

# General Directors meeting for Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters

National Library of Latvia  
3 Mūkusalas Street, Riga

Wednesday, 6 May 2015

*\*Please note that Latvian time is one hour ahead of Brussels time*

8.30-9.00 Registration and welcome coffee  
*Venue hall "Daugava", 2<sup>nd</sup> floor*

9:00-9:10 **Opening of the meeting, Presidency speech**

*Venue: hall "Rīga", 2<sup>nd</sup> floor*

***Ilona Raugze***, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

9:10-10:40 **Implementation of Territorial Cohesion Objective, including the Territorial Agenda 2020**

***Frank Vansteenkiste***, Director General, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure of Luxembourg

***Kai Böhme***, Director, Spatial Foresight GmbH

The Presidency TRIO of Italy-Latvia-Luxembourg has decided to base its common programme in the field of territorial development on a discussion about the way in which the European Union's objective of Territorial Cohesion is implemented. It is the right time for this discussion as it has been more than five years since Territorial Cohesion was recognised as a European Union (EU) objective in the Treaties. Moreover, it was agreed by the ministers responsible for territorial and urban issues during the Hungarian Presidency to evaluate the need to review the policy document "Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020, Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions" (TA 2020). In this context, the Presidency TRIO has undertaken an assessment based on a survey which looked at the implementation of the Territorial Cohesion objective and the TA 2020, among others, addressing relevant governance mechanisms and challenges.

During the meeting the draft final results of the survey will be presented. The intention is to continue the discussion at DG level on how the Territorial Cohesion objective has been implemented, including what success and failures we experienced and what can be done in the future to improve support mechanisms. The debate shall indicate how to proceed with the TA 2020, prepare the ground for further actions, including the improvement of the governance of territorial cohesion related policies and instruments, and launch the debate of Cohesion Policy post 2020.

*Discussion issues:*

- 1) *How would you assess the implementation of territorial cohesion in the past five years and where do you think are the most apparent needs to improve its implementation?*
- 2) *How could the delivery of territorial cohesion be improved using existing instruments and do we need new instruments to do so?*
- 3) *What are the main achievements and shortcomings of the TA 2020 and what direction should any improvement take?*
- 4) *How could we make better use of the TA 2020, in terms of delivery and communication?*

10:40-11:10

Coffee break

*Venue hall "Daugava", 2<sup>nd</sup> floor*

11:10-13:45

**Ministerial Draft Declaration**

*Venue: hall "Rīga", 2<sup>nd</sup> floor*

**Introduction of the agenda item**

***Ilona Raugze**, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development*

Cities and towns play a significant role in economic, social and territorial development and cohesion of the EU, they account for approximately 70% of EU citizens, social and economic activity. Meanwhile they face different challenges which require purposeful and coordinated action at all governance levels. These circumstances triggered an EU wide debate among the EU Members States, EU institutions and stakeholders regarding the need to develop the Urban Agenda at EU level.

So far the development of the EU Urban Agenda has not been discussed by the ministers responsible for territorial cohesion and urban matters. Nevertheless political debate is needed in order to provide future Presidencies, the Commission and other key stakeholders with a mandate to further develop the EU Urban Agenda.

The Presidency TRIO of Italy-Latvia-Luxembourg has decided to contribute to the EU Urban Agenda development process.

With reference to the Presidency TRIO common programme, the Latvian Presidency has prepared the draft Declaration that includes political statements to provide political support for the development of the EU Urban Agenda. The final draft Declaration will be proposed for adoption at the informal meeting of Ministers responsible for territorial cohesion and urban matters held on 10<sup>th</sup> of June in Riga.

The draft Declaration consists of two major parts: part one includes statements regarding the overall EU Urban Agenda framework, the second part includes statements on the essential role of small and medium sized urban areas.

Discussion during the Directors General meeting will be organised around the two parts of the draft Declaration, with the aim of agreeing on the statements to be submitted for adoption at political level.

**Part 1 – Actions to support the EU Urban Agenda**

***Normunds Popens**, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission*

***Mark Frequin**, Director General, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of Netherlands*

So far there is no particular agreement among involved parties regarding shape and content of the EU Urban Agenda or on the main responsibilities among parties involved. However a common understanding on particular elements of the future EU Urban Agenda can be acknowledged.

The first part of the draft Declaration includes the statements identifying the main principles and elements towards the EU Urban Agenda development. It also includes statements defining the main responsibilities among different players that would lead towards better policies affecting urban areas, more harmonised and effective measures in support of sustainable development and better participation and contribution of urban areas in achieving common EU goals.

At the meeting participants will be invited to comment on the proposed statements of the first part of the draft Declaration.

In order to facilitate discussion, DG Regio will present the Commission's next steps with regards to the EU Urban Agenda, followed by the Netherlands presentation on the plans of the Dutch Presidency, including their goals and roadmap with important milestones towards the EU Urban Agenda development and adoption.

*Discussion issues:*

1. *Do you agree to the proposed main principles / elements towards the EU Urban Agenda development?*
2. *Do you agree to the proposed roles of the Members States, the Commission, local and regional authorities?*
3. *What should be the further steps and milestones in developing the EU Urban Agenda?*

13:45-15:00 Lunch, family photo

*Venue: Atrium, 1<sup>st</sup> floor and Restaurant, 1<sup>st</sup> floor*

15:00-16:30 **Part 2 – Acknowledgement of the significant role of small and medium sized urban areas in overall territorial development**

*Venue: hall "Rīga", 2<sup>nd</sup> floor*

***Mart Grisel, Director, European Urban Knowledge Network***

The second part of the draft Declaration is devoted to the Presidency TRIO's common priority of small and medium sized urban areas (SMUAs), acknowledging their significant role and potential for balanced territorial development and achievement of European goals, as an integral part of the EU Urban Agenda.

According to the ESPON TOWN research (KU Leuven and ESPON, 2014), approximately 24.2% of the population in Europe lives in SMUAs. These areas provide a significant existing and potential collective contribution to the EU common strategic goals, especially regarding employment, climate change and energy sustainability, fighting poverty and social exclusion. The presence of clusters of SMUAs in the core of the European continent, which contributes to the largest share of its GDP, shows their importance regarding the realisation of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

In view of the essential role they play in regional development the issue of SMUAs, their challenges, potential and development directions, deserves particular attention. The discussion on this issue is the Presidency TRIO's contribution to the common EU Urban Agenda development process.



The proposed draft Declaration contains statements acknowledging the significant role and unused potential of SMUAs for balanced territorial development and achievement of the strategic European Union goals. It also identifies the most significant activities to be done at different governance levels to unlock their potential and fully use their assets.

In order to facilitate the discussion on the issue the draft research report “Challenges of Small and Medium-Sized Urban Areas, their economic growth potential and impact on territorial development in the European Union and Latvia”, developed upon the request of the Latvian Presidency, will be presented during the meeting. The report synthesizes evidence from recent studies and publications on SMUAs and statistical data analysis. It describes various cases of SMUAs from EU countries. Inter alia, it gives an insight into development challenges and development potential of SMUAs, describes preconditions for development and possible development directions, analyses funding opportunities as well as proposes recommendations for further activities at EU and national level.

**Discussion issues:**

1. *Do you agree to the statements of the declaration regarding the role, challenges and potential of SMUAs?*
2. *Do you agree to the proposed roles and actions of the Members States, the Commission, local authorities?*
3. *Do you have any success story to share regarding growth of particular SMUAs and their contribution to the economic development? Whether and how it was supported by EU or national policies?*

16:30-17:30

**Closing Session**

*Venue: hall “Rīga”, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor*

**Preparation for HABITAT III Conference**

*Ana Moreno, Coordinator, HABITAT III Secretariat*

*Normunds Popens, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission*

**Presentation of the LUX Presidency**

*Frank Vansteenkiste, Director General, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure of Luxembourg*

**Presentation of the NL Presidency**

*Mark Frequin, Director General, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of Netherlands*

*Hans Tijn, Director, Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment*

**Presidency Closing Remarks**

*Iļona Raugze, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development*