

UN-HABITAT

Statement of the Advisory Council to the Warsaw Office on the European referential for sustainable and inclusive cities derived from the Leipzig Charter

Recalling the achievements of the European Union in strengthening the policies that make up the urban acquis of the European Union, such as the URBAN and URBACT programmes, the Urban Development Group activities which lead to the Rotterdam 2004, Bristol 2005 and Leipzig 2007 declarations as successive reference points for urban policy and city networking.

Recognizing that cities of Central, Eastern and South East Europe are not only important nodes of economic development and social welfare realizing national policies and plans but also an important part of the heritage and history which is the key to achieving sustainable urban development and management.

Noting that the sustainability of cities forms a basis for a diverse economy and stable development requiring a balance between social and economic processes and their natural and cultural environment, and that infrastructure and settlement patterns are of great significance for economic efficiency and should be understood as determinants of the well-being of urban communities.

Realizing that not all social groups have equal access to the opportunities present in today's cities and that demographic changes can lead to the emergence of areas of exclusion, lacking capacity for adaptation and self-identity, unwelcoming for their inhabitants, and limiting the potential for the efficient development of an inclusive and safe city.

Recommend that UN-HABITAT intensifies its efforts on urban policy issues, in line with the provisions of the Leipzig Charter, and develop activities aimed at raising the awareness of present challenges for urban policy; developing skills for adequate, rational and integrated management of urban development; stimulating the creation and intensification of the transnational networks among the cities of Central, Eastern and South East Europe, open also to cooperation with the cities and city-networks of Western Europe; enabling exchange of experiences as well as formulation and implementation of pilot projects on urban management in selected areas.

Recommend also that UN-HABITAT, in collaboration with the members of the Advisory Council, seeks to raise resources for such activities from European Union Programmes and makes efforts at tailoring the initiatives towards the needs of extending their territorial reach for cooperation.

Warsaw, 7 September 2009