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## LEIPZIG CHARTER on Sustainable European Cities

The "LEIPZIG CHARTER on Sustainable European Cities" is a Member States document, elaborated by a broad and transparent participation of the European Stakeholders. Knowing the challenges and chances and the different historically, economically, socially and environmentally backgrounds of the European Cities the Member States' ministers responsible for Urban Development agree upon common principles and strategies for urban development policy. The Ministers commit themselves to support the development of integrated urban development strategies and the related governance for their implementation and, to this end, establish any necessary framework at national level.

### We declare:

1. We, the ministers responsible for urban development in the member states of the European Union, consider the European cities which have evolved in the course of history to be valuable and irreplaceable economic, social and cultural assets.
2. With the objective of protecting, strengthening and promoting our cities, we strongly support the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, building on the Lille Action Programme, the Rotterdam Urban Acquis and the Bristol Accord. In doing so, all three dimensions of sustainable development, that is economic prosperity, social balance and consideration of environmental aspects, as well as institutional capacity must be considered simultaneously and in a balanced way.
3. Our cities possess unique cultural and architectural qualities, strong forces of social inclusion and exceptional possibilities for economic development. They are centres of knowledge and sources of growth and innovation. At the same time, however, demographic problems, social inequity, exclusion and environmental problems can also be found in our cities. In the long run, cities cannot fulfil their function as engines of social progress and economic growth as described in the Lisbon Strategy unless we succeed in maintaining the social balance within and among cities, protecting their cultural diversity and establishing high quality in the fields of design, architecture and environment.
4. We increasingly need integrated strategies and coordinated action by all persons and institutions involved in the urban development process which reach beyond the boundaries of individual cities and communities. All levels of government - local, regional, national, European level- have a proper responsibility towards the future of our cities. To make this multi-level government really effective, we must improve the coordination of the sectoral policy areas and develop a new sense of responsibility for integrated urban development policy. We need a better coordination of policies between the local, regional, national and European levels. We must also ensure that those working to deliver these policies at all levels acquire the generic and cross-occupational skills and knowledge needed to build sustainable cities and communities.
5. We strongly welcome the statements and the recommendations set out in the Territorial Agenda for the European Union and the European Charter "Network Vital Cities". We further recognize the importance of the Aalborg Commitments as a valuable contribution to strategic and coordinated action at a local level.

6. **We recommend:**

7. **To make greater use of the integrated urban development policy approaches**
8. For us, integrated urban development policy means simultaneous and fair consideration of the concerns and interests which are of relevance in urban development. The preparation of integrated urban development policy represent a process in which the coordination of key areas of urban policy, the involvement of sectors, stakeholders and public and the decisions about future development in terms space, subject matter and time are taking place. Integrated urban development policy is a key prerequisite for implementing the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Its implementation is a task of a European dimension, but that must consider local specificities and take into consideration the subsidiary principle.
9. The reconciliation of interests facilitated by an integrated urban development policy forms a viable basis for a consensus between the state, regions, cities, citizens and economic actors. By pooling knowledge and financial resources, the effectiveness of scarce public funds will be enhanced. In this way public and private investments should be better coordinated with each other. Integrated urban development policy involves actors external to the administration and enables the citizens to play an active role in shaping their immediate living environment. At the same time, these measures could provide more planning and investment certainty.
10. We recommend that European cities consider developing integrated urban development programmes for the city as a whole. These implementation-oriented planning tools should
11. describe the strengths and the weaknesses of cities and neighbourhoods based upon an analysis of the current situation
12. define consistent development objectives for the urban area and develop a vision for the city,
13. coordinate the different neighbourhood, sectoral and technical plans and policies with each other and ensure that the planned investments will help to promote a well-balanced development of the urban area,
14. focus and coordinate the use of funds by public and private sector players in terms of space.
15. be coordinated at local and city-regional level and involve the citizens and the agents that can contribute to shape the future economic, social and environmental quality of territories. This also includes strengthening the city-regional coordination. We must stop considering urban development policy issues and decisions in an isolated manner. Our cities should be pillars of city-regional development and assume responsibility for territorial cohesion. In order to do so, our cities must network more closely with each other at European level. Only by doing so, partnership between cities and rural areas on an equal partnership basis as well as between small-, medium-sized and large towns and cities within city-regions and metropolitan regions can be achieved.

16. Integrated urban development policies provide us with a set of instruments which have already proved their worth in numerous European cities in developing modern, cooperative and effective governance structures and are indispensable for improving the competitiveness of European cities. They facilitate an anticipatory coordination of settlement, economic and infrastructure development by taking account, among others, of the existing impacts of aging and migration trends and energy-policy conditions.
17. Within the scope of an integrated urban development policy, we consider the following strategies for action to be of crucial importance for strengthening the competitiveness of European cities:
  - 18. Creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces**
  19. The quality of public spaces, urban cultural landscapes and of architecture and urban development play an important role for the living conditions of the urban population. As soft locational factors, they further constitute important locational factors for knowledge industry businesses, a qualified and creative workforce and for tourism. Therefore, the interaction of architecture, infrastructure planning and urban planning must be intensified in order to create attractive, user-oriented public spaces and achieve a high standard in terms of building culture. The strategy of mixing employment, living, education, supply and recreational use in urban neighbourhoods has proved to be especially sustainable. However, the building culture can't be limited to public spaces – though it is obvious that the city and the state can exercise intensive influence on them –, building culture is a need for the whole city and its neighbourhood. Therefore it is also necessary taking into account securing the cultural heritage through preserving historical buildings, their urban and architectural values.
  20. Creating and ensuring functional and well-designed urban spaces and infrastructures is a task which must be tackled jointly by the state, regional and the local authorities, but also by citizens and businesses.
- 21. Modernizing infrastructure networks and improving energy efficiency**
22. Sustainable, accessible and affordable urban transport system, including traffic management and interlinking transport modes, establishing modern public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure, should make an important contribution to the quality of living as well as to locational and environmental quality. Urban transport must be reconciled with the different land-use requirements of housing, work areas, the environment and public spaces.
23. Technical infrastructure, especially water supply, waste-water treatment and other supply lines, must be improved at an early stage and adapted to changing needs in order to meet future requirements for high quality urban living.
24. Cities must contribute to ensuring and enhancing its residents' quality of life and its attractiveness as a business location by making use of sophisticated information and communications technologies in the fields of education, employment, social services, health, safety, security and eGovernment.

25. Energy efficiency of existing and new buildings, an economical use of natural resources and economic efficiency during operation are key prerequisites for a sustainable public utility service and transport infrastructure. An important basis for efficient use of resources is a compact settlement structure, which can be achieved by good spatial planning, preventing the urban sprawl. This involves a strong will of land supply and speculation's control. Optimized and efficient infrastructure networks and energy efficient buildings will lower the locational costs for businesses and residents.
26. Our cities must also be able to adjust to the threat posed by global climate change. Well designed and planned urban development can provide a low carbon way of accommodating growth, improve environmental quality and reduce carbon emissions. Cities can achieve these outcomes through innovative mitigation measures which in turn aid the development of new industry and low carbon business.
- 27. Proactive innovation and educational policies**
28. Cities are places where a lot of knowledge is created and also imparted. The full exploitation of a city's knowledge potential depends on the quality of its pre-school and school education, on the transfer opportunities provided within the education and training systems, as well as by social and cultural networks, the opportunities for lifelong learning, the excellence of its universities and non-university research institutes and on the transfer network between industry, businesses and the scientific community.
29. Integrated urban development policy can contribute to improving these factors, for example by bringing the stakeholders together, by supporting networks and optimizing locational structures. Integrated urban development promotes social and intercultural dialogue.
30. Integrated urban development strategies, cooperative urban development management and good governance can contribute towards a purposeful use of the potential of European cities particularly with regard to competitiveness and growth, as well as to reducing disparities within and among neighbourhoods. They provide the citizens with an opportunity for social and democratic participation.
- 31. That special attention is paid to deprived neighbourhoods within the context of the city as a whole.**
32. Within one city, considerable differences may exist in terms of economic and social opportunities in the individual city areas, but also in terms of the varying quality of the environment. In addition, the social distinctions and the differences in economic development are often continuing to increase which contributes to destabilization in cities. Therefore safety is also an important field of action of integrated urban development policy.
33. We must offer prospects and support as well as preventive measures to the residents in urban neighbourhoods which are threatened by physical deterioration and social exclusion or are disadvantaged in economic, social and environmental terms as well as in term of their physical infrastructure.

Here we need an active involvement of the residents and a better dialogue between the political representatives, the residents and the economic actors in order to find the best solution for each deprived urban area.

34. Against this background, we consider the following strategies for action, embedded in an integrated urban development policy, to be of crucial importance for deprived urban neighbourhoods:

**35. Pursuing strategies for upgrading the physical environment**

36. Economic activity and investments on one hand and high-quality urban structures, a sound built environment and a modern and efficient infrastructure on the other hand are closely interlinked. For this reason, it is necessary to improve existing building stock in deprived neighbourhoods with regard to their design, physical conditions and energy efficiency. Improvements in housing standards in new buildings as well as in existing large prefabricated buildings bear the biggest potential for increasing energy efficiency within the EU and thereby combating climate change. High quality of architecture, urban development and public spaces as well as healthy and affordable housings can strengthen people's identification with their neighbourhoods and thus make these neighbourhoods more attractive for both young and old people.

37. In order to increase the sustainability of investments into upgrading the physical environment, they must be embedded in a long-term development strategy which also includes, inter alia, the public and private follow-up investments.

**38. Strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy**

39. Measures to secure the economic stabilisation of deprived neighbourhoods must also exploit economic forces inherent in the neighbourhood themselves. In this context, labour market and economic policies which are tailored to the needs of the individual neighbourhoods will be the appropriate instruments. The objective is to create and secure jobs and to facilitate the start-up of new businesses. In particular, access opportunities to local labour markets must be improved by offering demand-oriented training. Increased use must also be made of the employment and training opportunities in the ethnic economy.

40. It is the task of the European Union, the Member States and the cities to create better conditions and instruments to strengthen the local economies and thus the local labour markets.

**41. Proactive education and training policies for children and young people**

42. A crucial starting point for improving the situation in deprived neighbourhoods is the improvement of the education and training situation in the local community in conjunction with proactive policies focused on children and young people.
43. More possibilities for education and training must be provided and improved in disadvantaged neighbourhoods which are geared to the needs of, and address deficiencies in provision for children and young people living there.

By means of a policy focus on children and young people which is tailored to the social area they live in, we must contribute to improving the prospects of the children and young people living in deprived neighbourhoods to participate and realize their ambitions and to ensure equal opportunities on a long-term basis.

**44. Promotion of efficient and affordable urban transport**

45. Many deprived neighbourhoods must bear the additional burden of poor transport connections and environmental influences which reduces the attractiveness of these areas. The development of an efficient and affordable public transport system will sustain the citizens right to mobility and accessibility.
46. In order to resolve this problem, transport planning and traffic management in these areas must increasingly aim to reduce the negative impacts of transport on the environment and to organise transport in a manner which will better integrate these neighbourhoods into the city and region as a whole. This will also require an efficient and affordable public transport system as well as appropriate networks for pedestrian and cycle traffic.
47. The better we manage to stabilize deprived neighbourhoods economically, to integrate them socially and to upgrade their physical environment and transport infrastructure, the better the chances will be that our cities will remain places of social progress, growth and innovation in the long term.

**48. We emphasize that:**

49. Our cities need enough scope for action in order to perform local tasks in a responsible manner. We need a better coordination between all policies and initiatives of the EU that concern the urban dimension and we would like legislation at European level to be examined concerning their consequences closely in the future with a view to obtaining a sustainable urban development within the framework of the existing institutions and procedures, in particular in economic and financial regard. Here the practical experience and expertise of the cities should be used.
50. The principles of urban development policy should be laid down at national level and the stimuli for innovative solutions should also be created at national level, as well as at other levels. We need a competition for the best urban development ideas and instruments.
51. Our cities need a sound financial basis which provides long-term stability. Therefore, the European structural funds should continue to form an integral part of public funding based on integrated urban development programmes. The use of these funds should be focused closely both on the existing difficulties and potentials and take into consideration the opportunities and difficulties in the Member States. If not already provided for, the local authorities should develop the necessary skills and efficiency to implement integrated urban development policies.

52. The new EU initiatives, JESSICA and JEREMIE, supporting the establishment of urban development funds and funds for SME, using financial engineering instruments to leverage private capital into the implementation of integrated urban development strategies, provide promising opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of conventional national and European funding sources.
53. At national level, Government Departments need to recognise more clearly the importance of cities to delivering national, regional and local ambitions, and the relevance and impact of their policies upon them. The efforts of different Departments working on urban issues need to be better aligned and integrated so they add value to each others work to achieve more than the sum of their parts.
54. We emphasize the importance of systematic and structured exchange of experience and knowledge in the field of sustainable urban development. A European platform to pool this exchange more intensively is crucial to support actors involved in urban development at all levels and in all sectors. We will continue to promote and intensify the exchange of knowledge and experience between policy makers, practitioners and researchers at local, regional, national and European level in the future in order to reinforce the urban dimension of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the Lisbon Strategy and the European Employment Strategy.
55. We look ahead with confidence.
56. Europe needs strong cities and regions.