
Results of the Public Consultation on key features of an EU Urban Agenda and European Commission perspectives

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On 27th May, the European Commission published the results and the way forward after the 2014 public consultation on the EU urban agenda.

In its document, the European Commission acknowledges the key message from local and regional authorities: Europe can help cities to address common challenges and, in turn, cities can contribute to achieve the priorities of the Union. Content wise, most of the respondents are of the opinion that **no new legislation is needed, but rather better legislation which reflects urban realities. No new instruments or funding sources are requested, but better coordination among the existing one. The Commission will work in close cooperation with the Luxemburgish and Dutch Presidencies through the Urban Development Group** within the framework of the intergovernmental cooperation on urban development.

1) Overall approach: focus on three priority areas

The following areas will work inter-dependently and their impact on economic, environmental, climate, demographic, social and territorial issues will be considered. **City governance and innovation will now be two key horizontal dimensions** across all three areas.

1.1. Smart cities

The European Commission envisages to **upgrade and create a more holistic Smart Cities and Communities¹ agenda** as a tool to better integrate and connect energy, transport, water, waste and a broader ICT dimension anchored in a wider urban development context and integrating new innovative solutions that contribute to its objective. At the same time, the **Inter-Service Group on urban and territorial development will actively work on strengthening European Commission's internal coordination of urban initiatives.**

1.2. Green cities

The urban dimension of the 7th Environmental Action Plan will focus on the potential of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions related to challenges of urban development.

1.3. Inclusive cities

Supporting urban physical and economic regeneration to fight urban poverty and build equitable cities for all regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, as well as addressing the challenges of migration, affordable housing and the socioeconomic integration of marginalised communities.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eip/smartcities/>

2) Better regulation tools

The Commission services **will ensure that its impact assessment procedures respond to stakeholders' demand for territorial impact assessment** with a special attention to urban areas, using available tools². This is in line with the Commission's better regulation package³, particularly regarding with the re-launched of The Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (Point 4.1 of the regulation package).

3) Improve coherence and coordination of EU policies with an impact on cities

The Commission services will use the new Urban Development Network tool⁴ to up-scale pilot initiatives in different policy areas within the European Structural and Investments Funds to link EU sectorial initiatives and ESIF support to integrated actions based on holistic urban development strategies. The Services will also continue to support bottom-up initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors and Mayors Adapt.

Besides, the EC services will align various tools and initiatives around key EU objectives through **joint planning of calls for EU funding**, for example between the Urban Innovative Actions (ERDF Article 8 calls) and other EU initiatives such as Horizon 2020 or LIFE. Whether this could also mean an alignment with CEF urban nodes call remains unclear. At the international level, the same approach could be taken in regards with the Global Covenant of Mayors⁵ or the EU-China partnership on smart cities and urban mobility⁶.

Ultimately, **the European Commission services will explore the possibilities of providing a single entry point, or one-stop-shop, for end users, and will update on a regular basis the urban portal⁷** regarding the existing initiatives and funds targeting cities.

4) Improve urban intelligence, benchmarking and monitoring

The European Commission services will continue to support the consolidation and harmonisation of data and sources, making them more complementary and readily available. In this perspective, multidisciplinary European research on urban development will therefore be supported through Horizon 2020 and the JPI Urban Europe⁸, and **annual City Fora will be organised** to discuss further developments of the EU Urban Agenda.

² http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/impact/key_docs/docs/cswd_ati_en.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/better_regulation/documents/swd_2015_110_en.pdf

³ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/better_regulation/documents/com_2015_215_en.pdf

⁴ Under the ERDF action in support of sustainable urban development (Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of 17.12.2013), cities have to develop strategies that set out integrated action to tackle economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges. At least 5% of the national ERDF allocations under the Investment for growth and jobs goal shall be allocated to these actions.

⁵ http://www.conama.org/conama/download/files/conama2014/AEs%202014/1996969208_ppt_PBallesteros.pdf

⁶ http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/eu_china/sustainable_urbanisation/sustainable_urbanisation.htm

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/themes/urban-development/portal/

⁸ <http://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/>