



# purple

peri-urban regions platform Europe

## Declaration on the EU urban agenda

### PURPLE Declaration

**On the occasion** of the signing, on 30th May 2016, of the "Pact of Amsterdam" which officially launches the EU Urban Agenda and in recognition of the fact that the needs of urban areas of all kinds must be better taken into account when designing and implementing EU policies since all such areas contribute to the EU's major policy objectives;

**Having regard to** the numerous official statements listed in the annex to this paper (including extracts from European Council declarations, European Commission documents, European Parliament resolutions, Committee of the Regions reports and European Economic and Social Committee opinions) as well as to:

- The set of "KEY MESSAGES"<sup>1</sup> arising from the 2015 Open Days seminar "*Urban Agenda & ESIF 2014 - 2020: Involving peri-urban territories in order to boost urban-rural links*" held in Brussels on the 14th October stating that any urban agenda should include a consideration of urban impacts on surrounding territories and vice versa.
- The PURPLE response<sup>2</sup> to the 2014 public consultation on "*The urban dimension of EU policies – key features of an EU Urban Agenda*" arguing for recognition that peri-urban regions are a growing and dynamic feature of EU territorial development and must be taken into account in any future urban policy.

### PURPLE is convinced:

- that Europe's territory is characterised by a complex web of inter-relations and inter-dependencies with urbanisation blurring the divides between urban and rural areas and creating ever-larger peri-urban areas where urban and rural co-exist, with their own range of specific characteristics, problems and opportunities;
- and that some of the main challenges faced by urban areas (economic and social development, climate change, transport and demographic change), can only be tackled through working in partnership with their surrounding peri-urban areas;



<sup>1</sup> <http://goo.gl/TVENbL>



<sup>2</sup> <http://goo.gl/6gM2zZ>

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**The members of the PURPLE network**, the voice of peri-urban territories in Europe welcome the assertion in the Pact of Amsterdam text that “*Urban Authorities [...] need to cooperate within their functional areas and with their surrounding regions*” and are pleased to read that the EU urban agenda acknowledges “*the polycentric structure of Europe and the diversity (social, economic, cultural and historic) of urban areas across the EU.*” and that “*a growing number of urban challenges are of a local nature, but require a wider territorial solution (including urban-rural linkages), cooperation with functional urban areas*”.

At the same time PURPLE members want to seize this opportunity to **reiterate their strong belief that:**

- stakeholders implementing the Pact of Amsterdam should look at, and take due account of, the interactions between urban and rural areas since the EU Urban Agenda must not only be relevant for the city centres but also for the larger urban areas extending beyond traditional administrative borders, thereby taking into explicit account the challenges faced by peri-urban territories;
- the Pact of Amsterdam can only be successful if cities recognise the inter-dependencies they have with their peri-urban hinterland acknowledging and understanding that the role of peri-urban areas for the development of cities is as important as the role of cities for the development of their surrounding regions;
- each and every thematic partnership launched by the Pact of Amsterdam should include a consideration of urban impacts on surrounding territories and vice versa;

and more generally, on the eve of the crucial debate about the EU budget and policies post-2020, **calls for EU decisions makers:**

- to put more focus on “smart territories” rather than working with the old-fashioned urban-rural typology with an unbalanced focus on EU Cities;
- to keep in mind that EU investments and strategies must maintain a strong territorial and place-based focus with more specific attention being paid to peri-urban areas in order to better support growth, jobs and innovation both within and beyond urban centres. The EU Urban Agenda should indeed not only be a working method to tackle urgent urban problems, but also a tool to strengthen urban areas, including peri-urban territories, as frontrunners of the European economic development;
- not to forget that a large proportion of the EU population lives in peri-urban regions and will feel part of the European dynamics only if the EU acknowledges the peri-urban reality.