



25th November 2008

Final Appendix to the final statement  
by the ministers in charge of urban development  
for implementing the Leipzig Charter

The Leipzig Charter on the European Sustainable City, adopted on 24 May 2007, made the following recommendations:

- 1 – Greater benefit can be derived from an integrated approach to urban development policy by:
  - exploring in each Member State the possibility of formulating an integrated urban development programme
  - creating and conserving high quality public spaces;
  - modernising infrastructure networks and increasing energy efficiency;
  - focusing on a policy of active innovation in education and training.
- 2 – Special emphasis to be given to deprived urban neighbourhoods in the context of all the cities involved by:
  - sustaining the strategies for upgrading the physical urban environment; notably in terms of high architectural quality and urban design
  - strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy;
  - developing an active policy for education and training in favour of children and young people;
  - encouraging the setting up of an efficient affordable sustainable urban transport system for all.

The Leipzig Charter and the Territorial Agenda are based on the Member-States' conviction of the need to promote the EU territorial cohesion whilst going on towards the Lisbon and Göteborg strategies goals. The synergy between these approaches is explained in the Green Book of the European Commission on Territorial Cohesion (6<sup>th</sup> October 2008), which recognised the essential role of cities in Territorial Cohesion which recognised the essential role of cities in Territorial Cohesion. The intention is to raise the profile of existing and future community policies and to ensure they are fully aligned Reports by the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee, as well as the resolution of the European Parliament on the follow-up of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter entitled "Towards a European action programme for spatial development and Territorial Cohesion", all meet this approach.

Against this background, it has become necessary for all participants to come together and construct tools for the operational application of the Leipzig Charter and to make these tools available to the relevant stakeholders, to the cities, to other public authorities, to the scientific and technical community, to the private sector, and to non-governmental organisations representing the inhabitants and users.

### **-1-- General principles for implementing the sustainable city**

The sustainable city concept goes back to the Aalborg Charter adopted in May 1994 by the participants at the conference on sustainable cities, which began preparing the local agendas 21 in Europe. These actions enabled many cities and local authorities to equip themselves with reference frameworks for sustainable development to strengthen their policies and ensure that the concept of sustainability was embodied in their plans and projects. Some of these approaches have been singled out, analysed and disseminated through European programmes for exchanging and promoting good practice. These experiences have shown that attempts to standardise these

initiatives in one form or another face significant practical barriers to implementation. The idea of a standardised prescriptive European reference framework for sustainable cities is therefore inappropriate.

1.2 The integrated approach to sustainable urban development is based on harmonisation and synergisation of all public policies that affect the city, from the European level to the municipal level. This will require the development of new ways of organising territorial governance and partnerships between the different levels of administration and other relevant stakeholders. This is a matter that demands the full attention of the European Union and Member States. The substantial differences in skills distribution between national, regional and local levels, from one Member State to another, supports the need for very open mechanisms for partnership and cooperation.

1.3 Sustainable development is based on the interaction of three pillars: environmental, economic and social; and how they are integrated and tackled through multi-level governance structures. The European strategy for sustainable development calls for public policies to go beyond traditional sector-based approaches to meet the new challenges confronting the Union by promoting joined-up action on the three pillars. The 4<sup>th</sup> Report on Economic and Social Cohesion by the European Commission also proposes to take into account these new stakes.

## **2. – Towards an overarching, flexible open reference framework**

2.1 The operational application of the Leipzig Charter implies that all the stakeholders may use a transversal tool that goes beyond traditional sectoral and institutional based approaches. Such a tool should allow all stakeholders, regardless of their culture of origin, the interests they represent or the instruments they use, to interact on the basis of objectives, criteria, methods and measurement instruments defined together. Local stakeholders can complement it and shape it to meet specific local circumstances.

2.2 The task is therefore to devise an open methodological reference framework. This framework could take the form of a questioning and analytical tool that could serve as a medium for debate and a joint search for converging pathways to progress. The differing or conflicting approaches to sustainable, integrated urban development should not be an obstacle to developing more shared solutions.

2.3. The elements that make up the tool should be sufficiently wide-ranging to have the potential to be applied in a variety of urban settings, They might be made more specific and, under the principle of subsidiarity, might even be quantified by stakeholders in the course of local debate on the specific characteristics of their urban spaces..

2.4 This is a tool for local debate and dialogue between different levels of governance. It should not be a tool for third parties to evaluate urban policies. On the other hand, this tool should facilitate access to knowledge of good practice and existing methods for developing locally produced indicators and could support measures to follow-up the implementation of integrated, sustainable and cohesive urban development approaches or the absence of this.

## **3- General architecture of the reference framework:**

The approach is based on participation by all stakeholders of the city: local authorities, businesses, professional associations, the scientific community, non-governmental organisations, inhabitants and users. These stakeholders should be able to set up centres under the responsibility of the local

authority concerned. The purpose of these colleges would be to:

- select the questions to be included;
- make a joint assessment of the situation in regard to the objectives of sustainable development;
- identify areas for improvement and open up avenues for further investigation;
- select indicators, where appropriate.

The centres could be greatly assisted by the following tools:

### 3-1: A thesaurus of questions

This thesaurus would be made up of a number of questions related to the themes taken up by the Leipzig Charter and form a core narrative that could be gradually expanded. It would be open so that problems could be considered from the viewpoint of specific local characteristics. These questions should be classified by themes and structured by order of importance.

### 3-2: A thesaurus of good practice:

The tool would be designed to link these questions to examples of good practice identified, more specifically under European programmes. These questions should be presented in a structured form and should use a common language. The information available would emphasise how these practices could be reproduced.

### 3-3: A thesaurus of indicators:

Some of these examples of good practice give rise to precise quantitative or qualitative indicators. The tool would give access to methods for calculating these indicators while stressing the precautions to be taken in their use. It would also allow to devise the necessary methodologies for the definition and assessment of quality indicators when it proves more difficult to measure these from a purely statistical point of view

Furthermore evaluation tools should be available to describe the impact of the policies and measures taken

In order to implement such a process there could be a need for some technical assistance, in the frame of the implementation of the reference framework mainly for the preparation, monitoring and reporting of the debates; and also for the presentation of the final outputs. This is the reason why it seems useful to organise professional training for these tasks: those professional partners could also play an important role for the capitalisation and dissemination of the results, and processes, and for their on-going improvement.

## **4- Methods and agenda for producing the reference framework**

To define the architecture and specifications of this reference framework, the French presidency has relied on the support of a pilot group made up of representatives from the Member States, the European Commission, local authority networks and experts on the city.

The French presidency proposes that the production of this reference framework involves two groups:

4.1 A high level group, led by France, made up of representatives of Member States, European institutions, representatives from local authority networks and professional associations and of the civil society. The Urban Development Group (UDG) would undertake the role of monitoring committee for this group, which would report to the directors general and ministers of urban development.

4.2 A cities work group set up as part of the URBACT II programme and led by one of the cities.

The two groups would work in close coordination, the role of the high level group would be to build the reference framework, based mainly on the experiments, reactions and proposals of the “cities” group. This would include an analysis of how the urban dimension of the operational programmes and national urban policies has been implemented. The role of the “cities” group would be to examine and test existing reference frameworks and proposals by the high level group on specific examples of “test cities”, and to provide a corpus of “good practice”.

The results of the work of these groups should be presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2010 at the latest.