should support local employment initiatives. In view of the increase in the number and size of urban areas with social and economic problems and of pockets of poverty, Parliament wished planning policies to prevent property speculation, help young people to acquire a home of their own and facilitate the integration of older people, the disabled and immigrants. It stressed the possible role of European cities as laboratories for social innovation and the need to promote the involvement of young people in local employment initiatives, and employment of women. In the field of civil liberties, Parliament supported unrestricted application of the provisions of the Treaty on the right to vote for Community residents. Stressing the integrating function which urban areas could perform, it called for training of social workers in order to combat disintegration of the social fabric and to combat racism and xenophobia. Effective crime prevention measures should be adopted. As crime was closely related to the problem of drug dependence, Parliament suggested structural measures, measures related to the situation, and measures related to the criminal in the context of a coherent interdisciplinary approach to fighting urban crime. The reform of the Structural Funds should help to reinforce the principle of partnership. Parliament noted the Commission's proposal to introduce a new sphere of intervention under Objective 2 for urban areas affected by serious pockets of poverty and social exclusion (new Objective 2). However, it emphasised that the new area of application of Objective 2 did not sufficiently tackle urban problems and called for Objective 1 structural policy to do more in this field. It called for the URBAN Community initiative to be extended under the reform of the Structural Funds, on the basis of cooperation and partnership between urban areas and various small and medium-sized cities. Parliament believed it necessary, as part of Community cooperation between cities, to develop cultural networks and sports networks, and to promote diversity of religious observance.?