



Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2008/2130(INI)
Urban dimension of cohesion policy in the new programming period	
Subject 4.70 Regional policy 4.70.02 Cohesion policy, Cohesion Fund (CF) 4.70.04 Urban policy, cities, town and country planning	
Procedure completed	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	REGI Regional Development	PPE-DE VLASÁK Oldřich	26/03/2008
European Commission	Commission DG Regional and Urban Policy	Commissioner HÜBNER Danuta	

Key events			
22/05/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/01/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
19/02/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0031/2009	
24/03/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
24/03/2009	Debate in Parliament		
24/03/2009	Decision by Parliament	T6-0164/2009	Summary
24/03/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2008/2130(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54; Rules of Procedure EP 54-p4
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/6/62886

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE414.151	16/10/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE415.342	21/11/2008	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0031/2009	19/02/2009	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0164/2009	24/03/2009	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2009)3060	04/06/2009	EC	

Urban dimension of cohesion policy in the new programming period

The Committee on Regional Development adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Oldřich VLASÁK (EPP-ED, CZ) on the urban dimension of cohesion policy in the new programming period.

Whilst urban issues fall under the responsibility of national, regional, and local authorities, urban areas nevertheless play a key role in the effective implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies and are therefore viewed as a high priority in cohesion policy. In this context, the report makes the following recommendations:

Taking account of the urban dimension of regional development: stressing the importance of sustainable urban development and the contribution of urban areas to regional development, MEPs call on the Commission regularly to evaluate the impact of EU policies on the economic and social situation (particularly issues relating to education and culture), as well as the health, transport, environmental and security situation in urban areas.

MEPs express concern that the urban dimension is inadequately taken into account by some Member States in the implementation of cohesion policy. They highlight the positive experience of the URBAN Community initiative and call for these achievements in the urban dimension of structural funding to be taken into account.

Member States are called upon to take all necessary measures to support their capital cities and other metropolises in their efforts to deal with the challenges arising from urbanisation and the resulting population increase, in areas of waste management, housing, employment and education.

Definition of 'urban areas': MEPs consider that it would be useful for Member States to define the term 'urban areas'. Any obligatory definition and designation of urban areas should be left to Member States in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity based on European common indicators. However, it would be useful for Member States to define, through a process of public consultation, on a case-by-case basis, the urban dimension, as they perceive it, in order to strengthen internal harmonisation and improve interaction with the Commission.

Recourse to sub-delegation: the report points out that Member States have the possibility of delegating to the cities the management of European Structural Funds (ESF) geared to the implementation of measures aimed at achieving sustainable urban development. MEPs regret the fact that the possibility of sub-delegation has so far not been fully utilised and are convinced that a clear role for urban areas as intermediary structures should be envisaged and encouraged in the context of the multi-level governance approach in the next programming period.

Integrated approach: the report stresses the need to adopt an integrated approach in implementing urban development policy (which deals with questions fundamentally linked to the daily life of citizens, such as transport services, public services, quality of life, employment and local economic activities, security, etc.). The Commission is called upon to draw up guidelines comprising recommendations and examples of good practice concerning integrated urban development plans and to encourage also the exchange of best practices between national, regional and local authorities.

Urban management plans: Member States are called upon to prioritise, within their national strategic reference frameworks and operational programmes, funding for projects which implement sustainable urban management plans. MEPs recommend that sustainable urban management plans include at least some of the following elements:

- a waste management plan;
- noise maps and action plans, local air pollution and environmental programmes;
- forecasts for population growth;
- reclamation of abandoned sites and buildings;
- regeneration of neighbourhoods in decline and de-industrialised areas;
- availability and accessibility of public services;
- urban structure and the proportion of green areas;
- facilities for people with disabilities;
- upgrading the cultural, historical and natural heritage;
- estimating water and energy requirements and efficient use of water and energy;
- availability of public transport and effective traffic management;
- integration of vulnerable groups (emigrants, minorities, people with few qualifications, people with disabilities, women, etc.);
- availability of decent housing at affordable prices, and plans to combat crime.

Strengthening governance and improving the use of resources: MEPs identify an urgent need to reinforce the administrative capacity of urban governance and call for existing financial, human and organisational resources to be used more efficiently in order to create and strengthen the networks established by towns and cities in the field of sustainable urban development.

In this context, they stress the need for infrastructure which helps maintain particular characteristics (e.g. historical), modernisation (e.g. innovation poles), economic growth (e.g. SMEs) and seasonal activities.

The report also supports the idea of the principle of revolving JESSICA funds and its potential for economic growth in urban areas.

Lastly, MEPs recommend that the Commission and Member States establish an EU High Level Group on Urban Development and apply the open method of coordination to urban development policy at EU level.

Urban dimension of cohesion policy in the new programming period

The European Parliament adopted by 592 votes to 47, with 48 abstentions, a resolution on the urban dimension of cohesion policy in the new programming period.

Whilst urban issues fall under the responsibility of national, regional, and local authorities, urban areas nevertheless play a key role in the effective implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies and are therefore viewed as a high priority in cohesion policy. In this context, the Parliament makes the following recommendations:

Taking account of the urban dimension of regional development: stressing the importance of sustainable urban development and the contribution of urban areas to regional development, MEPs call on the Commission regularly to evaluate the impact of EU policies on the economic and social situation (particularly issues relating to education and culture), as well as the health, transport, environmental and security situation in urban areas.

Member States are called upon to take all necessary measures to support their capital cities and other metropolises in their efforts to deal with the challenges arising from urbanisation and the resulting population increase, in areas of waste management, housing, employment and education.

URBAN Community initiative: MEPs express concern that the urban dimension is inadequately taken into account by some Member States in the implementation of cohesion policy. They highlight the positive experience of the URBAN Community initiative and call for these achievements in the urban dimension of structural funding to be taken into account and for similar mechanisms to be introduced into the mainstream funding available for sustainable urban development, thereby enabling a larger number of cities to benefit from these achievements.

Definition of 'urban areas': MEPs consider that it would be useful for Member States to define the term 'urban areas'. Any obligatory definition and designation of urban areas should be left to Member States in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity based on European common indicators. However, it would be useful for Member States to define, through a process of public consultation, on a case-by-case basis, the urban dimension, as they perceive it, in order to strengthen internal harmonisation and improve interaction with the Commission.

Recourse to sub-delegation: Member States have the possibility of delegating to the cities the management of European Structural Funds (ESF) geared to the implementation of measures aimed at achieving sustainable urban development. MEPs regret the fact that the possibility of sub-delegation has so far not been fully utilised and are convinced that a clear role for urban areas as intermediary structures should be envisaged and encouraged in the context of the multi-level governance approach in the next programming period.

Integrated approach to urban planning: MEPs propose that any public urban development support should be based on integrated urban development plans. They call for the integrated approach to be made a binding condition, as soon as possible but no later than the next programming period, for granting and implementing Structural Funds and also for receiving loans from the European Investment Bank. The Commission is called upon to draw up guidelines comprising recommendations and examples of good practice concerning integrated urban development plans and to encourage also the exchange of best practices between national, regional and local authorities.

Urban management plans: Member States are called upon to prioritise, within their national strategic reference frameworks and operational programmes, funding for projects which implement sustainable urban management plans. MEPs recommend that sustainable urban management plans include at least some of the following elements:

- a waste management plan;
- noise maps and action plans, local air pollution and environmental programmes;
- forecasts for population growth;
- reclamation of abandoned sites and buildings;
- regeneration of neighbourhoods in decline and de-industrialised areas;
- availability and accessibility of public services;
- urban structure and the proportion of green areas;
- facilities for people with disabilities;
- upgrading the cultural, historical and natural heritage;
- estimating water and energy requirements and efficient use of water and energy;
- availability of public transport and effective traffic management;
- integration of vulnerable groups (emigrants, minorities, people with few qualifications, people with disabilities, women, etc.);
- availability of decent housing at affordable prices, and plans to combat crime.

Strengthening governance and improving the use of resources: MEPs identify an urgent need to reinforce the administrative capacity of urban governance and call for existing financial, human and organisational resources to be used more efficiently in order to create and strengthen the networks established by towns and cities in the field of sustainable urban development.

In this context, they stress the need for infrastructure which helps maintain particular characteristics (e.g. historical), modernisation (e.g. innovation poles), economic growth (e.g. SMEs) and seasonal activities.

The resolution also supports the idea of the principle of revolving JESSICA funds and its potential for economic growth in urban areas.

Lastly, the Parliament recommends that the Commission and Member States establish an EU High Level Group on Urban Development and apply the open method of coordination to urban development policy at EU level.