

# Sustained and sustainable growth strategies around major urban centres

*State of play and regional visions for the future*

Wednesday 12 October 2016

## KEY MESSAGES

### CONTEXT

The workshop set out to address challenges facing those regions surrounding major urban centres which very often serve as key drivers in the EU economy. The debate drew attention to the ways in which such peri-urban areas can stimulate economic growth, and highlighted the particular role that Cohesion Policy can play.

The organising regions, supported by the PURPLE network, the voice of peri-urban territories in Europe, share a common interest in growth and development in areas around, at the edges of urban centres and metropolitan areas, where links between urban and rural territories are at their most concrete; and where the two overlap and coincide.

The regions involved, together with PURPLE itself, are very grateful to our guest speakers and presenters without whom this event would not have been possible.

This paper brings together a number of key messages arising from the above workshop. A range of contributors were asked to share their thoughts on the nature of growth strategies around large urban centres in different parts of Europe.

PURPLE President Helyn Clack gave an introductory address setting out the pivotal role played by peri-urban regions in making growth feasible and sustainable – a point echoed by all speakers.



Regional Authority  
FrankfurtRheinMain



South Moravian Region



EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

- The focus cannot be just about growth, it must be about sustained and sustainable growth, which can only be developed in a strategic way with longer term impact
- Growth strategies around major urban centres including those which are supported by EU instruments - and indeed those made within the framework of cohesion policy or rural policy - will only succeed if they maintain a focus on the territorial dimension and, if they take account of the peri-urban
- Growth without a strategy is not good- neither for urban, nor peri-urban areas and planning coordination at regional level must prevent urban sprawl and ensure the multifunctionality of peri-urban areas
- It is only by understanding place that growth will be made to work. Only place-aware growth strategies will work. And, of course it follows that growth will take different forms in different places - that too needs to be realised and taken into account
- Recognition and understanding of the territorial dimension is a key pre-condition of achieving sustainable growth. in the context of today's event that means understanding the unique characteristics of areas surrounding major urban centres
- What all peri urban areas around major urban cities share is an absolutely key role in economic growth and ongoing prosperity. They share characteristics as places of a particular type
- Without exception we will find a whole complex web of relationships and inter dependencies between these (peri-urban) areas and the urban centres themselves
- Peri-urban areas across Europe face similar challenges, but the one-size-fits-all principle cannot be applied, because of the specificity of local communities and the variable synergies existing with the regional and national levels
- It is hard to speak about peri-urban if we cannot give a clear definition of "urban spaces" (the definition can be based on numbers of people but also on the functions - health, education, etc. - they deliver) but it is clear that there are interrelations between urban and rural areas and that EU tools like LEADER or CLLD could help in strengthening the link among them.
- Concrete mechanisms must be devised at the EU level to help/allow local and regional territories face peri-urban challenges
- The use of EU tools (e.g. ITI) can help strengthening the cooperation (based on the bottom-up principle) between the main urban centres and the surrounding peri-urban area around strategic areas (transport, tourism and spatial planning/urban sprawl).
- Other concrete mechanisms must be devised at the EU level to help/allow local and regional territories face peri-urban challenges

## A Parliamentary perspective

**Ivan JAKOVČIĆ**, members of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development (REGI), ALDE coordinator

For Mr Jakovic it is imperative that we realise there is no single formula. Regions vary one from the other and must therefore use different means to reach our own goals – Zagreb, London and Prague are similar in some ways but very different in others. That doesn't mean to say that we don't share certain features and challenges and areas of interest – and to Mr Jakovic's ears Istria sounds in many ways peri-urban – but it does mean one has to be selective about from whom one might learn for example. It is also extremely complex and multi-faceted – all governance levels have a role to play and the local level is as critical and valid as any other – indeed the regions lie, or should lie at the very heart, of our thinking.. Nor is this purely about public administrations, both public and private sectors have role to play in sustainable growth and they must work together and find new ways to do so.

## An EESC perspective

**Roman HAKEN**, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee, Rapporteur on The future of the EU Urban Agenda

There are notes of caution to be sounded here Mr Haken reminded his audience – we can easily talk about “urban space” but are we clear what we mean by it? – do we indeed have the same shared meaning, or is more a matter of accepting that a definition that works for everyone in every setting is impossible? Peri-urban areas are all too often seen as problematic by nature – they are the areas where disputes between competing interest manifest. They are in some ways predicated upon assumptions such as that the enlargement of cities is a negative thing – but is this inherently true? Rural-urban linkages must be supported; we must accept there are special and exceptional cases and we must use the tools at our disposal such as LEADER and CLLD to help us achieve this.

## An EU Presidency perspective

**Katarina NEVEĐALOVÁ**, Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU (Cohesion policy unit)

We might usefully formulate our thinking around three topics all of which have already arisen during the course of our deliberations What role can the further implementation of the Urban Agenda play here? There is potential for real impact and beneficial effect here and the Slovak presidency is keen to see more happen. As September's conference in Bratislava showed, opinions on Cohesion Policy do indeed differ from one Member State to another as other speakers have highlighted but with formal discussions now underway is a key tool nevertheless. A failure to bring about genuine simplification can only impede and hamper and there is a case for formulae and flat –rates – that debate needs to be developed in parallel with everything else.

## The South Moravian example

Tomáš GRULICH, Department of Strategic Development, Regional Authority of the South Moravian Region

Four methodologies that work/help were highlighted:

- \* **Cooperation in the framework of integrated territorial investment – Brno Metropolitan Area**
- \* **Community led local development (CLLD) - local action groups**
- \* **Local action plans for education**
- \* **A voluntary association of municipalities**

## The Mazovian example

Piotr BRZESKI, Director, Mazovian Office of Regional Planning

Where there is a key role for coordinated planning takes account of land use and functioning areas:



Mazovian Office of Regional Planning



### Programming Metropolitan Area Development

- Studies serving to identify the functional borders of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area (WMA), its strengths and weaknesses, and other aspects important from the point of view of the **WMA Strategy 2030**.
- Project carried out in 2013-2015 in cooperation between Warsaw, Mazovia and five municipalities around Warsaw.



