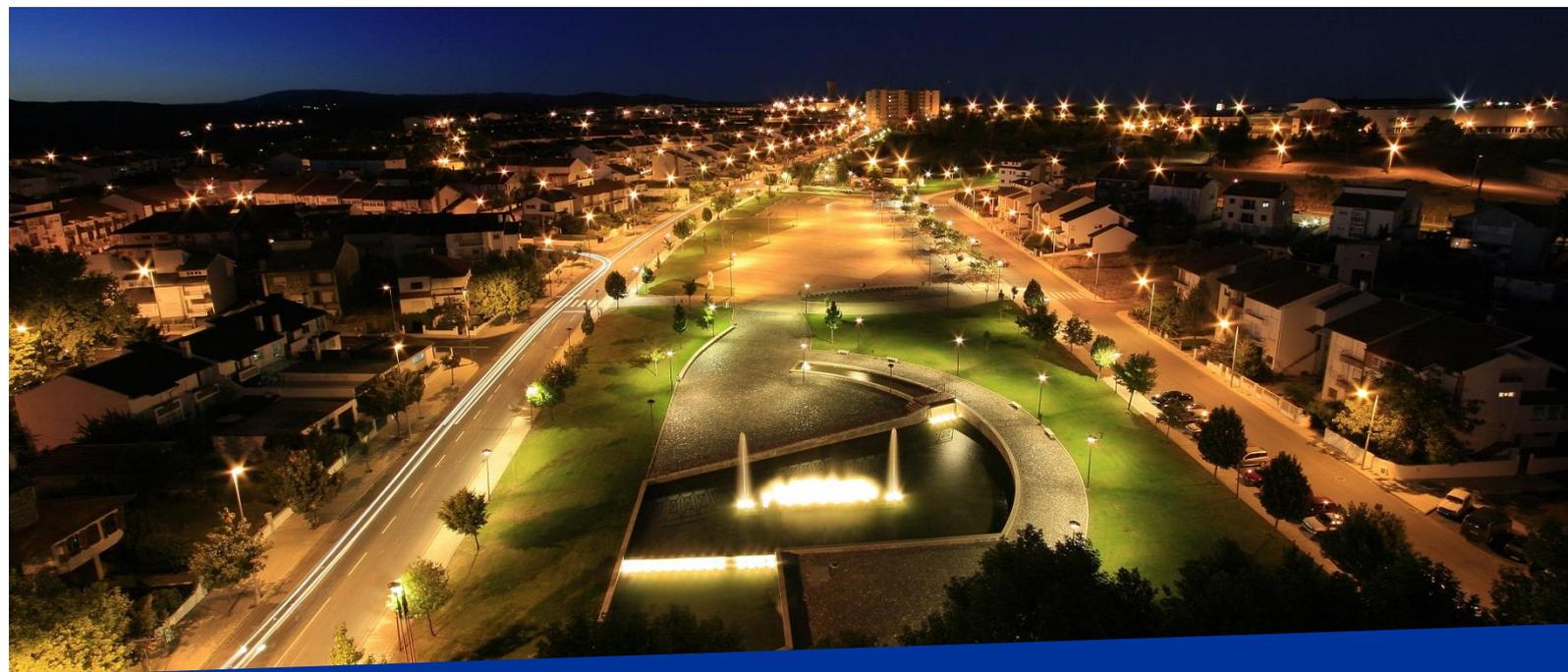




EURE
Interreg Europe



FOR A BETTER AND SUSTAINABLE QUALITY OF LIFE IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Catalogue of policies, actions, good practices and recommendations

EURE Joint Report Executive Summary

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1. Overview of the report

The EURE Joint Report “For a better and sustainable quality of life in European cities”¹ contains the following sections:

CHAPTERS	CONTENTS
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The reasons why EU is, and should continue intervening in Urban areas - How urban areas actors perceive EU intervention
2. State of Art in Europe	Thematic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sustainable Land Use and Urban Renewal ✓ Water supply and Management ✓ Waste management and Circular Economy ✓ Energy Transition ✓ Sustainable Urban Mobility ✓ Air and Noise Quality ✓ Climate Adaptation ✓ Green Growth and Eco-Innovation ✓ Social Inclusion ✓ Governance for sustainable urban development and Civil Society Participation
3. Role and Support of EU programmes on the European Urban Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU urban policy funding so far. - Perspectives for the future EU programmes 2021-27
4. Findings and Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SWOT Analysis - Recommendations to the EU Commission for 2021-27 programming period

¹ Report on How the funds allocated by article 7 of the ERDF Regulation for the development of urban policies are being used and how they can be improved.

2. Why EU is, and should continue intervening in urban areas?

- **The EU Urban population is growing fast**

Europe is a highly urbanised continent, more than 80 % of the population is expected to live in European urban areas by 2050. Although urban areas only account for around 4 % of Europe's surface, the sheer number of people causes enormous impacts on resources and biodiversity far beyond city borders.

In fact, the evolution of the EU urban and rural population in the last decades is clear (Eurostat), the tendency is a growing concentration of the population in urban areas, reducing drastically the population of rural areas, but characterized as well by a space occupation of a larger rural territory (urban sprawl) in particular in metropolitan areas.

In 100 years 30 % of EU population move from rural to urban areas (Eurostat)

	1950	1970	1980	1990	2000	2015	2020	2030	2050
Urban	51.5	63	67.4	70	70.9	73.6	74.7	77	82
Rural	48.5	37	32.6	30	29.1	26.4	25.3	23	18

These urban areas are seen as both the source of and solution to today's economic, environmental and social challenges. Europe's urban areas are home to over two-thirds of the EU's population, they account for about 80 % of energy use and generate up to 85 % of Europe's GDP. These urban areas are the engines of the European economy and act as catalysts for creativity and innovation throughout the Union. But they are also places where persistent problems, such as unemployment, segregation and poverty, are at their most severe. Urban policies therefore have wider cross-border significance, which is why urban development is central to the EU's Regional Policy.

EU cities represent:

82 %	Of EU population expected to live in EU urban areas around 2050
4 %	Of EU territory surface occupied
80 %	EU energy use
85 %	Of EU GDP

- **The scope of urban areas in Europe and elsewhere**

The UN's definition of urban areas and cities is very simple, it classifies 4 categories: Urban agglomeration, Metropolitan area, City proper and Cities (varying from small cities with less than 500.000 inh. To metacities with more 20 million inh).

The current definition of "city", developed in 2011 by the European Commission and OECD and applicable to EU and OECD countries, is based on population size and density. Eurostat specifies several categories: Urban grid, urban centre (with minimum 50.000

inh), City, Commuting zone, Functional Urban Area, Greater City, and Urban-Rural typology.

To these concepts European ESPON program², to analyse the potential for polycentric development in Europe (27+2 countries), identified 1.595 so called Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) with a minimum of 20 000 inhabitants were identified consisting of a core area and surrounding areas that are economically integrated with the centre.

What seems clear³ is that **the term 'urban area'** is often used but **not clearly defined**, and that:

- Approximately half of the cities in the EU had a relatively small urban centre of between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants⁴;
- In EU 28 there were 960 Cities, 715 Functional Urban Areas identified and 40 Greater Cities;
- The average density of Cities (inh. Per SqKm) is 3.000 in Europe, against 1.600 in North America and 4-8.000 in Asia, Africa and Latin America⁵;
- Cities with more than 5 million inh. We have 4 in EU against 79 Worldwide;
- In EU we have 271 Metro Regions⁶, 500 cities with more than 1 million inh., and 13.000 cities with less than 1 million inh.;
- There is no definition of Small and Medium sized cities in EU.

• The panorama of the EURE partners' cities

Eure partners' Cities spectrum represents a total population of **10,200,000** inhabitants, in 9 Countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Romania, Poland, Czech Republic, Cyprus, France and Latvia). They are involved **466** Cities. From these cities, 10 have more than 200,000 inhabitants, 35 have more than 50,000 inhabitants, 21 between 20 and 50,000 inhabitants, and 410 are small cities with less than 20,000 inhabitants.

Eure project includes big Cities like the Metropolitan Areas of Riga, Rennes, Brest, Lublin, Nicosia, Pielsen, Vigo, Coruna, Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia.

• What are the challenges of today's and tomorrow Urban Areas?

Today EU 'urban areas', whatever their population size or status, face considerable problems for which solutions have to be found. Problems are Demographic (increase, decrease or ageing population), Poverty increase, Economic (activities to be re-invented and jobs to be maintained and or created), Environmental (climate change prevention,

² ESPON project 1.4.3 Study on Urban Functions Final Report March 2007 + Reference 3.

https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/fr-1.4.3_April2007-final.pdf

³ Jürgen Breckenkamp, Lesley Patterson, Martina Scharlach, Wolfgang Hellmeier, Arpana Verma European Journal of Public Health, Volume 27, Issue suppl_2, 1 May 2017, Pages 19–

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/9507230/KS-GQ-18-008-EN-N.pdf/a275fd66-b56b-4ace-8666-f39754ede66b>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/citiesreport/state_eu_cities2016_en.pdf

⁶ a functional urban area (city plus commuting zone) of at least 250,000 inhabitants

pollution, quality of life standards), Rural-Urban relationships (space availability for urban occupation, agriculture and other economic activities), Mobility, Social exclusion, Fiscal pressure, Resources-efficiency (like water supply, waste collection and treatment, energy), Housing, Security and Governance (including civil society participation on the decision making process).

• EU URBAN AGENDA

These are challenges that needs an adequate response and an efficient Governance.

The UN and EU already analysed most of these problems and gave some answers via the **Urban Agenda**⁷.

The Pact of Amsterdam agreed upon by the EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters on 30 May 2016 established the Urban Agenda for the EU. Based on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the Urban Agenda focuses on the three pillars of EU policy making and implementation: Better regulation, Better funding and Better knowledge⁸.

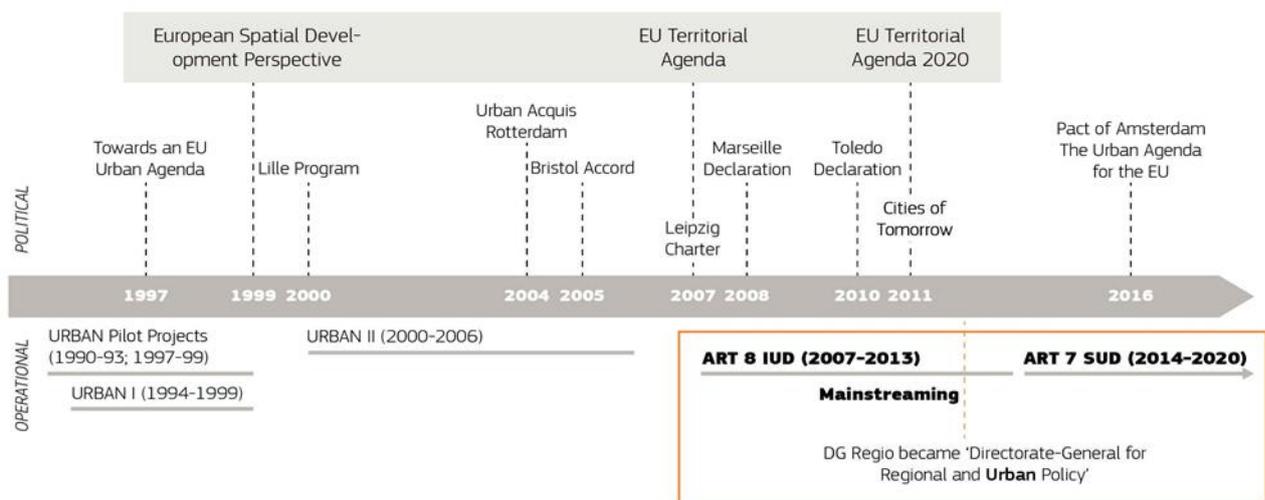


Figure 1. The evolution of the urban dimension of the EU policy⁹

2007 was a defining year in this long process. In fact, it was the year when the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable Cities was signed at an informal ministerial meeting held under the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Leipzig Charter offers two key principles for sustainable urban development: the application of a holistic, integrated development policy, and the focus of special attention on deprived neighbourhoods.

⁷ All the information concerning EU Urban Agenda is on <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/urban-agenda/multi-level-governance-in-action>

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/territorial/topic/urban_en

⁹ <https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/handbook-of-sustainable-urban-development-strategies.pdf>

The new Urban Agenda - [The New Urban Agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 23 December 2016](#), is a cornerstone in the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and other milestone reform agendas such as the [Paris Agreement](#).

The New Urban Agenda incorporates a new recognition of the correlation between good urbanisation and development. It underlines the linkages between good urbanisation and job creation, livelihood opportunities, and improved quality of life, which should be included in every urban renewal policy and strategy (17 goals).

SDG 1 No Poverty, in all its forms everywhere
SDG 2 No Hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being
SDG 4 Quality Education
SDG 5 Gender Equality
SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation
SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy
SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities
SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
SDG 12 Responsible Production and Consumption
SDG 13 Climate Protection Measures
SDG 14 Life under Water
SDG 15 Life on Land
SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals

[A NEW Leipzig Charter](#)¹⁰ was approved by EU ministers on 1st December 2020, to respond to the new challenges of sustainable urban development, including the pandemic effects on towns and cities throughout Europe, and had as reference the SDG 11 goal of the UN Urban Agenda:

1. The Transformative Power of European Cities
 - 1.1 Three Spatial Levels of European Cities
 - 1.2 Three Dimensions of European Cities
2. Key Principles of Good Urban Governance
3. Empowering Cities to Transform
 - 3.1 Strengthening Urban Governance to Ensure the Common Good
 - 3.2 Ensuring Adequate Policies and Funding for Cities

EU, all along the last decades until now, developed several instruments which applies to Cities as well like: several Directives concerning the water, sewage and solid waste and other environmental Regulations (like Natura 2000); Eu Digital Agenda and more recently the Circular Economy Action Plan.

¹⁰ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/themen/building-housing/city-housing/new-leipzig-charta.html>

With this New Leipzig Charter is time to EU to implement it and put forward the financial resources accordingly.

Everybody agrees that a city experiences economic development when people's income increases. A city experiences economic growth if the output of its economy increases. If economic growth is slower than population growth, incomes are likely to decline and inequalities may increase. Growth that increases inequality may benefit certain groups, but the longer-term test of development is whether per capita income grows in a way that spreads opportunity and is reasonably sustainable over the long-run.

And that a city's development policy is judged successful if it raises real per capita income in the city. Household income varies strongly with other characteristics of an economy, including specialisation, education, science and technology capacity, and the wages in core sectors. In addition, national and local characteristics of the labour market and the quality of institutions can have a big impact on per capita income and its distribution.

Many Cities in EU faces additional problems related to their border location, for which specific solutions as to be founded as well, including cross border governance.

- **A new Challenge – socioeconomic impact of COVID 19**

To these challenges a new and more complex one arises in the beginning 2020 with the EU sanitary crisis COVID 19, with enormous socio and economic consequences never seen since the Second World War, which has to be considered as well as a priority in the future EU urban policy.

Cities and Municipalities, other than the national and Regional governments, will be in front line of the response to the social crisis of the increasing social exclusion as a consequence of unemployment increase and reduction of household's income. They will be in front line as well not only to help unemployed people with basic revenues, but as well to help people back to work on stimulating new economic activities and investing in socio economic infrastructure to attract them.

OECD document 'Cities Policy Responses' (23 July 2020)¹¹ reinforces this analysis, as well as the estimation of McKinsey & Company¹² **up to nearly 59 million jobs (26 percent of total employment) across Europe are potentially at risk** of reductions in hours or pay, temporary furloughs, or permanent layoffs. Jobs at risk represent 74 percent of total sector employment in the accommodation and food sector, 50 percent in the arts and entertainment sector, and 44 percent in the wholesale and retail sector. Wholesale and retail represent around 14.6 million jobs at risk (25 percent of total jobs at risk) and accommodation and food around 8.4 million (14 percent); manufacturing and construction also see substantial numbers of jobs at risk. Other sectors are much less affected, such as professional services (1.6 million), finance and insurance (1.2 million),

¹¹ <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/cities-policy-responses-fd1053ff/>

¹² <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/safeguarding-europes-livelihoods-mitigating-the-employment-impact-of-covid-19>

information and communication (0.6 million), agriculture (0.4 million), and real estate (0.3 million).

The questions are:

- **When the financial support will be made available?**
- **How is it going to work on the basis of Member States Partnership Agreements presented?**
- **How Cities and Municipalities are going to be involved.**
- **How EU Funds are going to be allocated to cities and municipalities when we know that around 80% of the EU population is living in urban areas?**

3. Recommendations for the future of EU Urban Policy

3.1. How future EU Urban Policy should look like

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, a clear judgment was expressed on unsustainability of the current development model, not only on the environmental level, but also on the economic and social level. An integrated vision has emerged - without distinction between “developed” and “developing” countries.

Environmental sustainability must be understood as a transversal reference framework of the cohesion policy not only as an important element for safeguarding the natural resources and ensure a development process which is compatible with the challenges of Change Climatic, but also as a real driving force of the regional growth. The new cohesion policy, in accordance with each regional planning process, will have to mark a "green deal", an agreement/pact that the Regions not only signs with Europe but also with its local authorities and with the regional productive systems in order to redefine the economy and boost the development.

On the environmental side, there are three main directions which should drive the interventions: (i) further incentives for forms of energy production from renewable sources; (ii) the commitment to transition from a development model based on linear economy to a circular model in which the reduction of waste materials is associated with reductions in gas emissions greenhouse; (iii) attention to sustainable mobility in particular in major urban centers, given the growing mobility for work and study.

On the social side, the greatest need is to intervene on the growing inequalities (i) through a more widespread participation in the production process, in particular of youth and women; (ii) through interventions on the weakest subjects, also due to their location in more disadvantaged urban and territorial areas.

On the economic side, the commitment on the innovation remains a decisive strategic axis which has to be achieved through the participation of the companies together with an action aimed at strengthening and modernizing the knowledge infrastructure of the cities and regions and the quality of work.

On the market side: to introduce incentives for the citizens (consumers) in order to buy products which, comply with a sustainable production process.

Therefore, on the basis of these directions, in the opinion of EURE partners, future EU Urban Policy should:

- Implement the new Leipzig Charter decided end 2020;
- Reinforce all Cities Competences and Financing to tackle existent and future predicable citizen' needs like those came out with the COVID-19 sanitary crisis;
- Create legal conditions to promote Functional Urban Areas in particular related to small cities of 20,000 inhabitants or more to assure a correct development of the rural-urban network. Creating the conditions to a better and efficient resolution of Cities common problems by managing public services in a cooperative manner and therefore reducing operational costs for the involved communities;
- Pay a particular attention to Cities' Governance and encourage citizens' participation in public decision-making process, in particular at local level.

3.2. Recommendations for each one of the urban policy thematic

Along with the overall recommendations set up in the full report, the future EU Urban Policy should in concrete promote the following thematic ideas to ensure better results for citizens' quality of life and sustainable development of the urban and rural areas.

- **Urban Resources efficiency**

In the last decades EU focused more on environmental legislation. As a result, air, water and soil pollution has significantly been reduced. Legislation at EU level has been modernized and the use of many toxic or hazardous substances is now forbidden or restricted, therefore EU citizens enjoy some of the best water quality in the world and over 18% of EU's territory has been designated as protected areas for nature.

Sustainable land use and urban renewal

If Europeans want to have in future enough land for living, working, mobility and recreation in Cities and, at the same time, have a balance between urban space and agricultural / forestal needs, they have to make a choice by reducing urban sprawl.

As the new Leipzig Charter's D.1.1 Chapter, on Active and strategic land policy and land use planning, states:

"Space is limited in many cities, which often leads to conflicting interests. Local authorities need to apply sustainable, transparent and equitable land use planning and land policies, including local authority land ownership and control. In order to ensure resilient and long-term development, local authorities need to take into account strategic and future developments and risks. Key elements to achieve this are:

- *Polycentric settlement structures with appropriate compactness and density in urban and rural areas with optimal connections within cities to minimise distances between housing, work, leisure, education, local shops and services. This should minimise traffic and mobility needs within and between cities, combatting urban sprawl and reducing traffic areas;*
- *Fostering the cooperation beyond administrative and national borders and coordination of spatial planning in functional urban areas, taking into account urban-rural linkages, in order to prevent as well as contain urban sprawl;*
- *Reducing land take, prioritising the renewal and complex regeneration of urban areas, including brownfield redevelopment, to limit soil sealing;*
- *Land use should balance urban density by favouring green and blue infrastructure, to increase urban biodiversity and enable climate-neutral, resilient and environmentally sound urban development as well as improved air quality;*
- *Design and management of safe and accessible public spaces providing healthy living environments for all citizens;*
- *Sufficient areas for adequate, safe, well designed and affordable housing to ensure vibrant and socially mixed neighbourhoods, avoiding speculative land policy;*
- *Mixed-use urban spaces to promote new forms of production and economic activity in a green, creative, service-based economy."*

Therefore, EURE recommends that:

- 1. New urban policy should encourage and support financially the reduction of urban sprawl;** This reduction should be made through urban or Integrated large urban areas including the rural surroundings (in a functional urban area concept) for re-use, re-build, revitalization of spaces to bring new functions. Actions should be taken to support 'Brownfield regeneration', 'Social Housing (and increasing housing density for instance), 'Urban renewal / Urban regeneration / Urban revitalization' concepts, increasing the quantity of public space and improving its quality, preservation and development of the built and other cultural heritage, etc.

Water – water harvesting, urban flood management, storm water management

Europe is largely considered as having adequate water resources, but water scarcity and drought is an increasingly frequent and widespread phenomenon in the EU.

EU Member States are obliged to carry out a preliminary assessment of flood risk to identify areas of potential flood risk, to establish and publish flood hazard and risk maps and to develop and implement Flood Risk Management Plans. Cities try to respond to changing climatic conditions and try to introduce new approaches to water management.

In the past, the city water management focused on providing drinking water, the reduction of flood risk and solving water pollution. The main identified risks associated with the climate change are also extreme rainfall, floods in the city, insufficient soaking of rainwater, drought and insufficient amount of water.

2. Therefore, all Cities and Groups of Cities should be encouraged to have long term Strategies and Action Plans to implement measures to: Assure water supply in future; Reduce flood risk and underground water pollution.

Waste and Circular Economy

The Circular Economy Package, adopted in March 2020, will lead to more recycling of waste and so contribute to the creation of a circular economy. It will encourage the use of recyclable packaging and reusable packaging and will improve the way waste is managed.

In this context, there are several options to be considered to reach the proposed goals:

- Cascade national recycling targets down to the municipal level with responsibility for waste collection systems, and ensure that there are consequences for municipalities that fail to meet targets;
- Introduce measures (incl. taxes) to phase out landfilling and other forms of residual waste treatment (e.g., Mechanical Biological Treatment, and incineration) to provide economic incentives to support the waste hierarchy;
- Develop guidance with local and regional authorities for municipalities in the form of a minimum service standard for separate collection. Organise technical support and capacity-building programmes for municipalities at national level;
- Introduce mandatory requirements to sort bio-waste, and ensure that planned or existing treatment infrastructure matches the collection systems;
- Encourage co-operation between municipalities on infrastructure planning and/or service procurement to ensure scale efficiency and that the financial burden is shared;
- Improve Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes, at least in line with the general minimum requirements set out in the revised Waste Framework Directive;
- Introduce measures to encourage households to sort waste, including higher collection frequency for separated streams as compared with that for mixed waste;
- Improve monitoring and reporting, including by ensuring that data is captured at municipal level;
- Use EU funds more effectively to develop waste infrastructure by ensuring that co-financing supports prevention, re-use and recycling performance.

Local and regional authorities have an important role in launching and accelerating the transition to a circular economy, whether by leading by example, setting clear framework conditions or directly supporting local and regional stakeholders.

Starting point: analysing the local and regional context: factors such as industrial profile of a region (for example, service and resource-intensive sectors), accessibility (for instance, implementing more resource-efficient transport systems, district heating systems or a sharing economy could be a greater challenge for less accessible) play an important role.

Using smart public procurement: using green public procurement criteria and mechanisms such as pre-commercial procurement.

Supporting local and regional stakeholders: Local and regional authorities can offer support to relevant stakeholders by providing targeted funding, access to knowledge and information, as well as networking opportunities.

Setting clear framework conditions: Cities and regions should integrate their commitment to a circular economy into relevant strategic documents, setting out local priorities, planned measures and forms of support available. This sends a clear signal to local and regional stakeholders, enabling them to plan their activities in the long term. The documents can include EU regional operational programmes, long-term development plans, environmental strategies, as well as other thematic or sectoral strategies (e.g., waste management or industrial development plans).

Therefore, EURE strongly recommends:

3. All Cities and groups of Cities should implement the necessary actions to reach goals marked in the Circular Economy Package¹³. But they should not be alone in the process, national and European advice and financial support should be available to encourage urban actions.

Energy Transition

Despite efficiency gains, energy consumption is expected to continue growing at the rate of 0.7% per capita per year.

Over the past ten years, municipalities have emerged as significant players in global energy markets, they are even increasing their own staff capacity and resources to

13 By 2035, 65% increase the reuse and recycling of municipal waste; by 2030 all waste suitable for recycling or other recovery, in particular in municipal waste, shall not be accepted in a landfill; by 2030 a Circular Economy Plan as suggested by the CEAP - Circular Economy Package which establishes a concrete and ambitious programme of action, covering entire materials cycles, from production and consumption to waste management and the market for secondary raw materials; The EU Directives to meet the target of increase the reuse and recycling of municipal waste up to 65% by 2035, and the specific recycling targets for packaging by 2030:a) All packaging 70%;b)Plastic 55%; c) Wood 30%; d) Ferrous metals 80%; e) Aluminium 60%; e) Glass 75% and f) Paper and cardboard 85%.

address climate change and lead new energy programmes while exerting leadership in programmes and policies to decarbonise energy products and use.

Is visible in the case of renewable energy which in the final energy consumption has been growing continuously. The trend is very promising, however, to maintain it, a lot needs to be done.

4. Cities and Groups of Cities should reinforce their energy efficiency measures, integrating as much as possible renewables. Developing notably intelligent systems, networks and energy storage systems at the local level "through interventions to support the promotion of energy integration technologies from renewable sources";

Sustainable Urban Mobility

Nowadays, urban transport relies on the use of conventionally fuelled passenger cars, mainly oil based energy consumption (98%). This kind of transport represents a significant part of total energy consumption (33%). Moreover, urban transport represents 40% of CO₂ emissions within the transport sector, a sector weighing 20% of total carbon emissions, a large contribution to climate change.

Half of total urban trips (less than 5 km) are made with a private car, causing high level of congestion and costing 202 billion euros per year. Urban accidents represent more than 10,000 casualties per year. Lastly, private cars are not used 96% of time although one third of urban infrastructure is dedicated to them, implying less public place for other modes.

Despite constant strategic policies, action plans and large funding, the European Court of Auditors claims that the EU-supported projects have not yet helped make mobility in urban areas more sustainable. Regarding urban transport, the projected passengers target is not often reached and traffic congestion has not yet significantly reduced, impacting negatively people health and climate change.

SUMPs – Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans have helped to improve the quality of life in European cities, particularly in the city-centres. Nevertheless, they are still areas for improvement.

A transition towards sustainability relies on structural policies at the functional urban scale. As a subsidiarity application, **SUMP should be the core of the European framework strategy**. Member-States (or other legislative authorities) must make them lawfully compulsory along with dedicated national or regional funds, and definitively **a prerequisite for cities to request EU-funds**. Instead of centralised states, regions or other appropriate administrative areas (like Metropolitan areas, Agglomerations, Inter-Municipal Federations or other Functional Urban Areas) could become a more operational intermediate institution to promote, support and follow up SUMP

implementation, sharing best practices in a similar geographic background, particularly in a polycentric territory of small and medium-sized cities.

SUMPs must be in line with urban planning as well as dedicated energy, environmental or climate change plans. In addition, they must protect vulnerable users, particularly when active modes are promoted. Parking management should also be optimised to reduce traffic congestion due to parking search.

Access regulations for vehicles, such as low emission zones, must be more largely deployed to avoid bringing private cars in downtown areas, by deploying park and ride facilities at the entrance to cities.

With fewer cars, it would be possible to rearrange public space and better support an integrated multimodal urban mobility approach, not only for passengers but also logistics. Therefore, ITS solutions could offer digital tools to enable mobility integration.

Shared mobility must be used at both ends of a journey chain with first and last mile solutions, like bicycles, ebikes or appropriate ultra-compact electric city vehicles, physically located at main mobility stations. It appears that mobility authorities must engage collaborations with private operators so as to integrate shared mobility in the whole multimodal system, particularly by deploying new performing transport services in underserved areas, through appropriate business models. Sharing mobility could be considered as an alternative mode only if the vehicles are used on priority lanes. In conclusion, **sharing public space is an important structural condition in order to compete with private cars.**

Encouraging modal shift requires engaging large investments in light rail urban transport systems (tramway or tram-train) so as to connect the main city with its peri-urban areas. This approach refers to **urban planning in the perimeter of functional urban areas**, bringing potentially a new balance of activities with economic relocations.

In Europe, a lot of studies, demonstrator projects and best practices sharing have already been financially supported and well spread out. A new phase should come up by engaging structural policies supported by public-private partnerships – multimodality and electrification – to accomplish a true transition towards sustainable urban mobility

Therefore, it is recommended to:

5. **Promote sustainable intermodal urban mobility** through interventions aimed at improving the sustainable urban mobility actions such as the acquisition of rolling stock materials with **lower environmental impact**, the significant enhancement of the cycle network and cycle / pedestrian in the urban area, the implementation of integrated actions aimed at better usability when **switching from one mode to a low emissions mode** (e.g. interchange points, exchanger car parks, parking places, bicycle parking, etc.) **or collective** (with particular reference to adductions a bus stations,

railway stations, tramway stops etc.) and the development of **infomobility and intelligent transport solutions** for a better use of services and services infrastructure by citizenship.

- **Environmental management performance**

Air and Noise Quality

Air and Noise pollution are phenomena of modern times and increase of urban population, transportation and industry development are often pointed out as main sources. The consequences for the public health and citizens' quality of life imposes action to be taken. Therefore, it is recommended:

6. Air pollution: Cities and groups of Cities should implement the European Commission Clean Air Policy Package, including a Clean Air Programme for Europe setting objectives for 2020 and 2030, adopted in 2013; and follow the guidance provided in the Communication "A Europe that protects: Clean air for all", adopted in 2018.

7. Noise Pollution: Cities and groups of Cities should implement Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC.

Climate Adaptation

Climate adaptation is one of the actual themes being tackled at all levels of administration. Adaptation to climate change, adaptation to ongoing current and expected impacts is essential for sustainable development of cities. As mentioned in the new Leipzig Charter, "Predictive and preventive policies, plans and projects should include diverse scenarios to anticipate environmental and climatic challenges and economic risks as well as social transformation and health concerns".

8. Promote adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and resilience to disasters through prevention interventions (interventions and actions of regulation and government of the territory aimed at mitigating risks such as hydraulic hazard for the environment, cultural heritage, the social system and economic activities)

Social Inclusion

Having in mind that one of the EU pillars refers to social rights, it is important to note that at EU27 level population at risk of poverty rate is 16.8% (more than 75 million people and 27% are children) and this indicator has been growing since 2010. This rate is based on 2018 data (last info from Eurostat) and varies from Country to Country but in general terms we can conclude that the real situation is much worst necessarily after COVID 19 socio economic impact.

Cities are in the frontline to resolve the social exclusion problems which basically concerns: families with very low revenues, housing conditions (in particular for the homeless), health and education conditions, and migrants and refugees situation.

Without eliminating social exclusion there is no Social Cohesion, one of the EU integration objectives.

It is therefore recommended:

9. Cities and groups of Cities should promote social inclusion. They should be strongly advised, encouraged and supported to **prepare and Implement Social Inclusion Action Plans** for their territories. These Action Plans shall notably include financing of measures to create local economy Jobs, to provide social housing (in particular for the homeless, and education (in particular for the children that represents 27% of the population at risk of poverty), where the pandemic impact was the strongest (the poor, unemployed, less skilled workers, less educated, elderly population) in a coordinated way with the national authorities, as well as to foster the inclusion of migrants.

In addition, cities and groups of cities should promote social inclusion by the means of **citizen participation** in local decision processes.

Green Growth and Eco-innovation

Trees and plants increase their ability to absorption of pollutants, the more they are closer to the source of pollution. That is why it is important to plan actions not only of reforestation but also interventions in the urban contexts, considering that cities produce about 70% of the total pollution. Plants in the city are therefore no longer intended only as aesthetic and beautifying elements, but as real means of protecting the quality of the air and consequently our health.

Moreover, a “blue” dimension should be taken into account. Blue growth is a reality for cities next to a river, coastal and port cities; where water is a paramount element of urban development.

10. Cities and groups of cities should **strengthen biodiversity, green and blue infrastructure** in the urban environment and reduce pollution through interventions aimed at creating green infrastructures in the urban area, in order to safeguard and protect natural resources, address the negative effects of climate change, reducing the consumption of soil and settlement dispersion.

3.3. Financing

An important theme, in continuity with the current programming period, is that of integrated territorial development. Indeed, the higher concentration of resources should be promoting the sustainable urban development based on integrated, local and/or territorial strategies. At the same time, integrations between funds can be strengthened, first with the ESF + for interventions in support of education and training as well as with the EAFRD to support the development of territorial strategies especially in the suburban areas.

Cities are in the front line to resolve citizen's increasing needs (80% of the EU Population), responsibility increased by the socioeconomic impact of the sanitary crisis of COVID 19 in areas like the increased poverty and social exclusion.

They will be in front line of the response to the social crisis of the increasing social exclusion as a consequence of unemployment increase and reduction of household's income. They will be in front line as well not only to help unemployed people with basic revenues, but as well to help people back to work on stimulating new economic activities and investing in socio economic infrastructure to attract them.

It is necessary to closely understand issues that needs to be solved on local level and when larger scale is appropriate, so in which cases the involvement of several municipalities should be organized. That is also unclear how to finance these actions for functional areas: benefiting some parts of areas directly, some parts of areas less and some without direct benefit.

Recently EU Institutions agreed to increase SUD allocation to at least 8% for the 2021-27 programming period, which are good news but not enough having in mind the huge amount of investments needed.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended:

11. To increase National and EU financial support to Cities:

- a) **Support should be increased to Cities and their networks.** In particular to smaller cities, which can be considered as leaders of FUA – Functional Urban Areas and involve smaller cities around them in a polycentric system.

b) **The new EU instruments** that will be approved by the EU Council and Parliament concerning the Recovery package of public money (MFF- Multiannual Financial Framework and Next Generation EU) **should be an occasion to boost Cities and Municipalities financial support in particular through ITI – Integrated Territorial Investments**. Therefore, the **allocation of EU structural Funds should be increased in the Operational programs to at least 10%**, in current prices using the facility of the actual allocation that is of at least (8%).

3.4. Governance

Governance for Sustainable Urban Development and Participation

Mandated by the United Nations, UN-Habitat programme promotes socially and environmentally sustainable towns, cities and communities. In Europe, “2030 Territorial Agenda: a future for all places” should be the appropriate policy framework to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda, approved on 1st December 2020, is a real opportunity to incite cities’ administrations to work beyond silos and engage collaboration with nearby municipalities so as to deliver holistic policies at the appropriate functional urban area. In this effort, new European tools and shared knowledge could help cities tackle integration and policy coherence, and thus establish new efficient governance. Accordingly, **urban authorities could set up an urban data platform**, which should play a key role in monitoring policies through a range of SDGs based indicators. To this regard, create stakeholders’ groups is revealing crucial.

In Europe, 240 cities with populations over 100,000 have made some progress towards becoming smart cities¹⁴. In Nordic countries, all of them are smart cities. Most cities over 100,000 people in Italy, Austria and the Netherlands are smart cities, as well as half of British, Spanish and French cities. In contrast, Germany and Poland are behind, while the eastern EU Member States have the lowest number of smart cities.

The concept of Smart City has become much more multidimensional and scalable, depending on which technologies to use, data to cope, domains to apply and integration level to reach. The deployment of connected devices – sensors, smartphones or connected vehicles – is a prerequisite to collect and exchange data. Smart cities envisage data as a resource to monitor the urban life, optimise public policies or create new services for society. Let’s note that digitalisation should not be seen as an end in itself but as a mean to foster inclusiveness, empowerment and also environmental sustainability.

¹⁴ <https://euagenda.eu/publications/how-many-smart-cities-are-there-in-europe>

At international level, dialogue is engaged through multi-level governance. The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is a bottom-up, multi-level governance model that brings together local governments, regions, Member States but also non-governmental organisations, such as WWF. The Urban agenda for the EU has also launched a range of partnerships to deal with thematic urban issues. Each Partnership is made up of Urban Authorities (cities), the European Commission, EU organisations (European Investment Bank, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of Regions), Member States, Partner States, experts, umbrella organisations (e.g. EUROCITIES, Council of European Municipalities and Regions), knowledge organisations (e.g. URBACT, ESPON and INTERREG EUROPE) and other stakeholders (NGOs, business, etc.).

Representative democracy is being questioned and traditional representation mechanisms are no more sufficient to ensure a proper democratic participation. Regarding deliberative process, intermediate bodies – industry, labour, professional associations, non-governmental organisations ... – are progressively involved at different scales.

In the last two decades, innovative solutions deepening citizen participation or empowerment have spread in Europe. Participatory budgeting, in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget, has since largely spread in European cities. The largest metropolises – Paris, Madrid, Lisbon or Milan – have implemented it as well as around 3,000 smaller cities (e.g. Rennes, Brest or Viana do Castelo), involving millions of European citizens. In the last decade, this effort was fostered by the use of digital platforms along with new methodologies.

In addition, the civil society must be engaged, not only intermediate bodies but also and more directly, the citizens. Applying a bottom-up approach, civitechs could support participatory processes. However, in-person events are still necessary to build trust between representative and the population. Thanks to volunteers or civic lottery, citizens' councils or large-scale mini-public debates, aiming to co-create a common collective vision, might draw the future of urban democracy.

Therefore, is strongly recommended that:

12. Cities and groups of Cities should in the future reinforce Governance by development concepts such as Smart Cities and governance participation involving the civil society in the decision-making process.

Governance and Functional Urban Areas (FUA's)

An important concept to take into account in future city governance is the FUA – Functional Urban Area.

In Europe, the urban fabric is polycentric. At the national level, polycentric regions are, in reality, organized around FUA's, large, medium or small, as shown by different national

experiences. **This type of organization must be strengthened in the future** since they are proved to be real.

The European program ESPON Study concluded:

- ✓ The most important quality of the FUA concept is its ability to extend beyond administrative boundaries. As a result, the needs for economic activity and service production can be mapped more efficiently. This leads to more consistent strategic planning and vision. Many European countries have inserted some statistical levels between the municipal and regional levels, shaping current urban areas and inter-municipal cooperation. European countries have identified FUAs in various ways such as functional urban regions, districts, commuting areas, local labour market areas, daily urban systems, displacement zones and sub regional units, as well as others.
- ✓ The functional urban area (FUA) consists of the Urban Area / central municipality plus the adjacent areas of commuting (peripheral municipalities). Switching data at NUTS 5 level is a prerequisite for defining these FUAs, but switching data (according to Data Navigator) is available for this territorial level only for Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden. FUA has a definition of national counterparty (often referred to as functional urban region, commute area, commuter catchment area, commuting area, or the like) in 18 countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary (regional work centers), Italy, Norway, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and the United Kingdom). Due to lack of data, European program ESPON uses the national definitions of FUA, or the closest available counterparts. **FUAs with a population of 20,000 are considered urban, and even the smallest FUAs are considered if they have a functional role within the national urban system.**
- ✓ FUAs are the basic components of the polycentric region. Polycentric regions are established by two or more FUAs that reinforce each other. At two levels, we are dealing with urban polycentric regions, the (sub) national level (national polycentric regions) and the transnational level (cross border polycentric regions).
- ✓ Even if in practice it is only statistically evident for large and medium-sized FUAs, the concept can be applied to areas of 20,000 and more inhabitants, or even less than 20,000 inhabitants, under certain circumstances.

Currently are eligible for ERDF: the great European FUAs and the FUAs of cities with 50,000 or more inhabitants. **Why only these ones?** Once smaller cities have the same problems, even in a different scale, and have smaller resources. For this reason, these **smaller FUAs, of 20,000 or more inhabitants should be more supported.**

Europe is a polycentric urban territory, with different levels of polycentrism. Basically, the urban territory is organized like the following scheme:

- Metropolitan Areas or Metrópolis, that constitute FUAs naturally

- Cities with 50.000 or more inhabitants, which constitutes, or can be FUAs, within a Region
- And in fine, the smaller Cities between 10-20.000 inhabitants, which are centers of attraction for 2 or more smaller urban centers.

In the absence of detailed and comparable statistics at European level on cities, it is reasonable to provide for a set of eligibility criteria for the constitution of FUAs, using the Eurostat criterion described above as a basis, and adding other easily identifiable criteria and consequently, make smaller urban centres also eligible for national and European funds on a FUAs basis. Therefore, **it is highly recommended:**

13. A. To include in the future, for the purpose of organizing urban planning and management in national polycentric regions, the **FUA with about 20,000 or more inhabitants¹⁵. These FUAs should therefore be able to access European funds for European urban policy in the form of ITI's.**

13.B. Eligibility criteria for national and ERDF funding 2021-27. The FUA leader municipality:

- It must have at least around 10,000 inhabitants¹⁶, **and in total the FUA territory must have at least 20,000 inhabitants;**
- FUA leader city must elaborate a document describing its attractiveness in relation to the surrounding urban and rural centers (ex. % of non-resident population working on the municipality, capacity to attract new economic activities, characteristics of the services provided to non-residents). **Territorial continuity should not be compulsory**, as orography of some territories make this condition sometimes impossible, even if the territory effectively is functioning as a FUA;
- It must present **a formal agreement with the other urban and rural centers** involved including a strategy of integrated urban development for the FUA area, accepted by all partners.

Urban Policy Necessary instruments

In order to improve the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the policy making and implementation process regarding functional urban areas and other functional regions, it is essential to have data, indicators and analysis tools that can help to better understand the drivers for growth and inclusive social development in functional areas.

¹⁵ Central and peripheral municipalities integrated in an area of influence of the main city of the central municipality.

¹⁶ <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783319674094>

Analyses tools on European scale should help to build an evolving urban agenda, diversified actions for concrete functional areas of Europe, so also there is a significant need for development of funding model for actions addressed to these diverse territorial functional areas.

- **Statistics**

Without appropriate statistics is not possible to design a realistic evolving EU Urban Policy.

Findings

- There is no clear and consensual definition of Urban area in EU and elsewhere
- There is no clear Statistical definition of Cities, in particular concerning those below 50,000 inhabitants
- There is no EU available statistics at the level of Cities (Eurostat). The only few statistics existent are at Municipal level (administrative boundary) which is commonly accepted that do not represent the urban evolution reality.
- There is no clear overall picture, at EU level, on what is really the investment of EU funding in Cities for the period 2014-20, since the information is dispersed through National, Regional and Local strategies (ITI, CCLD, etc), community initiatives (Innovative Urban Actions, Urbact, Interreg programmes, Life, etc), and specific ESF programmes concerning Youth populations (Youth Initiative) and Social Inclusion.
- The EU Statistical classification (NUTS 2021) only comprises 3 levels (104 NUTS I, 281 NUTS II e 1348 NUTS III). Why not create a level NUTS IV to understand the urban – rural reality?

Therefore, ***is highly recommended to improve EU and national statistics' production*** in the following sense:

14. Recommendations on Statistics production:

Urban evolution has generated a transformation in the scale that has led to **different figures** (counties, urban agglomerations...). Nevertheless, **there is neither accurate nor uniform information** about this administrative level to be used as input to design the Urban Policy. In this sense, it seems advisable to **reflect about the adequacy of create a new level NUTS IV**, especially to have appropriate statistics for the Urban Policy.

In close collaboration with national statistics institutions, and using notably the periodic and specific census, Eurostat should provide accurate statistics in an annual basis, or at least every 2 years.

The **information other than population and area** (sq. km) should contains at least data on: a) Urban Space occupied (housing, industry, services, green

Space, transportation); b) Housing (private, social); c) Families 'average income (to detect clusters of poverty)

The information should be provided in a breakdown by: a) Metropolitan Areas and Big Cities Functional Urban Areas; b) Big Cities (100,000 inhabitants or more); c) Medium Cities (between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants); d) Small cities (less than 50,000 inhabitants); e) Small cities Functional Urban Areas (commuting area around a city of around 20,000 inhabitants, as proposed by ESPON)

• ITI INSTRUMENT

Findings

- ITI is being used in the current 2014-20 EU programming period with success. ITI is a valuable tool to devolve decision-making to specific local areas. Within this framework, local authorities should, at the very least, be more closely involved in project selection;
- Urban ITI should not be privileged and take priority over other types of ITI at EU and national level: ITIs is a tool for all local area types. As authorised by the Regulation, some ITIs will be applied beyond areas strictly defined as urban, but will also help the development of an integrated approach in functional areas and neighbourhoods, at regional or at local level. It is already used in some Cross Border areas;
- ITI is a new instrument and it is particularly important that Technical Assistance be available to fully support the ITI's activities, in particular those related to properly accounting the spend across the separate ESI funding sources;
- It is not compulsory for an ITI to cover the whole territory of an administrative level. An ITI can be implemented at any (sub national) level, for which an integrated territorial development strategy has been set up. It may cover a region, a functional area, an urban or a rural Municipality, a neighbourhood or any other sub national territory.

We took note, according to the EC Guidelines for 2014-20:

1. That urban authorities or any other authorities responsible for sustainable urban development in functional areas apply participatory approach during different stages of programming their development. Relevant stakeholders should be firstly identified, then involved in programming, monitoring and evaluation. Participation is a key factor of creating sustainable growth.
2. That European Commission together with national, regional and local authorities co-operate with urban and other authorities and institutions involved in functional urban

areas in programming relevant financial perspectives. Communication, dissemination of information, adequate timing of different programming stages will translate into better projects, better EU funds spending and meeting sustainable development objectives in a short-term and long-term perspective.

Having in mind all these findings and the fact Member states had different approaches during the programming period 2014-20, **is strongly recommended:**

15. That European Commission recommends ITI's should be used in the next EU 2021-27 programming period as a main instrument for SUD. ITI's should be encouraged not only for urban areas, but as well for Functional Urban Areas. In this case ITI's should be encouraged as well for Cross Border Functional Urban Areas.