Sustainable urban development: a framework for action, follow-up of COM(1997)0197

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The European Parliament adopted the resolution by Leoluca Orlando (V,IT) on the Commission Communication on Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action. The report welcomes the proposed plan and stresses that some 100,000 EU munipalities are threatened by decay of urban infrastructure, impoverishment and depopulation owing to the new dynamics of development of the world economy. It welcomes the initiative taken by the European Commission to present a Framework for Action covering 24 actions to be taken in order to make urban issues subject to an integrated policy approach at European level. Calling for the adoption of the European Spatial Development Plan (ESDP) - which has just been adopted by the Council of Ministers - the Parliament points out the need to develop towns and cities in Europe on the basis of a more multi-centric approach. It calls on the Commission to put forward an ambitious proposal on the future internal mechanism for implementing the inter-service coordination of all Community policies and measures affecting urban development, specifically assigning responsibility therefore to a Member of the Commission. The report invites the Commission to simplify management rules concerning urban pilot projects financed through the Structural Funds so as to reduce payment delays and make social synergies easier. It also requests the participation of urban local actors in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes. In this respect, it welcomes the continuation of the URBAN Community Initiative and asks that it place a particular emphasis on small and medium-sized towns. It also considers that the street (and not only the district, as hitherto) should be included as the basic spatial unit. It also calls for the promotion of innovative actions with the aim of reinforcing the sustainable integration of cities in their regions, with the aim of revitalising community housing and facilities. The Council and the Commission are also called upon to revise the Trans-European Transport Networks policy in order to: - give priority to regional connections; - promote infrastructures and actions reducing the pressure placed on urban centres by car and truck traffic; - allow the financing of urban mobility projects. The report also calls for the promotion of sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and use of public transport) and intermodality. When implementing the urban action plan, it asks that the Commission take account, at all levels, of the particular concerns of women and of multiculturalism. On an international level, the Parliament calls on the European institutions and governments to ensure appropriate follow-up to the Habitat II process and calls on the Commission to formulate and implement, in the context of ACP-EU cooperation, a sustainable urban development policy framework. Finally, the Parliament proposes that the Commission should launch, as part of an integrated policy, 4 action lines following the Framework for Action's urban policy aims: 1) strengthening economic prosperity and employment; 2) promoting equality, social inclusion and regeneration; 3) protecting and improving the urban environment; 4) contributing to good urban governance and local empowerment. The Parliament believes that the following step should be the adoption of an Urban Agenda based on the ESDP, the main findings of comparative research on urban conditions in Europe and the first experience with the urban mainstreaming into the Structural Funds.