

**Towards a common framework for urban development in the  
European Union  
Informal Meeting of EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters  
Declaration of Ministers  
Bucharest, 14 June 2019**

**We, the ministers responsible for urban matters,**

upon the invitation by the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), during the session of the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for urban matters in the European Union, on 14 June 2019, in Bucharest (Romania),

in the presence of the European Commissioner for Regional Policy and representatives of the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank Group, Norway and Switzerland, representatives of cities involved in the Urban Agenda for the EU Partnerships, relevant stakeholder organisations and observers,

**Taking note of the EU urban acquis and political references to it by European Institutions, in particular:**

- The Leipzig Charter on sustainable European cities, adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers on urban development of 24-25 May 2007 in Leipzig under the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union;
- The 'Marseille Declaration' adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for urban development on 25 November 2008;
- The Toledo Declaration, adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers on urban development of 22 June adopted 2010 in Toledo;
- The Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020, agreed at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development of 19 May 2011 in Gödöllő;
- Communication of the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. 'The urban dimension of EU policies - key features of an EU urban agenda' - COM2014 (490);
- The Declaration of Ministers towards the EU Urban Agenda - the Riga Declaration, adopted at the Informal Meeting of EU Ministers Responsible for Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters, 10 June 2015;
- The Presidency Conclusions of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meetings on Territorial Cohesion and Urban Policy Luxembourg, 26 and 27 November 2015;
- The Urban Agenda for the EU - 'Pact of Amsterdam', agreed at the Informal Meeting of EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters on 30 May 2016 in Amsterdam.
- The General Affairs Council of the European Union - Council Conclusions on the Urban Agenda for the EU, 24 June 2016, the Council of the European Union;

- Council conclusions on the objectives and priorities of the EU and its Member States, adopted for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III);
- The Report from the Commission to the Council on the Urban Agenda for the EU, COM(2017) 657 final;
- Opinion of the Committee of the Regions ‘Towards an Integrated Urban Agenda for the EU’, adopted on 25 and 26 June 2014;
- Opinion of the Committee of the Regions ‘Concrete steps for implementing the EU Urban Agenda’, adopted on 7 April 2016;
- Committee of the Regions - Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and the EU Budget ‘The Follow-up Strategy on the Implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU’, 29 September 2016;
- European Economic and Social Committee opinion: The 2030 Agenda - a European Union committed to sustainable development globally, adopted on 20 October 2016;
- The resolution of the European Parliament of 3 July 2018 on the role of cities in the institutional framework of the Union (2017/2037(INI));
- The report of the Parliamentary Committee on Regional Development on the urban dimension of EU policies (2014/2213(INI)), adopted on 17 June 2015;
- Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions - ‘Implementation assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU’, adopted on 5 July 2018;
- European Parliament legislative resolution of 27 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum and Migration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Border Management and Visa Instrument (COM(2018)0375 - C8-0230/2018 - 2018/0196(COD)).

**Aware of the role of urban areas of all sizes for sustainable development, as highlighted by recent documents and reports, among which:**

- The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, UNECE, 2015;
- The State of European Cities 2016. Cities leading the way to a better future report, UN Habitat & DG REGIO, 2016;
- The Habitat III Regional Report on Housing and Urban Development in the Economic Commission for Europe Region, UNECE/UN-Habitat, 2016;
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, DG REGIO, 2017;
- The Reflection Paper ‘Towards A Sustainable Europe by 2030’, EC, 2019;
- OECD principles on urban policy, OECD, 2019;
- The Future of Cities Report, EC/JRC, 2019.

**Having regard to the new Leipzig Charter as a common strategic framework for urban development of the European territory,**

The Leipzig Charter adopted in 2007 under the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union brought long-lasting impetus to the European understanding of integrated urban development. The Charter's fundamental principles are as relevant today as they were back then. However, the framework conditions have changed: the EU and its Member States are facing additional socio-political challenges. At the same time, new political frameworks exist, such as the Urban Agenda for the EU, from which much can be gained.

The Leipzig Charter should be reviewed and further developed in view of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second semester of 2020. Themes, principles and trends in integrated urban development in Europe are to be presented in detail and reviewed in terms of their future relevance for a New Leipzig Charter - based on a dialogue process involving the local, regional, national and European level, as well as scientific baseline studies.

**Having regard to the Urban Agenda for the EU as an innovative mechanism to enhance multilevel governance,**

The Urban Agenda for the EU has brought about vertical and horizontal cooperation among Member States, European institutions and all relevant stakeholders, by bringing cities and their representative organisations at European level to the same table and giving them a voice during discussions.

The three pillars 'Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better knowledge' have demonstrated to be the right approach to be further considered in the urban dimension of EU policy making and the implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU.

**Having regard to the fact that 10 years have passed since territorial cohesion was enshrined in the Treaty (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union art. 174),**

Cities and urban areas play important role in delivering on EU priorities. Urban development has strong potential to contribute to the territorial cohesion of the EU by creating positive externalities beyond urban areas. It is crucial to pursue the added-value of the integrated territorial development and 'urban ownership' as promoted by the Cohesion Policy.

**Acknowledge:**

1. The role and growing importance of urban areas of all sizes in the EU and of local and regional authorities, as the level of governance closest to citizens.
2. The role of local authorities in achieving the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN New Urban Agenda, and the future EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 and the Paris Agreement COP21.
3. The valuable messages delivered by local and regional authorities and citizens through the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, as well as European organisations such as EUROCITIES and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.
4. The work achieved by the rotating presidencies of the Council of the European Union in the field of urban matters and the advancement of informal

intergovernmental cooperation to address current and future challenges faced by urban areas, in conformity with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

5. The substantial work carried out by Member States and the European Commission, and stakeholders in order to implement the Urban Agenda for the EU, as well as the support from the European Parliament in setting up the partnerships.
6. The helpful role of the European Investment Bank Group in financing urban investments and providing urban investment advice.
7. The significant urban development knowledge and policy recommendations accumulated and disseminated by programmes such as URBACT and ESPON and other initiatives<sup>1</sup>.
8. The relevance of the Leipzig Charter for Sustainable European Cities on the European, national, regional and local policies.
9. The effort invested so far by all members and, in particular the coordinators of the partnerships, the cities and the European Commission services in the Urban Agenda partnerships in proposing concrete actions to improve regulations, funding and knowledge.

#### **Recognize the need:**

10. To ensure a coherent strategic and operational framework for urban development that can approach the current and future challenges and the policy directions to address them in an effective way.
12. To assess, learn and build on the innovative governance dynamics that the Urban Agenda for the EU has set in motion.
13. To put stronger emphasis on improving the urban dimension of the EU legislation by strengthening the link between the Better Regulation Agenda, territorial impact assessment tools and the work of the partnerships.
14. To better embed the cross-cutting issues especially in terms of the integrated participatory approach to urban development as laid out in the Pact of Amsterdam.
15. To develop a functional relationship between the New Leipzig Charter and the Urban Agenda for the EU and the Territorial Agenda 2020+.
16. To improve the way in which the Urban Agenda for the EU is delivered to cities and citizens.
17. To involve more towns, cities and regions beyond those directly involved in the Partnerships and to capitalise on and roll out the results, recommendations and lessons learnt in the Partnerships.

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Innovative Actions, Urban Development Network, One-stop shop portal for cities, EC/JRC's STRAT-Board and Urban Data Platform, as well as Community of Practise, URBIS, International Urban Cooperation, EU Framework Programmes for Research & Innovation, JPI Urban Europe and European Urban Knowledge Network

18. To address the challenges of the urban-rural continuum taking into account that urban and rural areas are interconnected through different types of linkages that often cross administrative boundaries.
19. For all programmes to work together do disseminate research findings, best practices and technologies.

**Agree:**

20. To support the implementation and continuation of the Urban Agenda for the EU in line with the guiding principles of the new Leipzig Charter in order to guarantee a coherent policy framework for urban development at the EU level, based on the subsidiarity principle, through:
  - a. maintaining the current level of attention for the themes laid down in the Pact of Amsterdam that should remain on the EU agenda.
  - b. linking the operational nature of the Pact of Amsterdam to the strategic framework of the new Leipzig Charter, which will (re)define key principles of sustainable urban development.
  - c. completing the assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU in view of its improvement. The new Leipzig Charter shall offer new guiding principles on which the Urban Agenda for the EU can further develop, in order to ensure the implementation of strategic provisions. The selection of these new policy directions should be taken in close cooperation with the European Commission, Member States, cities and regions.
  - d. capitalising on the results of the Urban Agenda for the EU towards improving the regulatory, financial and knowledge framework at EU and national level.
21. To improve the Urban Agenda for the EU and ensure coordination between different initiatives, through a better alignment of the Territorial Agenda of the EU with the Urban Agenda for the EU in addressing European key challenges such as territorial and societal fragmentation, and or urban sprawl, and others within functional urban regions.
22. To complement the initial list of priority themes established by the Pact of Amsterdam with two new themes on Culture/Cultural Heritage and Security in Public Spaces:
  - a. Culture/Cultural Heritage

The objectives of the partnership are to develop culture and cultural heritage in urban areas, having regard to the quality of landscape and built environment heritage as a powerful tool to achieve social, ecological and economic goals and having in regard its role as an important resource for urban-rural development.

b. Security in Public Spaces

The objectives are to ensure enhanced security in public spaces, given its importance for the identity and social fabric of cities. Relevant themes are: prevention, technology, better guidelines and laws and exchange of practices.

**Invite the European Commission:**

23. To continue the efforts towards the Urban Agenda for the EU process.
24. To actively support the development and the implementation of actions under the Urban Agenda for the EU.
25. To further evaluate the progress of the Urban Agenda for the EU, and to adequately consider the ensuing results and recommendations of its Partnerships when implementing the UN New Urban Agenda.
26. To increase the visibility of the results and actions of the Urban Agenda for the EU at European, national, regional and local level.
27. To support whenever possible, the evidence-based approach when tackling urban challenges, and to continue building synergies between EU programmes and initiatives.
28. To ensure efficient internal coordination between territorial and urban policies and other EU Policies, most importantly Cohesion Policy by internally strengthening the cross-sectoral role of urban policy.
29. To consider where relevant the implementation mechanism of the Urban Agenda for the EU in line with the subsidiarity principle, when designing the governance of the EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, so that the EU can be better geared to achieving the UN 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals.
30. To promote the Urban Agenda for the EU during future Cities Fora.

**Invite the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank Group, as well as the European associations of cities and regions**

31. To continue to contribute to the further development of the Urban Agenda for the EU and to support the implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU actions.
32. To continue their efforts and remain active partners within the partnerships of the UAEU;
33. To increase the visibility of the results and actions of the Urban Agenda for the EU.

34. To continue the role of European Investment Bank Group in financing investments which contribute to the implementation of more effective funding of the priorities of the Urban Agenda for the EU and the provision of urban investment advice via URBIS and other activities under the European Investment Advisory Hub.

**Invite Member States:**

35. To continue the efforts in the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU.
36. To support the implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU actions.
37. To increase the visibility of the results and actions of the Urban Agenda for the EU at European, national, regional and local level.
38. To consider the recommendations of the partnerships in order to further recognise the urban development policies at national and regional level and empower local and regional actors effectively when implementing Urban Agenda for the EU.
39. To further evaluate the progress of the Urban Agenda for the EU and to adequately consider the results and recommendations when implementing the UN New Urban Agenda.
40. To adequately consider, where relevant, the actions of the Urban Agenda for the EU in achieving at national, regional and local level the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.
41. To ensure efficient coordination within national administrations between territorial and urban development policies and other national policies.
42. To strengthen the informal intergovernmental cooperation in promoting multi-level governance and the bottom-up approach in full respect of the subsidiary principle while also taking into account the competences of each level.

**Invite local and regional authorities:**

43. To maintain their commitment to support the participatory approach that promotes bottom-up visions.
44. To support the implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU actions at local and regional level, where appropriate.
45. To take due consideration, according to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, of the recommendations of the Partnerships in order to improve their uptake within urban development policies at local and regional level.

**Invite future presidencies of the Council of the European Union:**

46. To maintain the commitment and continue the informal intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters, as a contribution towards a stronger Urban Agenda for the EU, in support of the UN New Urban Agenda and the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. We therefore ask:
- a. The Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union to take stock of the assessments of the Urban Agenda for the EU and facilitate discussions towards renewal of the Leipzig Charter.
  - b. The Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union to develop the directions of the Urban Agenda for the EU as one of the stepping stones for the decisions to be made at the next Ministerial Meeting in Leipzig 2020 during the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union.
  - c. The German Presidency of the Council of the European Union to establish a strategic document incorporating guiding principles of integrated urban development added by possible future steps for continuation of the Urban Agenda for the EU as an operational mechanism to implement the principles of the New Leipzig Charter,
47. To reflect, following the Commission's assessment of the progress of the Urban Agenda for the EU, on how to best capitalize, in the future landscape of urban policy-making, on the added value of the Urban Agenda for the EU.
48. To organise, in accordance with the provisions of the Pact of Amsterdam, future informal ministerial meetings in order to discuss the updated status of implementing the Urban Agenda for the EU.