

The President  
Le Président

## URBAN RENAISSANCE

### THE ROLE OF URBAN REGENERATION IN THE FUTURE OF EUROPE'S URBAN DEVELOPMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

After the reconstruction, of the Second World War, western European countries exhibited a great economic growth and the welfare state. Families could live better and consume much more. Housing conditions improved much in several countries in Europe.

Families could afford for better and bigger houses. At the same time agriculture mechanised more and workers looked for jobs in the manufacture industry and in services. They looked for jobs in the cities. Cities developed new industrial, services, shopping and housing areas.

After 1973 and 1979 oil prices crises, these trends changed. The rising of energy costs, the declining of consumption, the international recession and the intense competition gave rise to unemployment and social crises. Many traditional industries declined or became bankrupt. Some looked for better locations, less expensive rents and lower salaries, or in some industries more specialised workers. Harbours began using new technologies such as containers and ships became larger and larger. Railway transport lost business to road transport. Governments did not invest in these areas. Consequently physical and social infrastructure became obsolete. Obsolescent urban areas emerged in the inner cities, along waterfronts and more widely spread. Local tax bases declined and were not sufficient to upgrade these areas. Private investors no longer invested in these areas. These physical problems were exacerbated by social ones, such as, crime, poverty, social exclusion and racism. These problems affected cities and regions. In recent years the globalisation of production and of investment accelerated these trends.

In Europe, most cities have therefore changed rapidly, in the last 30 years. The economic bases of cities are being restructured. City economies are no longer primarily based in manufacture production,. The process of suburbanisation pulled out many functions from central places towards the periphery. These two trends gave rise to abandoned buildings, factories and harbours, to unemployment and social problems and to urban and environmental degradation.

Peripheral housing estates exhibited more attractive houses, cheaper and new, with better social facilities, infrastructure and services. So many households moved away from inner cities. These changes were also related to changes in the nature and structure of families:

- people living longer;
- the number of children decreasing;
- an increasing number of one person families

And so the number of households is increasing rapidly, even where there was a declining population.

The Urban Regeneration has been a key policy response to these problems. Its general objective is to break the cycle of urban decline, by promoting the growth of new economic activities, the creation of new activities and jobs, the reduction of social problems, the promotion of social inclusion, the improvement of urban quality and the upgrade of the urban environment. In order to address these objectives it has been necessary to support urban regeneration through stable institutional, economical, financial and technical enterprises and/or corporations. The European city is no more a place of traditional industry but a place of consumption, scientific development, innovation, culture and recreation.

The scientific development is based:

- in the expansion of Institutes and Universities;
- on clusters of knowledge, like: biomedical, space, ICT and material sciences;
- networking between new industries, the private sector, universities and local, regional and national authorities;
- in the dissemination of knowledge;
- in technology transfer; and
- in the new industries like: life sciences as biotechnology, neurosciences, vascular medicine, bio banks, experts centres of imaging; communications; new media; creative industries like: fashion, design, photography, and performing arts.

In some European cities industry has been substituted by tertiary and quaternary sectors of economy. Cultural heritage has also been the bases of the growth of tourism and leisure industries.

## **URBAN REGENERATION ACROSS HISTORY**

In the last 150 years urban regeneration as been related to:

- the improvement of public health, mainly by water treatment and supply, sewerage , waste collection and paved and clean streets;
- the construction of new urban infrastructure and facilities such as rail stations, schools, university faculties, hospitals, etc;
- the provision of housing establishment of minimum standards;
- the control of urban growth and sprawl, as a consequence of the development of urban transport systems
- the modern urban design, reconstruction of war time damage, especially after the Second World War;
- the construction of new road traffic infrastructures;
- the regeneration of obsolete industrial and waterfront areas;
- the social inclusion;
- the objectives, principles and technologies of urban sustainable development.

Some of these are characteristic of an epoch, others are present in more than one epoch and others are always present.

These themes dominated previous eras of urban change and policy (Roberts, P., 2006, p.10):

- relationship between physical conditions and social and political response;
- housing and health;
- linking social improvements and economic progress;
- optimal land use and control of urban sprawl;
- changing the role of urban policy;

All over Europe, in the last decades, new laws were published, new programmes were created and new interventions were on the field.

The relation between urban regeneration and the planning system is different from country to country. In some countries like Belgium and Netherlands urban regeneration is an extension of urban planning system. In UK it appears to be a virtually separated arm of public policy. (Couch, C., 2003, p. 6).

## **EU AND URBAN REGENERATION**

The EU does not have a mandate in urban policy, but engage in some urban matters. In 1990 the Green Paper on the Urban Environment was published. It served as an orientation for several directives and political actions. The Community Initiative Programme Interreg and the Urban Pilot Projects were initiated. Urban regeneration was focused by urban pilot projects and URBAN I and URBAN II. It was also included in several project financed by the European Regional Development Fund, ERDF. The Trans- European Networks, TEN, was important for economic growth and employment in transport, telecommunications and energy areas, in regions covered by objective 1.

Urban pilot projects financed, from 1990 to 1996, 33 projects in the first phase and 26 projects in the second phase, in a total investment of 202 million Euros. The projects had to be innovative, contribute to regional development, be on urban planning or regeneration with European interest and contain a demonstration potential of a proposal.

URBAN I, 1994-1999, financed 900 million Euros, in 118 programmes, with a total investment of 1800 million Euros, covering 3 million inhabitants, 52% in cities of more than 250 000 inhabitants (large cities); 51% in cities between 100 000 and 250 000 inhabitants ( medium size cities), and 17% in cities with less than 100 000 inhabitants ( small cities).

URBAN I financed different strategies (Drewe, P., 2008, p.186):

- integrated physical infrastructures, social inclusion, and environmental improvements - 44,8%;
- integrated approaches with a focus on social or economic or physical or environmental;
- flagship approach - 10,4%;
- integrated community group approach - 18,4%.

URBAN II, 2000-2006, financed 700 million Euros, on 70 programmes with a total investment of 1580 million Euros, covering 2,2 million inhabitants, 39% of large cities; 44% of medium cities; and 17% of small cities.

The objectives of URBAN II were:

- to formulate and implement innovative strategies for sustainable economic and social regeneration of small and medium-sized towns and cities or of distressed urban neighborhoods in larger cities;
- to enhance and exchange knowledge and experience in relation to sustainable urban regeneration and development in the areas concerned+

The urban regeneration strategies of URBAN II projects should follow the following principles:

- sufficient critical mass of population and associated support structures to facilitate the formulation and implementation of innovative urban development programmes;
- strong local partnership to define challenges, strategy and priorities, allocate resources and monitor and evaluate the strategy. Partnerships are wide and include economic and social partners, non-governmental organizations and residents' groupings;
- an integrated territorial approach linked to development strategies for the wider urban area or region;
- integration of the economic, social and environmental, security and transport aspects, including equality of access to education and training opportunities;
- promotion of equal opportunities between men and women;
- complementarity with the main forms of assistance under the Structural Funds and other Community initiatives+ ([Interreg III](#), [Leader+](#), [Equal](#)).

URBAN II considered that at least three of these criteria should be fulfilled for an area to be eligible:

- a low level of economic activity and a specific need for conversion due to local economic and social difficulties;
- a high level of long-term unemployment, poverty and exclusion;
- a low level of education, significant skills deficiencies and high drop-out-rates from school;
- a high number of immigrants, ethnic and minority groups, or refugees;
- a high level of criminality and delinquency;
- precarious demographic trends;
- a particularly degraded environment+

Urban regeneration could benefit from programmes for industry like Rechal, for coal, Retex for textiles and Konver, for defence. Social problems could be included in programmes from DGV and environmental ones from DG XI and Discus and Lasala.

The INTERREG programme also included urban regeneration programmes like: the Urban regeneration Network and the Living in Towns.

On the Urban Environment it called for several sustainable tools, like compact cities, the control of urban sprawl, the reuse of land and urban environments. DG 11, Environment, DG 16, Regional

Affairs and DG 5.

The European Spatial Development Perspective, ESDP, was approved in Potsdam in 1998, with the aim to provide an integrated, multisectorial strategy for spatial development of Europe. The objectives of ESDP were important to several urban regeneration programmes in several cities. EU programmes with more connections with urban regeneration include Jessica and Jeremie. Jessica (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) is focused on sustainable investment growth and employment in European urban areas. It arose out of the report European Strategic Guidelines. Jeremie (Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises) and focussed on start ups, new technologies, innovation and technology transfer to small and medium enterprises.

### **URBAN REGENERATION TODAY**

Urban Regeneration is related to:

- a better understanding of the process of decline and an agreement on what one is trying to achieve and how (Lichfield, 1992, p.19)
- new ways of tackling our problems which focus in a co-ordinated way on problems and on the areas where those problems are concentrated (Donnison, 1993, p.18)
- policies that attempt to return derelict and vacant land and buildings to beneficial use, create new forms of employment where jobs have been lost, improve the urban environment, and tackle an array of urban social problems (Couch, C., 2003, pref.)

Urban regeneration is key to delivering a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change (Roberts, P., 2006, p.16 and 17). It is composed of six themes:

- the connections between economic, physical and social solutions
- the physical replacement of many local urban elements
- the economic development success for the urban prosperity
- the best possible urban use and minimise the need for urban expansion and greenfield development
- the importance of political forces and dominant social conventions
- the application of the principles of sustainable development

Urban regeneration includes different main themes:

- revitalization of life in towns and cities
- the promotion of sustainable solutions
- economic development
- the solution to social problem areas
- environmental actions
- accessibility and connectivity

The key areas of focus for urban regeneration include main areas:

- city and town centres
- inner towns and cities
- areas suffering housing market failure and abandonment
- peripheral housing areas
- old industry areas: harbours, airports, coalfields, railyards, power stations
- areas of degraded and polluted environments

The experience of Urban Regeneration in some European cities may conclude that the key issues are (Couch, C. 2003 p. 208):

- the approach of regeneration in the globalised economy
- the need to promote an attractive image of the area
- the need for cooperation between cities and regions
- the importance of long-term and new forms of partnership
- the integration of sustainable policy goals
- the potential of culture projects
- the benefits of new industry, educational and research institutions
- the importance of social inclusion policies and foster social capital
- the importance of green infrastructure

The SENSE OF PLACE gives special character, identifies the city and retains and attracts population and tourists. It is essential that urban regeneration includes an integrated and comprehensive solution and a strategic process. (Roberts, P., 2006, p. 22).

The process of urban regeneration mobilises a wide range of actors and stakeholders including the EU, national, regional and local governments, local communities, corporate business, investors and construction companies, property owners, real estate investors, financial and economic organisations, social and environmental organizations, teaching, innovative and research institutions, but most of all the local community.

Urban regeneration initiatives have been analysed and published for several Regions, Cities and Towns. These include such diverse places Milan, Amsterdam, Paris, London, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Ruhr region, Glasgow, Dortmund, Montpellier, Barcelona, Belfast, Glasgow Manchester, Rennes, Seville, Lille, Dundee, Charleroi, Liverpool, Wallonia region, Utrecht, Edinburgh, Berlin, Antwerp, Bilbao, Brussels and Chester.

Experience teaches that the following characteristics are very important:

- the location is very important for the accessibility of citizens, workers and tourists, opportunities of location of new activities, such as tourism, culture, leisure and services; central places are generally more attractive than peripheral ones
- the objectives of regeneration
- the attractiveness of the landscape, people and of investments.
- the existing heritage.
- the economic reconstruction, the strength of local markets and regional national and global economy.
- the rail or motorway, port, energy, ICT and airport infrastructure.
- the existence of a regional and national urban policy.

The study of several urban regeneration initiatives in several cities in Europe concluded that what is also important is stability of direction, of financing and of organisational cohesion. (Couch, C. 2003 p. 199). In some circumstances special delivery vehicles are needed to deliver large scale regeneration projects such as urban development corporations or by enterprise zones.

Strong planning frameworks are essential for effective and sustainable regeneration. They provide confidence to investors and communities affected by regeneration. They are most effective when they are complemented by a range of supporting policies and programmes.

Marketing strategies are an important component at different level and phases. To attract investment in the first phase. To attract activities, faculties, high-tech enterprises, scientific and research institutions, technology centres, cultural facilities, innovative complexes, meanwhile the site is in reconstruction. To retain and attract citizens, workers and tourists when everything is concluded.

Social inclusion policies are essential to combat unemployment, low preparation for work market, homelessness, etc. Promoting employment, training, education, health and building up capacity and participation in society.

Urban regeneration should have a holistic and integrated approach to be able to solve the problems of the area and contributing to resolve several problems of the city and the region.

Urban regeneration should also meet the challenge of sustainability. At the European level there are several programmes and projects, including the Fifth and Sixth Environmental Action Programmes, the Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign and the Aalborg Charter. Several countries have a National Development Sustainable Strategy. In urban regeneration sustainable urban development can assume different forms such as: achieving a better relationship between the distribution of people and jobs, more sustainable patterns of urban form, the reduction in the need for urban expansion, the brownfield and contaminated sites cleanup, ecological planning principles in the master plan, in the infrastructures and in the construction projects, sustainable drainage, flood management, renewable energy schemes, and in the new activities like converting disused buildings into, business and research parks, museum, or creating green and recreation zones; and maximizing densities and promoting public transportation, cycling and pedestrian safety.

State institutions need private investment, experience and risk to deliver urban regeneration. The institutions involved should be managed having in mind public and private interests of several organizations that is known as cross sectorial long-term partnerships.

Financial investment and funding for regeneration redevelopment is essential for these long term investments. Without state help and EU funding it is more difficult to go on with the urban regeneration in European Cities and Towns.

## **CONCLUSION**

All European cities need urban regeneration. Sustainable Urban Regeneration can make an enormous contribution to the resolution of main problems such as the current economic situation, global warming, energy consumption, social exclusion and urban decline. This will only be achieved if concerted action is taken across all European countries.

The principles of urban regeneration are well established. The experience of urban regeneration in European Cities and Towns is well proven. The current and medium term prospects for the economic situation needs an incentive for sustainability. European Cities and Towns need to make an enormous contribution to the recovery of European economic problems through their regeneration.

There is therefore a need for a greater level of urban regeneration to help deliver, the European goals of economic growth, sustainability and social inclusion. Experience has shown the benefit of European programmes applied to Cities and Towns. There is therefore an opportunity for the creation of a European programme to dynamise Urban Regeneration all over Europe to deliver the required Urban Renaissance.

More than an Urban Programme it shall be a programme for Urban Renaissance that will give a new impulse to city prosperity, the seed of the future, the glory of the past recovered for future generations. The preparation of European Towns and Cities for the Future

## **URBAN RENAISSANCE**

**ECTP-CEU proposal is that this programme will be designated:**

## **URBAN RENAISSANCE PROGRAMME**

ECTP- CEU is willing to help EU authorities and the Committee of the Regions in the design of such a programme.

To achieve this objective the Urban Renaissance Programme shall have a budget that is, at least, ten times the budget of Urban I and II to move the European effort in this field from a series of useful localised projects to a transformative programme reaching out and having an impact on all areas.

The objectives of urban regeneration shall:

- promote the overall prosperity, equity and competitiveness of cities, towns and regions;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- preserve the heritage values and the uniqueness of place of cities and towns and dynamise new activities as motors of development;
- enhance the cities and towns through a variety of sustainable solutions as efficient energy, efficient use of resources , mobility, air quality, compact city, higher urban densities, sprawl control, flexible solutions, mixed use, eco-cycle infrastructures, local shopping and biodiversity;
- help solve economic, social, physical, environmental, housing, transportation and health problems in a strategic, integrated, comprehensive and sustainable way;
- mobilize and upgrade the contributions of culture, knowledge, innovation, new industries and recreation to the urban regeneration;
- identify actions that can enhance sustainability, contribute to economic growth and promote social inclusion,
- turn problem areas into opportunities for creating sustainable urban development;
- mobilise the participation, from the outset, of all partners and actors, communities involved and local communities.

Urban regeneration Programme shall be based on the following operational parameters:

- a detailed analysis of the area within the context of the functional city and the wider region,
- a comprehensive vision and strategy to the area, providing an integrated vision and the strategy for the development of the city and of the region, with the reference of the national urban policy, based on sustainable principles;
- a related integrated delivery strategy, plan and actions, including economic and financial issues, new activities, employment, education, training, physical and environmental aspects, health, social and community issues, and housing and transportation issues, with the most possible consensus and cooperation, through the participation of all the actors: professional, political, social, financial, stakeholders, community members and neighbour communities, that guaranties an improvement in the quality of urban life;
- a clear emphasis on how actions, mechanisms and resources, will contribute to achieve the vision and the objectives;
- a contract+ identifying all partner, their means of engagement, their activities, the financial contributions, programmes and outcomes;
- vertical and horizontal integration of activities and resources and cooperation of all partners, including statutory authorities;
- a great emphasis in urban design and quality;
- clear and operational short, medium and long term objectives and goals, quantified wherever possible, and with milestones of progress;
- a solid institutional basis, with a strategic commitment at the local, regional and national levels, to deliver economic and finance stable resources;
- a monitoring and evaluation system of urban regeneration, quantified wherever possible, including sustainable indicators, to analyse the achievement of objectives and of sustainability, to revise the programmes when and if necessary, and to disseminate the information.

## **EUROPEAN CITIES ARE DIAMONDS THAT SHALL BE POLISHED**

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