

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE
URBAN SUSTAINABILITY
AND INTEGRATED
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“LA PERSPECTIVA SOCIAL EN LA REGENERACIÓN URBANA: LA EXPERIENCIA DE BÉLGICA”

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em 2010.es



Con la colaboración de:

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The social perspective in urban regeneration: The Belgian experience

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Grootstedenbeleid
Politique des Grandes Villes



POD | Maatschappelijke Integratie
SPP | Intégration Sociale



Origin of the Federal Urban Policy.

- Starting point (Government Agreement 1999):
“Negative dynamics in certain urban areas as a result of: urban flight, impoverishment, lack of public investments, societal problems, lack of safety ...”
- Main objective:
“To create a better living environment in these areas via an overall, integrated approach, in consultation with the local population.”
- Start of impulse programme in large cities: the year 2000.
- → City contracts – now “Sustainable City Contracts” (17 cities).
- Budget 2010: EUR 67 million.



Objectives of the Federal Urban Policy programme

Strategic Objectives:

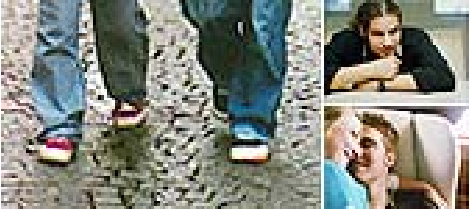
1. Promote social cohesion in problem areas.

→ social inclusion, fight against poverty, social and cultural diversity, social services, social economy, assistance for newcomers, etc.

2. Reduction of the cities' ecological footprint.

→ sustainable energy, energy-efficient buildings

3. Improve cities' appearance and image.



Key strategic objective: Social cohesion

- 2009 : 88 out of 127 projects.
- Social cohesion is also the most important secondary goal for projects that have Strategic objective 2 and 3 as their key objective.
- Thus social cohesion constitutes the central axis of the “Sustainable Cities” programme.
- The Federal Urban Policy Unit is part of the Federal Public Service “Social Integration”.



Operational objectives of social cohesion

Examples :

- Promoting integration of new residents.
- Creating public spaces for encounters and recreation.
- Social and professional integration of low-skilled workers.
- Closing the digital divide.
- Promoting participation of the residents.
- Neighbourhood mediation in case of trouble.

Federal administration determines the scope - cities customise to their needs.

General condition: integrated approach

- Projects must fit in with an **overall vision** of the city and the problem areas in a perspective of sustainable development.
- No one-dimensional “single-shot” projects.
- Integrated approach of various policy areas (employment, housing, living environment ...).
- Participation of various stakeholders (population, city users, investors ...).
- Cooperation of several policy levels (multi-level approach).



Territorial approach: deprived areas

- The Federal Urban Policy Programme is chiefly a programme for the regeneration of problem areas.
- The definition of these areas is based on a “Chart index of distressed neighbourhoods in Belgium” (2001 and 2006).
- 22 indicators: housing, education, unemployment, comfort, income, health conditions ...
- Total number of deprived areas: 1,369
- Number of residents: 1,702,997 (16 % of the Belgian population).



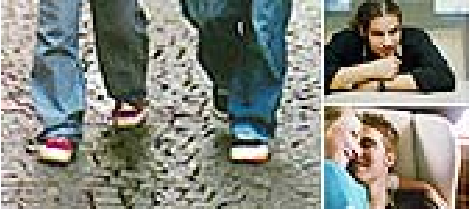
Examples of integrated 'social cohesion' projects.

City of Brussels : Project X

A project that aims to restore occupied private rental housing to public health standards.

Four integrated operational objectives :

- **Renovation** of the housing units that do not comply with housing standards (public financing).
- **Integration by housing:** indigent tenants can move back after renovation and pay the same rent during 9 years.



Urban regeneration in Belgium

- **Climate objective:** reducing energy consumption, energy-efficient materials.
- **Social and professional integration:** renovation works carried out by people who receive a minimum income from the Public Social Welfare Centre (professional experience, improving skills).

Logo van de
desbetreffende sectie
hier toevoegen



City of Antwerp PARK RAILWAY NORTH

Conversion of an old goods marshalling yard of the Belgian Railway C° (24 ha) into a public park.

Key objectives:

- **From split to backbone:** reconnecting the city centre to the poorer northern neighbourhoods.
- **Redevelopment** of vast brownfield into public space.
- **Impulse for the environment** in the Antwerp North district (first green zone).

Urban regeneration in Belgium

- **Social cohesion:** sport, cultural and recreational facilities, skate & BMLX bowl, public events, public participation.
- **Public participation** through specific involvement in the project (expositions, discussions, walk-and-talk, party week, events “(un)known is (un)loved” ...)

Partners :

- City of Antwerp
- Federal government (Urban Policy)
- Flemish government (City Policy)
- EU (ERDF)
- Private investors
- Local associations.



City of La Louvière : CITIZEN SHOPS

A shopping gallery serving the disadvantaged

- Part of the city's urban development strategy involves renovating neighbourhoods while supporting social life, self-image and a social mix.
- A series of boutiques offer a choice: second-hand clothes, products for children, hair and beauty salon, laundrette, furniture store and restaurant.

Urban regeneration in Belgium

- PSWC clients enjoy preferential prices (advantage cards), but the gallery is serving the entire population of La Louvière.

Key objectives:

- **Social inclusion:** special facilities for the disadvantaged.
- **Social cohesion and mix:** located in the city centre, open to all.
- **Social and professional reintegration:** real-life laboratory for trainees in work-inclusion schemes.
- **Building renovation** (former paint shop) in the city centre.

Inclusive urban policy at a federal level

There is more to the federal urban policy than the City Contracts. Urban policy involves many policy areas, falling under the responsibility of several federal public services.

Examples:

- An average 70% of the financial support measures for lower income groups of the Federal Public Service Social Integration go to the residents of the larger cities (32% of the population)

Urban regeneration in Belgium

- Fiscal measures of the for promotion of renovation in urban problem areas (Financial Department).
- Strategic plans for Safety and Prevention in the cities (Domestic Affairs).
- Financial impulses for young physicians to establish a practice in urban problem areas (Public Health Service).

The further development and coordination of these measures is a priority issue for the next few years within the Federal Urban Policy.

Multi-level governance in Belgium

An integrated urban policy requires mobilising all policy areas and levels (Leipzig Charter).

Context of Belgium → cooperation between Federal State, Communities, Regions and Cities.

Consultative channels:

- **Inter-ministerial Conference on Urban Policy** (federal state ministers, regions, communities).

- Proposal: **High Council for Urban Policy:** consultation platform for all stakeholders in the urban policy (higher authorities, local authorities, scientific environment, civil society ...).

Legal basis:

- **Cooperation agreement** between the various administration levels.



Main theme of the Belgian EU-presidency 2010 : *Towards a common methodology for Multi-level urban policy in Europe*

The Open Method of Coordination or a method inspired on the OMC for integrated urban policy

- → Method for intergovernmental policy coordination, combined with EU monitoring.
- → Based on the need for a unified European approach to face common challenges for urban areas (social exclusion, climate change, ageing society...).



Four stages:

1. Agreeing to **common objectives** (shared goals) on European level = Common indicators
2. **Preparing national strategic reports** – national (incl. regional) policies to meet the common objectives.
3. Production of **joint reports** by the European Commission.
4. Evaluating and **mutual learning** (peer reviews).



Belgian EU presidency 2010

Multi-level conference

“New methods for an integrated urban development strategy on all levels of government”

December 02 City of Liège