

PURPLE 2018 Report

A short message from the President

Dear All,

In many ways 2018 was all about looking forward to change, as the EC announced it plans for a future budget and policy and programmes for 2021-27; it was a year that was in many ways dominated by conjecture and preliminary planning. PURPLE succeeded in positioning itself within that series of ongoing debates and it gave me particular pleasure to have PURPLE fly the peri-urban flag at an event that we organised in the European Parliament in late September.

It was also a year when I was honoured once again to be the President of our network. As ever, I am indebted to my political colleagues and their officials for their hard work and support and I particularly want to thank colleagues in South Moravia and Flanders for all their efforts in organising our 28th and 29th General Assemblies in Brno and Voeren respectively.

I look forward to the year ahead and to being part of an evolving network which remains true to its roots and key purpose of giving a voice to the peri-urban across Europe.



Helyn Clack

Key Achievements

- Setting out our views on future EU Cohesion Policy
- Thematic Working Groups launched
- The ROBUST project
- PURPLE and CAP reform
- PURPLE at the European Parliament
- PURPLE Topic Papers
- European Rural matters
- Engaging with the Urban Agenda
- Re-launching the Peri-Urban Charter
- PURPLE Lobby Group revisited
- Peri-urban climate change
- Governance and meetings

Setting out our views on future EU Cohesion Policy

May 2018 saw a set of proposals from the European Commission as regards the legal framework and underpinning rationale for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), future elements of Cohesion Policy and the programmes which are designed to deliver against those policy aims.

Like many other representative organisations, PURPLE sought to play an active role in responding to those initial proposals and being actively involved in the (re)shaping of emerging policy and programmes.

To this end, PURPLE produced six position papers relating to different areas of the post 2020 legislative proposals. The six papers relate to:

- The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)
- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (see also item below on CAP reform)
- The proposed Common Provisions Regulation (CPR)
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF)
- European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) [Interreg]
- European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

The intention is that each paper be reviewed and updated as necessary as discussions on each of the six interrelated issues continue over the coming months.

Thematic Working Groups launched

From late 2017 onward, PURPLE Working Group members started to look at how the work that it undertook might be carried out differently so as to encourage more participation of a greater number of member regions and a greater number of actors within those regions. This was in turn spurred by the member review exercise undertaken the previous year where concerns were expressed as to how the group might work more

effectively. These discussions continued into 2018 and one key resolution was to explore how best to develop meetings around particular themes of interest to peri-urban actors – the hope being that a tighter focus on a given topic might enable colleagues to cooperate more closely to an agreed end – for example the production of a paper, event, funding application or targeted lobbying work to be carried out by Lobby Group colleagues.

The first two such half-day events took place in late 2018:

- Peri-urban regional planning – led by Frankfurt
- Peri-urban agriculture – led by Flanders

The group continued its planning for at least three more such meetings in 2019.

The ROBUST project

The Horizon 2020 ROBUST project - the first EU level project in which PURPLE is a full partner - began in mid 2017 and is scheduled to last four years. The project looks at rural-urban linkages with an overall goal “to advance the understanding of the interactions and dependencies between rural, peri-urban and urban areas and to identify and promote policies, governance models and practices that foster mutually beneficial relations”. PURPLE’s role in the project is to take the lead on work about policy recommendations whilst also having some input to all seven other Work Packages. Two full project meetings took place in 2018, in March in Lisbon and in Ljubljana in October with PURPLE participating fully in the meetings themselves as well as the project Steering Group meetings.

PURPLE was also involved in a project event hosted in Brussels by DG Agri looking at some of the key general precepts around which the projects practical work and resulting policy recommendations might be orientated.

PURPLE and CAP Reform

As reported previously, Mrs Helyn Clack had already been involved in dialogue with Commissioner Hogan as regards any future/further CAP reform, emphasising that balanced territorial development across Europe should be the starting point for any consideration of rural policy alongside (as opposed to within) the CAP.

2018 saw PURPLE engaging with the content of the November 2017 EC Communication “The Future of Food and Farming”. This work resulted in a position statement released to coincide with five other papers as per the article above. Whilst welcoming the Communication’s position and subsequent Proposals in calling for CAP simplification, modernisation, greater accountability with regard to the achievement of those objectives ,and in looking to make a more explicit contribution to the EU’s broader commitments in terms of climate change and SDGs, PURPLE expressed reservations as regards the lack of reference to rural development more generally and the absence of overt recognition that the rural and urban do not exist in isolation one from the other.

PURPLE at the European Parliament

The six papers referred to above regarding key elements of future EU budget, cohesion policy and CAP reform were officially launched at an event in the European parliament held in late September 2018. This was the first time in a number of years that PURPLE has itself initiated an event in one of the EU institutions on a peri-urban theme. PURPLE was proud and pleased to have the sponsorship of Franc Bogovič for this event – Mr Bogovič was already known to many of us through his work with the RUMRA intergroup and his participation in the PURPLE CoR Open Days event in 2015.

We were also privileged to have the support of Mr Michael Schneider who acted as CoR co-rapporteur on that body’s opinion on the future of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), as well as leading on the 2016 “The Future of Cohesion Policy beyond 2020” paper which makes explicit reference to the peri-urban.

The event attracted an audience of over forty who were invited to listen to and debate key interventions on the importance of peri-urban territories in future policy and programme planning.

PURPLE Topic Papers

2018 saw the publication of the sixth in its ongoing series of Topic Papers. Each paper is designed to address a subject with a particular peri-urban dimension, with the sixth in the series drawing upon work that had been undertaken over the previous eighteen months.

In the case of Green infrastructure (GI), the new paper highlights the unique nature and potential contribution of peri-urban Green Infrastructure. Much of what we normally think of as GI is located in peri-urban areas but this key fact is often overlooked and its full significance not acknowledged or understood.

The Topic Paper captures the nature and value of peri-urban GI, sets out a rationale for the development of a peri-urban GI "agenda" and sets down a series of challenges to policy-makers with the aim of stimulating further debate and better policy and practice.

European rural matters

PURPLE continued to participate in both the European Rural Networks (ERN) Steering Group and its Assembly. As previously reported, and explained in detail at the 28th General assembly in Brno in June, The ERN brings together the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) and the European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) network. The ERN's Assembly was launched in 2015 as the main governance body of the ENRD and EIP-AGRI network and as a forum for debating the strategic framework for their activities, covering all aspects of the Rural Development Policy 2014-2020. PURPLE's membership of both the ERN's Assembly and Steering Group, continues to add value to our work from both PURPLE's and the ROBUST project's perspectives as a number of key players in evolving policy debates as well as implementation strategies and review – both from other networks and organisations and from the European Commission – take part in the ERN.

Engaging with the Urban Agenda

The twelfth and final partnership established as part of the EU Urban Agenda relates to Sustainable Land Use and Nature Based Solutions (SLU_NBS). These are subjects of obvious relevance and interest to peri-urban actors. A consultation exercise on the draft plan for this UA partnership took place in the summer of 2018. The plan itself consists of ten elements ("draft actions") – five concerning sustainable land use and five which relate to nature based solution with proposed draft actions designed to reflect the four priority themes upon which the partnership has decided to focus: **Land take; Brownfields and under-used land; Functional Urban Areas, and, Nature-based solutions.**

The draft actions contain reference to a number of issues of direct importance and interest to PURPLE and we submitted multiple responses – one to each of the ten draft actions areas – highlighting particular areas where we felt it was important to challenge underlying assumptions, or to repeat our key messages that areas around urban centres must not – and are not – purely there to service urban cores.

Re-launching the Peri-Urban Charter

We have previously reported on work undertaken in the last quarter of 2017 by our colleagues in South Moravia discussing the PURPLE network and its remit with local and regional organisations in the Czech Republic. As a result, five organisations had signed up to PURPLE's Peri-Urban Charter the aim of which is to widen recognition of peri-urban issues and challenges in Europe.

The Executive Board meeting of December 2018 returned to the subject of the Charter and in light of South Moravia's success undertook to attempt a broader "re-launch" of the Charter initiative with PURPLE Vice-President Mr Wojciech Jankowiak offering to lead on this work with progress to be reviewed and future steps agreed.

As a reminder: the Peri-Urban Charter was launched a few years ago and is for organisations that - like members of PURPLE – have an interest in peri-urban policy issues, research and practical initiatives but - unlike members of PURPLE - are not regions or local authorities and therefore cannot be members of the network. By signing up to the Charter - and thereby making a public acknowledgment of their support for PURPLE's vision and supporting PURPLE's work – it is hoped that such organisations can help give PURPLE's voice more power.

PURPLE Lobby Group revisited

Proposed changes to the way in which the PURPLE Working Group operates has been referred to above. With that work underway in the autumn of 2018, attention turned to the way in which the Lobby Group might look again at the way in which it operates and explore whether it too might develop a new way of working aimed at the greater inclusion of a greater number of regions in a more participative way.

This work is ongoing and is being led by Andre Rydykowski of the FrankfurtRheinMain Brussels office together with the PURPLE Treasurer and Secretary General – this sub group is due to feedback its interim findings to the PURPLE President in the first quarter of 2019.

Peri-urban Climate Change

Climate change is a subject that has been on the PURPLE agenda for a number of years. It was the focus of a seminar held in Brno on June 27 2018 as part of the 28th PURPLE General Assembly with the title "Combating

Peri-urban Climate Change (mitigating the effects of climate change in peri-urban areas)”.The event's Czech hosts offered a series of four complementary presentations designed to give both an overview and accompanying detail of the local situation and the sorts of actual and planned interventions which the region and others have developed and are in the process of implementing.

In response to the presentations from the local actors, PURPLE member regions responded with a further set of four presentations. All the presentations from the event are now all available on the events page of the members section of the website.

Governance and meetings

The Executive Board, as elected in June 2017 with Helyn Clack from Surrey as its president, met in December 2018. July 2018 saw the last of a series of bilateral meetings between the President and her board colleagues, following the election of Herr Rouven Kötter to the Executive Board during our 29th General Assembly at Voeren in October 2018, the chance arose to convene a full Board meeting in December to again consider how each can best give leadership to take PURPLE forward in their renewed mandate.

Board meetings remained opportunities for PURPLE politicians in particular to meet with each other, share views and experiences, question and challenge officers and provide both guidance and scrutiny to the network. Members serve in positions of trust representing and protecting the interests of the wider membership.

In the case of the December 2018 meeting, members also took the chance to give their endorsement to the draft Annual Activity Plan 2019 which is to be formally ratified at the 30th General Assembly. Two General Assembly meetings took place during the year. The first in Brno (CZ) included a seminar on Peri-Urban Climate Change (as above). The second took place in Voeren, Flanders alongside the Tripartite Symposium at the kind invitation of the Flemish Land Agency (VLM, BE) and delegates had the opportunity to attend the field trip and symposium as well as the General Assembly itself.

There were five “standard Working Group meetings held over the course of the year as well as three new-style “thematic Working Group sessions as follows:

- Peri-urban regional planning - led by Frankfurt - meeting September 2018 – next steps, to be determined
- Peri-urban agriculture - led by Flanders – meeting October 2018 – next steps, circulation of papers and establishment of standing group
- Peri-urban transport - led by South Moravia – meeting March 2019, next steps, circulation of papers and outline of draft Topic Paper

The table provides a brief overview of formal PURPLE meetings of different types held over 2018*.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
General Assembly						28				24		
Executive Board							Bilateral meetings					4
Working Group			6		16				5 + 6	25		13
Lobby Group			6							25		

A short explanation as to the intended purpose of each type of grouping within PURPLE is provided here for reference.

General Assembly: consists of political representatives from all member regions. The General Assembly manages the network and meets twice a year, normally this happens once in Brussels and once in one of the member regions. These meetings usually coincide with a PURPLE conference or event on peri-urban issues.

Executive Board: currently consists of six political representatives from the member regions plus an ex officio Treasurer. The Executive Board is elected by the General Assembly to administer PURPLE. It is principally responsible for the overall political steering of the network; setting the political agenda and defining the overall vision of PURPLE.

Working Group: consists of officers and experts from member regions who meet regularly in Brussels to plan actions and events and to share experience.

Lobby Group: consists primarily of Brussels-based officers in the representations of member regions. The Lobby Group coordinates PURPLE's Brussels contacts and actions and monitors EU policy development.