

P6_TA(2008)0069

The Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter

European Parliament resolution of 21 February 2008 on the follow-up of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter: Towards a European Action Programme for Spatial Development and Territorial Cohesion (2007/2190(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Territorial Agenda of the EU ('the Territorial Agenda') and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities ('the Leipzig Charter'), which were both adopted at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for spatial planning and urban development held in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007, and the First Action Programme for the Implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union, adopted at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for spatial planning and development held in Ponta Delgada (Azores) on 23 and 24 November 2007 ('the First Action Programme'),
 - having regard to the Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion (COM (2007)0273) ('the Fourth Cohesion Report'),
 - having regard to the European Spatial Development Perspective, adopted at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for spatial planning held in Potsdam on 11 May 1999,
 - having regard to the results of the European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (ESPON) 2006 Programme,
 - having regard to the proposed ESPON 2013 Programme,
 - having regard to Articles 158 and 159 of the Treaty establishing the European Community,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development (A6-0028/2008),
- A. whereas territorial diversity, polycentrism and compact cities are essential structural characteristics of the territory of the European Union,
- B. whereas the majority of Union citizens now live in cities,
- C. whereas the current challenges facing spacial development in the European Union include climate change, urban sprawl and land development, energy consumption, transport infrastructures, demographic change, including the depopulation of rural areas and other regions of the EU, the impact of enlargement on social, economic and territorial cohesion and the uneven regional effects of globalisation, including the widening gap between rich and less prosperous regions, as well as the unequal development of urban and rural areas combined

with structural change;

- D. whereas the objectives set out in the Territorial Agenda are the establishment of a polycentric, balanced urban system and the creation of a new urban-rural relationship, the formation of innovative regional clusters, ensuring parity of access to infrastructures and knowledge, the promotion of trans-European risk management, sustainable development, forward-looking management and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage,
- E. whereas the objectives set out in the Leipzig Charter are making greater use of integrated urban development policy approaches by creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces, modernising infrastructure networks and improving energy efficiency, promoting proactive innovation and educational policies and – particularly in deprived neighbourhoods – promoting sustainable, efficient and affordable urban transport, pursuing strategies for upgrading the physical environment, strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy, and proactive education and training policies for children and young people,
- F. whereas spatial planning is the proper instrument for the guidance of land use and settlement structure in the Member States and their regions and cities, and for determining quality of life and development opportunities on the ground,
- G. whereas, in addition to cohesion policy as an instrument for strategic governance, other measures are needed to achieve the objectives of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter, particularly spatial impact assessments, the integrated approach and spatial planning observation,
- H. whereas, in addition to cohesion policy, rural development policy has significant spatial impact; whereas there is insufficient integration of these two policy areas and therefore a need for enhanced synergies that will reveal real development potential and boost the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural areas, something which would help in combating rural depopulation,
- I. whereas the quality of public space and of the natural, cultural and architectural environment plays an important role in the quality of life of people living in urban and rural areas and are crucial ‘soft’ location factors,
- J. whereas creativity and innovation are crucial resources in the transition to a globalised knowledge society; whereas, therefore, the development of creativity potential on the ground is key to the success of sustainable spatial and urban planning,
- K. whereas ‘Baukultur’ (the culture of a high quality built environment), that is to say the sum of cultural, economic, technological and environmental aspects influencing the quality and process of planning and building, is an essential component of integrated urban development,
- L. whereas the integrated approach implies that the projects developed should constitute a coherent long-term plan incorporating the economic, social and environmental dimensions and fully involving key partners in the planning, execution and evaluation of urban development programmes;

- M. whereas an integrated approach to the territorial dimension of cohesion does not consist only of land planning and urban development actions and policies, because the ultimate objective is to ensure a balance between Union citizens wherever they live, an aim which cannot be achieved solely through land planning,
1. Considers that the objectives of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter can only be achieved by pursuing a comprehensive, cross-sector, holistic development strategy to put the integrated approach into practice;
 2. Proposes, in the context of the mid-term review of cohesion policy, and with an eye to post-2013 cohesion policy, that the implementation of an integrated approach should be a binding requirement for programme planning and project selection under the Structural Funds; to that end, calls on decision-makers to undertake voluntarily to implement new cooperation methods;
 3. Welcomes the decision of the EU ministers responsible for urban development, taken at their informal meeting in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007, to set up an intergovernmental working party, chaired by Germany, to identify and elucidate various issues relating to the implementation of the JESSICA initiative;
 4. Welcomes the creation of a Commission inter-service group dealing with suggestions for the implementation of the integrated approach and calls on the Commission to work in close cooperation with all social, environmental and economic partners and to ensure their involvement in all decisions relating to territorial cohesion; asks the Commission to keep Parliament informed about the progress of this work;
 5. Calls for particular attention to be paid, in the shaping of post-2013 cohesion policy, to spatial characteristics and needs and to region-specific treatment based on these factors; recommends the use of implementation-oriented planning tools, as mentioned in the Leipzig Chapter, based on research and permanent monitoring;
 6. Calls on the Commission and Council, in the context of the mid-term review of cohesion policy, to make better use of synergies with the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development for the development of the territory as a whole; recommends, with an eye to post-2013 cohesion policy, close coordination between cohesion policy and rural development policy, in order to enhance the opportunities for improving the quality of life in rural areas;
 7. Notes that it is not only metropolitan regions that have innovation potential, and that some relatively remote and rural areas are in the forefront of achieving the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy; urges the Commission to look more closely at the success factors of these areas with a view to creating a development model for small and medium-sized towns in rural areas;
 8. Stresses the importance of partnership and of the sharing of functions between urban and rural areas for the balanced and sustainable development of the territory as a whole; calls on urban and rural authorities in cooperation with all public and private stakeholders to identify their common assets and produce joint regional and sub-regional development strategies in order to secure better living conditions and quality of life for all citizens of the Union; calls on the forthcoming

presidencies to hold informal meetings of the ministers responsible for territorial planning and urban development to address these issues;

9. Calls on the Commission and Council to take the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter into account in their review of the general budget of the European Union, and to make qualitative adjustments to enable territorial cohesion targets to be incorporated more effectively into EU policies; considers that legislative measures need to be taken in the next few years to achieve this;
10. Calls on the Council, on reviewing the Lisbon and Göteborg strategies (sustainable development strategy) at the 2008 Spring summit, to define territorial and urban policy interests as objectives;
11. Urges the Member States to take swift action to achieve the goals of the Territorial Agenda and implement the Leipzig Charter;
12. Calls on the Council and the Member States, in a spirit of true multi-level governance that both takes account of the territorial diversity of the European Union and respects the subsidiarity principle, to fully involve local and regional governments, including cross-border public authorities, and, in pursuit of the partnership principle, to involve the economic and social partners, relevant NGOs and private stakeholders in the action programmes for implementing the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter, and gives its wholehearted support to these efforts; stresses that this need to work together should be regarded positively by all actors involved, as it has been proved that coherent collaboration is effective;
13. Recalls the key role that access to information and communication technologies plays for the future development prospects of the regions, and thus recommends, as mentioned in the Territorial Agenda, integrating infrastructure such as broadband cables into new transport and communication programmes;
14. Calls on the Commission to undertake a systematic analysis of the territorial impact of relevant key EU policies, as agreed by the Member States under line of action 2 of the First Action Programme, and also to undertake a spatial impact assessment of relevant new legislation; points in this connection, to the potential of the evaluation methods developed by ESPON;
15. Acknowledges that high quality pre-school and school education, lifelong learning, universities and other research institutes are fundamental for the future development of cities and regions;
16. Recalls that Natura 2000 is an important instrument for European spatial development; insists that the requirements of Natura 2000 be fully implemented and that landscape corridors and open space networks between protected areas be created so that flora can disperse and fauna can move freely, thus preserving biodiversity;
17. Calls for a policy on creative economic sectors to be incorporated into spatial and urban development with the aim of creating a framework, using the instruments available (cohesion policy, spatial and urban planning) and taking into account the

quality of space, for improving opportunities for creative and innovative action;

18. Considers it necessary, in the light of demographic trends, to improve the adaptability of cities and regions, prioritising self-development and the promotion of voluntary work;
19. Emphasises that demographic trends lead to new challenges on the labour market, in access to social and health services and housing and in planning in general; points out that the ageing of the population can be seen as an opportunity for creating new jobs in a growing market and new products and services which improve the quality of life of older people; stresses that the development of the so-called 'silver economy' is important at local and regional level;
20. Calls on the Member States to guarantee as a matter of principle throughout their territory the availability of, right of access to and accessibility of services of general interest, in order to enable people in differing regions to exploit their region's own specific opportunities and potentials; calls for particular account to be taken of the needs of disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, immigrants, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed and people with few qualifications and the particular needs of women; calls on the Commission, in its guidelines for the application of the framework rules on services of general interest and the award of public contracts, to enable local authorities to take greater account of local needs and local actors and to improve their adaptability;
21. Calls on the Commission, in the light of the Community's new competences for spatial planning under the Treaty of Lisbon, to draft a communication on the creation of an EU framework for spatial impact assessment at project level, taking account of the work of ESPON;
22. Notes that, following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, cooperation and coordination between itself and the Council and Commission must be stepped up in the context of the implementation of the First Action Programme;
23. Welcomes in particular the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon declares territorial cohesion alongside economic and social cohesion to be a Treaty objective and provides for shared legislative competence between the EU and the Member States in this area; points out that the Treaty of Lisbon recognises the fact that the territorial challenges that affect islands, mountains, border regions and very remote and sparsely-populated areas should be tackled, since they have a negative impact on the overall competitiveness of the EU's economy; calls on the Commission to complement the First Action Programme with specific proposals for EU measures and initiatives;
24. Highlights the fact that there is no commonly agreed definition of territorial cohesion yet and therefore urges the Commission to define clearly territorial cohesion and to list the objectives for territorial development in the European Union in its forthcoming Green Paper on territorial cohesion; expects the highest priority to be given to the objective of ensuring that all citizens of the Union, wherever they live in the EU, are offered equal development and access opportunities;
25. Recommends the further development of the European Spatial Development

Perspective and urges the full involvement of the new Member States in this policy framework;

26. Considers it important to carry out regular assessments of progress in the implementation of the Territorial Agenda; calls on the Council, the Commission and all stakeholders to evaluate not only progress made in the implementation of individual measures of the First Action Programme, but also the impact of these measures and their contribution to sustainable spatial development in the EU;
27. Calls on the Council to agree as soon as possible on simple, quantifiable indicators for the observation of spatial development in the EU; calls for annual land development to be set as a one of those spatial development indicators;
28. Notes that these indicators could be used as targets for the guidance of spatial development; proposes that the Council and Commission use these indicators for benchmarking between the Member States, and for building up a database of best practises;
29. Supports the Council's intention to issue a report on the implementation of the First Action Programme at each informal Council meeting; suggests that the Council consider a Mutual Learning Programme for European spatial development on the exchange of experience and best practices between the Member States;
30. Stresses the importance of improving coordination between the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter; regrets in this connection that the Council has not yet adopted an action programme for the implementation of the targets of the Leipzig Charter, and calls on forthcoming presidencies to remedy this omission, thereby ensuring a systematic follow-up to the Leipzig Charter;
31. Welcomes the initiative of the Slovenian Presidency to prepare and promote measures seeking to enhance coordination between spatial and urban development with a view to further interlinking between the objectives of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter;
32. Refers to the conclusions from the Fourth Cohesion Report in which towns and urban areas are seen as centres of population, economic strength and innovation; welcomes proposals for the creation of innovative regional and urban clusters spanning both internal and external borders of the EU;
33. Calls on the Commission and Council, having particular regard to the work of the Urban Audit, to set benchmarks for the sustainability of cities as set out in the Leipzig Charter, such as per capita energy consumption, local public transport usage as a proportion of total transport volume, and per capita greenhouse gas emissions;
34. Highlights the key role that cities play in achieving the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and thus calls for a holistic and well coordinated urban development strategy supported by all levels of government as well as the private sector;
35. Calls on the Commission to take a greater interest in the issue of urban sprawl; calls on the Member States, in the light of the problem of landscape fragmentation

and the continuing loss of land to urban growth in the Member States, to force through effective measures and strategies to restrict land development;

36. Recommends that the Member States give priority to internal urban development rather than external, in other words that they prioritise the re-use, or use for new purposes, of existing buildings, mainly by means of sustainable land management, before building on new land;
37. Welcomes the emphasis put on the interlinking of transport modes by the Leipzig Charter; highlights the importance of an integrated and sustainable transportation system and the significant role that an improved cycling and pedestrian infrastructure can play, particularly in the larger cities; calls upon the Commission to explore more effective mechanisms to support local authorities in developing strategies for integrated transport networks, particular in less developed regions;
38. Believes that, in order to respond effectively to growing demand for high-quality urban living, it is essential that local authorities rapidly bring their technical facilities into line with EU standards; believes, in particular, that facilities for supplying drinking water (for example by improving distribution or the quality of the water distributed), or for purifying waste water (for example by destroying networks or creating new ones) and all analogous facilities should be adapted to meet the new standards as soon as possible;
39. Regrets that social and economic disparities are on the increase, particularly in metropolitan regions and cities in the EU, but also in rural areas; calls on the Member States to tackle this problem more energetically and to take greater account of it when planning programmes with a view to the award of appropriations from the structural funds;
40. Takes the view that cities have a particular responsibility in fulfilling the EU climate change targets as they are in a unique position to deliver potential solutions to contribute to the reduction of the global greenhouse gas emissions; urges Member States to incorporate climate protection into urban development as a horizontal objective;
41. Highlights the fact that investing in environmentally friendly technology, such as innovative prevention, mitigation and adaptation measures, offers significant business opportunities in the long term;
42. Notes that urban areas suffer the effects of climate change more severely when the lack of fresh air corridors leads to further warming and higher pollution concentrations;
43. Insists that efforts be stepped up to improve integration and social and territorial cohesion, particularly by overcoming defects in the built environment and by improving environmental conditions, while pursuing a balanced development policy for urban areas, namely by stabilising problem areas and providing attractive living, working and leisure areas;
44. Calls for better integration of deprived neighbourhoods; asks the competent authorities of the Member States to identify the warning signs of decline in particular areas and to increase efforts to implement a policy of social integration

to reduce inequalities and prevent social exclusion; stresses the important role that small and medium-sized enterprises play for economic development and territorial competitiveness, not only in deprived neighbourhoods, but in all urban areas;

45. Calls on the Commission, in the context of future funding programmes including the Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities to step up its support for projects promoting the development and exchange of experience on sustainable urban management, the promotion of energy efficient practices and technologies, the resolution of urban environmental problems and the contribution of cities to combating climate change;
46. Takes the view that enhancing urban identity and active citizenship in cities can contribute to the successful implementation of the Leipzig Charter; calls on the Commission and the Member States to launch a territorial dialogue to boost public participation in planning for the revitalisation and development of urban areas;
47. Calls on the Member States and their regions and cities to pay greater attention to creating a culture of a high quality built environment ('Baukultur') as well as to the availability of decent and affordable housing as crucial factors for social inclusion and for the quality of city life in the context of sustainable urban development, while giving particular attention to the quality of the public space , notably in terms of architectural design quality, as a means of improving the well-being of Union citizens;
48. Calls on the Council, and in particular the Slovene and French Presidencies, to build on the progress made under the German and Portuguese Presidencies with regard to territorial cohesion and continue to adopt proposals in this regard; takes the view, given that the emphasis to date has been on cities, the relationship between town and country, and land planning, that future initiatives must take more account of the requirements of regions with territorial disadvantages, such as islands, mountains, border areas and very remote or sparsely populated areas;
49. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, and the Committee of the Regions.