

## UN-HABITAT

### **Statement of the meeting of the Advisory Council to the Warsaw Office on territorial cohesion in the context of neighbourhood and regional initiatives of the European Union**

*Recognising* territorial cohesion as a promising new paradigm for development in Central, Eastern and South East Europe, indicating a direction for the re-orientation of a number of wide-ranging sectoral policies and opening up new opportunities for better defining the goals of social and economic development and transnational cooperation.

*Recognising also* that territorial cohesion requires the distribution of development among the territories of various types and appreciating that in Central, Eastern and South East Europe and that there exists a 'very strong typological differentiation of areas, with disparities in their economic and social development levels.

*Realizing* that the scale of territorial differentiations can weaken the efficiency of the economic and social cohesion policies and lead to disparities in the quality of life, unless the autonomous features of the territories and their unique resources can be used for development purposes and as a factor for enhancing international and cross-border cooperation.

*Realizing also* that the European Union's existing policy instruments for territorial cohesion are organized predominantly according to administrative borders, seldom matching actual functional or problematic areas and with resources allocated failing to attain their potential effectiveness. This is especially marked at the external borders of the European Union which cross many homogenous areas, because these instruments often address only parts of such areas, mostly those lying within the Union's territory, and therefore instead of strengthening they may reduce cohesion.

*Agreeing* that the territories of various types have diverse needs and opportunities for development of networks and settlement structures and that territorial policies allocating public resources for urban development should: favour the specific concentrations of development activities; raise awareness of social identity; improve economic effectiveness; tackle the aging and depopulation of city centres; minimise energy consumption and pressure on the natural environment; support development of a balanced urban-rural and city-region relationships and protect natural and cultural heritage and landscape.

*Recommend that UN-HABITAT, in line with* its efforts to engage in territorial cohesion through normative activities, contributes to efforts aimed at developing transnational typology and delimitation of the functional and problematic areas in Central, Eastern and South East Europe in relation to cross-sectoral, integrated and transnational approaches to urban development and management.

*Warsaw, 7 September 2009*