



Urban Agenda for the EU

Briefing note on the Action Plans developed by the UA Partnerships

Briefing note

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The *Urban Agenda for the EU* was launched in May 2016 with the [Pact of Amsterdam](#). It is meant as a new working method to promote cooperation between Member States, cities, the EU Commission and stakeholders. Twelve thematic Partnerships have been set up, which will deliver Action Plans containing non-binding recommendations for:

- **Better and more urban-friendly regulation**, for a more effective and coherent implementation of existing EU policies, legislation and instruments. Proposed actions will not initiate new regulation, but will be regarded as an informal contribution to the design of future and revision of existing EU regulation, in order that it may better reflect urban needs, practices and responsibilities.
- **Better Funding**, to contribute to supporting and improving innovative and user-friendly sources of funding for urban areas across all EU policies and instruments.
- **Better Knowledge**: to contribute to enhancing the knowledge base on urban issues and exchanging best practices and knowledge.

Each Partnership is made up of Urban Authorities (cities), the EU Commission and other EU bodies (EIB, EESC, CoR), Member States, knowledge organisations (e.g. URBACT, ESPON) and stakeholders (NGOs, business, etc.). The Partnerships are composed on average of about 15 to 20 participants.

This document contains 9 briefing notes summarising the Action Plans developed by 9 (out of 12) Partnerships, namely:

1. Energy Transition.....	page 2
2. Public Procurement.....	page 4
3. Jobs & Skills in the Local Economy.....	page 6
4. Air Quality.....	page 8
5. Urban Mobility.....	page 10
6. Sustainable Land Use.....	page 12
7. Migrants and Refugees.....	page 14
8. Digital Transition.....	page 16
9. Housing.....	page 19



1. PARTNERSHIP ON ENERGY TRANSITION

BACKGROUND

The Energy Transition Partnership identifies a range of Actions around legislation and policy; finance; and communications and networking that if delivered will together further the Energy Transition and strengthen the role and opportunity that cities have to play in it. It 1) provides concrete short-term actions in the areas of 'Better Regulation', 'Better Funding' and 'Better Knowledge'; 2) identifies partner institutions and organisations and a mechanism for delivering the proposed actions; 3) Makes some recommendations for future actions and activities that need pursuing to support the delivery of the Energy Transition.

SUMMARY

The Partnership has developed an initial set of 5 potential actions:

1. Draft Action 1: Creation of 'Financing for District Energy' Task Group

A paper will be developed to explain the challenges of financing district energy projects. The goal is to explore, identify, and engage with existing forums, such as Energy Efficiency Financial Institutions Group (EEFIG), to start an open dialogue for mapping potentials and exploring how cities can be engaged. Consequently, this dialogue will be shaped to inform the policy-making process, which will help to address financing challenges. This will help to identify the most appropriate existing forum in which to address these relevant issues and to identify possible solutions to the challenges.

2. Draft Action 2: Maximising Use of Waste Heat in Cities

Establish a Working Group of stakeholders to look at the barriers to accessing and utilising waste heat in cities. This Group will then run a number of workshops and engagement sessions with both heat network operators and waste heat producers. The Group will then use this intelligence to develop a Position Paper that sets out a range of recommendations for how these barriers could be addressed for the mutual benefit of the heat network operator, the waste heat producer and the associated energy system.

3. Draft Action 3: Guidance on Energy Master-Planning for Cities

Energy master-planning is a complex activity, and there is currently limited support available to enable cities and municipalities to develop a master plan for their local energy system. This Action will develop a supporting document that will try to assist and enable cities to accommodate energy master-planning processes.

4. Draft Action 4: 'Deployment Desks' for City Retrofitting

The Action will develop a guidance document that will set out how to create, develop and operationalise the 'Deployment Desk' concept in cities and regions, notably through the identification of already existing structures which could be considered as Deployment Desks, and study how they function. This guidance document will be distributed among EU regional and local governments. Future activities could include 1) the establishment of investment funds linked to energy efficiency and specifically for housing retrofitting and urban regeneration (regional level, local level); 2) Searching for EU and national funds to develop renovation plans; 3) Promoting flexibility and adapting the urban regulations to make it feasible for energy retrofitting, allowing for the implementation of bioclimatic technical solutions; 4) Increasing European, national and regional funds allocated to deep renovation and urban regeneration;



5. Draft Action 5: Closer Co-Operation with EU Bodies to Promote Energy Transition Funding

By Q3 2019, a fully-fledged position paper will be brought to the attention of relevant stakeholders (DG RTD, DG COMP, DG ENV, DG REGIO, EIB, etc.) that determines the work programme formulation for EU funding programmes and EIB finance constructions. This paper is to be formulated with input from existing organisations/working groups active across the EU. By the end of 2020, there will be a (concept) work programme that includes dedicated energy transition funding for urban areas. This funding stream will also have more flexible exemption rules regarding (indirect) State Aid.

ANNEX

Link to the draft Action Plan: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/energy-transition/introduction-draft-action-plan-energy-transition-partnership>

List of the members of the Partnership:

- Urban Areas
 - Gdańsk (PL, Coordinator)
 - London (UK, Coordinator)
 - Roeselare (BE, Coordinator)
 - Gothenburg (SE)
 - Navarra Nasuvinsa (ES)
 - Tilburg and Groningen (NL)
 - Udine (IT)
 - Vaasa (FI)
 - Warsaw (PL)
- Regions
 - Vidzeme Region (LV)
- Member States
 - France
 - Germany
- Other participants
 - European Commission (DG REGIO, DG CLIMA, DG ENER, DG RTD)
 - Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
 - European Investment Bank (EIB)
 - EUROCITIES



2. PARTNERSHIP on INNOVATIVE AND RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

BACKGROUND

The Action Plan of the Partnership includes 7 Actions aiming to facilitate and support innovation and sustainability (social, economic and environmental) through PP strategies.

SUMMARY

The Partnership formalised 7 actions, some have already been achieved, others are ongoing or will be undertaken in the coming months.

1. Building a procurement strategy and managing strategic procurement

1.1 Guidance on building and managing strategic procurement

This action aims to produce a guidance toolkit that can help politicians and technicians in cities to build their own PP strategy. The toolkit should be supported by an exchange of good practices that need financial support. It will be accompanied by dissemination activities and a train-the-trainer educational package.

1.2 Measuring spend and wider impact in European Cities

This action aims to develop a common cross-Europe methodology for municipalities and other institutions to measure directly where their procurement spend goes and the impact it has (economically, socially and environmentally).

1.3 Recommendation(s) for future EU funding

The aim of this action is to develop recommendations to the EU Commission, Parliament and Member States on providing funding for procurement of innovation, strategic procurement, joint cross-border procurement and in particular social procurement and circular procurement.

2. Developing relationships with economic operators; utilising the market potential and bringing it closer to the purchasers

2.1 Innovation procurement broker

The objective of this action is a more efficient public sector by means of a new paradigm of interaction among public and private players. The expected impact is an increase in the matching system among public buyers and suppliers in the EU. The main deliverable is a set of guidelines for the definition, the implementation and management of "Innovation Procurement Broker", conceived at regional, national and EU level, with the close involvement of cities.

3. Providing guidance on legal tools and improving competence on innovative and sustainable procurement

3.1 Legal handbook innovative PP

A legal handbook is a tool for practitioners to gain such knowledge and experience. The legal handbook on innovative PP will contain a practical guideline regarding legal aspects for the procurement of innovation.

3.2 Develop a flexible and customisable concept for Local Competence Centres for innovative and sustainable procurement

The objective of the action is to improve capabilities of local buyers in conducting innovative and sustainable PP, as well as better awareness of benefits of such PP. A guideline will be published featuring potential models for local knowledge exchange and collaboration. It will specify which conditions and considerations in opting for a model need to be taken into account.

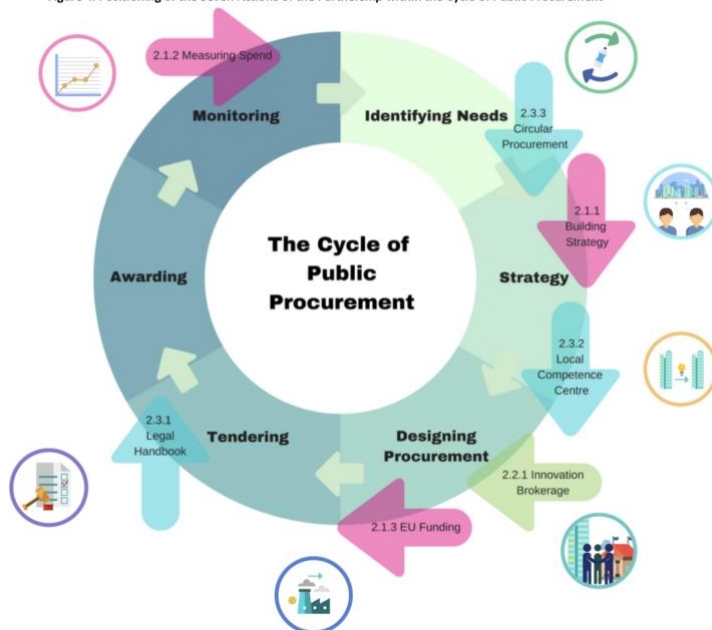
3.3 Competence building in circular procurement

The goal of this action is to share and 'unlock' experience, knowledge and insights on circular procurement with public buyers and their clients, managers, policy advisors and budget holders. The aim is to offer knowledge that is practical and directly transferrable to the work of public buyers and to provide managers/politicians who want to use circular procurement as a strategic tool with an easily



accessible and ready-to-use training solution.

Figure 4: Positioning of the Seven Actions of the Partnership within the Cycle of Public Procurement



ANNEX

Link to the Action Plan: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/public-procurement/final-action-plan-public-procurement-partnership-available>

Members of the Partnership:

- Urban authorities Haarlem (NL, Coordinator), Gabrovo (BG), Larvik (NO), Munich (DE), Nantes (FR), Preston (UK), Vantaa (FI)
- Member States: Italy
- Other participants: Commission (DG REGIO, DG GROW), European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest (CEEP), Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), EUROCITIES, ICLEI, URBACT



3. PARTNERSHIP ON JOBS & SKILLS IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

BACKGROUND

Local authorities are crucial to improve the circumstances for the creation of jobs since they can play a role in facilitating a favourable business ecosystem, training the workforce, supporting (social) entrepreneurship, ensuring proper infrastructure and mobility, providing quality public services, controlling urban development and land use, diminishing the time and the procedures to obtain building permits, etc. The Partnership identified three priority areas:

- 1st Priority Area: Skills - Next Economy, and Education and Skills
- 2nd Priority Area: Capital investments - Valorisation of R&D and Business Locations
- 3rd Priority Area: Governance - Public Services and Effective Local Governance

SUMMARY

1. Priority 1: Skills - Next Economy, and Education and Skills

▪ Action 1: Talent Office

The Talent Office aims to pool the best innovative practices, such as an Observatory and digital platforms, to address Talent mismatch, acting as an enabler to connect talent and all the stakeholders related with the talent supply and demand and to raise awareness on present and future skills, through lifelong career guidance.

▪ Action 2: Future Labour Market Skills

This action foresees the creation of an online repository of the best practices of local approaches to transfer and develop future labour market skills, aiming to provide permanent mechanisms for knowledge exchange in this area.

▪ Action 3: The European Pillar on Social Rights (EPSR) as a Framework for the Reconversion Towards a Sustainable Economy

The EPSR sets out 20 key principles and rights “to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems”. It is a policy objective for a more social Europe in the proposed regulation regarding several funds post 2020. This action suggests that the EPSR should be the framework for the reconversion towards a sustainable economy in urban areas.

▪ Action 4: Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)

Including a Human Capital Agenda and the local dimension into the Regional Innovation Strategies, notably by contributing to an updated and improved RIS3 guide and preparing a position on the criteria of the enabling condition as proposed in Annex IV to the Common Provision Regulation (CPR).

▪ Action 5: Long Term (Lt) Investments

This action proposes to promote and optimise the long-term investment framework for jobs and skills, notably by drafting a best practice guide on investment platforms and preparing a position to the Council and the EU Parliament on how the proposal for an InvestEU Programme could better support local and regional long-term investment strategies.

▪ Action 6: Horizontal Action: Simplification 2.0

Simplifying future EU cohesion policy programmes for urban areas, notably by 1) providing input to the Council and the Parliament on the proposals for the new regulations for the implementation of the structural funds, 2) preparing a position on the new State Aid framework in the light of investments related to jobs and skills, 3) providing concrete simplification proposals to the foreseen consultation on the simplification on EU State Aid rules

2. Priority 2: Capital investments – Valorisation of R&D and Business Locations

▪ Action 7: Funding Deprived Areas

It is suggested to create new financing facilities within the next programming period for the regeneration of deprived brownfield areas with social and economic regeneration. The regeneration of deprived areas is directly related to the development of the local economy and



the enhancement of the competitiveness and depopulation of the cities. Considering the proportion of degraded and economically unused territories, a systematic set of measures for the revitalisation of the urban environment are needed. It is necessary to improve the capacities and knowledge for the successful implementation of EU and local funded initiatives.

▪ **Action 8: Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) Flexibility**

The effective coordination between different policy and administration levels (“place-based development approach”) is essential for successful and efficient development of local areas. From this perspective, place-based strategies include any effort to enhance the liveability and quality of life in a given community. An important purpose of place-based strategies is to develop local solutions to the local challenges. Recommendations on ITI for the development of the next programming period will be prepared.

▪ **Action 9: Cluster of State Aid and De-Minimis**

Argue for more flexible State Aid rules for innovative start-ups and for more flexible rules for regeneration projects (eligible costs for real-estate in deprived areas).

3. Priority 3: Governance - Public Services and Effective Local Governance

▪ **Action 10: Job-Oriented Ecosystem**

The action contrives of the creation of favourable conditions for business development. In light of current challenges, the strategic European/national/regional/local documents in the field of cities’ sustainable development should be updated in order to emphasize the need to ensure more favourable conditions for businesses and to drive the economic externalities in order to achieve a positive impact for the social and environmental aspects.

ANNEX

Link to the Action Plan: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/jobs-and-skills-local-economy/final-action-plan-jobs-and-skills-local-economy-partnership>

Members of the Partnership:

- **Urban Areas:** Jelgava (LV, Coordinator), Rotterdam (NL, Coordinator), Berlin (DE), Ghent (BE), Grand Angoulême (FR), Kielce (PL), Miskolc (HU), Porto (PT), Turin (IT)
- **Member States:** Romania (Coordinator), Greece, Italy
- **Other participants:** Commission (DG REGIO, DG EMPL), Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), EUROCITIES, European Investment Bank (EIB), URBACT (observer)



4. PARTNERSHIP ON AIR QUALITY

BACKGROUND

Air quality is the main determining environmental factor for the quality of life in cities. The main objective of the partnership is to place the healthy city higher on the EU agenda and to help attain healthy urban environments. Addressing this issue involves acknowledging the unique impact of different pollutants and emission sources as well as accounting for atmospheric chemistry and transboundary effects. Air quality is therefore a complex issue that depends on accurate monitoring, relevant legislation and effective controls and enforcement. The EU has introduced a series of legislative controls intended to reduce emissions and improve air quality. These currently include the Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD), the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD) and a series of source-specific regulatory instruments.

The Partnership suggests the creation of 'guidelines for air quality planning' with a registry of 'best practices in urban air quality planning'. These are intended to promote access to the details of air quality measures including suitability and relative effectiveness. The Catalogue of Air Quality Measures provided by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the 'Code of Good Practice for Cities Air Quality Plans' that the Partnership is developing are good examples.

Raising public awareness of the health impacts of poor air quality is important to gain acceptance of measures to improve air quality, but also of the costs of air quality measures necessary to be taken by local communities. This is especially true for those measures which may be perceived as 'inconvenient' or 'unnecessary' or 'costly' for the citizens. For example, urban vehicle access restrictions, building restrictions or biomass burning restrictions.

Problem: difficult to receive (EU)funding for specific air quality projects.

At the European level, urban governance could be assisted by following the example of currently successful collaborations, for instance the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy⁵ who have created an online knowledge sharing resource which details codes of best practice and new initiatives. The Partnership suggests the creation of 'guidelines for air quality planning' with a registry of 'best practices in urban air quality planning'.

The work of the partnerships focused on four main topics: Modelling city-specific situations, Mapping of regulatory instruments and funding, Recommendations on air quality good practices and Guideline for cities' air quality action plans.

In February 2019, the partnership delivered a [suite of integrated tools](#) to help cities and Member States overcome the challenge of air pollution and reduce its negative impact on health:

- [A joint Position paper on EU Ambient Air Quality Directives](#)
- [A Code of good practice for designing and implementing Air Quality Plans](#)
- [A Guidance for financing air quality plans](#)
- [A new tool for measuring benefits generated in terms of impact on citizen's health and living environments](#)
- [A Communication toolbox on air quality](#)

SUMMARY

Key aspects that matter for the profession

- The code of good practice for designing and implementing Air Quality Plans underlines that the co-operation between different level of governance and integration of planning regarding different sectors is a key factor for a real improvement of cities air quality.
- Land use and urban planning should be used to reduce traffic proximity exposure for new buildings with local urban planning instruments; increasing green areas.

Other aspects included in the recommendations:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) can be a tool used for the development of



- AQPs;
- All Stakeholders and key actors have to be consulted during the process;
 - Ensure policy coordination and integrated planning;
 - Coordinating with other sectors of the administration in order to ensure and maintain coherence between different sectorial policies (Climate change, Transport sector, Energy sector, Agriculture, etc).
 - Increasing the energy efficiency in housing plays an important role

A joint Position paper on EU Ambient Air Quality Directives

To contribute to better regulation and implementation of existing legislation in the field of ambient air quality, the Partnership has submitted a joint Position Paper in response to the Open Public Consultation to support the Fitness Check of the EU Ambient Air Quality Directives.

A Code of good practice for designing and implementing Air Quality Plans

The Partnership has also produced a user-friendly Code of good practice for designing and implementing Air Quality Plans. The Code provides useful guidance to facilitate local decision-making, improve the efficiency of air quality measures selection and governance, and ultimately help cities improve public health, while safeguarding compliance with EU legislation. The Code also indicates ways to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals for the 2030 Agenda.

With clear explanations, and a collection of examples and hands-on tips, the Code of good practice for cities Air Quality Plans is a unique companion for guiding urban planning authorities through every step of the process of designing and organizing an Air Quality Plan.

A Guidance for financing air quality plans

In addition, the Partners published a guide to identify, integrate and improve traditional and innovative financing schemes dedicated to the implementation of air quality measures. Opportunities to leverage the involvement of both private and public financial resources are highlighted.

A new tool for measuring benefits generated in terms of impact on citizen's health and living environments

Based on state-of-the-art methodologies the Partners have designed and tested a new tool to measure the health gains and costs of urban planning measures and help policy-makers and practitioners improve decision-making through a better selection of air quality-related measures.

A Communication toolbox on air quality

The Partners also invested in the development of an inspiring Communication Toolbox for awareness-raising strategies on air quality issues. The Toolbox contains a wealth of inspiring practices, solutions and practical tips to raise awareness and stakeholder engagement in air quality initiatives.

ANNEX

Link to the Action Plan:

https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/ua_paq_-_final_plan_action_plan.pdf

Members of the Partnership:

- **Urban Areas:** Constanta (RO), Helsinki/HSY (FI), London (UK), Milano (IT), Utrecht (NL)
- **Member States:** The Netherlands (Coordinator), Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland
- **Other participants:** European Commission (DG REGIO, DG ENV, DG RTD, JRC, DG ENER, DG MOVE, DG AGRI, DG GROW), Consortium Clean Air Ruhr Area, represented by the city of Duisburg, EUROCITIES, URBACT, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)



5. PARTNERSHIP ON URBAN MOBILITY

BACKGROUND

Urban mobility is currently facing changing circumstances: rising congestion, related air and noise pollution, climate change, the search for alternatives to fossil fuels and other limited resources, advancing urbanisation and the crisis of public budgets are examples of the forces set to determine the development of transport and mobility in Europe. Using a wide range of interconnected measures and strategies, the challenge is to deal with the increased demand for mobility whilst developing a resilient mobility system, which can meet future challenges. Urban mobility concepts have to take particular account of connecting suburban areas, metropolitan areas and cross-border traffic. The cityscape, environmental and social compatibility are vital aspects which also need to be reflected. The focus lies on: public transport, soft mobility (walking, cycling, public space) and accessibility (for disabled, elderly, young children, etc.) and an efficient transport with good internal (local) and external (regional) connectivity.

There is an interconnection with Partnership on Sustainable Use of Land and the Partnership on Air Quality:

- Urban planning and mobility development must be seen as two sides of the same coin as transport and mobility are variables dependent on settlement structures and land use.
- The strong connection between mobility and environmental quality must be seized as a way of contributing effectively to reaching the agreed limit values for, inter alia: climate, air quality and noise.

The actions of the partnership are structured under four main topics:

- Governance and planning
 1. Reinforcing multi-level cooperation and governance
 2. Reinforcing the uptake of sustainable urban mobility planning
- Public transport (incl. green uses and accessibility)
 3. Evaluating best practices in convenient access to public transport
 4. Scaling up innovative clean buses
- Active modes of transport and public space
 5. Developing guidelines on infrastructure for active mobility supported by relevant funding
 6. Promoting sustainable and active mobility behaviour
 7. Reducing diversity of Urban Vehicle Access Regulations (UVAR)
- New mobility services and innovation
 8. Exploring the deployment of New Mobility Services
 9. Setting up a European framework for fostering urban mobility innovation

SUMMARY

The action plan contains actions focussing on the collection of data and information on the one hand, and actions involving the developments of guidelines and recommendations. Design and planning competences are required and therefore relevant for the profession.

- Action 2: Reinforcing the uptake of sustainable urban mobility planning

Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (SUMP), with EU guidelines for cities, is a core element of the EU urban mobility policy and very useful tool for cities. This action seeks to strengthen the SUMP concept by revising its guidelines, reinforce national frameworks and provide good practices. (Action Leader: European Commission DG REGIO + DG MOVE)

- Action 3: Evaluating best practices in convenient access to public transport



The action targets recommendations to understand, on a consistent basis, how accessible public transport systems are in cities and regions. This helps to identify the impact of different best practice strategies, which in turn can optimise decision-making at all levels and SDG implementation. (Action Leader: UITP, Walk21, City of Karlsruhe)

- Action 5: Developing guidelines on infrastructure for active mobility supported by relevant funding

There are no European level standards or recommendations on how to design safe, comfortable, direct and attractive infrastructure for walking and cycling and the knowledge is missing in several Member States and cities. This action aims to contribute to the development of European guidelines and encourage Member States to develop their own guidelines on this basis. (Action Leader: European Commission DG MOVE, European Cyclists' Federation)

ANNEX

Link to the Action Plan:

https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/pum_actions_in_a_nutshell_en.pdf

https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/2018-11-14_pum_final_action_plan.pdf

Members of the Partnership:

- **Urban Areas:** *Karlsruhe (DE, Coordinator)*, Bari (IT), Bielefeld (DE), Burgas (BG), Gdynia (PL), Malmö (SE), Nijmegen (NL), Torres Vedras (PT), Ulm (DE)
- **Regions:** Region Skåne (SE), Wallonia Region (BE)
- **Member States:** *Czech Republic (Coordinator)*, Cyprus, Finland, Romania, Slovenia
- **Other participants:** European Commission (DG REGIO, DG MOVE, DG ENV), CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions), EUROCITIES, EIB (European Investment Bank)
- **Stakeholders:** European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), POLIS, International Association of Public Transport (UITP), Walk21



6. PARTNERSHIP ON SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

BACKGROUND

The main objective of the partnership is “To ensure the efficient and sustainable use of land and other natural resources to help create compact, liveable and inclusive European cities for everyone”. This general aim is underpinned by two objectives: 1) to promote the liveable compactness city model and 2) to mainstream and promote nature-based solutions as a tool to build sustainable, resilient and liveable urban spaces.

The action plan responds to the growing need for better urban management, in the context of scarce land resources and the potential benefits of using nature to address the challenges of cities. Decisions about land use and other natural resources in urban areas has a bearing on the quality of life for city inhabitants and how sustainable urban development is.

Environmental challenges are, in fact, closely connected to urban planning. Finding the balance between compactness and achieving high standards of quality of life in a healthy urban environment is a major challenge. It is recognised that a city might be compact, but it could be unliveable (i.e. overcrowded) and also be too exclusive (i.e. reflecting the often higher cost of land in urban centres along with the privatisation of some urban spaces).

This path toward creating and sustaining liveable compact cities, via the prevention and management of urban sprawl and the promoting of sustainable land use might include the following approaches:

- Support for infill development, prioritising the renewal, regeneration and retrofitting of urban areas and the redevelopment of brownfields;
- Provision of high-quality buildings, affordable housing, public spaces and mobility policies;
- Protection of urban green areas, promotion and development of new nature-based solutions into the compact city to ensure more liveable conditions.

SUMMARY

The action plan relies on professional expertise in urban development, landscape architecture and architecture. However, the proposed actions mainly focus on urban governance and planning policies and tools.

SUSTAINABLE LAND USE ACTIONS

The Action Plan proposes a number of actions to tackle the issues of land take and urban sprawl, including the problem of both sprawling and shrinking cities and resulting under-used areas, mainly through measuring net land take in order to help cities setting effective land use policies.

Proposed Actions:

- To define a set of common indicators or develop a composite indicator for net land take that takes into account urban greening and re-naturalization processes as well as soil sealing / desealing at different spatial levels.
- To include land take in the Strategic Environmental Assessment at EU, national and local levels.
- To explore different methods for mapping under-used land and for collecting relevant good practice on how to manage and activate under-used spaces in a collaborative



partnership with public and private stakeholders. Closely linked to the activation of under-used land and the broader context of land recycling is the need to look brownfield redevelopment.

- Limiting land take and mitigating urban sprawl is also linked to questions of urban (or metropolitan) governance.
- To mainstream cooperation within Functional Urban Areas by collecting more evidence on how coordinated spatial planning in these functional areas can contribute to the reduction of land take and the mitigation of urban sprawl.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS ACTIONS

One of the main objectives of this Partnership is to enhance framework conditions for NBS, and to integrate NBS into policy, regulation, planning, and financing.

To achieve this the Partnership identified three different levels of action across the course of its work:

- At European/national level: EU Directive and regulations (then implemented at national level) often refer to NBS, but a further level of integration is needed to boost the implementation of NBSs across cities in Europe (Action 6). Moreover, several initiatives are ongoing in this area (H2020 projects on re-naturing cities, UIA, URBACT) and best practice should become more available for city planners and decision makers to build on;
- At City level: At city level two main issues have been identified. On the one side the lack of knowledge of existing funding instruments, and on the other side the lack of planning instruments has been identified as a barrier to the implementation of NBS within city project and plans. Reflecting this, the partnership proposes to work on a review of existing funding mechanisms and on the development of appropriate minimum legal requirements, targets and indicators to be included within local strategies and planning instruments.
- At local level (neighbourhood, local scale): The Partnership wants to raise the public awareness on NBS and its potential and to include social issues within the design of such solutions (through co-creation with civil-society).
- The partnership recognises the need to start at a local scale given best practice 19 examples available at this level (i.e Laboratori di Quartiere Bologna, Living Lab Rotterdam)

List of proposed actions:

Name of the action	Main Contribution	Action leader
1. INCLUDING LAND TAKE AND SOIL PROPERTIES IN IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES	BETTER REGULATION	Bologna and UNIBO
2. FUNDING AND FINANCING GUIDE FOR BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT	BETTER FUNDING & KNOWLEDGE	Luxembourg
3. IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING UNDER-USED LAND	BETTER KNOWLEDGE	INCASOL Government of Catalonia
4. INDICATORS OF LAND TAKE	BETTER KNOWLEDGE	Bologna and UNIBO
5. PROMOTING FUA COOPERATION AS A TOOL TO MITIGATE URBAN SPRAWL	BETTER KNOWLEDGE	Poland
6. BETTER REGULATION TO BOOST NBS AT EU AND LOCAL LEVEL	BETTER REGULATION	Bologna and UNIBO
7. BETTER FINANCING ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS (7.1 & 7.2)	BETTER REGULATION & FUNDING	Zagreb
8. AWARENESS RAISING ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS AND URBAN SPRAWL	BETTER KNOWLEDGE	Bologna
9. DEVELOPING COMMON TARGETS AND INDICATORS	BETTER KNOWLEDGE	Stavanger



ANNEX

Link to the Action Plan:

https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/sul-nbs_finalactionplan_2018.pdf

Members of the Partnership:

- **Urban Areas:** *Bologna (IT, Coordinator)*, Antwerp (BE), Cork (IE), Lille (FR), Águeda (PT), Stavanger (NO), Stuttgart (DE), Zagreb (HR)
- **Member States:** *Poland (Coordinator)*, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia
- **Other participants:** European Commission (DG REGIO, DG ENV, DG JRC, DG R&I), ICLEI, INCASOL, European Investment Bank (EIB), EUROCITIES

7. PARTNERSHIP ON MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

BACKGROUND

From the Action Plan:

More than 60% of refugees worldwide live in urban areas. In the future, this figure will gradually increase. Migration is a local reality. Cities are places where both migrants and non-migrants interact, be it through working, studying, living or raising their families. Cities offer great opportunities for migrants and refugees, but cities are also faced with challenges regarding integration and inclusion. (...) The Partnership focuses on the mid- and long-term view of integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees. It has identified the following topics that need to be addressed to ensure successful integration and inclusion: **Reception** and interaction with the local community, **Housing, Work, Education** and the cross cutting issue of **vulnerable groups**

To frame its work, the Partnership decided from early on to focus its work on five thematic areas:

- It is essential for the **reception** of migrants and refugees that communities are properly involved and informed in the processes taking place, not least to minimize the uncertainties that the local communities face;
- Moreover, providing refugees with **housing** is an essential but often difficult first step towards restoring the quality of life and autonomy of migrants and refugees;
- Fast access to the **labour market** is also a focus theme essential to creating autonomy;
- Moreover, it is essential that both integration courses and regular **education** for children and students start as soon as possible, to improve the integration process;
- Lastly, throughout these focus areas special attention must be paid to the extra **vulnerable groups** such as children, women and LGBT migrants and refugees.

From the scoping paper on housing for migrants and refugees:

One way for refugees to find an accommodation is to go to search on the private rental market, most commonly with the assistance of social service providers, charities, etc. which can strike agreements with private landlords for instance guaranteeing the payment of rent, thus easing the match between demand from refugees and supply. (..) Another way for refugees to find an accommodation is to apply for social housing. In most cases, social housing is allocated according to criteria reflecting the households' financial situation, family size, and time spent on the waiting list. Refugees which have been granted asylum have no higher priority than other groups when applying to social housing. However, since in most cases, when they apply, they



are low-income, living in temporary shelter or hostels, with young children, or single parent, they rank high on the priority list.

<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/sites/futurium/files/scoping-paper-housing-of-refugees-in-cities-.pdf>

SUMMARY

Sustainable and good quality housing is an essential element of the inclusion process and must go hand in hand with measures for social, educational and work related integration.

- importance of architectural and spatial quality and an integrated planning perspective for sustainable housing
- New constructions for housing, temporary or permanent, should make use of good quality materials.
- Architects can play an important role in the process of identifying and transforming spaces that can be used to temporarily shelter and using efficient and easy-to-build solutions for shelters
- The quality of the public space and social facilities should be considered and should be co-designed with local communities.

Access to housing is matter of social policy and cross-connection to other main topics of the Urban Agenda – Housing

Adaptive Re-use can provide rich pool of solutions in using empty buildings and structures for temporary or permanent use.

ANNEX

Link to the Action Plan: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/inclusion-migrants-and-refugees/final-action-plan-inclusion-migrants-and-refugees-partnership>

https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/action_plan_inclusion_of_migrants_and_refugees.pdf

Members of the Partnership:

Urban areas: Amsterdam (NL, Coordinator), Athens (GR), Barcelona City Council (ES), Berlin (DE), Helsinki (FI).

Member States: Denmark, Greece, Italy and Portugal.

Other participants: the European Commission (DG HOME as Coordinator, DG REGIO, DG EMPL), the CEMR, the European Investment Bank (EIB), EUROCITIES the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), the Migration Policy Group and URBACT.



8. PARTNERSHIP ON DIGITAL TRANSITION

BACKGROUND

The objective of the Digital Transition Action Plan is to provide improved public services to citizens, to support European cities in exploiting the possibilities of digitalisation, and assist European businesses to develop new innovations and create new business opportunities for global markets.

The Digital Transition partnership emphasises creating and offering European solutions to the global digitalisation markets. In this context, cities have a central role to play, as they are providing the services for their citizens and creating conditions for businesses. The partnership proposes initiatives on the topics where digitalisation can have the most profound effect in transforming urban governance, quality and fulfilment of life of its citizens, and the most advantageous business and growth opportunities for the businesses. The AP includes actions that aim at achieving more than one objective.

REPORT

Description of the issue / challenge for the architectural sector

- No clear policy in place for the inevitable smart city user interface,
- Fragmentation of knowledge and digital tools, need for standardised formats,
- Lack of access to big data for research and planning,
- Emerging technologies like VR and AR offer huge benefits to architects and planners and should be embraced asap,
- The Building Passport initiative is omitted and could be hugely beneficial, complimentary to the PLU efforts and as Big Data.

Recommendations to overcome the issue / take on the challenges

▪ TRANSPARENCY, BIG DATA AND ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE (ACTION 6)

Due to numerous EU partnerships and programmes there seems to be too much fragmentation in the knowledge base and networks. The first move in digitalisation would be to group the knowledge base and networks of all 12 partnerships into one web-based system (eg. forum, database or wiki). This would allow for a dramatic increase in speed of searching thus knowledge penetration and exchange, spark more cross professional and public debate, and raise public awareness through the possibility of simpler marketing.

Collected Big Data in general, within a common data exchange framework, should be disclosed to the public, to research centres and to government bodies at appropriate access level. This could support urban planning development via measuring and assessing outcome to create virtuous cycles of improvement.

Open Big Data/Closing the Performance Gap – Harmonise reporting metrics across Member States and between calculated and achieved performance and put in place disclosure requirements to ensure the rapid and continuous improvement of energy efficiency measures and technologies.

Current legislation does not mandate the reporting of achieved operational performance or the



validation of the indoor spatial and environmental quality achieved. This has caused major unintended consequences, including a significant gap between the expected and achieved energy performance of buildings that must be tackled by revised EU legislation.

ACE calls for the creation of a transparent and harmonised reporting and benchmarking of building energy use and building performance indicators by Member States; the mandatory EU-wide disclosure of building operation performance across all sectors; and the implementation of measurement and verification of energy performance in use.

▪ **PLANNED LAND USE (ACTION 6)**

The general Planned Land Use (PLU) data should be integrated in one system within the upcoming digital Building Passport (BP) data.

This way urban planning could be streamlined with access to vast amount of Big Data. It would be of course best to integrate it with a new or existing digital GIS system, to further streamline the planning process and ultimately allow for intra EU data exchange in a common format.

Combining PLU with the BP's select data on function, occupants, owners, area, volume, height, 3d model etc, could even help build a live data analysis both helpful to planners and to the wider public (as an existing and planned city map rising awareness and inclusion, available in physical locations, online and in VR). The PLU effort should directly correlate with the Building Passport efforts, as these are complimentary and have a huge potential for the digital transition partnership.

▪ **SMART CITIES AND DIGITALISATION IMPLEMENTATION (ACTIONS 3, 4+13)**

Technology is changing at a faster pace than we can regulate it, we need proper yet general legislation in place to secure digital democracy, but we also need fast implementation of basic features and getting them out to societies. Otherwise it will take too long to catch on before technology makes another leap - we will not reach critical mass of users allowing for the system to root into put things simply, many of the digitalisation efforts boil down to the relationship between the INDIVIDUAL and the (smart) CITY.

An app focused on the user-city relationship, with direct and clear benefits to the user (quickly providing all city related information and services), while providing transparent access to a live knowledge base on the city and its architecture seems like a good place to start.

Convenient, ready-made services (eg. Google maps) could ease the user into the app. On top of that public services could be added, like access to public transport tickets, city information, traffic, local news, tourist information, events, emergency services etc. As time goes on deeper modules would be added like opt-in behavioural tracking with rewards for eco-friendly behaviour. Finally, eGovernment interface could be added, like voting or various civil services.

For the price of convenience, the app would provide anonymous Big Data, for the city to organise itself more efficiently and have a closer than ever relationship with its users.

The added benefit would be that the Big Data would be in the hands of the local governing bodies, which have the greatest reason and potential to secure its fair use and anonymity.

Of course, it would be beneficial for this information to be visualised outside the app in physical living labs, open to the public, throughout the city. One of the best way to do this is to make use of the emerging technology of VR and AR to convincingly show what changes in architecture and city structure will take place soon.

▪ **EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES (ACTIONS 11+12)**

Emerging technologies have the power to change the status quo of life dramatically, and only by



encouraging transparency and high exposition of new tech can we safeguard the public interest. We must think in general terms on how we can protect the individual within the city to allow a transparent and fair use of the smart city of the future.

First and foremost, pilots and living labs must be a part of the public space, and must be accessible from one common place in the digital space. A common platform of knowledge and map of living labs would be beneficial. Otherwise fragmentation of access and awareness will slow down or block public transition to new technologies. It is easy to imagine, that with the transition to electric and shortly after self-driving cars, the entire infrastructure game will be redefined. Similarly, with the inevitable future of augmented reality overlaying multiple information on our perception of the city, the public must be confronted with the technology as soon as possible. Debate needs to spark before these products reach mass adoption, otherwise we are left with the private sector setting the rules.

The potential not to be ignored for emerging technologies is the 'canvas' of the city. In case of both AI, as well as AR/VR we should consider our cities and our architecture as an information bearer and passive cue giver to these emerging technologies.

Using certain materials, their reflectivity (visible and infrared) and especially colours as future guidelines for these systems, both in the horizontal plane(street) and the vertical (facades). Creating a clear visual separation, clear planes of colour or defined lines would be extremely beneficial for future SLAM1 analysis of these systems.

The emerging technology revolution will undoubtedly come from the free market with private interest in mind. The cities must thus produce something in advance to offer the IT companies of the future, retaining ownership and control, lest they will be left out of the equation all together.

What we should do is pre-emptively create general regulatory safeguards, as well as prepare the infrastructure (power, 5G) and fabric of the city (street materials, small architectural elements, facade material coding or cue/trigger elements) to provide good conditions for these technologies to appear. The city should provide the ground rules, while the market should tailor fit the solution, not the other way around.

ANNEX

Link to the Action Plan:

https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/digital_transition_action_plan_for_dgum_3008_18_final.pdf

Members of the Partnership:

Urban Areas: *Oulu (FI, Coordinator), Sofia (BG, Coordinator), Eindhoven (NL), Hamburg (DE), Helsingborg (SE), Lyon (FR), Rome (IT), Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia*

Member States: *Estonia (Coordinator), Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Romania*

Other participants: *Commission (DG REGIO, DG CNECT), Committee of the Regions, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), EUROCITIES, URBACT (observer), Government of Flanders (observer)*



9. PARTNERSHIP ON HOUSING

BACKGROUND

The most major recent development in the EU in the field of housing is the Pact of Amsterdam¹ adopted in May 2016, which launched the **Urban Agenda for the EU (UA)**. The UA is meant as a new working method between Member States, cities, the EU Commission and stakeholders.

Regarding the Housing Partnership, the Pact of Amsterdam says: *“the objectives are to have affordable housing of good quality. The focus will be on public affordable housing, state aid rules and general housing policy”*.

HOUSING ISSUES IN EU LAW

While the EU has *no direct competence* in housing, the housing sector is affected directly and indirectly by several EU policies, strategies and funding streams, among others:

Rules on State Aid and Services of general economic interest (SGEI),
VAT rules,
Rules on Energy Performance/ Energy Efficiency.

In a **report on Social housing in the EU**², the EU Parliament recalls that *“access to housing is a fundamental right that can be seen as a precondition to the exercise of, and to access to, other fundamental rights”*, as well as that *“guaranteeing access to decent and adequate housing is an international obligation incumbent on the Member States, to which the Union must have regard, given that the right of access to housing and to housing assistance is recognised in Article 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Articles 30 and 31 of the revised European Social Charter adopted by the Council of Europe and Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights, as well as in many Member States constitutions”*.

In an **opinion entitled Towards a European agenda for social housing**³, the Committee of the Regions stresses that, *“even if the EU has no specific competence in housing policy, it is necessary to explain the impact that European policy can have on housing, in view of the importance of housing in meeting the European Union’s major policy objectives as set out above (economic stability, efforts to combat climate change, and social inclusion)”*.

SUMMARY

- Actions and recommendations of the Housing Partnership

The Action Plan of the Housing Partnership⁴ was presented in December 2018. The main

¹ Pact of Amsterdam, 2016, <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/content/pact-amsterdam>

² Report of the European Parliament of 2013, <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/resources/docs/ep-report-on-social-housing-in-the-european-union.pdf>

³ Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 2012, <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/resources/docs/cor-opinion-on-towards-a-european-agenda-for-social-housing.pdf>

⁴ Full report available at: https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/final_action_plan_euua_housing_partnership_december_2018_1.pdf



Partnership's recommendations can be clustered as follows:

- 1) On **better regulation**, the it identified legal uncertainties in EU state aid rules as major obstacles to public investments in affordable housing and delivered a set of three actions in this area: An analytical guidance paper to showcase the problems and identify solutions, a capacity-building workshop on public support to housing, a recommendation to revise SGEI decision 2012 with the aim to delete the narrow target group for social housing in EU competition law.
- 2) On **better funding and financing conditions**, the partnership deemed that as housing situations vary a lot from city to city and country to country, it is very difficult to compare. However old EU MS can absorb more EU funds and EIB financing than new EU MS. The existence (or not) of frameworks, aggregators, structures for funding were identified as main reason. Capacity building is therefore identified as vital to overcome this, and the need to explore the constraints based on specific case studies was stated. The Partnership set out an action that can allow to de-block public investment in the frame of the European Semester. It is also recommended to develop an indicator on social and affordable housing in the Social Scoreboard that better considers the realities of socio-economic situation of EU citizens. The reference threshold of total housing costs should not be higher than 25% of the disposable income of a household, when calculating the housing overburden rate.
- 3) On **better knowledge and governance**, the partnership has elaborated several strands of actions, covering instruments for cities, recommendations to improve the EU urban housing market database and a recognition of the gender dimension in affordability and, on an institutionalized level, actions addressed to the EU Commission to create a "Monitoring system for affordable housing in the EU" as well as to Member States to reinstall the "Housing Focal Points" and Informal Meetings of Housing Ministers.
- 4) In the context of **good policy**, a "toolbox" on good housing policy on local, national and EU level in eight priority areas was developed. The 8 priority themes are: protection of vulnerable groups anti-speculation; renovation and energy efficiency; co-ownership, co-management and co-design; spatial planning; land use and building ground; rent stabilization and control; security of tenancy.
- 5) **Themes for future discussion**: conditions for long-term investment in partnership with cities; the possible benefit to public budgets by introducing social, environmental and economic impact assessment in affordable housing production and the role of a responsible construction sector.

▪ STATE OF THE HOUSING IN THE EU

Extract from the Housing Partnership Action Plan:

"The diversity of local, regional and national housing traditions and systems creates a unique fabric of housing provision all over the EU. Nevertheless, the Global Financial Crisis led to massive decline in investments in affordable and social housing in Europe to half of pre-crisis level. A steep and continuous increase in house prices and market rents characterizes most

Executive Summary available at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/background20paper20euua20housing20partnership2012-2018.pdf>



EU cities and urban areas; housing markets being fragmented to a great extent, with great distortions and obvious evidence of failure. A growing number of EU citizens, from low to middle class incomes, face overheated housing markets, affordability limits, housing cost overburden, low quality, overcrowded housing situations and are at risk of eviction.

Housing policies do vary substantially from one Member State to another, from one region to another, from one city to another, depending on the history and culture of public intervention in each Member State and on the prevailing economic and social conditions. State intervention, especially in the form of public investment in affordable housing, has declined substantially in the last decade, whereas demand is steadily growing in European cities.

Recent EU reports address the importance of investment in affordable housing as vital to sustainable economic recovery and social cohesion. The “High-Level Taskforce on Investing in Social Infrastructure” in Europe clearly depicts in its 2018 report that investments in social infrastructure have decreased by 20 percent since 2009 in the EU and estimates an overall investment gap at 150 billion EUR per year for the next ten years.

The EU has more than 220 million households, and an alarming number of 82 million Europeans are overburdened by housing costs. Cities, urban areas, regions, countries all over the EU are in urgent need of stable framework conditions to house their populations. They are in search of reliable and long-term political, legal and financial instruments to create or support national and local housing strategies. The main challenges are to provide new and renew existing housing, find building ground for affordable housing, develop neighborhoods in partnership with citizens and set up housing schemes where they are not implemented yet”.

Key points from *The State of Housing in the EU*⁵, a study carried out by Housing Europe in 2017:

The growth recovery means also recovery in house prices, which are growing faster than income in a majority of EU Member States. This is not true everywhere: while in some countries like the UK or Sweden prices are higher than pre-crisis level, in others like Greece, Portugal and Spain the downward trend has only marginally slowed down. Overall, housing is the single highest expenditure item for Europeans, at about a quarter of total EU households’ budget in 2015, increasing from 21.7 in 2000 and 22.5% in 2005.

Housing inequalities and income inequalities do reinforce each other. There is a direct link between the rising inequality at global scale and housing. Looking at housing costs in relative terms, the average EU overburden rate among people at risk of poverty has increased significantly compared to pre- crisis level, from 35.9 in 2005 to 39.3 in 2015. However, it has slightly decreased for those with higher incomes. The share of poor households paying too much for housing has doubled (or more) in Spain, Portugal and Ireland.

Housing has become the highest expenditure for Europeans and overburden rate remains stable at high level, hitting disproportionately harder the poor. This is reflected in increasing levels of homelessness.

As the level of housing construction is still low, especially major cities face a structural housing shortage reinforced by recent waves of migration. Construction is recovering much slower than prices and consequently housing shortages are emerging more clearly, especially in large cities/metropolitan areas with a growing population. This has been reported notably in the UK, Sweden, Ireland, Luxemburg, but also at local level in Netherlands and Germany. Shortage

⁵ <http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1000/the-state-of-housing-in-the-eu-2017>



contributes to increasing prices and rents.

In most cases policy responses at Member States level have been to decrease public expenditure for housing and relying on measures to increase the supply in the private sector or access to homeownership.

As cities are at the forefront of the housing crisis, they are showing a more prominent role in finding solutions. In this context, increasingly we find local authorities/cities coming up with solutions rather than national policies, ranging from making land available at reduces cost for social/affordable housing, demanding private developers to contribute to the development of affordable housing and social infrastructures, bringing vacant premises back into use, promoting initiatives to increase social inclusion, education and employment opportunities in poor neighbourhoods and enhancing mixed uses.

The study includes country profile for the 28 EU Member States.

ANNEX

Link to the Action Plan: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/housing/housing-partnership-final-action-plan-0>

Housing statistics on Eurostat website, focusing on dwelling types, tenure status (owning or renting a property), housing quality and affordability: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Housing_statistics

Members of the Partnership:

Urban Areas: Vienna (AT / Coordinator), Lisbon (PT), Poznan (PL), Riga (LV), Scottish Cities Alliance (UK)

Member States: Slovakia (Coordinator), Latvia, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Slovenia

Other participants: Commission (DG REGIO, DG ENER, DG EMPL), AEDES, EUROCITIES, European Investment Bank (EIB), Housing Europe, International Union of Tenants (IUT), URBACT, Union Habitat