

Council Conclusions on an Urban Agenda for the EU

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. RECALLS its conclusions of 18 November 2014, regarding the Sixth Cohesion Report, in particular paragraph 32, in which the Council encouraged the Commission and the Member States to continue the work towards an EU Urban Agenda ensuring that it is made in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity and competences under EU Treaties, taking into account the intergovernmental cooperation on the issue.
2. RECALLS the conclusions of the Commission Staff Working Document on the Results of the Public Consultation on the key features of an EU Urban Agenda^[1] in which the Commission services indicated the actions they intend to implement.
3. RECALLS the European Parliament resolution of 9 September 2015 on the urban dimension of EU policies^[2], in which the European Parliament underlined the importance of having a European Urban Agenda.
4. REFERS to its conclusions of 12 May 2016 on the New Urban Agenda prepared in the framework of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III).
5. UNDERLINES the importance and diversity of urban areas of all sizes and contexts in the EU and cooperation within functional urban areas and urban-rural linkages to achieve the objectives of the Union and related national priorities.
6. EMPHASISES that the Urban Agenda for the EU (hereafter: Urban Agenda) shall focus on overall EU objectives and challenges, relevant for all Member states, whilst taking into account the diverse urban profile of Member States.
7. RECOGNIZES that there is a need to enhance the complementarity of policies affecting urban areas and to strengthen their urban dimension.
8. UNDERLINES the contribution of specific EU policies, in accordance with the legal and institutional structures already in place, in particular Cohesion Policy, to the implementation of the Urban Agenda and meeting the objectives of sustainable urban development, thus contributing to the objectives of Europe 2020.
9. UNDERLINES that one of the objectives of the Urban Agenda is to improve the accessibility and coordination of existing funding possibilities and to contribute to their simplification. It will not create new EU funding sources or aim at higher allocations for urban authorities, nor affect the current distribution of legal competences and existing working and decision-making structures nor will it transfer competences to the EU level (in accordance with Articles 4 and 5 of TEU).
10. AFFIRMS that each stakeholder is free to determine its own level of participation in the Urban Agenda and that the outcomes of the partnerships can be regarded as non-binding contributions to the design of future and the revision of existing EU legislation, instruments and initiatives, as described in the Pact of Amsterdam.
11. AGREES on the need for better involvement of relevant key partners, including representatives of urban and regional authorities, in the preparation as well as the evaluation of EU policy through existing opportunities for consultation available to Member States.
12. WELCOMES the Urban Agenda as set out in the Pact of Amsterdam, agreed between EU Ministers responsible for urban matters during their informal meeting of 30 May 2016.
13. CALLS ON the Commission:
 - a) to play an active role and continue facilitating the implementation of the Urban Agenda within its existing budgets, including the provision of basic technical assistance to the Partnerships from 1 January 2017 onwards;
 - b) to align its actions on strengthening the urban dimension of EU policies to the Urban Agenda;

- c) to further strengthen its coordination and streamlining of policies directly or indirectly impacting on urban areas in a transparent way, in order to enhance the complementarity of the policies and strengthen their urban dimension, in particular in the areas of Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge;
- d) to set up a one-stop-shop for matters regarding the Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of EU policies and thereby to facilitate full, reliable and customised information for urban areas and stakeholders;
- e) to ensure the continuity, coherence and coordination of the Urban Agenda by supporting, where relevant, the implementation of the set of actions of the Urban Agenda, particularly the work of the Partnerships;
- f) to consider, after guidance by the DG Meeting on Urban Matters, in a transparent manner and where appropriate, the results and recommendations of the Partnerships when drafting relevant proposals for and reviewing EU legislation, instruments and initiatives;
- g) to continue to work with urban authorities and their representative organisations through the various existing opportunities for consultation and feedback offered, when developing new policy and legislative initiatives and evaluating existing EU strategies, policies and legislation;
- h) to continue to explore improved assessments of urban impacts, where relevant, as part of the impact assessments, using available tools and including stronger stakeholder involvement;
- i) to report back to the Council regularly, for the first time in the course of 2017, on the implementation and results of the Urban Agenda.

14. CALLS ON the Member States:

- a) to take the appropriate steps for the implementation of the Urban Agenda and engage, as appropriate, relevant bodies at all levels of government in the implementation of the Urban Agenda, in line with their respective competences and the principle of subsidiarity;
- b) to promote, as appropriate and in line with the proportionality principle, the improvement of the knowledge base of, and the proportionate collection of data on urban development issues and strengthen in cooperation with the European Commission the data exchange on urban areas, taking into account the need to minimise administrative burdens as much as possible and using existing tools and instruments.

15. ENCOURAGES the local and regional authorities to take the appropriate steps for the implementation of the Urban Agenda, in line with their respective competences and the principle of subsidiarity.

16. INVITES the European Parliament to consider, where appropriate, the results and recommendations of the Partnerships after guidance by the Directors General responsible for Urban Matters, for the agenda of relevant Committees when discussing relevant new and existing EU legislation.

17. INVITES the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee to provide input, within their competences, for the further development of the Urban Agenda.

18. INVITES the European Investment Bank:

- a) to support the development of better funding approaches in the urban context, including through financial instruments, in cooperation with the European Commission;
- b) to reflect, where relevant, the outcomes of the Urban Agenda as appropriate in its urban lending, grant-loan blending and advisory services approach in the urban context taking into account the need to support sustainable urban development strategies and without jeopardising its financial discipline.

[1] Doc. 9395/1/15 REV 1.

[2] (2014/2213(INI)).