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The URB-AL Programme in brief

Objective:

To develop a direct and lasting partnership between local participants in Europe and Latin America.

Activities:

Eight thematic networks of mutual interest offering an ongoing framework for cooperation and giving rise to joint projects cofinanced by the European Commission.

Two biennial political and technical meetings between mayors and representatives of towns in Europe and Latin America.

Participants:

Towns, conurbations and regions in the European Union and Latin America.

URB-AL's thematic networks

Network No 1	Drugs and towns
Network No 2	Conservation of historic urban contexts
Network No 3	Democracy in towns
Network No 4	The town as a promoter of economic development
Network No 5	Urban social policies
Network No 6	Urban environment
Network No 7	Management and control of urbanisation
Network No 8	Control of urban mobility

**Launching of Network No 3
"Democracy in Towns"
Coordinator: Issy-les-Moulineaux (France)**

The seminar launching the activities of Network No 3 "Democracy in Towns" was held in Issy-les-Moulineaux on 18 and 19 February 1999 and attended by 150 European and Latin-American participants.

Inaugural addresses were delivered by Mr Santini, Mayor of Issy-les-Moulineaux, Mr Silva, Mayor of San Salvador, and Mr Câmara Gomes, Director for Latin America at the European Commission DG 1B.

The experts responsible for drawing up the basic document "Democracy in Towns" then presented their report and their main analyses. This was followed by a detailed presentation of the URB-AL Programme.

As part of the plenary proceedings, participants were invited to join in open debates headed by prominent French and Latin-American figures. Led jointly by André Santini, Jacques Attali and Dominique Wolton in a direct link-up with the University of Marne-la-Vallée, the first forum dealt with "the place and role of information and communication technology in local democracy". The second forum dealt with the subject of "local democracy as a way of strengthening global democracy" and was led by André Santini, Michel Rocard, Michel Charzat and Rigoberto Quemé.

In addition to these proceedings, workshops were held on the following themes: "the institutionalisation of relations between the public and the local authorities", "decentralisation and local democracy", "exclusion from local democracy", "urban violence, public safety and peaceful existence", "educating the public in civics and involvement of young people in local democracy" and "training and skill-acquisition in towns".

By working in smaller groups, representatives of local authorities were able to focus on aspects of the central topic, which they felt to be most relevant in their own case. This exchange of experience also afforded participants an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the main outlines of joint projects and identify potential partners.

After the seminar, network members have five months to draw up their proposals for joint projects, which have to reach the coordinator by 31 July 1999. The coordinator then forwards all the projects to the Commission with a view to securing co-funding.

Issy-les-Moulineaux will be at members' disposal to help them redacting and presenting their proposals for joint projects.

High-Level Technical Committee meeting

The High-Level Technical Committee (HLTC) met in Brussels from 18 to 22 January 1999.

The main items on the agenda were:

- consideration of candidates for final selection of coordinators for Networks No 6 "Urban Environment", No 7 "Management and Control of Urbanisation" and No 8 "Urban Mobility", and
- consideration of proposals for joint projects under Network 2 "Conservation of Historic Urban Contexts" coordinated by the province of Vicenza.

The HLTC drew up recommendations on which the Commission could base its final decisions in these matters.

Joint projects under Network No 2 "Conservation of Historic Urban Contexts"

After assessing the six proposals for projects under Network No 2 presented by the Province of Vicenza, the Commission decided to co-fund the four projects outlined below.

Title	"Manual on local-authority management of the effect of tourism on historic centres"
Objective	Promoting methods by which local authorities can manage tourism in such a way as to reconcile lasting economic development with heritage conservation
Coordinator	Ayuntamiento de Arucas, Gran Canaria, Spain
Number of members	15: 8 LA (2 GUA, 2 MEX, 3 PER, 1 URU, 7 EU (2 E, 5 I))

Title	"ArchadiAE"
Objective	Full restoration and environmental regeneration of housing in historic contexts. Research into and use of operational techniques and traditional materials through schools and workshops
Coordinator	Ayuntamiento de Coria - Spain
Number of members	9: 5 LA (1 VEN, 4 COL) 4 EU (1 E, 1 I, 2 P)

Title	"Conservation of "olive tree" architecture"
Objective	Restoration and conservation of structures connected with the rural environment of various regions of the EU and LA. Full and harmonious integration of local way of life and cultural values
Coordinator	Diputación Provincial de Jaen - Spain
Number of members	11: 4 LA (1 ARG, 1 PER, 1 CHI, 1 MEX) 7 EU (1 E, 2 GR, 3 I, 1 P)

Title	"Historic urban contexts, land and employment"
Objective	Analysing local heritage conservation experiments and economic promotion models relating to the restoration of historic urban contexts. Training of local officials. Devising of occupational training strategies
Coordinator	Ayuntamiento de Vilafranca de Penedés - Spain
Number of members	8: 5 LA (2 ARG, 3 BRA) 3 EU (1 E, 1 I, 1 P)

Programme activities - Miscellaneous news

- ❑ The annual meeting of Network No 1 "Drugs and towns" took place in Santiago de Chile on 18 and 19 March 1999.
- ❑ The annual meeting of Network No 2 "Conservation of historic urban contexts" is scheduled to be held in Vincenza on 25 and 26 June 1999.
- ❑ A preparatory meeting for the launching seminar of Network No 4 "The town as a promoter of economic development" coordinated by the Ayuntamiento de Madrid was held in Barcelona on 24 March 1999. The seminar launching this network's activities is to be held in Madrid on 24 and 25 September 1999.
- ❑ The launching seminar for Network No 5 "Urban social policies" coordinated by the Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo is to be held on 12 and 13 April. 150 participants are expected. The basic document which will guide the work at the seminar is available on the Internet at <http://www.montevideo.gub.uy/urbal.htm>.

On the basis of a questionnaire sent to all network members, the following have been identified as potential topics for workshops: "Unemployment, employment, strategies of the informal economy, training for employment"; "Precarious or irregular occupation of land, subsidised housing"; "Management and public involvement"; "Health and education policies and programmes"; "Policies and programmes to help children, adolescents and the elderly".

International meeting on restoration of housing in historic urban contexts - Madrid, 9 and 10 April 1999

An international meeting on restoration of housing in historic urban contexts is being organised by the Community of Madrid on 9 and 10 April 1999. The aim is to launch a discussion forum on the regeneration of older, especially residential, urban areas. The Community of Madrid is making a considerable effort not only from the cultural point of view but also in terms of the search for a better quality of life for inhabitants.

The meeting is being held in cooperation with the URB-AL Programme, in which the Community of Madrid is involved (Network No 2 "Conservation of historic urban contexts").

Round-table discussions will tackle aspects essential to the appropriate and integrated execution of restoration work, especially the various strategies and levels of planning, the financial framework and the need for concerted management between the public and private sectors.

Guide to URB-AL Programme

The Guide to the URB-AL Programme was published in November 1998. Available in four languages (English, Spanish, French and Portuguese), it has been widely distributed to conveyors of information on the URB-AL Programme as well as to all the national local authority associations of the European Union and Latin America. It is also available from the European Commission's delegations in Latin America and from the Commission's offices in the Member States.

Copies of this publication can be obtained from the URB-AL Technical Secretariat.

Help Colombia

On 25 January 1999, an earthquake measuring point 6 on the Richter scale devastated the Risaralda and Valle del Cauca regions, killing 1 185 people.

The quake destroyed some 36 000 dwellings and the number of homeless is currently put at 159 000. In the aftermath of the disaster, the local authorities received emergency aid from the international community. A start will now have to be made on reconstruction, the cost of which has been assessed at some \$ 1 billion.

Some of the towns most severely affected are involved in the thematic networks of the URB-AL Programme. The towns of Pereira, Santa Rosa de Cabal and Dosquebradas are prominent examples.

An appeal for solidarity is being made to the members of the networks to mobilise available resources and launch cooperation measures to aid the devastated towns. In this way, the local authorities affected by the disaster can be helped in their difficult task of reconstruction.

Bodies wishing to contribute to the reconstruction of the regions struck by the earthquake should contact Mr Juan Luis Dominguez of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) in Colombia: echocol@latino.net.co - tel 57 1 218 10 95.

Readers' contributions

The URB-AL Technical Secretariat has received numerous articles in response to the call for contributions made in its last newsletter. Below is a selection of four topics addressed by readers. Further contributions to this page will be very welcome.

DelNet Programme

*Article by Diana A. Lopez Caramazana - Officer for DelNet Programme
ILO (International Labour Organisation) International Training Centre
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DelNet is a programme run by the ILO (International Labour Organisation) International Training Centre in cooperation with the UN Staff College and the programme for the promotion of local development of the Social Development Secretariat of Argentina.

The purpose of this new on-line programme is to increase the skills of people working in local development and decentralised positions both within the United Nations system and in local and national branches of the civil service as well as in civil society, who often have problems in accessing information and technical assistance at international level.

The DelNet programme affords participant institutions and individuals support in the area of local development through three basic services provided entirely in Spanish:

1. An on-line training course leading to the qualification "Local Development Expert" backed up by a system of virtual tutoring via e-mail.
2. A local development information service.
3. Technical assistance provided by a group of international experts.

Furthermore, DelNet offers an opportunity for networking with all the participants in the programme through the electronic discussion forum and the promotion of networks for cooperation on real topics. 55 institutions in 16 countries are currently involved in DelNet.

For more information on DelNet see Internet page: <http://www.itcilo.it/delnet>.

Municipalidad de Avellaneda, Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina

Article by Lic. Gabriela Dorrego - General coordinator for Local Authority Planning Board. Contact: con_plani@hotmail.com

In recent years, Avellaneda has embarked on a process of sustained expansion and growth.

One of the major successes in this process is precisely something of which we can now be very proud: the progress made in the implementation of the Urban Environment Plan for the city.

We believe there is a need to monitor and manage the changes that our society is now going through. We are therefore constantly striving to provide the best and most appropriate services as well as to develop alternatives, which it is our duty as a municipal authority to devise.

The public, institutions, organisations and businesses have a major role to play in meeting our town's increasing needs in this field.

Measures need to be taken involving the various social, economic, productive, educational and political sectors to improve the quality of life of the population.

The Urban Plan sets out to bring about harmonious co-existence in an environmentally sustainable town, which will mean satisfying the needs of the present generation without compromising the situation of future generations.

In the light of these needs, the Urban Environment Plan makes provision for the following:

- Establishment of an ecological industrial estate where the tanning, chemical and other industries will be relocated and new industries can also be sited.
- Establishment of an ecological reserve in the area adjacent to the future industrial estate.
- Setting up of the Environmental Management Consortium (*Consortio para la Gestión Ambiental* - CGA) as a meeting place for different institutions.
- Implementation of new technology.
- Transformation of land currently occupied by those industries destined to be relocated into areas of recreation, public facilities and green areas
- Establishment of the Avellaneda Technological Innovation Centre where young and professional people will be able to develop their creative skills.

Neighbourhood Management Boards (*Régies de Quartier*)

Article by Florence Dighiero - Coordinator of North-South Economic Solidarity

Projects. Contact: f.dighiero@infonie.fr or tel; 33 1 48 05 29 29

France has a nation-wide network of 130 Régies de Quartier (Neighbourhood Management Boards) known as the CNLRQ - Comité National de Liaison des Régies de Quartier (Neighbourhood Management Boards National Liaison Committee).

Neighbourhood Management Boards bring together local authorities, subsidised housing tenants and members of the public as partners in the joint management of neighbourhoods (Quartiers as defined by a feeling of belonging to a geographical and social entity).

These three partners perform administrative tasks on a voluntary basis. A team of full-time paid employees supervises the implementation of the project.

- The public. As users of services and beneficiaries of employment opportunities and given their role in the process of greater democratic involvement, the public are central to the operation of the Neighbourhood Management Boards.
- Local authorities. The local authority expects the Board to contribute to the technical management of the neighbourhood, job-creation and public civic involvement.
- Subsidised housing tenants. The Board can contribute to the regeneration efforts of subsidised housing bodies by involving members of the public and devising shared urban management methods with their assistance.

Action in the field is a fundamental part of the Boards' activities.

- The practical tasks of the Board are to clean, maintain, beautify and survey the neighbourhood.
- The activities of the Board always include the task of mediation. They help to integrate members of the public in difficulty, to generate local services (to meet unsatisfied needs) and new forms of activity and, lastly to integrate the neighbourhood into the town as a whole.

In practice, the Board's activities have social, economic and political dimensions.

- Social. For a Neighbourhood Management Board, public involvement in the management of urban services does not mean provision of excessive technical services but is the very means of providing these services.
- Economic. Through job-creation, the Board helps to promote practices of economic solidarity, the thinking behind which is that the economy is defined on the basis of people's needs by involving them as users, producers and citizens.
- Political. By increasing public involvement and taking greater account of community dynamics, the Board can help to bring about a potential *modus vivendi* for the neighbourhood as a whole.

**Visit to Brussels by delegation from Mercociudades
12 and 13 March 1999**

*Article by Luis Casas Luengo - Extremadura Regional Office in Brussels
Contact: fedex@online.be or tel 32 2 736 59 50*

On 10 and 11 March 1999, a delegation from Mercociudades attended the plenary session of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels.

Headed by Mr Mariano Arana, Intendente of Montevideo, the delegation was composed of Mr Hermes Binner, Intendente of Rosario (Argentina), H. E. The Ambassador Mr Claudio García de Sousa, Director of International relations of the City of Rio de Janeiro, and Mr Carlos Santanna, Vice-Prefect of Belo Horizonte (Brasil).

The visit to the Committee of the Regions was made in return for the visit paid by Mr Jos Chabert, Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions and Mr Carlos Sanchez Polo, Vice-President of the Junta de Extremadura to the 4th summit of Mercociudades held in Montevideo in September 1998.

Mercociudades brings together the main cities of the member countries of Mercosur and the associate countries (Chile and Bolivia) and performs a role similar to that of the Committee of the Regions in the European Union. The similarity of interests has prompted this move towards closer relations between the two institutions, which it is hoped will be consolidated further as a result of these visits.

To familiarise the members of the CoR with Mercociudades, the Office of Extremadura in Brussels set up an information stand in the lobby of the chamber where the European Parliament holds its Brussels part-sessions, distributing information on Mercociudades and on relations between the EU and Mercosur and in particular on the URB-AL Programme.

The information stand was opened by Vice-President Jos Chabert and Intendente Mariano Arana, who emphasised the increasingly important role played by the towns and regions in the processes of supranational integration. Both sides underlined the need to strengthen relations between Mercociudades and the Committee of the Regions and to exchange information on their respective activities.

Furthermore, Intendente Binner had the opportunity to address the plenary meeting of the Socialist Group of the CoR where a discussion took place with the European members of the latter.

On Thursday, 11 March, the members of Mercociudades attended a dinner held in their honour by the President of the Committee, Manfred Dammeyer, where they met other members of the Committee and where the value of further cooperation between the two institutions was strongly emphasised.

Addresses of coordinators of thematic networks 1 to 5

Network No 1

"Drugs and towns"

Coordination: Municipalidad de Santiago de Chile
 Sr. Carlos Varas
 Director para las Relaciones Internacionales
 Alcaldía de Santiago de Chile
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 Plaza de Armas s/n, Casilla 52-D
 Santiago / Chile
 Tel.: +56 2 6392691
 Fax: +56 2 6321962
 stgoint@reuna.cl
 www.urb-al.cl

Network No 2

"Conservation of historic urban contexts"

Coordination: Provincia de Vicenza
 Dott. Franco Pepe
 Capo di Gabinetto
 Amministrazione Provinciale di Vicenza
 Programma URB-AL - Rete n° 2
 Contrà Gazzolle, 1
 I-36100 Vicenza (Italia)
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 Fax: +39 0444 327825
 urb-al.rete2@provincia.vicenza.it
<http://www.provincia.vicenza.it/urb-al/urbal.htm>

Network No 3

"Democracy in towns"

Coordination: Ville d'Issy-Les-Moulineaux
 Mme Marie Virapatirin
 Programme URB-AL - Réseau n° 3
 Hôtel de Ville - Bureau de la Coordination
 62, rue du Général Leclerc
 F-92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux (France)
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 Fax: +33 1 40959725
 urb-al@wanadoo.fr
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Network No 4

"The town as a promoter of economic development"

Coordination: Ayuntamiento de Madrid
 Sra. Mercedes de la Merced Monge
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 Ayuntamiento de Madrid
 Programa URB-AL - Red n° 4
 Calle Mayor n° 72 - 1°
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<http://www.munimadrid.es/urbal/html/home.html>

Network No 5

"Urban social policies"

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