

## **Implementation of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter - towards a European action program for spatial development and territorial cohesion**

### Summary

About 75 % of the European citizens live in cities. Cities are challenged by deprived areas, crime and violence, pollution, migration and segregation. On the other hand cities offer great opportunities for jobs, access to services of general interest, cultural activities, infrastructure or high quality of living and working conditions.

With the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities the urban development Ministers agreed to the guiding principles of a policy on integrated urban development. In February 2008 the European Parliament adopted a report on the "Follow-up of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter". The report aims to ensure high quality of life by European added value and underlines the need of common principles, like the integrated approach or the partnership principle.

Since too often each separate sector designs its own plan (traffic, education, environment, housing) there is a need for a cross-sector and holistic development strategy to put the integrated approach into practice. Therefore the EP suggests making the integrated approach a binding requirement for programme planning and project selection for the structural funds of the European Union.

The principle of partnership stands for the cities participation in defining development goals on the national level, it stands for the people's participation in the formulation of projects in their respective district and ultimately it signifies the share of power. Whereas we have a broad consensus in general there are wide gaps between political expectations and the reality, e.g. "freedom of interpretation" what partnership means or how to implement partnership.

All in all there is a need to improve clearness and commitment. We should not waste time to find common definitions of "sustainable and integrated urban development" "partnership principle" as well as of "territorial cohesion".