

IN THIS ISSUE

In creating **EuropeAid** Co-operation Office, the European Commission has expressed its intention to improve the management and enhance the visibility of external aid. EuropeAid has been

managing the URB-AL programme since January 2001.

Among its priorities: reducing the time required to implement approved projects. Launched at the end of May, a unique call for **JOINT PROJECTS** for 2001 is directed to networks 3

to 8. Deadline for proposals is 31 October 2001 and contracts will be signed no later than the end of March 2002.

Under **EUROPE** heading, an exclusive interview with Charles Picqué, the Belgian Federal Minister in charge of the policy for cities.

At the start of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, he stresses how important is the exchange of experiences in drawing up new urban policies.

OTHER CHANNELS presents *Mercociudades*, a network of cities in step with the URB-AL programme.

According to the Province of Vicenza, URB-AL is a key that opens the doors to active co-operation. Montevideo makes this point by publishing its superb collection of exchanges on social policies and Malaga gives us its approach to the urban environment.

Last but not least, rendezvous in **RIO** de Janeiro in September 2001 where local authorities will discuss social integration.



Malaga, co-ordinator of network No. 6 on the urban environment.

URB-AL PROGRAMME NEWSLETTER,

URB-AL is a horizontal decentralised co-operation programme of the European Commission, aimed at cities, conurbations and regions of the European Union and Latin America.



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Co-operation Office
Latin America Directorate

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BIENNIAL MEETING

SECOND BIENNIAL MEETING IN RIO

Against poverty and exclusion...

With its considerable favela/barrio experience, Rio is co-ordinating the second Biennial Meeting of the URB-AL programme.

Founded by the Portuguese in 1565, the city of Rio de Janeiro was the capital of Brazil from 1763 to 1960, until Brasilia was built. Rio is now the second largest city in the country. With a population of over 5 550 000, the city extends over 86 km of seaboard and covers an area of 1 255 km².

From 17 to 19 September 2001, Rio de Janeiro will welcome delegates to the second Biennial Meeting of the URB-AL Programme.

"Social Integration in the city" will be the theme approached, from the two following angles:

- Concepts, paradigms and indicators of social integration
- Social integration policy through housing and work.

The base document, used as the starting point for reflexions and discussion, is also the main thread of the workgroups. Mayors and delegates from local communities in Europe and Latin America are invited to share their experiences at this event. Furthermore, a special office will be in charge of following up the meeting's conclusions.

E-mail: urbalrio@pcrj.rj.gov.br
Website: www.rio.rj.gov.br/urbal

URBAL II



The European Commission has officially announced the themes for the six new networks that will be set up in the near future as part of the second phase of the URB-AL programme. Co-ordination of the six networks will be the subject of a call for proposals, to be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities (OJEC).

- Local financing and participative budget
- Fighting against urban poverty
- Housing in the city
- Promoting women in local decision bodies
- City and information society
- Citizens' safety in the city

JOINT PROJECTS

NOTICE TO NETWORKS 3 TO 8:

Call for proposals for joint projects - 2001

At the end of May, the Commission launched the unique call for proposals for joint projects for 2001, which is applicable to networks 3 to 8.

Two significant changes from the usual terms need to be highlighted:

- The ceiling for maximum funding has been raised to 250 000 euros and the proportion of Community co-funding to 70%,
- From now on, a single local government may co-ordinate up to 3 joint projects in different networks.

The Technical Secretariat draws your attention to the fact that the deadline for submission through the co-ordination cell for each network is the same for everyone and has been set on 31 October 2001. Moreover, all contracts for selected projects will require to be signed before 31 March 2002.

All terms relating to this call as well as the appropriate forms are available on the www.urb-al.com website, on the 'Programme Guide' page.

URB-AL HAS HAPPY AND UNEXPECTED REPERCUSSIONS

Obvious paternity...

More and more projects are being born around and about URB-AL.

Although they are not the children of the programme, there is no doubt that they all belong to the same family.

They too are based on exchanging experiences.

Beside projects and work carried out jointly, Vicenza and Brazil have started up several initiatives that would have never seen the light of day without URB-AL.

So, last December in Brazil, about twenty professors from the University of Caxias attended a training course organised by the Province of Vicenza and the Chamber of Commerce on quality certification in the field of agriculture, in accordance with European standards. The Italian associations paid for training and accommodation expenses, whereas the university funded the travel expenses. The link with URB-AL? The project was born during the Porto Alegre seminar in 2000; among the guests of honour, there was the Principal of the University of Caxias, one of the main proponents of this training.

Another wide-ranging project was also conceived at Porto Alegre: the agreement between the Brazilian federal government and the Autostrada Padova-Brescia Spa company, represented at the seminar, giving the latter the opportunity to take part in international bids to build new Brazilian motorways. This agreement relies on mixed joint ventures combining European capital and technology with Latin American labour, raw materials and capital. The investment, amounting to several million euros, will have a substantial impact on the lives of the population.

Moreover, the Province of Vicenza opened an office in Santa Maria in spring this year. Its purpose: to offer young Brazilians the opportunity to go and work for two years in a business in Vicenza, with a guaranteed salary and accommodation.

This project, equivalent to an advanced-level training, will familiarise them with European standards of work and give them a command



Villa Cordellina Lombardi, the emblem for network No. 2

of production techniques currently used in European small and medium-sized enterprises. Not only are these initiatives laudable, but they also open meaningful perspectives. All these elements reinforce our conviction that URB-AL is the key that will open new doors to active co-operation.

Adapted from a text by Antonio Franzina,
cultural attaché to the Province of Vicenza.
www.urb-al.net/rete2

REPORT ON THE SECOND ANNUAL WORKING MEETING

Urban social policies



On 31 May and 1 June, the Conference Centre of the Montevideo City Hall was the venue for participants to this working meeting.

Over 180 persons were in attendance, including delegates from some fifty Latin American and European local authorities, universities and numerous international associations and organisations.

This meeting enabled an assessment of the three years of operations of the network to be drawn up, to examine progress on joint projects from the two previous calls for proposals and to launch the third call.

On this occasion, Montevideo presented a book published by the co-ordinating cell which, under the title "Network No. 5 on the move", deals with the exchanges between experts and takes stock of the ground covered since the network was launched.

NETWORK NO. 5

The workshops dealt with the following five themes:

- The integrated and universal nature of social policy in local government
- Socio-economic policies: new challenges for local authorities
- Culture and social exclusion
- Strategic local planning as a design tool for social policy
- The right to the city and the building of citizenship.

This final working meeting enabled 18 new proposals for joint projects to be drawn up collectively.

www.montevideo.gub.uy/urbal.htm

WORKING ON SOCIAL COHESION IN CITIES

Meeting with Charles Picqué

Belgium is taking over the Presidency of the European Union from July to December 2001. In this context, it seemed appropriate to meet Charles Picqué, who personifies all the dimensions of local and urban policies. Currently a Minister in the Belgian federal government, in charge of policy for major cities, Mayor of the commune of Saint Gilles since 1987, Charles Picqué was also Minister-President of the Brussels Capital Region before joining the federal government. The following sums up his vision of urban policies and his position on exchanges of experiences.

“ You know, it is very difficult to isolate THE urban issue, given that city policies are trying to solve a whole series of problems (the nature of which might be social, economic, cultural, demographic, town planning, etc.) in a transversal and integrated way. During the Belgian Presidency I will nevertheless attempt to move the debate forward on one or two specific urban themes, since it is not possible to attack on all fronts at once. (...) There is one theme that is particularly close to my heart: the development partnership with the private sector. Public investment is often insufficient to carry out real urban regeneration. A public/private partnership that is well understood and creative can contribute to giving new dynamism to disadvantaged city districts. A word of warning: this does not alleviate the public authorities from focus on solving social problems, especially exclusion phenomena. However, the necessary space should also be created for ways of kicking-up the economy of disadvantaged districts in partnership with existing and potential investors. (...) The conditions must be created for inhabitants and economic operators to rebuild confidence in the

potential of the most disadvantaged districts. (...) I am also convinced, and this is a second priority theme for the Belgian Presidency, that social cohesion in cities needs to be worked on. It is indeed necessary to tackle the problems of mobility, environment or protection of heritage, but the social fabric of cities must also feature citizen involvement. Now this is impossible when a process of social exclusion occurs. In some districts, I am struck by the sight of persisting problems, despite the renewal being carried out. Investment has indeed taken place, but without giving any thought to social cohesion. Therefore it is necessary to create new “city trades”, that will contribute to relations and social bonding. (...) In my opinion, the Belgian Presidency will dedicate to promoting the development partnership with the economic operators on amenities, investments and housing issues, on the one hand ; it will co-operate with associative operators on social matters on the other. I am fully committed to the logic of the URBAL programme: as far as I am concerned, exchange of experiences and information are essential. Moreover, an ‘exchange forum’ is



“The conditions must be created for inhabitants and economic operators to rebuild confidence in the potentiel of the most disadvantaged districts.”



Brussels: The Grand Place, World Heritage Site



Brussels: The European Parliament

envisaged during the Belgian Presidency, this will bring together representatives of several institutions and associations that have set up original experiences.

However, in order to be really productive, these exchanges should include field knowledge and a meeting with the actors. Recently I went to see the work of an association that is attempting to revitalise a district. Without this visit, I would not have grasped the human dimension of the issues; I would only have had a theoretical knowledge of the constraints and the context. (...)

On an international level, it is important to compare situations which are comparable, to allow for specifics. An example: Some time ago, I was attending

a meeting where each participant was required to speak on a subject which, in his or her eyes, was a major concern. I was sitting between the mayors of Sao Paulo and Cairo. When they referred to the problems in their country, especially the lack of main sewerage networks and water supplies, I understood that it would be inappropriate to talk about our little problems of mobility or occupational integration. I therefore kept to concerns, which are common to all cities. (...)

“I am a convinced supporter of exchange of experiences, provided one allows enough time and means to communicate properly.”

What strikes me about city issues is that they typify all possible strands of social injustice. When it is said that in Brussels, the capital of Europe, 10% of the population is illiterate, based on international criteria, people say it is impossible, yet it is true!

Therefore I think that, in parallel with exchanging experiences, the public with a poor knowledge of cities needs information. The middle classes scarcely walk into hazardous districts and they view the city as an area for economic activity: you work and invest in it, but you are not aware of its reality. More than ever the city is being treated unfairly. It has never had such an economic importance since the Middle

Ages, but in the meantime it crystallises the

most blatant pockets of inequality. ”

From an interview conducted by the URB-AL Secretariat.

FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT CITIES EXPECT FROM EUROPE

Cities build employment in Europe

This book based on the survey by Bernard Brunhes (*Des villes construisent l'emploi en Europe*, Editions de l'Aube, 112 pp., 14.94 EUR) gathers five detailed monographs on Bilbao, Bologna, Cardiff, Marseilles and Saarbrücken. However, the summing-up also includes an analysis of employment policies conducted in Bordeaux and Grenoble (France), Osnabruck and Magdeburg (Germany), Glasgow and Sheffield (United Kingdom), Naples (Italy), Bilbao and Valencia (Spain).

As many policies as there are cities, featuring higher or lower rates of unemployment (increasing or decreasing), the status of regional capital or simply an urban hub, more or less advanced processes of reconverting industry to tertiary and urban services, extremely varied legal and institutional environments and finally the creation of projects bringing together all players or, conversely, the persistence of historic and geographic rivalries. (...) The survey notes that ‘the European dimension is not lacking’ in urban policies. However, this primarily involves payments from structural funds or from programmes of Community initiatives (Urban, Adapt, Employment), whose contribution is essential in practice for cities that are often in debt. However, the Bernard Brunhes consultants add this remark: as well as financial resources, “*it would appear that what the teams (in charge of urban development) are looking for in the European programmes is: exchanges of experiences, teaching of best practice, concepts, a certain validation of the actions undertaken*”.

Extract from the article by Alain Reverchon in “Le Monde” newspaper of 27 March 2001

In this article, drafted before the Malaga launch seminar, Pedro Marin Cots, co-ordinator for Network No. 6, assumes the role of spokesman for his team in order to present the main thread of the base document, to set out their view of the urban environment and their hopes.

In our opinion, the urban environment is a combination of various themes mixed in with the day-to-day life of citizens and affecting the territorial model, the economy, the productive systems, and the social, cultural and educational diversity.

In order to prepare the base document, we set out from a vision of the urban environment which merges traditional urban planning with the more recent concept of the environment, the aim of which is to treat the urban reality in an integrated way. It is a matter of achieving an improvement in the quality of life of the current population, without compromising the needs of future generations.

As far as we are concerned, the concept of the urban environment is closely associated with town and country planning as a physical basis where human relations develop. This idea of urban sustainability doubtless requires the territorial model of cities to be defined more clearly, meaning that the features of the traditional compact city are to be maintained, as opposed to the model of the sprawling city.



THE CO-ORDINATION TEAM'S APPROACH

Urban environment



Malaga, co-ordinator for Network No. 6

Malaga, like other European cities, is a compact city in which, next to a central business area there are other polycentric areas (...) which makes it possible to use more important human attributes, such as conviviality and communication.

Compared with a compact city, the more recent model of a sprawling city, such as Sao Paulo, Bogotá, Mexico City or Los Angeles, favours independent public areas for communication, homes and work (...).

The sprawling city, which is larger in terms of space as well as population, has a reference image of private transport along wide roads; this involves higher energy consumption per head of population or wasting scarce resources and a substantial increase in urban pollution, amounting to the same thing.

The ability of the compact city to maintain and improve its quality of life lies precisely in observing change, in order to be able to organise it and make it productive. Its value consists of redeveloping, with a vivid imagination, areas of the city no longer in use into new reference public spaces.

Thanks to their closeness to the population, local authorities are currently perceived as best able to correct the direction taken by today's cities (more in line with trade than relational aspects) by means of policies which manage demand, despite the lack of elasticity of scarce resources. (...)

URB-AL I Network No. 6, one to start up, is at the meeting point of the other networks it has close links with. In fact, the base document shows that our idea of the urban environment includes various components already dealt with by URB-AL. That is why we have carefully followed the documents produced by the cities responsible for co-ordinating the other networks.

We hope to continue along the line of exchange of experiences that contribute to improving the quality of life in urban environments through the discussions in the working groups, enabling joint projects to be launched. And doing so, we remain conscious of the need to obtain financial resources, in order to take actions similar to those set out in the base document, especially in Latin America.

Malaga's achievements

- One of the first European cities to have set up a Local Agenda 21 (Malaga Green Charter), a document that specifies the actions to implement in order to become a sustainable city,
- Extensive experience of managing European programmes: URBAN, POMAL, ECOS OUVERTURE,
- HABITAT II award for best practices.

Full version of the base document:
www.urbalmalaga.com

MERCOCIUDADES STRENGTHENS ITS LINKS WITH URB-AL

When the networks are holding hands

The need to act in international, global and regional contexts has made traditional city management obsolete. Local governments must adopt new competencies and the spatial dimension of their operations is changing.

The interaction of the city with the international arena has become part of the urban agenda.

This scenario offers opportunities for collaboration among cities and encourages governmental institutions to seek new management methods, as demonstrated by the setting up of networks of cities. Their aim is to make it easier to adapt the local development strategies to the global dynamics as well as benefiting from the opportunities derived from the regional integration process.

As from the mid eighties, the principle of networking took over as a method of urban management and gave rise to the setting up of what Sergio Boisier calls the "Virtual Regions". Cross-border networks, especially of cities, have acquired growing importance, often associated with improving regional integration. The *Mercociudades* network is an example of this. Founded in 1995 in Asunción (Paraguay) and originally consisting of 11 cities, today it brings together the common interests of 79 cities in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The objectives of *Mercociudades* are set out in their articles of association.

1. To obtain recognition of *Mercociudades* in the structure of Mercosur and to pursue joint decision-making in the field of competencies.
2. To promote the creation of networks within technical operating units to develop inter-municipal action, programmes and projects of common interest.
3. To create communication networks among the cities in order to facilitate exchange of experiences and information.

The institutional structure of the network comprises the General Assembly, the Board, the Executive Secretariat, the Permanent Administrative Secretary and 12 Technical Units. (...)

After six years in existence, the assessment of *Mercociudades* is most positive: regular work channels set up, common experiences and competencies exchanged in the various fields of urban management, regional co-operation projects developed, joint efforts to achieve an area set aside for cities in the Mercosur decision-making process. The recent setting up of the Meeting Specialising in Municipalities and Town Halls as a body reporting to the Common Market Group within Mercosur on the initiative of *Mercociudades* should also be pointed out in this regard.

Recognition of the role of the network has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of its members, from 11 to 79 in six years. Moreover, the strengthening of the 'feeling of belonging' has enabled members of the network to reach a consensus regarding their common interests, especially their participation in the thematic networks of the URB-AL programme. The three Latin American cities co-ordinating the networks, namely Montevideo, Rosario and Santiago are part of *Mercociudades* and 62 of their 79 members are taking part in at least one of the 8 URB-AL networks.

Mercociudades acknowledges the contribution from URB-AL, both in respect of rapprochement among Latin American and European communities, as well as the search for solutions to major urban problems. That is why it was agreed during the meeting of the Board which took place in Valparaíso (Chile) last November, to make known to the Commission the particular benefit contributed by *Mercociudades* to the URB-AL programme.



Rosario, co-ordinator of Network No. 7 and present Executive Secretary of *Mercociudades* (2000-2001)

In its dual capacity of co-ordinator of Network No. 7 of the URB-AL programme and of *Mercociudades* Executive Secretariat, Rosario supports the decision of the network of Mercosur cities to commit to strengthening its links with URB-AL.

Adapted from an article by Maria del Huerto Romero,
Network No. 7 co-ordinator.
Mercociudades website:
www.redmercociudades.org



Valparaíso, next Executive Secretary of *Mercociudades* (2001-2002)

URB-AL NETWORKS

NETWORK No.2

Conservation of historic urban contexts

Coordinator: *Provincia di Vicenza*
 Contact: *Dott. Franco Pepe, Capo di Gabinetto*
 Address: *Amministrazione Provinciale di Vicenza
 Programma URB-AL - Rete n°2
 Contra Gazzolle, 1
 I-36100 Vicenza - Italia*
 Tel.: +39 0444 399208 / 326768
 Fax: +39 0444 327825 / 323574
 e-mail: *urb-al.rete2@provincia.vicenza.it*
 Website: *www.urb-al.net/rete2*

NETWORK No.3

Democracy in towns

Coordinator: *Ville d'Issy-les-Moulineaux*
 Contact: *Mme. Marie Virapatirin*
 Address: *Programme URB-AL - Réseau n°3
 Hôtel de Ville - Bureau de la coordination
 62, rue du Général Leclerc
 F-92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux - France*
 Tel.: +33 1 40957920 / 40956772
 Fax: +33 1 40959725 / 40956532
 e-mail: *urb-al@wanadoo.fr*
 Website: *www.issy.com/urb-al*

NETWORK No.4

The town as a promoter of economic development

Coordinator: *Ayuntamiento de Madrid*
 Contact: *Sra. Mercedes de la Merced Monge,
 Primera Teniente de Alcalde*
 Address: *Programa URB-AL - Red n° 4
 Antiguo Laboratorio Municipal
 Calle Bailén n° 41- 2ª planta
 E-28005 Madrid - España*
 Tel.: +34 91 588 47 60 / 90
 Fax: +34 91 588 47 88
 e-mail: *fronn@munimadrid.es
 urbal4@munimadrid.es*
 Website: *www.munimadrid.es/urbal*

NETWORK No.5

Urban social policies

Coordinator: *Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo*
 Contact: *Sra. Marta Ponce de León, Directora de
 Cooperación y Relaciones Internacionales*
 Address: *Programa URB-AL - Red n° 5
 Edificio Mercosur (STP Mercociudades)
 Luis Piera 1994
 1120 Montevideo - Uruguay*
 Tel / Fax.: +598 2 400 23 38 / 413 66 24 /
 413 66 25
 e-mail: *red5@deir.imm.gub.uy*
 Website: *www.montevideo.gub.uy/urbal.htm*

NETWORK No.6

Urban environment

Coordinator: *Ayuntamiento de Málaga*
 Contact: *Sr. Pedro Marin Cots,*
 Address: *Programa URB-AL - Red n° 6
 Palacio de Salinas
 Salinas n° 6, 1ª planta
 E-29015 Málaga - España*
 Tel.: +34 95 260 27 77
 Fax: +34 95 222 30 92
 e-mail: *red6@urbalmalaga.com
 pmarin@ayto-malaga.es*
 Website: *www.urbalmalaga.com*

NETWORK No.7

Management and control of urbanisation

Coordinator: *Intendencia Municipal de Rosario*
 Contact: *Ing. Roberto Miguel Lifschitz,
 Secretario General*
 Address: *Programa URB-AL - Red n°7
 Av. Belgrano 328 Piso 3º
 AR-2000 Rosario - Argentina*
 Tel.: +54 341 421 37 51 / 421 30 14
 Fax: +54 341 449 34 00
 e-mail: *urbal@rosario.gov.ar*
 Website: *www.rosario.gov.ar/urbal*

NETWORK No.8

Control of urban mobility

Coordinator: *Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart*
 Contact: *Ing. Wolfgang Forderer*
 Address: *URB-AL Programm - Netz nr.8
 Nadlerstraße, 4
 D-70173 Stuttgart - Deutschland*
 Tel.: +49 711 216 87 99 / 216 87 98
 Fax: +49 711 216 87 97
 e-mail: *urb-al@stuttgart.de*
 Website: *www.stuttgart.de/europa/urb-al*

FOR INFORMATION

SECOND BIENNIAL MEETING

"Social Integration in Cities"
 Coordination: *Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro*
 Contact: *Sr. Raul Leite Ribeiro, Embaixador*
 Address: *Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro
 Relações Internacionais e Cerimonial
 Palacio da Cidade - Rua São Clemente,
 360 - Botafogo
 22260-000 Rio de Janeiro, RJ - Brasil*
 Tel.: +55 21 2862239 / 2861045
 Fax: +55 21 2869246
 e-mail: *urbalrio@pcrj.rj.gov.br*
 Website: *www.rio.rj.gov.br/urbal*

INTERLOCUTORS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EuropeAid Co-operation Office
 Latin America Directorate
 «Regional Integration.
 Institutional Support» Unit
 Address: *Programme URB-AL
 Rue de la Loi, 200
 B-1049 Bruxelles - Belgique*
 Tel.: +32 2 296 65 52
 Fax: +32 2 299 36 22

URB-AL TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

Contact: *Chantal Jacquot*
 Address: *Av. de Broqueville, 116- Bte 6
 B-1200 Bruxelles - Belgique*
 Tel.: +32 2 775 93 00
 Fax: +32 2 775 93 09
 e-mail: *secretariat@urb-al.com*
 Website: *www.urb-al.com*

MORE OVER

AL-INVEST PROGRAMME

AL-INVEST Secretariat
 Avenue de Tyras, 75
 B-1120 Bruxelles (Belgique)
 Tel.: +32 2 266 49 00
 Fax: +32 2 266 49 01
 e-mail: *info@al-invest.net*
 Internet: *www.al-invest.org*

ALFA PROGRAMME

Technical Assistance Office
 Rue Joseph II, 36-bte7
 B-1040 Bruxelles (Belgique)
 Tel.: +32 2 219 04 53
 Fax: +32 2 219 63 84
 e-mail: *infoalfa@ceeeta.pt*
 Internet: *www.alfa-program.com*