Basic information

2014/2213(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Urban dimension of EU policies **Subject** 4.70.02 Cohesion policy, Cohesion Fund (CF) 4.70.04 Urban policy, cities, town and country planning 4.70.05 Regional cooperation, cross-border cooperation	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Development	WESTPHAL Kerstin (S&D)	22/09/2014
	Shadow rapporteur OLBRYCHT Jan (PPE) LEWER Andrew (ECR) VAN MILTENBURG Matthijs (ALDE) MICHELS Martina (GUE/NGL) VANA Monika (Verts/ALE) D'AMATO Rosa (EFDD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	REGNER Evelyn (S&D)	13/01/2015
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Regional and Urban Policy	CREȚU Corina

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/07/2014	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2014)0490	Summary
17/12/2014	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/06/2015	Vote in committee		
26/06/2015	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0218/2015	Summary
08/09/2015	Debate in Parliament		
09/09/2015	Decision by Parliament	T8-0307/2015	Summary
09/09/2015	Results of vote in Parliament		
09/09/2015	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2014/2213(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/8/02016

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE549.165	06/02/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE552.043	26/03/2015	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE546.619	08/05/2015	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0218/2015	26/06/2015	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0307/2015	09/09/2015	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
	COM(2014)0490		

Commission document (COM)		18/07/2014	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2015)748	24/02/2016	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	DE_BUNDESRAT	COM(2014)0490	21/10/2014	
Contribution	IT_SENATE	COM(2014)0490	31/10/2014	

Urban dimension of EU policies

2014/2213(INI) - 18/07/2014 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to initiate a debate on the urban dimension of European policies and on the key features of a future EU urban agenda.

BACKGROUND: today, approximately 359 million people - 72 % of the total EU population - live in cities, towns and suburbs. Although the speed of transformation has slowed down, the share of the urban population continues to grow, and is likely to reach more than 80% by 2050. Although cities' role for economic, social and cultural development, and their potential for a more resource efficient habitat, have long been recognised, **the policy response at European and national level has been slow and piecemeal**, with many but poorly integrated sectoral initiatives.

In 2011, **the European Parliament** adopted a resolution arguing for a strengthening of the urban dimension of EU policies and the intergovernmental co-operation on urban development policies, calling for a joint working programme or European Urban Agenda.

In response to calls for a EU urban agenda coming from a range of stakeholders at the EU, national and local level, the Commission organised a **CITIES Forum** to initiate a debate on the **need for a EU urban agenda**.

Following the CITIES Forum, Member States discussed the necessity to develop a EU Urban Agenda recognising the demand and expectations from the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, city associations and cities themselves.

CONTENT: building on the results of the CITIES forum, this Communication describes the current urban situation in the EU, where Europe stands today in terms of urban policy, the calls for a EU urban agenda and the global dimension of urban development.

The Commission proposes **a set of questions for consultation** aimed at further clarifying the need for a EU urban agenda, its objectives, and how it could function. A common opinion amongst the many stakeholders is that a EU urban agenda has to respect the subsidiarity principle and not be built on new legislation.

Objectives of a future agenda: the Commission states that an urban agenda at EU level could contribute to several objectives, and:

- enhance the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of policies through better coordination of policies, actors and governance levels and a better understanding of urban development contexts in the conception and implementation of policies ;
- strengthen cities' engagement and ownership of EU and national policymaking and implementation;
- support cities' capacity for transition and structural change to ensure viable urban economies and a socially, environmentally and territorially sustainable development of urban areas;
- being linked to holistic local development objectives, it could bring EU policymaking closer to the citizens;
- be instrumental in EU's development aid policies and be a vehicle to promote global sustainability issues.

A key first step in the possible definition of an EU urban agenda will be to work out where **EU action might bring most added value** and the elements of urban development that would benefit from a more concerted approach between different sectors and levels of governance.

Characteristics of a EU urban agenda: those who have contributed to this debate so far have suggested that the "agenda" might rather imply a new working method to ensure coherence. Others have proposed that it should take the form of a strategy with priorities for the long-term and operational guidelines for the short term.

An EU urban agenda could focus on a limited set of major European societal challenges, such as CO2 reduction, climate adaptation, inclusion or demographic change. A more ambitious agenda could provide a general framework to focus attention on the urban dimension of EU policies across the board, strengthening coordination between sectoral policies, city, national and EU actors.

Other issues discussed in the Communication include:

- defining the scope and focus of the programme, notably through the Commission's own reflection process Cities of Tomorrow";
- how urban stakeholders might better contribute to the policy development and implementation processes at EU level;
- the best ways to support a stronger urban and territorial knowledge base and exchange of experience to understand better the process of urban development;
- the roles of the local, regional, national and EU levels in the definition, development and implementation of a EU urban agenda.

The opinions and suggestions from stakeholders and competent authorities at the national, regional and local level will be an important input to the new Commission and the new European Parliament.

Urban dimension of EU policies

2014/2213(INI) - 09/09/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 545 votes to 115, with 38 abstentions, a resolution on the urban dimension of EU policies.

Whilst welcoming the initiative of the Commission to work towards a European Urban Agenda, Members considered that **EU policies should support and enable towns, cities and functional urban areas to express and attain their full potential** as motors of economic growth, employment, social inclusion and sustainable development.

Functional urban areas in the EU comprise a unique polycentric structure built around large, medium-sized and small towns, cities and their surrounding areas, thus going beyond the traditional administrative borders to encompass various territories linked by their economic, social, environmental and demographic challenges. These towns, cities and functional urban areas need to be **more closely associated** with the entire European policymaking cycle according to Members.

Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality: Parliament called for ways to introduce an **early warning mechanism** by adapting available tools and in accordance with Article 6 of the Protocol on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality, giving the **subnational government** the possibility to observe whether the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality have been taken into account, allowing subnational governments to be involved in the policy processes from an early stage.

Towards an integrated European Urban Agenda: Parliament recognised that although there is no explicit EU competence on urban development, a broad range of EU initiatives impact directly/indirectly on towns, cities and functional urban areas.

Under these conditions, Members are convinced that the **European Urban Agenda should be a joint effort by the Commission, the Member States, the local authorities and other stakeholders** to rationalise, coordinate and implement EU policies with an urban dimension through a practical, integrated and coordinated, yet flexible, approach, 'in and with' the towns, cities and functional urban areas, taking account of the local territorial specificities and respecting each Member State's institutional architecture.

The Commission is urged to **come up with a communication detailing the features of the future European Urban Agenda**, based on the 'urban acquis' and the extensive consultation with various stakeholders, including economic and social partners and civil society organisations.

Such an Agenda should be **fully in line with the EU's overall objectives and strategy**, particularly Europe 2020, and the objectives of territorial cohesion.

Integrated territorial development approach: Parliament called on the Commission to apply a more **place-based integrated territorial approach** when conceptualising new policy initiatives aimed at urban areas. The Commission is asked to:

- introduce, as a general rule, a **territorial impact assessment** on the urban dimension in order to ensure the practical feasibility of all relevant EU policy initiatives at regional and local level, to be receptive to the input from decentralised levels of government when drawing up impact assessments and new policies ('bottom up approach') and to make sure that all relevant sectoral EU policies adequately address the challenges that towns, cities and functional urban areas face; calls on the Commission to concentrate these territorial impact assessments on the following elements: balanced territorial development, territorial integration, aspects of governance, regulation, implementation at local level, and coherence with other policy objectives;
- **systematise and analyse all available data** to prevent duplication and inconsistencies and provide a clear definition of integrated sustainable urban development;
- work on instruments that could **measure the progress** and impact of an integrated urban agenda at EU level.

The urban dimension of EU policy instruments and funding: Parliament recalled that the EU's Cohesion Policy and its financial instruments are better equipped to support complex integrated territorial strategies for functional urban areas through shared strategic planning and rules.

The Commission and the Member States are urged to make full use of the regulatory framework to create synergies between the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), the EU subsidised programmes (such as LIFE, Horizon 2020, Intelligent Energy Europe, etc.) and cohesion policy funds, as well as public (i.e. national) investments, private capital and financial instruments in order to obtain the greatest leverage effect of invested funds.

The resolution highlighted the need to **exploit to a maximum extent the potential of the macro-regional strategies** for successful implementation of the integrated urban approach.

A new model of multi-level governance: Parliament stated that the European Urban Agenda should be based on a new multi-level governance method, involving the local level more closely at all stages of the policy cycle, thus bringing the policies closer to the realities.

Members urged the Commission to **suggest elements for a new model of multi-level governance based on partnerships and genuine collaboration**, going beyond simple stakeholder consultations, a model combining formal governmental structures with informal flexible governance structures that correspond to the new realities of the digitalised 'network' society, thus bringing government closer to the citizens and improving the democratic legitimacy of the European project.

Knowledge management and data sharing: Parliament called on the Commission to consolidate and ensure better coordination between the existing platforms (such as URBACT, the Covenant of Mayors, Mayors Adapt, Smart Cities and Communities) in order to allow local actors to better understand them and engage with them in a more efficient way. Stressing the need to update and improve the Urban Audit Database, Parliament encouraged Eurostat and the Commission to provide and compile more detailed data, collected where policies are implemented – in many cases at local level.

Implementing the future European Urban Agenda: in order for the European Urban Agenda to be an effective tool, Parliament stated that it should be a shared and **regularly updated conceptual framework** with a thematic focus on a **limited number of challenges** in the larger context of the Europe 2020 goals of smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. These challenges should respond to the following criteria: (i) are in line with the shared conceptual framework; (ii) are major urban challenges; (iii) cannot be solved by Member States unilaterally; (iv) where an EU approach has a clear added value.

The Commission is asked to:

- start working on mapping such challenges, but also identifying remaining bottlenecks, policy incoherencies or capacity and knowledge gaps, in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, particularly those at local level;
- ensure that the urban dimension is taken into account in all relevant new initiatives;
- appoint a political lead within the College of Commissioners to give strategic direction to the Urban Agenda of European policies and to report annually to Parliament on the Urban Agenda;
- designate a special EU urban coordinator;
- hold a regular urban summit drawing on the 'Cities of tomorrow' forum, bringing stakeholders from all levels of governance and different sectors together;

Lastly, Members urged the Commission to regularly inform Parliament about the external dimension of the European Urban Agenda and believes that the urban agenda could become the EU contribution to the international debate on the United Nations' 'New Urban Agenda' and the Habitat III conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016.

Urban dimension of EU policies

2014/2213(INI) - 26/06/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Regional Development adopted an own-initiative report by Kerstin WESTPHAL (S&D, DE) on the urban dimension of EU policies.

Whilst welcoming the initiative of the Commission to work towards a European Urban Agenda, Members considered that **EU policies should support and enable towns, cities and functional urban areas to express and attain their full potential** as motors of economic growth, employment, social inclusion and sustainable development.

Towards an integrated European Urban Agenda: the report recognised that although there is no explicit EU competence on urban development, a broad range of EU initiatives impact directly/indirectly on towns, cities and functional urban areas.

Under these conditions, the Members are convinced that the **European Urban Agenda should be a joint effort by the Commission, the Member States, the local authorities and other stakeholders** to rationalise, coordinate and implement EU policies with an urban dimension through a practical, integrated and coordinated, yet flexible, approach, 'in and with' the towns, cities and functional urban areas, taking account of the local territorial specificities and respecting each Member State's institutional architecture.

The Commission is urged to **come up with a communication detailing the features of the future European Urban Agenda**, based on the 'urban acquis' and the extensive consultation with various stakeholders, including economic and social partners and civil society organisations.

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The urban dimension of EU policy instruments and funding: Members recalled that the EU's Cohesion Policy and its financial instruments are better equipped to support complex integrated territorial strategies for functional urban areas through shared strategic planning and rules.

The Commission and the Member States are urged to make full use of the regulatory framework to create synergies between the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), the EU subsidised programmes (such as LIFE, Horizon 2020, Intelligent Energy Europe, etc.) and cohesion policy funds, as well as public (i.e. national) investments, private capital and financial instruments in order to obtain the greatest leverage effect of invested funds.

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