

Memo about the State of Play of the EU Urban Agenda

by the incoming Dutch Presidency

Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Policy Luxembourg 27 November 2015

In this memo the state of play and the next steps concerning the EU Urban Agenda are explained.

Priority themes EU Urban Agenda

During the DG meeting in Luxembourg on urban development held on the 21st of October there was general support for the proposed 12 priority themes and the 12 cross cutting issues and principles (see annex I). It was noted that the 12 identified themes are a first list to start 3-4 partnerships as pilots. In the future it will be possible to alter or merge themes, if deemed necessary.

The thematic partnerships will be organised around these themes in a "rolling agenda" (not all of them starting at the same time). The European Commission will align its actions from the Staff Working Document on these themes as well as the topics for the Urban Innovative Actions calls. The 12 priority themes and the cross-cutting issues and principles will have to be confirmed in the "Pact of Amsterdam" (see paragraph about the Pact).

Partnerships

A joint proposal by the Dutch incoming presidency and the Commission on a proposed working method and governance of the first partnerships was presented during the aforementioned DG-meeting (see annex II). The DG's agreed in principle to test the first partnerships according to the proposed method. However, some member states commented on the proposed working method and governance, which will be taken into consideration in the further development of the partnerships:

- the Urban Development Group and the DGs responsible for urban matters and other stakeholders should play a central role in the future coordination of the partnerships as a Steering Committee together with the European Commission (DG Regio) and the representatives of the cities (CoR, CEMR, EUROCITIES). This means that the current regular DG-meeting on urban matters (Member States, European Commission, European Parliament and representatives of cities) will form the Steering Committee. The CoR and the EESC will also be invited to participate. The UDG will prepare the DG meeting, as is already the case, and thus also the Steering Committee.
- Denmark suggested that knowledge exchange between the Member States should be stimulated in the EU Urban Agenda. The suggestion was that each UDG member prepares documents explaining their national experiences and policies on a selected theme of the EU Urban Agenda. These documents then would be the basis for a content-driven discussion on the theme during UDG/DG meetings. These discussions can feed into the partnerships. Many member states supported this idea.
- Many Member States had questions on the organisation and the financing of the Partnerships. Each Partnership should work out its own financial plan at the

outset. The NL and the EC agreed that this is an important point, which will be developed further taking into account the concerns of the Member States.

- Some Member States stressed that one of the representatives from the cities should represent the interests of small and medium-sized cities, if possible.
- Some Member States also stressed that the proposed organisation of work of Partnerships is seen as framework which can be flexibly tested within first pilot projects.

The incoming Dutch presidency and the European Commission will take these points into account in the further development of the partnerships.

Member States and stakeholders have been asked to express their interest in participating in the first Partnerships. For two of these Partnerships (housing, urban poverty) three member states (FR, BE, SK) already have expressed their interest to coordinate them. For the third proposed partnership on migrants/refugees no member state or other stakeholder has expressed interest to lead yet. After the DG meeting the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment has volunteered to lead a Partnership on Air Quality. This leads to the following list:

- Housing (led by SK)
- Urban Poverty (led by FR, BE)
- Migrant/refugees (no lead partner found yet)
- Air quality (led by NL)

Different Member States and stakeholders have already expressed their interest to start. The aim is to ideally organise the first meetings of the first Partnerships before the end of the year. The coordinators will organise these meetings with the support of the Netherlands. The aim is that in May (by the time of the Amsterdam Pact), the Partnerships have already identified the areas on which they would focus the Action Plan (after the stocktaking of existing work and after the identification of bottlenecks/potentials).

Pact of Amsterdam

Through the Pact of Amsterdam the Dutch incoming presidency aims to launch the EU Urban Agenda. The Pact will present the operational framework for the EU Urban Agenda, outlining the objectives, thematic focus, specific actions and governance. The aim is to adopt Council Conclusions confirming the contents of the Pact of Amsterdam during the Dutch Presidency. The incoming Dutch presidency will send the first draft of the "Pact of Amsterdam" to the UDG in December for a first written procedure. A second draft is foreseen in January/February 2016.