Urban dimension in the context of enlargement

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Jean-Marie BEAUPUY (ALDE, FR) on the urban dimension in the context of enlargement. The report noted that towns and cities and urban agglomerations or areas, including small and medium-sized ones, had a central role to play in achieving the revised Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives. It said that urban policy development priorities must continue to be reinforced at Member State and regional level after enlargement, to include housing and revitalisation of urban areas, infrastructure, transport, tourism, the environment, waste disposal, water supply, culture, training, education, social care and health.

MEPs stressed that there were great disparities in terms of urban policy between the 25 Member States, particularly following the most recent enlargement to include 10 new Member States which often had no clear and comprehensive urban policy at national or regional level. Although urban development did not fall within the direct remit of the EU, the Union was nevertheless responsible for policies which directly influenced sustainable urban development, such as regional and cohesion policy, transport, the environment, employment and social affairs, etc. The report added that the urban perspective of Objective 2 "should receive more attention in financial and territorial terms".

The committee pointed out that cities and urban agglomerations or areas represented 78% of the EU population and that both the most complex and the most common problems were concentrated in such areas (social exclusion, spatial and ethnic segregation, housing shortage, insecurity, drugs, pollution, contaminated former industrial sites, traffic, unemployment, lack of competitiveness, poverty, demographic changes, etc.). Towns and cities were also the places where the future was built: universities, research centres etc. MEPs concluded that urban planning should take account of the specific nature of European cities in terms of demographics and quality of life, incorporating a wide spectrum of policies and opportunities involving citizens and, in particular, young people and women.