

EDITORIAL

A greener and quicker recovery



As Europe moves into recession the politics of 'the recovery' intensify. Member States acknowledge that the challenge they face demands

global cooperation, but struggle to agree the measures to take even at EU level. When at the end of 2007 the European Commission reviewed the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, it foresaw with cautious optimism strengthening economic competitiveness, falling unemployment and increased prosperity. Less than 18 months later we face a very different picture.

There are therefore important lessons to learn as the 2009 Spring Council contemplates the current crisis, which inevitably raises the question of the 'post-Lisbon' strategy. Europe's new agenda must adopt a more integrated approach to growth, combining economic, social and environmental concerns. If the recovery is to be sustainable it must engage and include Europe's citizens in economic growth, creating an increasingly skilled workforce that in turn boosts domestic demand. The recovery must also be green, based on environmental innovation that uncouples the historic link between resource consumption, economic growth and the production of waste and CO₂.

City governments are well-placed to deliver on these priorities. We can pioneer initiatives for training and labour market inclusion and direct investment to improve energy efficiency and renewables, from retrofitting housing stock to sustainable urban mobility. Such tangible measures will have immediate benefits to people's lives as well as for the fight against climate change. Of course long-term strategic infrastructure projects are also necessary, but it is Europe's cities, empowered and resourced, that stand ready to deliver a greener and quicker recovery.

Paul Bevan
EUROCITIES Secretary General

HIGHLIGHTS

Policy dialogue with Danuta Hübner



Exactly one month after meeting with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, the mayors and vice-mayors of some of Europe's biggest cities, representing EUROCITIES, met with EU Commissioner for Regional Policy Danuta Hübner on 19 February in Brussels. The dialogue was an important opportunity for EUROCITIES to influence developments on the new European cohesion policy and budget review.

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Local authorities most trusted level of government



A new Eurobarometer poll shows that EU citizens trust their local and regional authorities above all other bodies, believing that they have a role to play in increasing understanding and trust in the Union. According to the survey, 59% of Europeans would like their regional and local authorities to be better taken into account in the EU's policy-making process.

[see p. 10](#)

Towards green connected cities



The EUROCITIES Knowledge Society Forum will meet in Manchester on 25 - 27 March 2009 to discuss aspects of ICT and the sector of environmental technologies. Discussions will focus on the need to 'green' the digital world and how cities can profile the issues by creating a new European wide campaign, around the idea of a 'Green Digital Charter'.

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Key developments



Policy dialogue with Danuta Hübner

Exactly one month after meeting with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, the mayors and vice-mayors of some of Europe's biggest cities, representing EUROCITIES, met with EU Commissioner for Regional Policy Danuta Hübner on 19 February in Brussels.

Leading discussions, EUROCITIES President Jozias van Aartsen, Mayor of The Hague, pressed the Commissioner on resources and flexibilities for cities from the recently announced Recovery Package, and presented EUROCITIES' response to the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.

Ms Hübner agreed that improved regional performance will not be achieved

without strong, prosperous and inclusive cities. EUROCITIES representatives argued that future cohesion policy must build upon the competitive advantage that urban concentration affords, and should give priority to investment to ensure the sustainable management of functional urban areas.

This dialogue with the Commissioner was an important opportunity to influence her thinking as new European cohesion policy emerges and the resources to support it are negotiated in the next budget period ■



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Restructuring, refocusing: EUROCITIES in 2009

Building on the themes of innovation and liveability; partnership and participation; and diversity and cohesion, which form the basis of EUROCITIES' 2009-10 workplan, the network's Executive Committee (ExCom) at its meeting on 19 February, agreed on the following proposals:

- **A potential EUROCITIES Corporate Cabinet**

The concept of establishing a Corporate Cabinet (a business club) to which one company from each of 15 key sectors would be invited to join for a two-year period. Members of the new cabinet would be invited to participate in the EUROCITIES annual conference, meet with ExCom politicians, and comment on policy positions as they emerge, but wouldn't participate directly in policy forums. The issue is to further discussed at the June 2009 ExCom meeting before any decision is taken.

- **Membership of metropolitan areas**

A new category of EUROCITIES membership will be established for metropolitan regions of at least around 400,000 population that have a core administrative entity of at least 200,000, so long as there is an established legal governance structure and political representation for the metropolitan area.

- **Operational objectives**

The network's three new operational priorities will be more influence; smarter networking; and financial sustainability. EUROCITIES Brussels office is developing a range of short and medium term action lines to support each of these objectives.

The next ExCom meeting will take place on 19 June in The Hague, and will focus on the social impact in cities of the current financial crisis.

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Restoring the €500 million for cities

On 28 January, as part of the overall European Economic Recovery Plan, the Commission proposed a €5 billion investment package designed to stimulate the economy in the current recession. This was apparently a reallocation of an underspend from 2008 and a significant proportion of the money was to be dedicated to energy related projects.

An earlier draft of the Recovery Plan is reported to have included an allocation of €500 million to 'cities', which was subsequently removed.

EUROCITIES is working together with Energie-Cités, Climate Alliance and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) to build political pressure to reinstate this €500m for 'smart projects' to be coordinated and implemented at the city level.

It is essential that the European Economic Recovery Plan (EERP) achieve short-term economic stimulus and widespread job creation as well as setting the foundation for longer-term recovery. Our argument is that cities can deliver sustainable development that will lead to both short-term stimulation and longer-term restructuring of the EU's economy. Innovative and sustainable projects at the city level will take advantage of local capacity to train workers, adapt infrastructure and support businesses and have a huge potential to both create jobs and achieve energy targets more quickly.

Member States and the European Commission have been in disagreement over various issues from the legality of the proposal, to the list of projects suggested. The Spring Council at the end of next week should address the Recovery Plan. In the meantime, the European networks are working closely with MEPs, as the European Parliament should have a significant voice in the final decision.

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Key developments



New EUROCITIES' project to boost cities' role in EU social policy development

A new network which is set to significantly boost the position and visibility of cities in EU social policy development has just been launched by EUROCITIES.

The 'EUROCITIES Network of Local Authorities' Observatories on Active Inclusion' (NLAO), established together with member cities Bologna, Prague, Rotterdam, Southampton and Stockholm, aims to give cities a greater role in the Open Method of Coordination (which relies on intergovernmental voluntary cooperation). The network is supported by European Commission funding, and as such puts cities' concerns right at the heart of EU and national policy-making in the social affairs field.

The five involved cities will set up 'observatories' to monitor the implementation of local social policies and identify good practice. These cities will report on governance arrangements;

commissioning and procurement practice; and provisions for quality management in a range of social service areas. Particular emphasis will be put on the areas of training/employment as well as supported housing/community development. In their research, each observatory will engage with NGOs, the research community and public bodies at national level. EUROCITIES will coordinate this work and produce comparative reports.

Discussions and results from the observatories' work will be used to monitor the implementation of common principles on 'Active Inclusion of people excluded from the labour market' already endorsed by EU Member States. The EUROCITIES-NLAO is therefore already receiving considerable attention as it will feed into the recommendations made to relevant actors in this regard.

Up to now, EUROCITIES has repeatedly asked for improvements in favour of

cities, particularly concerning EU procurement rules, as well as funding and, not least, policy coordination across

these sectors. EUROCITIES sees this new project as a prime opportunity to provide evidence for the key role that cities play in the EU social policy-making process.

The EUROCITIES-NLAO will run as a pilot initiative until mid-2010, with potential for a roll-out across a wider range of cities after that ■



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Commission projects bring new staff on board!

EUROCITIES has recently recruited three new staff to work on European Commission projects it has been contracted to manage.

Theresa Moloney (IRE) replaces Zoe Catsaras as EUROCITIES' Project Officer dealing with migration and integration activities in the area of social affairs. She will be responsible for the new EUROCITIES project, DIVE (See Projects). Theresa's previous experience is very relevant to this position, having worked with SOLIDAR, a network of NGOs and labour movement organisations as well as for a public affairs consultancy in Brussels. She has carried out a communications-based traineeship with the European Commission and holds a BA in European Studies and an MA in European Integration.

Anke Thiel (DEU) is EUROCITIES' new Project Coordinator for Social Inclusion, and most specifically for the EUROCITIES-NLAO (see above).

Anke worked as Associate Researcher with the Hans-Böckler Foundation in Germany and most recently as a Policy Analyst with Caritas Europa. She was a consultant with the German Federal Employment Service and gained experience in the European Commission in the field of Employment and Social Affairs. She holds a degree in Educational Sciences.

Daniela Amadio (ITA) is EUROCITIES' Project Administrator for social inclusion projects, most specifically the new EUROCITIES-NLAO (see above). Daniela was Project Manager at the European Public Law Organization in Athens, and most recently Project Officer at the Fondazione Brodolini. She has done a traineeship at the European Commission and holds both an MA in International Diplomatic Sciences and an Executive Masters in International and European Relations and Management.

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Terrassa gathers momentum for European engagement

Just months after joining EUROCITIES, the city of Terrassa, is already proving itself an active member of the network. At a meeting held at the end of February, Pere Navarro, Mayor of Terrassa (pictured left), expressed his interest in working with colleagues across Europe to drive forward the urban agenda at EU level.

The two days of meetings gathered together key politicians from Terrassa metropolitan area as well as representatives from other EUROCITIES' Spanish members including Barcelona, Madrid, Zaragoza, Gijon and Murcia. A politician from Palma de Mallorca



and EUROCITIES Secretary General, Paul Bevan (pictured right), also took part.

Political discussions focused on the Spanish EU Presidency scheduled for the first half of 2010. Representatives of Spain's cities are hopeful that the occasion could provide an opportunity to further engage with Europe's national politicians.

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Terrassa City Office: www.terrassa.cat/internacional



Intercultural dialogue: cities advocate long-term strategy

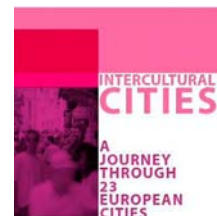
EUROCITIES has proposed to the European Commission a series of measures to ensure that the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 has an enduring impact. Among some of the measures presented, EUROCIITIES advocates that the Commission:

1. Sets up a strategy for intercultural dialogue to ensure long-term sustainable results and capitalises on the momentum represented by the 2008 European Year.
2. Mainstreams intercultural dialogue in relevant EU policies and programmes.
3. Increases the importance of the intercultural dialogue criteria for 'European Capitals of Culture'.

The recommendations form part of a new publication, 'Intercultural Cities: a journey through 23 European cities', which documents the experiences of those involved in a chain of city-to-city visits carried out over the past year. A unique aspect of

the initiative is that it tapped into the knowledge and perspectives of a range of city peers - from local politicians, to teenagers, to practitioners working in the field of culture. Each city sent a team of ambassadors to another city to exchange experiences on how to foster intercultural dialogue through specific policies and structures and the 23 visits took place in 2008 during major local events and festivals.

The publication was presented at the Intercultural Cities Conference in Amsterdam on 5 March, which gathered more than 120 participants from all over Europe, including representatives of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and several local and EU policymakers ■



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Culture at EUROCIITIES: Working Group updates

- New report on young people and culture

EUROCITIES' Working Group on Young people and Culture has published a report on 14 large cities' surveyed actions on the inclusion of young people through cultural activities. By showcasing examples of their cultural policy and practices, the report highlights the need for local authorities to ensure that young people both contribute to and benefit from their community's cultural activities. The report also promotes the mobility of young people.

- Making the most of the Commission's culture programmes

Within the EUROCIITIES Culture Forum more than 40 major European cities exchanged experiences on the European Commission Culture Programme (Culture 2000 and Culture). Cities supported the need and desire to maintain a strong culture programme. They recommended that the Commission's results be distributed more effectively, and that better support services be provided to applicants. This exchange initiative was led by EUROCIITIES Working Group Resources for Culture.

- The role of cultural and creative industries in cities

About 30 cities from 13 different countries took part in the EUROCIITIES Working Group (WG) Creative Industries' survey aimed at better understanding the importance of cultural and creative industries for cities. The survey focused particularly on benefits for local economies, as well as strengths, weaknesses and specific initiatives needed to create the best environment possible for creative industries to thrive. The report is available from the EUROCIITIES website.

The WG's next meeting will take place in Tampere on 19-20 April and will focus on communication strategies in a challenging economy and on new forms of cooperation between stakeholders of the creative sector. EUROCIITIES Brussels Office has circulated preliminary information about the meeting among members.

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Be a future European Capital of Culture!

Find out how your city could potentially become a future European Capital of Culture.

The European Commission is holding an information day on 5 May in Brussels for all cities interested in bidding for the title in the future. The meeting will inform cities on the criteria and selection process, as well as good practices between past, present and future or possible future Capitals.

Do note that the 2010-2013 Capitals have already been chosen and those countries entitled to host the title in the coming years are Sweden and Latvia (2014); Belgium and Czech Republic (2015); Spain and Poland (2016); Denmark and Cyprus (2017); Netherlands and Malta (2018); and Italy and Bulgaria (2019).

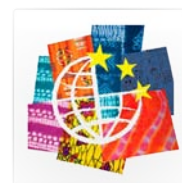
Information day:
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/news1936_en.htm

Deadline for registration: 15 April 2009; e-mail:
Eac-Culture@ec.europa.eu

Culture and creativity: vectors for development

Brussels | 2-3 April 2009

An international conference on the theme 'Culture and creativity as vectors of Development' will take place in Brussels on 2-3 April 2009. Organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, this meeting will underline the role of culture in the development and the sustainability of ACP societies.



Conference website: www.culture-dev.eu

Economic Development



Take the EUROCITIES financial crisis survey

The EUROCITIES Brussels office has launched a survey to gain an insight into the impact of the current financial crisis on its member cities and what responsive measures are being taken.

Our survey covers the following areas:

- The severity of the impacts of the crisis in terms of job losses; terminated projects; reduced investments; budget cutbacks;
- Tools used to counter the impacts of the crisis e.g. project alterations;

increased cooperation with other government levels etc.;

- Tools provided by the European Commission's Economic Recovery Plan which are being used e.g. cash advances under the European Regional Development Fund; increased use of state aid; the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund; and

- If the Commission's and other tools are not being used and why.

The survey results will be used both to inform discussions at the EUROCITIES

Economic Development Forum in Gijón on 25-27 March and EUROCITIES' longer term work on cities and the financial crisis.

Deadline for survey responses: **30 March 2009** ■

EUROCITIES financial crisis survey:
<http://tinyurl.com/citiesandcrisis>

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Consultation of cities and regions to boost Europe's potential

The Committee of Regions (CoR) is seeking input from European local and regional authorities on the future of growth and jobs strategy after 2010 by means of an open consultation. The outcome of the consultation will be presented and discussed in Brussels during the Open Days week of 5-8 October 2009, and will then feed into the political message that the CoR will address

to the 2010 Spring European Council, where the final decisions on the future of the Lisbon Strategy will be made.

Deadline for consultation responses: **20 April 2009**

CoR: www.cor.europa.eu

Join in Europe's first ever entrepreneurship week

Europe-wide | 6-14 May 2009

In a bid to promote entrepreneurship across Europe and inform entrepreneurs about support

available at European, national and local level, the European Commission is organising its first European SME Week on 6-14 May 2009.

The week is one of several measures aimed at implementing the Small Business Act, and marks an opportunity to inspire potential entrepreneurs to 'take the plunge' and work towards achieving their aspirations.

Across Europe, business organisations, support providers, regional and local authorities, and others are organising a wide variety of events and activities such as performance art, competitions, conferences, fairs, company open-days, online activities, workshops, seminars and networking, as part of the week.

If your city and/or constituents are interested in taking part in a similar way, check out the criteria for doing so at the official European SME week website.

European SME week: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/entrepreneurship/sme-week/about/index_en.htm



Results of Territorial Cohesion Green Paper consultation announced

European Commissioner for Regional Policy Danuta Hübner has recently presented the initial conclusions of the Commission's consultation on the Territorial Cohesion Green Paper.

Echoing some of EUROCITIES' arguments made in its response to the consultation, the Commissioner said: "I am pleased to see that most of the contributions understand territorial cohesion in the way that is closest to my heart: that territorial cohesion is first of all about mobilising development potential, not compensating for handicaps. We need better coordination between all policies with territorial impact, and a more flexible approach to defining the territories in which EU programmes operate, for example at a specific neighborhood level within a city."

Almost 350 national governments, parliaments, regional and local authorities as well as EU-wide interest groups responded

to the survey. An initial response analysis shows consensus along the following lines:

- A desire for more strategic and flexible territorial cooperation.
- A wish to see territorial diversity taken into account more, allowing for more practical implementation of policy.
- The need for better coordination between different levels of government to ensure the compatibility of European policies and local interests.
- Better use of indicators and increased analysis to improve understanding of territorial processes.

The final results of the public consultation on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion will be presented in the 6th Progress Report on Economic and Social Cohesion in June 2009.

EU Territorial Cohesion:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/terco/index_en.htm

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Cities eyes set on Copenhagen

In Nantes Metropole on 23-25 February, the EUROCITIES Executive Committee (ExCom) Working Group (WG) on Climate Change and Energy got down to work on preparations for the United Nations Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change in December (COP15). To increase international recognition of local authorities' role in fighting climate change, EUROCITIES is lobbying with other regional and local authorities' networks on this front.

The WG also reviewed the status of EUROCITIES' Declaration on Climate Change, a new edition of which is available in English, French, German and Spanish. 55 cities have signed up to the Declaration. The WG will aim to encourage non-signatories to follow suit based on the political importance of the document, and its potential to strengthen cities' position in Copenhagen.

In the same light, the WG discussed the Covenant of Mayors launch event on 10 February in Brussels. Mayors and vice-mayors of over 350 cities across Europe, including 40 EUROCITIES members, signed up to this initiative. The Covenant's Secretariat is managed by a consortium of partners, including EUROCITIES. See: www.eumayors.eu

A joint session was also held with the EUROCITIES WG on Climate Change-Air Quality-Energy efficiency as part of the EUROCITIES Environment Forum meeting. It was agreed that this WG will collect best practice examples to illustrate aspects of the EUROCITIES Climate Change Declaration; provide input to the political group's preparative work on financing mechanisms on climate change for which a workshop will be held by the Danish Association of local Governments in June. The ExCom WG on the other hand will continue giving political guidance, most

specifically, on the upcoming White Paper on Adaptation to climate change.

Both the EUROCITIES Stockholm AGM 2009 on climate change and the Mayors' Summit in Copenhagen on 15-17 December, will demonstrate EUROCITIES' determination in ensuring that local authorities' role and views on the issue are made clear at international level.

Representatives of relevant EU institutions have been invited to attend the ExCom WG on Climate Change and Energy meeting on 28 April in Brussels during which climate financial mechanisms and the carbon market will be discussed ■

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Agreement on EU's climate position, but not on funding tools

Martin Bursik, Czech Environment Minister chaired the 2 March Environment Council, which had the agenda of bringing about the adoption of conclusions – to reach an ambitious comprehensive agreement on climate protection after 2012 – on the EU's position in UN climate talks next December.

The conclusions, which are part of the Environment Council's contribution to the European Council in March, have already received the backing of all delegations except Poland, which was unable to agree to the paragraph on financing required to help developing countries; the European Council will settle this question.

Carbon-neutral cities: the way forward

A 'green' customer loyalty card, a floating climate campus, and an ecological public transport fleet are all new sustainably-focused initiatives that were presented at the EUROCITIES workshop on 12 February during the European Union Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) 2009.

- **City Carbon Card:** Belfast City Council for several years has explored options to use incentives aimed at influencing behavioural change to reflect the growing need to address human-induced climate change and poor resource management. The 'City Carbon Card' is one such tool being explored as part of these efforts.
- **Rotterdam Climate Campus:** Launched in October 2008 by Al Gore, the 'Rotterdam Climate Campus' is set to become a future breeding ground for water management and clean energy research and innovation by knowledge institutes and government authorities. The campus will be housed in a futuristic, floating building.
- **Green Fleet and Foro Proclima:** Madrid has targeted the corporate sector by means of a discussion forum, 'Foro Proclima', to tackle climate change at the local level. Forum participants aim to reduce the vehicle emissions of their fleets by reaching a goal of 6% of clean vehicles by 2011.

EUSEW: www.eusew.eu

Stockholm voted Europe's greenest capital!

Stockholm will be the European Green Capital in 2010.

Stockholm, a fast-growing city of 800,000 inhabitants, was rewarded for its ambitious target of becoming fossil free by 2050 and for its Integrated Management System that ensures environmental issues are included in the city's budget, operational planning, reporting and monitoring. Around 95% of the population live less than 300 metres



from green areas. It also received the award for its far-reaching programme to develop green areas, and for reducing per capita CO2 emissions by 25% compared to levels for 1990.

European Green Capital: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital>

Knowledge Society



Towards green connected cities

Manchester | 25-27 March 2009

Over the past few years there has been an increasing convergence between many aspects of ICT and the sector of environmental technologies. In particular there is a new focus on the need to 'green' the digital world and, conversely, to look at ways that technological innovation, whether digital or not, can support sustainability and tackling climate change.

The EUROCITIES Knowledge Society Forum will meet in Manchester on 25 - 27 March 2009, specifically to discuss the following items:

- How large organisations, both public bodies and businesses, can best use innovation and ICT to become more sustainable, especially in their own use of energy, innovation here is taken as meaning everything from particular uses of technologies (energy tech and/or digital tech) to new processes and/or approaches aimed at behaviour change;

- How the digital world can be more green, both by reducing emissions from less sustainable uses of ICT, and by using ICT, i.e. the Internet and the Web, in new and imaginative ways to really engage people and convince them to change their behaviour and to act more sustainably, especially around energy use;

- How we can best raise the profile of these issues and approaches and use the power and influence of big cities, and their partnerships with business and the community, by creating a new European wide campaign, around the idea of a Green Digital Charter.

The event will feature a number of high-level speakers, including among others:

- Linda Mauperon, Member of Cabinet of European Commissioner Viviane Reding

- Paul Johnson, Head of European Public Sector Team, CISCO



- Michael Stephenson, IBM Global Business Services, UK Climate Change Programme, IBM ■

Registration and information:
<http://eurocitiesksf09.eventbrite.com/>

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EUROCITIES urges fair treatment of cities in broadband roll-out

Members of the EUROCITIES Working Group Broadband held a successful meeting on 4 March with Member of the European Parliament Catherine Trautmann, rapporteur on the Telecoms Package and former Mayor of Strasbourg.

Discussions focused on the potential contribution of local authorities to the roll-out of high capacity telecommunication networks, also known as Next Generation Access Networks (NGAs).

Ms Trautmann welcomed the meeting opportunity and was keen to discuss urban and local perspectives as regards the Telecoms Package and NGAs.

Representing EUROCITIES, Albert Deistler from the City of Cologne and others, proposed several constructive ideas which will form the basis of future collaboration between EUROCITIES and concerned MEPs.

All parties attending recognise the role of local authorities in facilitating civil work, which accounts for 80% of network deployment. Cities can coordinate civil engineering works, facilitate sharing of ducts and include broadband infrastructure into their long-term spatial planning, which in turn leads to a more cost-effective roll-out.

Participants also discussed the specific state aid rules that apply to broadband projects in urban areas. As cities are commonly considered 'black areas' i.e. sufficiently covered by the market and with a presumably high service uptake, public investment in urban telecom networks is often rejected by the European

Commission. EUROCITIES representatives asked Ms Trautmann to ensure that intransparent state aid rules do not hinder roll-out and leave poor neighbourhoods disconnected.

The current market regulation proposal now allows for the National Regulatory Agency's (NRA's) to have a 'geographical segmented' approach to decide whether regulation is still needed. In other words the NRA's can make a distinction between rural and urban areas. However the situation in a particular city may be quite different from neighbourhood to neighbourhood (from rich to poor, from good broadband provision to little or none).

It is important that the use of this instrument doesn't lead to 'Poor Man's Broadband' provision in areas that are less economically attractive for business to roll out infrastructures and to provide services. EUROCITIES representatives stressed that coverage needs to be ubiquitous and affordable in cities as well, and they shall not be regarded a priori as sufficiently covered.





MEPs and EUROCITIES press Commission to publish urban mobility plan

Around 100 representatives from local authorities, the European Commission, the European Parliament and others took part in the panel discussion, 'The EU Action Plan on Urban Mobility: Where to now?' organised by EUROCITIES and MEPs at the European Parliament on 4 March.

In light of the Commission's delayed action plan, the meeting served as an opportunity for the European Parliament and European cities to jointly address some of the issues at the heart of the current transport debate.

Speaking at the event, MEP Gilles Savary (pictured right), the Rapporteur on the Parliament's Action Plan on Urban Mobility leading political action on this front, said:

"The past consultation and work on the EU Action Plan on Urban Mobility should not fall by the wayside with the European Parliament elections and the subsequent change of Commission. We hope the

European Parliament report will strongly influence the hearing and appointment of the new transport commissioner."

At this crucial stage, both EUROCITIES and MEPs ask that the Commission considers a coherent set of initiatives that:

1. Optimises EU financing of sustainable urban transport
2. Promotes a more integrated approach to transport planning
3. Respects the principle of subsidiarity

Miguel Ángel Cámara, Mayor of Murcia (pictured left), the city which is currently leading the EUROCITIES Mobility Forum, also commented:

"Cities are home to 80% of Europe's population. The economic and environmental state of Europe therefore depends largely on the economic and environmental state of our cities, and urban mobility is a deciding factor in this. Our cities need support from national



governments and the EU to ensure they have the necessary tools to provide efficient, affordable and sustainable urban mobility solutions."

EUROCITIES and MEPs urge the Commission to publish the Action Plan as soon as possible ■

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Budapest wins European Mobility Week Award

EUROCITIES member, Budapest, was judged by an independent panel of experts to have done the most to raise public awareness of air pollution from traffic and promote cleaner alternatives during European Mobility Week (EMW). Almada in Portugal, and EUROCITIES member, Zagreb, were runners-up among a group of ten European cities.

At a ceremony in Brussels, EU Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potocnik, presented the European Mobility Week Award 2008 to Budapest.

Some 2,102 towns and cities around Europe and beyond with a combined population of 218 million people took part in the EMW 2008, whose theme was 'Clean air for all.'

The EMW award rewards the local authority that is deemed to have done most in raising public awareness of sustainable mobility issues and implementing projects to achieve a shift towards sustainable urban transport. Over 60 local authorities applied for the award and 10 were shortlisted by the panel of experts.

The city and districts of Budapest – dedicated participants since EMW started in 2001 – developed a whole range of events and activities to promote sustainable urban transport, with a major contribution from local artists and organisations. Among others, activities included two consecutive car-free days; a 'Clever Commuting Race' for VIPs to demonstrate the efficiency of public transport; an open-air exhibition of clean and energy-efficient vehicles; a conference on air quality and noise mapping; and a 'Pedestrianised Areas Day', promoting the pleasures of walking in the historical city centre along the banks of the Danube.



EUROCITIES Mobility Forum meeting in Brussels

Brussels Capital Region hosted the last EUROCITIES Mobility Forum meeting on 2-3 March, which took place in conjunction with the EUROCITIES-MEP joint panel discussion on 4 March in the European Parliament.

Around 50 city representatives attended the meeting and took part in parallel discussions led by the Forum's working groups on international accessibility; transport and energy efficiency; developing a new mobility for culture; and road safety. Within the groups and during the plenary session, participants were briefed and asked for input on four major current EU dossier: the Action Plan on Urban Mobility; consultations on the revision of the White Paper on Transport; the Green Paper on TEN-T; and the 4th Action Programme on Road Safety.

Participants further enjoyed an interesting line-up of site visits to Brussels harbour, Brussels regional traffic management centre, as well as a road tunnel operation, organised by the host city.

The next Mobility Forum will be held in Lodz (Poland) on 2-4 June.

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European Mobility Week: www.mobilityweek.eu



Take part in Commission consultations!

Have your say in the following consultations organised by the European Commission:

- **EU action to reduce health inequalities:** this aims to gather input on how the EU can help reduce health inequalities within and between Member States, including approaches such as raising awareness, monitoring health inequalities, financial and other support to Member States and other stakeholders.

Deadline for consultation input: **1 April 2009**

Consultation: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en>

- **Financial inclusion: ensuring access to a basic bank account:** this consultation will collect input on how financial inclusion can be improved and how best to ensure that every citizen has access to a basic bank account.

Deadline for consultation input: **6 April 2009**

Consultation: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/index_en.htm ■

New resources and events

- **2010 European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion website**

The European Commission has launched its website for the 2010 European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The website provides key information on the objectives of the year and planned activities.

2010 European Year website:
<http://2010againstpoverity.europa.eu>

European Commission Communication on 'Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems' which refers to pre-primary education as an effective means to establish the basis for further learning, preventing school drop-out, increasing equity of outcomes and overall skill levels'. The study examines the available cross-national data and national policies on early childhood education and care (ECEC) in 30 countries across Europe.

Eurydice: www.eurydice.org

- **Early childhood education and care in Europe**

Eurydice, a network for education in Europe, has just published its new study on tackling social inequalities through early childhood education. The study forms part of the follow-up to the 2006

- **Social Services – A Tool for Mobilising the Workforce and Strengthening Social Cohesion**

Prague | 22-23 April 2009

This event will feature a high-level panel on sustainability, quality and accessibility of social services plus workshops on employment in the social sector and on the role of SSGI in promoting active inclusion of jobless people.

Czech EU Presidency: www.eu2009.cz

- **Social Polis Stakeholder Conference**

Vienna | 11-12 May 2009

A range of panels and workshops on different themes around cities and social cohesion will be held during this conference which will focus on future directions of research on social cohesion.

Social Polis: www.socialpolis.eu

EU Employment and Social Affairs Council adopts Social Protection and Social Inclusion report

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) of the EU has adopted the 2009 Joint Commission-Council Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion. The report assesses the role of social policies during the current recession and provides information on the latest national strategies on social protection and social inclusion for the period 2008-2010.



It presents a structured account of main trends in social affairs and social policies across Europe, tackling issues such as child poverty, financial exclusion and health inequalities, as well as the severe exclusion suffered by the most vulnerable groups, including homeless people and the Roma community.

The joint report is accompanied by a set of 27 country profiles assessing the social situation and strategies for each member state and by a comprehensive Commission services working document which provides a more detailed thematic account of challenges and policy responses.

Joint Report: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/joint_reports_en.htm

Stockholm and Birmingham: new leaders of EUROCITIES' Social Affairs Forum

The city of Stockholm, represented by Ulf Kristersson, Vice-Mayor of Stockholm for Employment and Welfare, is the new Chair of EUROCITIES' Social Affairs Forum (SAF). Stockholm is not only a long-standing member of the SAF, but is also a member of EUROCITIES' Executive Committee, and will this year host the network's annual conference. The city of Birmingham, represented by Paul Tilsley, Deputy Leader of the City Council, has also been elected the new Forum Vice-Chair.

At the Forum meeting in Rotterdam on 2-3 March, the new Chairs paid tribute to the work of Rotterdam and Newcastle, the respective outgoing Chair and Vice-Chair. They highlighted the crucial importance of social policies and the Forum's political work in the context of the current economic and financial crisis. Among other priorities, they also announced intentions to boost the Forum's work on employment issues and the fight against poverty.

Participation & Cooperation



Cities are crucial to success of European elections, says Commission

European Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström has called on regional and local politicians to rally citizens' turnout for the European Parliament elections taking place on 4-7 June 2009.

Speaking at a conference in Brussels this month, Ms Wallström commented on the crucial role that local authorities can play in bridging the gap between Europe's institutions and its citizens:

"You are best placed to do the job. You know the local audience. You know what issues citizens are concerned about and you can explain to them without EU jargon why Europe matters".

Referring to the recent Eurobarometer survey (see below), Ms Wallström noted the special responsibilities held by local and regional authorities as 'the level of government that citizens most trust'.

Voter turnout in European elections has steadily declined since the first direct elections 30 years ago. The figures have dropped consistently with 62% in 1979 and only 47% in 2004. The Commission is particularly alarmed as elections are less than four months away and only 26% of the electorate is aware of that fact ■



European Parliament 2009 elections:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009>

RegioStars 2010 features new city-specific criteria

For the first time ever, the European Commission's annual awards for territorial excellence, 'RegioStars' will include a category exclusive to cities. EUROCITIES welcomes the Commission's choice to integrate city-specific criteria into RegioStars, which is only entering its third edition.

RegioStars Awards identify good practices in regional development and highlight original and innovative projects which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions. The categories for 2010 are as follows:

1. CityStar themes

- Innovative use of brownfield sites in an urban context

- The integration of migrants or marginalised groups in urban areas

2. ICT Themes

- ICT applications for e-inclusion
- ICT applications by or for SMEs
- Broadband coverage in less developed regions or rural areas

3. Information and Communications

- Websites offering quality information and showing the European added-value.

Deadline for applications: **17 July 2009**

RegioStars: http://ec.europa.eu/inforegio/innovation/regiostars_en.htm

Forging stronger links with Eastern cities

The cities of Kharkiv (Ukraine), Tbilisi (Georgia) and Minsk (Belarus), for the first time, joined the EUROCITIES Working Group (WG) on European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Enlargement which met in Warsaw on 27 February.

The WG encourages exchanges between cities from the EU and ENP area. Some WG members have applied jointly for EU funding under the CIUDAD programme to further intensify this effort, and focusing in particular in the role of community planning in city administration.

In addition to these exchanges, the WG is also keen to encourage increased participation among these cities within the broader EUROCITIES network and activities. To facilitate this, the WG is planning to meet in Kharkiv (Ukraine) and Tbilisi later this year.

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Local authorities most trusted level of government, shows survey

A new Eurobarometer poll shows that EU citizens trust their local and regional authorities above all other bodies, believing that they have a role to play in increasing understanding and trust in the Union.

Published in February, the poll finds that a considerably higher proportion of total respondents (50%) trust their local authority above their government (34%) or the EU (47%). The figure is as high as 70% in Austria, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

Most important for the EU, 59% of Europeans would like their regional and local authorities to be better taken into account in the EU's policy-making process.

Referring to the survey results, EU Commissioner for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy, Margot Wallström argues that regional and local bodies 'are well placed to do the job': "You address them through familiar regional and local channels and you can explain in simple language the way EU policies affect daily life in the regional and local community".

Wallström frequently comments on the importance of informing citizens about how the EU affects their lives, and has asked that regional and local authorities help boost turnout at this year's European elections. The European elections will take place on 4-7 June 2009.

Eurobarometer Special Survey: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_en.htm



Projects



INTI-CITIES to DIVE: EUROCITIES launches new migration and integration project

The publication of 'Benchmarking Integration Governance in Europe's Cities', earlier this year marked the end of the INTI-Cities project which EUROCITIES undertook over the last 18 months to investigate cities' approaches towards managing diversity; the publication is available in six languages from the INTI-Cities website.

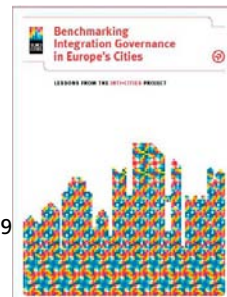
Continuing in the same field and using the same peer-review methodology as for INTI-CITIES, EUROCITIES has now started coordination work for a new project, 'Diversity and Equality in European Cities' (DIVE).

Through DIVE, partner cities will examine how municipalities use diversity and equality considerations when acting as policy-makers, employers, service providers and buyers of goods and services. As part of the project, the EUROCITIES Working Group on Migration and Integration will also develop a 'Cities Charter' on the role of local government in the integration of immigrants.

DIVE project partners include the cities of Amsterdam, Berlin, Leeds, Rome and London as well as the Migration Policy Group and Ethics etc. The project is co-financed by the European Commission, DG Justice, Freedom and

Security through the European Integration Fund.

The next two INTEGRATING CITIES conferences taking place in Berlin on April 2009 (see Events) and in London 2010 are co-financed by this project ■



INTI-CITIES: www.inticities.eu

Theresa Moloney, Project Officer – Migration and Integration: theresa.moloney@eurocities.eu

Online local energy planning knowledge base launched!

The Intelligent Energy – Europe project PEPESEC has just launched its online knowledge base with over 170 best practices on local energy planning from all over Europe.

The database compiles key facts and figures, experiences and lessons learnt from the implementation of local energy planning projects in areas of energy efficiency, transport, citizen/business engagement, street lighting, and low power IT initiatives among others.

A number of EUROCITIES member cities have submitted descriptions of their respective projects for the knowledge base.

Leading this work is Manchester Knowledge Capital (M:KC) supported by Genoa Municipality, EUROCITIES and the PEPESEC Consortium.



PEPESEC Knowledge Base: www.pepesecenergyplanning.eu

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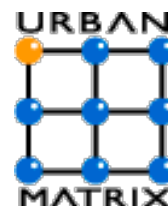
Workshop on public-private partnerships and sustainable urban development

Malmo | 27-28 April 2009

In recent years, Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have become a convenient solution for sourcing investment for new city projects. However, such alliances risk reducing the autonomy of a city's administration as well as threatening quality standards and sustainability ambitions the city may have established.

The next URBAN MATRIX workshop will look at the opportunities, benefits and challenges of existing solutions in PPPs in different European cities. Discussions will focus on 'finding the right balance' between PPPs and sustainable urban development. City practitioners, researchers and business representatives will examine different types of projects and will exchange their ideas on innovative ways of financing city projects without compromising cities' environmental ambitions.

All EUROCITIES member cities are invited to attend this workshop.



URBAN MATRIX: www.urban-matrix.net

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EUROCITIES Funding Briefs

There are three calls for proposals open under the European Commission DG Justice, Freedom and Security:

- **DAPHNE III:** supports transnational actions committed to the prevention and combating of violence against children, young people and women and the protection of victims and groups at risk. Total budget available: €11.9 million; maximum European Commission co-funding rate: 80%.

Deadline: **22 April 2009**

- **Fundamental Rights & Citizenship:** supports transnational actions which promote fundamental rights of citizens residing in the EU in priority areas e.g. protection of the rights of the child; combating racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Total budget

available: €5.8 million; maximum European Commission co-funding rate: 80%.

Deadline: **22 April 2009**

- **Drugs Prevention and Information:** supports transnational actions committed to the prevention and reduction of drug use and the improvement of information on drug use. Total budget available: €2.2 million; maximum European Commission co-funding rate: 80%.

Deadline: **8 April 2009**

These Funding Briefs will be uploaded to the EUROCITIES members area website in the coming days.

Events



Date / Place	Name of Event	More information
18-19 March 2009 Prague, Czech Republic	Monitoring the Urban Dimension in Cohesion Policy Organised by European Regenerations Areas Network	www.interact-eu.net
23-26 March 2009 Kaiserslautern, Germany	Parallel patterns of urban growth and decline International Symposium of the International Urban Planning and Environment Association	www.upe8.uni-kl.de
26-27 March 2009 Prague, Czech Republic	Future of the Cohesion Policy and Territorial Cohesion Organised by the Czech Ministry for Regional Development	http://old.mmr.cz/index.php?show=001036014000010
30-31 March 2009 Limoges, France	Regional answers to climate change Organised by the Assembly of European Regions	www.aer.eu
1-3 April 2009 Seville, Spain	Strategies of city-to-city co-operation for economic revitalization Organised by UN-HABITAT and Sevilla Global	www.unhabitat.org
2 April 2009 Berlin, Germany	Integrating Cities III - Embracing Diversity, Achieving Equal Opportunities Hosted by the Senate of Berlin in cooperation with EUROCITIES and the European Commission	www.intocities.eu
19-21 April 2009 Gothenburg, Sweden	Access and mobility for the cities of tomorrow 4th international conference on future urban transport	www.fut.se
20-21 April 2009 Seville, Spain	Europe's Creative Regions and Cities Organised by the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission	www.cor.europa.eu
22-24 April 2009 Malmo, Sweden	Council of European Municipalities and Regions General Assembly How can local and regional governments prepare for today and tomorrow's challenges?	www.cemr2009.se
22-25 April 2009 Sitges, Spain	14th International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development Cities 3.0 – Strategies, concepts and technologies for planning the urban future	www.corp.at

EUROCITIES Flash is published by EUROCITIES Brussels Office.

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