

Memo  
To: ECTP-CEU  
From: Jan Vogelij

Ref:  
**DG's meetings**

Under Luxembourgish EU Presidency a meeting was held of the EU Member State Directors General responsible for territorial cohesion and those for urban affairs on 20 and 21 October 2015.

### **Territorial cohesion**

The progress of the implementation of the EU Territorial Cohesion Policy was evaluated in order to prepare suggestions and proposals for the Ministers. Although a lot happens on the local level with regard to territorial cohesion, the local level does not refer to the EU policy.

In order to support the effectiveness of its implementation the document "Towards a better use of the European Territory - Pathway for strengthening territorial cohesion in Europe" has been adopted. That report included many actions for raising awareness, communication and promotion of the territorial cohesion policy, without introducing new regulation and with respect to subsidiarity and proportionality.

*I suggested that we might consider applying Territorial Cohesion as a criterion for the Urban and Regional Awards Scheme. (No reaction)*

### **Scenarios for Europe's future**

As a tool for enhancing the cohesion of Europe's territory, the application of visions and scenarios was considered because:

- Integrated Scenarios enable involvement of other sectors;
- Scenario building allows for sharing ownership,
- Scenarios demonstrate likely effects of different policy options,
- Scenarios are useful at several upcoming discussions, like the European Investment Plan, the mid term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Energy Union, the Digital Agenda, as eye-openers for potential policy pathways.

A visioning process may precede scenario building for creating a preliminary common view on the future.

## **Cross-border regions**

Cross border regions with their specific place-based aspects was a subject introduced by the Luxembourgish Presidency as a specific subject with regard to territorial cohesion as well as with regard to the Urban Agenda. More specifically, the potential of small and medium sized cities in cross-border polycentric regions were considered.

Cross border integration, being a subject that has been approached for decades already, is still usually confronted with large barriers: legal, cultural, linguistic, multi-level etc. Innovative governance solutions with horizontal as well as vertical perspectives are needed.

## **Urban Agenda**

The need for a European urban policy has been agreed and supported by the Ministers some time ago. During last EU Presidencies, the subject of “urban” regarding cities, was enriched by Italy through including small towns in remote areas, by Latvia through including small and medium sized regional clusters and by Luxembourg through introducing small and medium sized cities in cross border locations.

Now the Agenda must be elaborated through working on a revolving agenda whereby partnerships of countries would elaborate elected priority themes. The up-coming Dutch EU Presidency, initiator and promoter of the Urban Agenda, offered to host the first three or four themes as pilots for developing the system. Twelve priority themes are proposed and the meeting was supposed to select the first three subjects for elaboration. Selected were: Affordable Housing and Urban Poverty. The third subject was not chosen yet, although there was a long discussion about the subject of refugees.

*I proposed to start a dedicated partnership on the subject of sound urban planning, in which integrated approaches in modern multi-level governance would be included.*

JCV  
Soest,  
03/11/2015