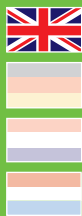


# VITAL URBAN LANDSCAPES

THE VITAL ROLE OF  
**SUSTAINABLE AND ACCESSIBLE URBAN LANDSCAPES**  
IN EUROPE'S CITY REGIONS



THE FINAL REPORT OF  
**THE SAUL PARTNERSHIP**  
2006  
**MESSAGES FOR EUROPE**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

These are the conclusions of the SAUL Partnership, a consortium of metropolitan regions in North West Europe (Amsterdam, Frankfurt Rhein-Main, London, Luxembourg, Rhein-Ruhr and Saarland) who have been working together for six years on a series of Interreg-funded projects.

This document is a brief summary of the SAUL Final Report. The Report looks at issues of key significance to people's quality of life in Europe's city regions. Globalisation, post-industrial economic restructuring and social change are creating landscapes in transition. They offer challenges and opportunities for both growing and shrinking regions.

SAUL's transnational approach has tested innovative spatial planning and design solutions for a new era. In rapidly changing city regions, a new regional planning dimension is essential. Spatial visions created with stakeholders and citizens can capture the big picture and build a sense of identity.

SAUL has demonstrated the benefits of planning in partnership, bringing together co-operation and participation. Engaging a wide alliance of public and private sector players with citizens, can generate social

capital and test new attitudes to governance for open space environments.

We reveal what we have learnt from working together transnationally. Our *TransPlanLab* tools and innovative methods of continuous evaluation have demonstrated the value of a transnational 'learning region' approach. Finally, we emphasise the unique significance of new urban landscapes in developing liveable city regions at the heart of a competitive Europe's future economy.

For the past three years the projects SAUL (*Sustainable & Accessible Urban Landscapes*) and SAUL Plus, with a combined budget of €22 million, have carried out a series of transnational urban landscape projects. These range from investments within large regional parks to local engagement initiatives.

All these are described in *Regional Reports*, an annex to the Final Report. It shows how they helped to deliver regional strategies, with evaluations of their outcomes and impacts, and the lessons learned. The Final Report draws on those lessons for these *Messages for Europe*.

The Final Report and the Regional Reports Annex are available on the SAUL website at [www.saulproject.net](http://www.saulproject.net)

# Messages for Europe

**In Europe's economic heartland, new urban landscapes are now a reality with a vital impact on people's quality of life in city regions. Their unique challenges and opportunities need innovative approaches by drawing transnationally on examples of good practice.**

**Politicians** should make new urban landscapes a key policy tool in urban and regional development strategies, to reflect the changing needs of society in all city regions.

**Practitioners** should respond to the changing functions of new urban landscapes by testing innovative ways of interpreting them, designing and creating environments fit for purpose.

**Sustainable regions are ones where people want to live, now and in the future. Regional spatial strategies, based on visions widely shared, give people a stronger sense of belonging, locally and regionally.**

**Politicians** should adopt regional spatial strategies that create new opportunities for improving quality of life in city regions, by joining up different geographical and stakeholder interests through region-wide landscape concepts, such as regional parks, in order to foster stronger regional identity.

**Practitioners** should embrace new spatial planning tools, such as the broad spatial vision approach, using consensus based methods in which all citizens can participate, and capturing larger scale opportunities to which a wide spectrum of society can relate.

**The impacts of globalisation and social change mean that Europe's citizens increasingly demand to be in the driving seat of shaping their future environment. Partnerships with the people offer a new approach to planning and governance for Europe's urban landscapes.**

**Politicians** should give political support and financial commitment to facilitate efficient, productive interaction between informal spatial planning processes, involving a wide range of partners, stakeholders and citizens, and the formal planning systems.

**Practitioners** should value and exploit the creativeness, openness and flexibility of informal planning methods and stakeholder networks, by setting up regional partnerships and capacity building processes, in order to link and embed participation into the formal systems of planning and governance.

**Transnational partnerships can unlock learning, transferable knowledge and greater understanding. A strong transnational partnership is greater than the sum of its parts and can deliver shared objectives in Europe.**

**Politicians** should use networks to build the capacity to sustain a 'learning region' culture, strengthening regional partnership structures in times of change to capitalise on spatial planning opportunities offered by new urban landscapes.

**Practitioners** should seize opportunities to promote transnational learning and exchange, using shared experience to guide change within and between institutions concerned with urban development.

**Competitive city regions are ones that can attract and retain viable businesses and their employees by offering a good quality of life. New urban landscapes are an essential element in building Europe's future economic structures and social well-being.**

**Politicians** should recognise and assert the high value of public spaces as a crucial development resource for city regions, and a major asset in building a region's economic success through enhanced quality of life.

**Practitioners** should incorporate into spatial planning strategies the full potential of new urban landscapes, including forestry and agriculture, inner city and peri-urban spaces, in order to promote their new potential for encouraging social cohesion.

**The European Commission** should ensure that future transnational funding programmes encourage co-operation between major city regions of Europe, east and west; and that the principles of spatial planning at the European level continue to underpin their direction.



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All the States and Regions together with their agencies participating in SAUL have been strongly committed to the work of the Partnership. At the time of producing this Report, it had not been possible for all of them to consider formally whether they wished to adopt all its recommendations as policy.

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