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European Academy
of the Urban Environment**

Analysis Report
Thematic Strategy on the
Urban Environment
on the basis of reports by
EU Working Groups on
four Thematic Areas

Sustainable Urban Management,
Sustainable Urban Transport,
Sustainable Urban Design and
Sustainable Urban Construction

and

Twelve Candidate Countries'
Overview Report

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European Academy of the Urban
Environment

46/48 Bismarckallee
14193 Berlin
Germany
Tel.: +49/30/89 59 99-0
Fax: +49/30/89 59 99-19
e mail: jj@eaue.de

Contributors:

Simon Goettler
Jenny Johnson (translation)
Jana Laasch
Dr. Michael LaFond
Dr. Hanns-Uve Schwedler (responsible)

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0. Executive Summary

The Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment is one of the key actions outlined in the 6th Community Environment Action Programme and is to be presented to the European Parliament and the Council in 2005. Four priority themes have been identified for the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, and independent working groups have been established on each of these four themes. They are:

- Sustainable Urban Transport
- Sustainable Urban Management
- Sustainable Urban Design
- Sustainable Urban Construction

The 4 WGs produced their Interim Reports in July/August 2003. Their final reports were presented in spring 2004.

The working groups have been tasked to answer four basic questions:

- What is 'best practice'?
- Why isn't every urban area using best practice techniques?
- What can be done to overcome these problems?
- What can Europe do to overcome these problems?

It was the aim of these four WGs to work out recommendations for the many and various levels of action and for a variety of players. This was to take place on the basis of analysis of the problems and of the barriers in the four thematic areas.

DG Environment of the European Commission awarded a service contract to the European Academy of the Urban Environment (EA.UE) to prepare an Overview Report on the urban situation for each of 12 Candidate Countries, which was presented in July 2003, and an Analysis Report, which reflects on Working Group findings and their relevance for the Candidate Countries. The interim version of the Analysis Report was presented in September 2003.

The final Analysis Report here presented is structured as follows:

- The **results of the four WGs** have been synoptically summarised and compared in chapter 1 according to the following points: definitions and visions of sustainability; problems and trends; state of the art / best (good) practices; barriers; recommendations (in general addressed to EU / EC level); indicators, targets and monitoring; EU programmes.
- There follows an **overview of urban problem areas in the candidate countries**. In addition the most significant barriers to more sustainable urban development are elaborated and **examples of good practice** in urban development are presented (chapter 2). These case studies have been evaluated with regard to their objectives and to the barriers with which the projects were confronted. The Candidate Countries' Report, submitted in July 2003, is used as a basis for this process, and

from this indications have been derived in order to rank the proposed fields of action which are given in chapter 4.

- A number of **EU programmes** which are of relevance for the four thematic areas are considered in chapter 3. In addition, the recommendations contained in the Communication "**Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment**" dated 11 February 2004 (COM(2004)60) have been summarised and analysed with regard to their significance for candidate countries.
- Chapter 4 consists of – as it were emanating from chapter 2 – a series of general and over-arching **recommendations** which are directed primarily to the Commission/Community level. These recommendations have been compared with the results in the final reports of the four WGs and with the Communication "Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment", which to a certain degree they complement. The generic recommendations are amplified by a number of more specific recommendations in the four thematic areas; they are a synopsis formed from results of interviews carried out as part of the compilation for the Twelve Candidate Country Overview Report which was submitted in July 2003.

At this point the most crucial results in this Analysis Report will be summarised below.

WG results and recommendations

Disregarding all the recommendations which are specific to one or other of the themes, it is clear that there are large areas of congruence in the WG recommendations. These points refer in the first instance to those areas in particular (they are grouped in the order of importance, which is derived from comparisons between the WG reports):

- capacity building and increase in commitment / dissemination and exchange of experience
- national / EU-wide action plans / standards / guidance
- national / EU funds / funding

- improving vertical and sectoral cooperation
- improving data availability / monitoring, benchmarking
- improving EU monitoring and report system(s)

- use and improvement of innovative tools and instruments
- innovative fiscal instruments
- improving horizontal, integrated cooperation

- increasing public awareness
- coherence between EU policies
- improving cooperation beyond administrative boundaries
- public-private partnership
- subsidiarity in the sense of decisions and actions taken close to the citizen/to the problem and/or at the appropriate level

EU programmes and initiatives

Most of the EU programmes referred to will be revised and reformulated in 2006. All of them offer many and various opportunities to underpin more sustainable urban development. The increased attention being given to networking, exchange of experience and public participation and stakeholder involvement in these programmes is a very positive step. In particular where the candidate countries are concerned, these aspects should in future (and in revised/re-issued programmes) be emphasised even more clearly.

There is, however, some concern that some programmes (especially those meant to support 'economic cohesion') do not necessarily support sustainable actions, and the Commission could probably do more to ensure that opportunities to address this goal are maximised. Obviously, agreed objectives (between different DGs), comparable and quantifiable targets and measurable indicators to monitor EU programmes are still not in place. Assessment criteria should also consider whether projects which are given financial support are in actual fact dependent on funding; secondly, whether frequently very short funding periods for projects which, in the broadest of meanings, concern institution and capacity building do not thereby stand diametrically in conflict with fulfilling their objectives.

If the proposed actions indicated in the Communication "Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment" are implemented and are in future applied as criteria for EU programmes and initiatives, at least several of the concerns which are referred to may be mitigated and movement in the direction of a more sustainable urban development may be more effectively supported.

If for the time being more specific or technical proposals referring to one of the four thematic fields are left aside, it is contended that the Commission ought to increase its efforts primarily in the following areas:

In the fields of Urban Management and Urban Transport, management and action plans have been proposed for local authority areas/agglomerations with more than 0.1 million inhabitants; such plans are to be oriented in accordance with guidelines which will be developed by the Commission. As for the Sustainable Construction and Sustainable Urban Design fields, evaluation and objective-type guidelines are announced. In all four fields it is proposed to intensify acquisition of information as well as to elaborate those indicators which are still not available. An additional main point of emphasis ought to be created in action and initiatives in the areas of training / exchange of experience / capacity building / creating and raising awareness.

In this way the proposals in the Communication may be placed in accordance with the recommendations of the working groups – although it is felt that in some areas they could certainly be more concrete and driven to a greater degree by priority considerations.

Application to candidate countries

Differences in problems being faced and in barriers preventing more sustainable urban development in candidate countries and EU member states are in the majority of fields more of a quantitative than of a qualitative nature. It must be underlined, however:

- that in some cases the sheer size of a problem and the (temporal) dynamics of its development present such a huge hindrance, that in effect the problem itself becomes a barrier, and should be tackled through specific measures (in particular urban sprawl, rapidly growing private motorised transport);
- that there are some problems which exist almost exclusively in the candidate countries, and which need to be taken into account in proposals which will be made for the enlarged EU. The most severe 'special problem' are large (pre-fabricated) housing estates.

It is therefore an obvious conclusion that recommendations of the WGs and those of the Communication can to a large degree be applied to the candidate countries and to their urban environment situations. Nevertheless, if it is a question of allocating priorities to these recommendations, this may well be a different matter.

Recommendations

As far as the candidate countries are concerned, particular importance should be attached to the following fields of action (given here in the order of importance which has been derived from an evaluation of the 'Twelve Candidate Countries Overview Report' and from the examples of good practice described):

- improving sectoral, vertical and horizontal cooperation
- capacity building and training / international cooperation
- integrated plans / planning / action programmes
- overcoming financial constraints
- public participation and awareness raising / NGO involvement
- innovative tools and instruments (incl. indicators)
- improving data availability / monitoring / benchmarking
- coherence between EU policies
- public-private partnership
- subsidiarity in the sense of decisions and actions taken close to the citizen/to the problem and/or at the appropriate level

All steps towards implementation within these fields of action can also be supported and promoted at European level:

- When dealing with complex thematic areas such as urban management and planning, it would seem that '**soft laws**' (such as broad, strategic Directives) can provide meaningful support frameworks for more sustainable urban development. Specific directives, on the other hand, would be – except possibly in some technical fields – unworkable and of little or no added value because of such great diversity in

the extent and nature of these problems. On the other hand, soft instruments and recommendations can promote and underpin more sustainable urban development, precisely in those countries which lack to a certain extent commitment and knowledge of the 'rules of the game'.

- When considering monitoring of recommendations and of directives, it is necessary to strike a balance between efforts and fulfilment of the aims. On the one hand there is a danger that capacity and resources will be tied down unnecessarily and that the very act of reporting per se will be regarded as a sufficient criterion of implementation. On the other hand monitoring is necessary to a certain extent in order to assist developments and to keep (political) interest alive.
- Whereas up to the present time in the pre-accession preparation 'economic cohesion' was uppermost in the mind, at the very latest once the countries have joined the EU, 'social cohesion' and thus (not only economic) sustainability has necessarily to play a more central part. In particular the Structural Funds, but in addition a number of other programmes and initiatives, need to be much more firmly oriented towards sustainability criteria, and be available for urban development processes (and for 'special problems' in the candidate countries, such as large housing estates, rapid urban sprawl and private motorisation, as referred to above).
- since only some of the candidate countries will enter into full membership in May 2004, there must be well-directed harmonisation and support instruments put in place for those countries joining the EU at a later date. Otherwise there is a danger that the gap between countries will expand, making social, economic and environmental cohesion even more difficult and thus unnecessarily increasing the resulting costs.

1. Overview and comparison of the four Working Groups

This chapter summarises in synoptic fashion the results of the four Working Groups (WGs) on urban design, urban construction, urban transport and urban management. Their outcomes are compared according to the following points:

- definitions and visions of sustainability;
- problems and trends;
- state of the art / best (good) practices;
- barriers;
- recommendations (in general addressed to EU / EC level);
- indicators, targets and monitoring;
- EU and other programmes.

The four WG reports are compared with each other in this chapter as the Urban Thematic Strategy ultimately deals with the urban environment in general, and with the larger concept of sustainable urban development. It is assumed that sustainable urban development will necessarily deal with the four WG themes in an integrated way. Each of the seven points listed above begins here with a short summary or synthesis of the four WG reports, followed by theme-specific issues and recommendations. Terms, definitions and concepts are as much as possible presented in the words originally found in the four final reports.

1.1 Definitions and visions of sustainability

The WG reports principally locate the roots of sustainable urban development in the Brundtland Report (1987) and the Rio de Janeiro World Conference on Environment and Development (1992) which launched the Local Agenda 21. Other initiatives are seen to have been instrumental, such as the Habitat II Conference or 'Cities Summit' in Istanbul (1996) and the Communication 'Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action' (1998).

Common features of the four reports include the view that sustainable urban development involves an integrated, long-term approach to planning and development. In general a process is proposed which is informed by a common and clear (EU) vision of sustainable development, with clear goals and benchmarks that outline a direction. It is recommended that implementation be systematically monitored and evaluated with respect to qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Further it is argued that the process or cycle of sustainable planning and development be participatory, involving civil society and stakeholders. Integrated planning is proposed that involves a coordination of social interests with those related to the economy and ecology, and a cooperative approach both in horizontal (disciplinary and geographic) terms and in vertical (administrative) structures. Sustainability is defined as strategies that work to conserve energy, resources and land and that work for equity and the health of people as well as the environment. Sustainable urban development, while respectful

of cultural heritage and traditions, would work to encourage alternatives and choices, and to inform decision-makers and consumers as to the advantages of sustainability.

Such strategies are hoped to lead to the creation of healthier and more attractive/ future oriented environments.

1.1.1 Urban Design

The WG report presents a European vision of Urban Design for Sustainability, which concerns an inclusive and participatory planning, design and management process that: aims at creating "beautiful", healthy, socially integrated and inclusive places; promotes equitable economic development; conserves land; looks at towns and cities in relation to one another and their hinterlands; ensures the strategic location of new developments in relation to the natural environment and transport systems; ensures development is mixed and of appropriate density; includes a well-developed green structure and a high quality and well-planned public infrastructure and respects and builds upon the existing cultural heritage and the social capital.

Two basic sustainable urban design strategies are outlined, including the 'compact city' strategy which focuses on dense urban form and efficiency of infrastructure and transportation, and the 'short cycles' strategy, which emphasises local environmental systems and a smaller 'ecological footprint'. Variations and complements to these are also discussed, such as 'decentralised concentration', which relates to a 'new town' concept, and the idea of concentrating development in denser, mixed settlements. This also correlates with the 'sustainable region' strategy which addresses the complex networking of urban and rural areas. Finally, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) is credited as playing an important role in raising awareness about both cultural and environmental values found in European landscapes. This convention is a new instrument dealing with protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe.

Urban design is defined as the physical design and planning of the built environment in relation to the natural environment as well as the general development of settlements.

Sustainable urban design involves an integrated approach towards knitting the urban fabric together, relating urban to rural surroundings, and considering urban areas as ecological and social systems. This works to develop the 'green structure' of cities, considering efficiency of material use and energy flows.

Sustainable development has to consider social and economic factors as well as the environment in an integrated and a holistic way, in line with international thinking on this matter. Additional dimensions are also of importance such as governance (empowerment, participation, etc) and cultural concerns, especially maintaining and developing local and regional identities.

The Urban Design report focuses on environmental recommendations while keeping the broader concept of sustainable development in mind.

It is recognised that sustainable development is confronted with contradictions as well as win-win situations. Economic and social interests often appear to be at odds with the

needs of ecological systems, but there are many situations where an increase in efficiency or improvement in planning can lead to advantages for all concerned.

Market forces and impacts of privatisation and globalisation are seen to have considerable impacts on urban development, for example in encouraging urban sprawl, and so a sustainable urban design must understand and work with questions of money flows, and with both supply and demand.

Conflicts and differences are seen between high and low-income countries: whereas high-income countries can afford, and are more interested in, 'environmental protection', low-income countries are much more interested in economic growth.

1.1.2 Urban Construction

There are many dimensions to sustainable development, including environmental, technical, economic, social and cultural aspects, and this remains a much-discussed but poorly-specified and inadequately applied concept.

It is clear that sustainable construction is not a finite goal, but a continuously redefined direction. The mainstreaming of sustainable construction will require integrated approaches and a clear and coherent top-down message, as for example expressed in a set of EU common goals.

Sustainable construction and development offers alternatives and choices: in order to have sustainable construction chosen as the alternative for tomorrow, it has to be promoted today as a viable alternative for the future. There is not one single, universal recipe for sustainable construction, as these techniques are necessarily related to use, culture, climate and available resources. Further, sustainable construction - as a performance based concept - is free of any particular architectural style. This is as much a responsibility during the creative process as it is a freedom. Mainstreaming sustainable construction will require leadership in public procurement by European institutions, member states, local authorities and other public bodies, in terms of setting a consistent example regarding what methods and techniques are possible and desired.

Today's challenge lies in weaving construction methods into the ecological systems, without giving up attained quality of life levels (comfort), nor sacrificing social, economic and cultural values, while protecting the heritage of future generations. Sustainable construction aims to introduce a holistic approach, bringing the dimension of a building's environmental performance into the whole cycle of construction – from inception to demolition and re-use.

Construction concerns the built environment which includes residential buildings (houses, apartments, etc.) and non-residential buildings (offices, factories, shops, schools, hospitals, etc.), as well as all their associated infrastructure such as transport facilities (roads, railways, canals, airports, etc.) and utility networks (electricity, natural gas and district heat grids, water supply, treatment and disposal systems, etc.). In terms of environmental sustainability, the function of the built environment is to provide appropriate, efficient and pleasant communities in which humans can live, work and socialise, whilst avoiding irreparable damage to the natural environment which supports all life and belongs to future generations. Hence, sustainability in construction is a

process that embraces qualitative as well as quantitative issues and human satisfaction as well as environmental protection.

1.1.3 Urban Transport

The urban transport WG argues that a long-term and clear vision based on an agreed definition of sustainability is needed at EU, national as well as local levels, and that a framework for thinking about sustainable development is needed to develop such a vision. A starting point is seen in the 'April resolution' of the European Union Ministers' of Transport Council (April, 2001) which defines sustainable transport as allowing for basic access and development needs while protecting ecosystem health and promising equity within and between generations. The WG has used the April resolution to develop its own vision, which is also related to Local Agenda 21.

Thus, a sustainable urban transport system:

- supports the freedom of movement, health, safety and quality of life of citizens of current and of future generations,
- is environmentally efficient, and
- supports a vibrant, inclusive economy, giving access to opportunities and services to all, including less affluent, elderly or disabled urban persons and non-urban citizens.

It is believed that an EU vision on sustainable urban transport could help to inspire national governments and local authorities to develop and work with their own visions. Ultimately it is argued that each city should develop its own vision and objectives, including all relevant stakeholders in an open and transparent process.

1.1.4 Urban Management

Sustainable urban management is integrated, comprehensive, and area-wide, and relates to the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, economic and social issues.

The sustainable urban management vision emphasises a process, building on former knowledge, a culture of learning, and a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Sustainable urban management means long-term planning, based on the precautionary principle and best available technologies. This would mean an open and inclusionary (participatory) decision-making process, and reformed organisational structures applying integrated policy approaches. Sustainability improves ecological conditions (healthy urban environment), and minimises impacts of urban areas on environment and ecosystems.

Urban systems are understood to operate as complex systems, and urban areas are defined to include cities and their surrounding regions. Management is understood to deal with the organisation of urban matters, involving policy, decision-making, implementation, monitoring, planning, etc.

As environment is often the most neglected sphere of sustainability, the WG on management is using environment as a starting point.

1.2 Problems and trends

Key problems and trends relevant to sustainable urban development are not presented here in a particular order, but rather as a set of interrelated trends and challenges.

In general, all cities are dealing with trends related to globalisation, for example increasing international competition among cities and regions with respect to investments and taxes.

Many cities – and countries – are stagnating economically, and faced with ageing and decreasing populations. This, combined with privatisation and market deregulation, leads to decreased resources of local authorities and increasing dependence on private capital.

All larger cities have faced or are facing problems related to suburbanisation which involves urban sprawl, the increasing spatial separation of houses and jobs (or services), and an increase in traffic, transport and car use.

Also typical is an increasing emphasis on project-based planning combined with traditional sectoral or discipline-based planning that stands in the way of integrated and area-wide planning.

Finally, information on sustainable urban development and relevant good or best practices is not generally available. A general lack of awareness as to the advantages of sustainability is found on the part of decision makers as well as among the general public.

1.2.1 Urban Design

Concerning problems facing sustainable urban design, a common set of ‘mega trends’ is identified including globalisation (also economic and political integration within Europe) together with accompanying increasing spatial division of labour, and moves towards ever larger economies of scale. Increasing international flows of goods, information and capital are paralleled by migrations of people, often leading to social tensions. Increased migration (especially mass immigration) and cultural exchange along with increasing economic competition is accompanied by decline and structural economic changes in many places. Local and regional identities are in general being eroded, and so relationships between governance and identity in urban systems need to be emphasised.

Many cities in Europe are not showing any significant increase in population and others are in decline, with a trend towards smaller, single-person households.

Market forces tend to neglect long-term processes and interests, and, in prioritising short-term profit, work to drive urban sprawl, encouraging suburban growth and land use patterns that are inefficient and wasteful of energy and land. Emerging information and communications technologies are also encouraging a decentralisation of urban development.

The decline of industry has led to unemployment and declining city neighbourhoods, and large scale, single use developments outside the main urban areas lead to urban sprawl, increases in transportation, energy and land use consumption, congestion and pollution.

Other main problems include excessive land consumption, traffic levels and car use, congestion and pollution and the loss of vitality associated with, and general unsustainability of segregated land use. Problems also involve social and ethnic segregation, lack of participation and social alienation, social exclusion, growing crime and insecurity, particularly in poorer inner city areas and on isolated public housing estates, unemployment and lack of housing, educational and cultural facilities and preservation of cultural heritage.

1.2.2 Urban Construction

Sustainable urban construction in Europe is of considerable importance as 80 % of the EU population lives in cities, with these people spending almost 90 % of their time in buildings. In the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as much as 50 % of the energy produced is consumed in the built environment.

Buildings are responsible for a considerable amount of the world waste production, although most of this waste is inert and increasingly re-used and recycled. The construction sector accounts for approximately 50 % by weight of all material taken from the Earth's crust, and in a few instances natural, non-renewable resources are being depleted beyond sustainable levels. Buildings cost up to ten times more to run during their life time, than their initial construction cost.

Across Europe, traditional construction methods (especially as practised before the industrial revolution) can be seen to be environmentally friendlier than their more modern counterparts (motivated by short term economic thinking). Values have changed, cultures have evolved, and traditional common sense has often been replaced by aggressively marketed fashions.

A general problem is that information on sustainable architecture is not widely available and professional education and training does not usually provide students with a profound understanding of sustainability.

Considerably less research has been directed at sustainable construction methods and techniques for retrofitting, refurbishment and renovation. This is an important concern since, in most areas of the EU, the annual rate of new building activity is between 0.5 % and 2.0 % of the total building stock, which means that even if all new buildings were sustainable, it would still take several decades or even centuries to make a significant impact. So examples of sustainable construction are more prominent in the new buildings sector than in the refurbishment sector.

Still, there seems to be light on the horizon, and with popular support for the idea of sustainability a trend towards integrated solutions seems to be in motion. Cultural Heritage has been acknowledged as a determining factor (already present in FP5) in enhancing the quality of life of people, and the dissemination efforts of sustainable

construction have resulted in relevant applications. There is a considerable amount of quality literature available on the subject of sustainable construction, and the relevance of the construction sector in sustainable development has been understood.

1.2.3 Urban Transport

As the spatial separation of houses and jobs (or services) has been increasing in Europe, car ownership rates have been increasing – much more dramatically in the candidate countries. Car use and urban density are found to be highly negatively related, and transportation systems and networks are expected to keep growing in their dimensions, as suburbanisation changes the face of Europe. The use of cars continues to grow, both in trips by private car per day, and in the average trip length. The fastest growth is seen with light commercial vehicles in urban areas. The market share of public transport is at the same time decreasing – also more dramatic in accession countries.

30 % of all transport kilometres are accounted for in transporting people and goods in urban areas, and urban transport accounts for over 40 % of total CO₂ emissions in Europe. While air pollution levels in EU member states are falling, congestion is increasing and noise pollution remains a problem. Traffic accident rates are falling in member states but increasing in candidate countries.

The primary challenge present itself as how affordable urban transport can be provided, while reducing pollution and congestion and also improving safety.

1.2.4 Urban Management

Problems confronting a more sustainable urban management and government begin perhaps with globalisation processes that take away competencies from local authorities. Accompanying trends of privatisation and liberalisation are changing the ownership of utilities, such as energy and water companies, making it more difficult for local communities and governments to influence these areas. Decreasing resources of local authorities leads to more dependence on private investors and capital, and the WG argues that as many cities are facing economic stagnation and population decline, growth-oriented policies are no longer appropriate.

Whereas fiscal competition (among communities) tends to favour sprawl, suburbanisation leads to more complex systems.

Sustainable urban management is further frustrated by the shift from area-wide planning to project-based planning.

1.3 State of the art / best (good) practices

Following are short lists of the state of the art, otherwise known as good examples - best practices – as identified by the four WGs. The projects and programmes are understood to be relevant and of interest at the European level for the respective themes concerning sustainable urban development.

1.3.1 Urban Design

Examples of good practice in urban design for sustainability mentioned in the WG report include:

- national policies: the government strategy for implementation of Local Agenda 21 in France (Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development), the guidance for sustainable urban design produced by the government of the Netherlands (National Strategy for Sustainable Development and National Package for Sustainable Urban Design), and the government of Slovakia's nation-wide spatial framework for urbanisation and city development,
- metropolitan/urban and regional physical planning in Stockholm,
- city-wide environmental and LA 21-based physical development plans in Spain (Vitoria, Calvia, Segovia), and for a smaller town and village in Austria (Weiz), which also involved economic regeneration; LA 21 plans at the district level in Vienna,
- ecologically-friendly new housing neighbourhoods and mixed-use suburbs in Finland (Viikki, Pikku-Huopalahti), Austria (Solar City Pichling in Linz), Germany (Freiburg-Vauban, Hannover-Kronsberg) and the Netherlands (Lanxmeer),
- Helsinki city-wide housing strategy to improve social integration and cohesion, inner city neighbourhood and brownfield site regeneration schemes from Finland (Turku), Sweden (Stockholm, Hammarby Sjöstad), Hungary (Ferencvaros-Budapest) and Norway.
- out-of-town centres, mixed-use developments and high density, mixed-use development around transport nodes in Sweden (Gothenburg) and Slovakia (Bratislava-Nove Mesto, Zvolen),
- an Energy Plan for a medium-sized municipality in Austria (Graz).

1.3.2 Urban Construction

According to this Report, there are relevant examples of sustainable construction all over the EU, but it is far from being a stream, much less a main stream. No best practices were identified in the report although the state of the art is discussed.

1.3.3 Urban Transport

Among the good practices identified by the WG Transport Report are the 'fingerplan' structure for urban and regional development in Copenhagen, integrated land use, landscape and transport planning in the Stuttgart region, and the ABC parking policy in the Netherlands. In addition attention is called to the public consultation traditions in Switzerland, and metropolitan transport authorities in Europe are named as good examples of geographical (regional) coordination.

1.3.4 Urban Management

The Urban Management WG identifies Local Agenda 21 – in Helsinki for example – as a good example for sustainability. The Spanish strategy for Sustainable Development

(EEDS) is named as an example of a 25 year plan that will deal with the main aspects of sustainability, including urban development. The Strategy for Sustainable Development in Italy is also named as a good example of such planning at the national level, as is the urban policy in the UK. National level initiatives are outlined for Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.

A number of programmes and initiatives are also named as good practices:

- EMAS, in particular the experiences in the Lewes District, East Sussex, England,
- URBAN AUDIT
- European Common Indicators (ECI)
- European Environment Agency / European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET)
- Cumulative Impact Assessment and Territorial Impact Assessment (CIA / TIA)
- ESPON 2006 programme: Integrated tools for European Spatial Development
- Open Method of Cooperation (OMC): see White paper on Governance
- WHO City Health Plan (CHP) and City Development Health Plan (CHDP)
Comprehensive integrated planning at the local level. CHPs and CHDPs are related to the Health 21, WHO strategy which is in turn inspired by the Agenda 21.

1.4 Barriers

A range of barriers to implementation of sustainable urban development have been identified by the four WG reports. The most common are those below, which are not prioritised but rather listed as a set of inter-connected issues.

Key barriers are often found in economic constraints on the part of local authorities, and a lack of public funding and resources. For some themes and areas the problem is expressed as an inappropriate distribution of resources rather than as a lack of resources. It is believed that many public funding programmes and subsidies work to frustrate sustainable development by supporting projects and developments that are not sustainable, and that tax structures and systems are often at odds with the goals of sustainable development. Further, many laws and regulations – for example concerning the permitting of buildings – do not encourage sustainable development, but actually frustrate it.

In general there is limited horizontal as well as vertical cooperation, meaning a lack of cooperation across city-rural boundaries and among local and national organisations, but also among administrative departments and institutions. There is lack of participation, and lack of involvement by stakeholders and the public in general in urban planning and development issues. The challenges and opportunities regarding sustainable urban development are not widely known, and there remains a lack of awareness, a lack of information and access to good examples, and perhaps because of this a lack of commitment to sustainable development.

Last but not least, there is a lack of clear goals and a lack of monitoring and indicators, and perhaps most importantly a lack of a clear (and common) vision of urban sustainable development, which needs to be seen as a process and direction, offering (sustainable) alternatives and choices to planners and consumers.

1.4.1 Urban Design

Barriers for achieving sustainable urban design vary from place to place but cover common themes such as lack of political will and awareness; difficulties with planning and administrative systems, legislation and procedures, including slowness in the planning system, the need for appropriate training and education; lack of information and appropriate knowledge sharing systems; the persistence of the traditional, sector-based approach to urban planning and design; the complexity of the holistic vision of sustainable development and planners' and others' reluctance to accept it.

Additional costs associated with sustainable development are a major constraint in those parts of the world with low levels of production and income and where the main priority is to catch up on the standards of living enjoyed elsewhere.

Other barriers include existing planning systems and legislation that work against sustainability, the lack of effective public-private partnerships, and the fragmentation of planning areas that works against urban-rural and other forms of cooperation.

1.4.2 Urban Construction

Limiting factors to sustainable building and construction include economic constraints and the usually limited resources available for public but also other building projects. Other barriers include lack of choices, meaning the lack of immediately available technologies and manufacturers regarding sustainable approaches, and lack of available renewable and sustainable energy sources and systems. In general there are gaps in the research concerning sustainable construction, especially dealing with the more specific local and regional challenges and possibilities.

Urban planning rules and regulations and financial institutions that do not encourage sustainable construction, along with a list of other barriers, are especially challenging for entrepreneurs, or project promoters, who can be public or private.

The market is not always receptive to ideas of sustainability, and is driven by other factors (such as culture, fashion, geography, etc). Markets need to be informed and influenced through environmental impact data, indicators and reporting processes.

Urban utilities and other infrastructural services are not often interested in sustainable construction, as their primary aim is to sell as much as possible of their product or service.

1.4.3 Urban Transport

Barriers to implementation of sustainable urban transportation initiatives include (as in the other themes) the ongoing globalisation of the economy which is resulting in increasing competition among cities, and an increase in transport. Related to this is

suburbanisation which is thinning densities and leading to complex systems of local authorities and planning, and the increasing spatial separation of jobs, services and housing.

The transport WG report observes that current policy initiatives are not enough to achieve sustainable urban transport systems and that there is a lack of agreement among policy makers about the steps to take. Also seen as barriers are lack of coherence between various policies and funding programmes and inadequate involvement of stakeholders in planning, or the disproportionate weight given to some stakeholders.

Finally, it is noted that policy makers do not always take a total system view, and that subsidiarity can be used as an excuse for inaction at national and international levels, in terms of implementing or enforcing sustainable transport standards.

1.4.4 Urban Management

Key problems hindering sustainable urban management have been listed in the order of importance. To begin with there is often limited cooperation beyond administrative borders and limited horizontal cooperation (policies integration). Generally there is a lack of or under-use of data, tools and practices, and it is observed that project-based development does not support coherent sustainability policies. Public participation and involvement is not usually well enough integrated into decision-making processes and there is limited vertical cooperation between different governmental and administrative levels. There is often a lack of institutional capacity and willingness to learn and there is a separation of planning and implementation, or even a neglect of implementation. Typically problems are found with public-private partnerships. There are often insufficient resources for planning, and in the end generally speaking a lack of commitment to sustainability issues.

1.5 Recommendations (general)

Each of the four WG reports proposes a number of general recommendations regarding their particular theme and sustainable urban development. These are not necessarily to be realised at the EU level, but could for example be implemented at the local, regional or national level.

1.5.1 Urban Design

The Urban Design WG proposes 22 general recommendations falling under five broad headings:

- awareness, information, education and research;
- strengthening sustainable urban design in EU policy;
- promoting sustainable urban design in legislation at EU and national levels;
- supporting exchange and transfer of good practice experience at all levels;
- encouraging sustainable urban design through incentives, subsidies, taxes and funding programmes.

More specifically, the recommendations include encouraging credit-based or public-private partnerships to promote sustainable urban development and to fund infrastructure projects. It is proposed that public finance capacities be used as revolving funds, to 'pump-prime' or to leverage private financing, or to provide loan guarantees for private projects.

It is also recommended that the system of subsidies (including tax relief) at both the EU and national levels be improved by introducing sustainable guidelines.

Policy integration, both horizontally and vertically, is seen as a priority issue, as is raising awareness through the media and building capacities of citizens and stakeholders. The involvement of children in planning and development discussions is suggested, and training and education programmes for sustainable development, especially for professionals and graduates are recommended as are campaigns to distribute and communicate new and good examples (best practices).

It is noted that legislation at the national (and local) level is more useful than legislation at European level where the promotion of knowledge sharing is the main task, as it depends on national policy, the local situation, available financing and the political situation.

The urban design report argues for guidance 'manuals' on good practice in planning procedures at the national and local levels (efficiency of planning processes, public participation, public-private partnerships, etc), and advises that Environmental Impact Assessment methodologies and LA 21 initiatives could be broadened to consider sustainable urban design.

Finally, a number of models of environmentally sustainable urban form have been developed that are broadly variations and hybrids of two basic strategies illustrated in the urban design report: the 'compact city' strategy and the 'short cycles' or 'green city' strategy.

1.5.2 Urban Construction

The WG report presents a list of general recommendations seen as key to realising more sustainable construction, in fact most of the proposals are directed at the local to the national level, with fewer specific recommendations for the EU. In general it is noted that the methods and techniques are available to move towards sustainable construction, but that getting the relevant actors in the construction industry to implement them in their day to day practice may rely predominantly on how effectively the actors can be motivated to take on the liabilities and risks associated with change. It is argued that laws and directives need to be more effective and that taxes should be adapted to encourage sustainable building. Other general recommendations include the following:

- public funding and public procurement should be linked to sustainable criteria
- construction permits should reflect sustainable criteria
- municipalities should offer (more) flexible conditions
- raise awareness of end users as to sustainable building and energy etc.
- shift attitudes in all stakeholders and actors

- encourage local systems for water, energy and waste etc.
- integrate principles of sustainable construction into practices of design, construction, maintenance and management of buildings
- certification of sustainable construction must be performance based rather than prescriptive
- use integrated approaches
- there is a need for international cooperation in defining strategies and performance targets for the built environment.

It is observed that more research and development is required in the areas of refurbishment and renovation, and that there are insufficient methods to cope with the complexity of ecological factors and systems as a whole.

The development scene is described as being too technical, and it is argued that sustainability needs more human and comprehensible applications (social and cultural sustainability). Finally, there is a need to measure progress in urban construction and development, and so a recognised system of benchmarking and assessment of the sustainability of buildings is needed.

1.5.3 Urban Transport

The WG final report proposes a framework for sustainable policies and initiatives which work with a system of scenarios, policy packages, tactics, goals and performance indicators.

A framework for policy analysis is recommended, including three categories for which a wide range of policy options are listed for each of the three categories:

- hardware
- software
- mindware

Importantly, local mobility management plans are proposed to encourage cooperation, efficiency, better planning and a more active public transport policy at the local government level. Recommendations for mindware include public awareness and health campaigns, and participatory policy-making involving stakeholders.

Other recommendations include better targeting of financial resources and better coordination between locally managed urban transport and road systems and nationally managed railway and highway systems.

In general it is noted that a carefully chosen combination of instruments is in general more efficient and better capable of overcoming barriers than the use of individual instruments on their own.

The WG makes the point that successful development and implementation of sustainable policy packages demands coordination and cooperation, both horizontally

and vertically speaking; with this in mind it is noted that the various levels of planning authorities each have actions to be emphasised.

Finally, ECMT is cited as being a good resource for sustainable policies.

1.5.4 Urban Management

Key recommendations in the urban management WG report include the enabling and facilitation of cooperation beyond administrative borders (horizontal cooperation) and the encouragement of sectoral integration as well as public-private partnerships. In general development of institutional capacities is argued for, as is increased support for

local governance and an increase in public awareness. Finally, the WG calls for improvement in availability of data, tools and practices.

Recommendations are based on the following elements:

- implementation of the Local Agenda 21
- empowerment of local authorities with respect to sustainable development
- support for urban environmental management plans and management as well as monitoring systems with corresponding tools and indicators
- assistance with capacity building in local authorities

Recommendations specific to EU member states include a request for support for local authorities from national level governments, as is for example called for in the European White Paper on Governance and the Aarhus Convention. National Action Plans (NAPs) for the urban environment as well as National Reference Centres (NARCs) for the urban environment are proposed, as is elaboration of Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programmes (SUSHIP).

Local authorities are called on to define and implement 'Urban Integrated – Local Action Plans' (LAPs) in coordination with NAPs. Environmental management and monitoring systems are also proposed for the local level, for example EMAS.

1.6 Recommendations (EU / EC)

Prioritised recommendations of the four WGs concerning the EU, not surprisingly, often deal with financial policies. It is commonly argued that EU funding programmes should be reviewed with respect to sustainability criteria, and that these should in general be adapted to be consistent with sustainable development goals and objectives.

Cooperation should be encouraged both horizontally among departments, cities and regions as well as vertically among cities, regions and states up to the EU level.

A clear (EU) vision of sustainable urban development should be agreed on, with accompanying common objectives, indicators, and monitoring and evaluation strategies.

Information campaigns and the exchange and transfer of ideas and (good) examples need to be supported. Best practices need to be identified, disseminated and better publicised.

1.6.1 Urban Design

Urban design recommendations at the EU level include the argument that EU Structural Funds and the various Commission-led funding programmes and subsidies should be better informed and directed by a sustainable urban design perspective. Further it is stated that mechanisms need to be created for evaluating the implementation of current EU policy which addresses sustainable urban development and for assessing the effectiveness of future policy. There should be guidelines and requirements for local urban impacts studies and strategic environmental assessments on all major infrastructure projects funded by the EU (for example, the TENs programme) or member state governments.

The European Union could provide guidance and more information on sustainable urban design and general strategies such as LA 21, but also assist in collecting and sharing experiences and concepts.

The European Common Agricultural Policy should address broader rural development rather than just agricultural support.

The 'compact city' strategy advocated by the European Commission in its 1990 Green Paper on the Urban Environment, as a basic model for sustainable urban design, is still essentially valid. However, it needs to be further developed, paying closer attention to the need to establish a 'green structure' and to draw on other approaches such as 'decentralised concentration' at the urban regional scale.

New European Union subsidies could be specifically targeted at promoting good practice in urban design for sustainability, and deal with both new, greenfield site developments, as well as brownfield site redevelopment and inner city regeneration.

The existing URBAN II initiative should be augmented with an URBAN III follow-on.

The current proportion of Structural Funds going to urban development should be increased.

The EU could fund research and offer guidance on approaches concerning the taxing of development through 'betterment' taxes and trading development rights, to encourage private financing of public goods.

Further ministerial coordination is recommended including a possible meeting of European ministers representing the social, economic, environment, transport, housing, urban and rural development and local government sectors to discuss the implementation of national plans for sustainable development with a particular focus on the urban environment, and extended use of the current system of reporting at the EU level on national progress.

'Soft laws' (European Council decisions) should be considered for specific recommendations that would be able to influence national policy on sustainable urban

development, for example regarding targets and guidance related to policy objectives and key urban design themes.

The continuing implementation of the European Spatial Development Perspective remains a priority.

1.6.2 Urban Construction

Recommendations of the construction WG report include definition of common EU indicators and quantified objectives and targets. It is argued that common research and data collection practices across the EU with respect to sustainable building should be supported.

Other recommendations call for the assistance of European institutions for sustainable construction through public procurement practices and the proposal that all spending of public money should respect sustainability criteria. It is also recommended that taxes and other regulatory mechanisms be adapted to encourage actions and movement toward sustainability. Finally, it is argued that a considerable number of demonstration projects are needed across the EU to effectively communicate sustainable building possibilities.

1.6.3 Urban Transport

Recommendations in the Transport WG report begin with the statement that subsidiarity should be respected, but that action should also be taken, and that national as well as supra-national guidance is important: it is advised that the EU provide guidance and information concerning cooperative and integrated planning. At the same time, it is emphasised that "each city or region is different" and that the EC should create a framework for action at the local level, not dictate specific measures. The Transport WG calls for policy coherence at the EU level, for example in the coordination of programmes such as the Trans-European Network (evaluate proposals with respect to sustainable criteria), cohesion funds (link funding to sustainable principles), and air and noise quality directives (require compliance). It is recommended that funding initiatives and subsidies be linked to performance indicators, and that objectives, indicators, and impacts assessment strategies be developed and communicated through a clear vision.

Further, it is recommended that the EU use information campaigns to help change behaviour, for example through dissemination of good practices and knowledge.

More specifically, mobility management plans are called for (could be recommended or required) and it is argued that EU actions at the urban level should give walking and cycling a more prominent role.

The WG also recognises that incentives and subsidies given by tax policies in most member states are at odds with the objectives of sustainable urban transport. As a result, the EU is urged, at least for the long-term, to undertake steps to address problems such as tax treatment of cars, and other conflicts between sustainable objectives and current financial policies.

1.6.4 Urban Management

To begin with, the Urban Management report argues that the thematic strategy should facilitate a shift from talking to delivering, meaning a shift from Local Agenda 21 to Local Action 21. An emphasis is placed on dissemination and promotion of good practices and methods, on capacity and institutional building, adoption of tools and methods and implementation.

A number of recommendations for the EU level are made, including the following:

- promote development and use of common indicators and evaluation practices
- support use of systems such as LA 21, EMAS, ESPON, URBAN AUDIT, ecological footprint, etc.
- sponsor a Sustainable Cities Civic Leadership Programme for local government officials (capacity building)
- support a Sustainable Urban Management ‘think-tank’
- EU funding such as structural funds should respect principles of sustainable planning
- publicise examples of best practices
- require the Johannesburg plan of implementation
- require national Environmental Awareness action plans
- establish a framework for effective urban governance
- encourage national action plans for the urban environment
- strengthen the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET)
- encourage use of Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) and Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA)
- consider the White Paper on European Governance as a mechanism for building institutional capacity at various scales
- propose an Urban Framework Directive, to develop and integrate policies and initiatives

1.7 Indicators, targets and monitoring

Common recommendations among the four WG reports concerning indicators and monitoring call for a clear and common vision of sustainable urban development at the EU level, from which cities, regions and states can derive more specific and locally appropriate goals and objectives. Common indicators and evaluation systems are needed to be able to compare problems and successes across cities and countries. Clear criteria should help to inform decision-makers as well as end-consumers as to the advantages of sustainable products and technologies. Clear criteria should also influence public funding programs as well as the design of tax structures. Common goals and

benchmarks can help to define and communicate the general direction for future spending, planning and development.

Indicators need to be designed and applied which measure quantitative as well as qualitative changes, and can measure outcomes, for example in transportation systems, and on the other hand performance, such as with respect to buildings.

1.7.1 Urban Design

The WG recommends that the EU assist with the use and application of methods for data collection, indicators and monitoring, as well as analysis approaches such as GIS.

It is proposed that an emphasis be placed on learning from existing European indicator programmes, including the European Common Indicators Programme and the work that has been done on urban indicators such as the Urban Audit, Environmental Impact Assessment and Local Agenda 21.

In general, targets are recommended (or a framework for setting local targets) as are indicators, the evaluation of good practice, and benchmarking strategies.

A 'toolbox for urban design for sustainability' is described that would help to promote environmental and integrated planning.

Models and good examples of sustainable urban design are often as useful as particular local indicators, for understanding and comparing progress.

1.7.2 Urban Construction

It is argued that globally, nationally, regionally, and locally relevant environmental targets must be linked to economic sectors, including construction. These should be short, medium and long-term environmental targets, ideally agreed upon by all concerned.

A regular assessment of building performance and publication of results is recommended, as outlined in the EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings. In addition, the Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) is recommended as a technique for examining products and materials over their entire design life, considering all impacts as well as eventual disposal.

The WG is aware that in order to retain the full qualitative input of every actor of the building sector it is important to set targets as opposed to prescribe solutions.

Sustainability in buildings is measured through their performance that is associated with a set of quantifiable targets and goals. At the same time, some performance parameters and qualities in sustainable construction, which are of critical importance to the quality of life of people, are not easy to quantify: cultural expression and cultural identity, integration into the existing urban and natural context, attractiveness. These are all factors which can motivate people to care for their built environment.

There is a consensus on the following less quantifiable quality objectives of sustainable construction that include urban design measures:

- intensify the identity and character of the built environment;
- introduce diversity and variety of texture, colour, form, typology, use and property;
- introduce flexibility to cater for unknown future needs;
- increase the life span of buildings and public spaces;
- optimise orientation of buildings to benefit from climate conditions;
- guarantee accessibility to all.

There is also consensus on the following more quantifiable quality objectives of sustainable construction:

- improve indoor and outdoor air quality;
- improve indoor and outdoor thermal comfort conditions;
- reduce CO₂ emissions per capita and per sector;
- improve energy efficiency of buildings by implementing appropriate construction methods and techniques (passive solar design) and by internalising the best of the local climate conditions;
- integrate renewable energy systems (active solar and wind) and energy management systems for permanent monitoring;
- use non-renewable resources rationally (materials, energy), taking into consideration the life cycle of materials and their reuse and recycling potential (up stream and down stream);
- specify systems to maximise efficiency in operation, making room for flexible performance;
- reduce waste and facilitate waste separation;
- reduce water demand and implement grey water recycling systems at the local level;
- reduce running and maintenance costs, and
- improve impact on bio-diversity.

1.7.3 Urban Transport

The Transport WG argues that an EU communication on sustainable urban transport providing a definition of sustainable urban transport with a vision, objectives, indicators and a monitoring system needs to be disseminated. It is recommended that the EU develop a set of common indicators to enable benchmarking, monitoring and decision making at the national and supra-national levels, and that linkages be made with OECD work on indicators and data collection. Outcome indicators are called for that would be useful for project evaluation, and it is proposed that EU financial actions be linked to performance indicators, with EU funding being linked to long-term sustainable urban transport objectives.

1.7.4 Urban Management

The Urban Management WG calls for indicators, data collection and monitoring, emphasising comparability among European urban areas, and carrying capacity.

A number of alternative strategies and approaches are noted, including the following:

- ecological footprint
- EIONET
- National Reference Centres for the Urban Environment
- EMAS
- CIA / TIA
- EIA / SEA
- URBAN AUDIT
- ECI European Common Indicators

1.8 EU / EC and other international programmes, policies and initiatives

In the following are lists of European and other international programmes related to sustainable urban development, as named or as suggested by the four WGs. Some of the proposals are of a general nature, and relevant to all fields of sustainable urban development, for example the (Local) Agenda 21, and EU initiatives such as the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign and the 6th Community Environment Action Programme. Other EU efforts are also (or have been) meaningful to a wide range of urban themes, including the EU strategy for sustainable development (Gothenburg European Council, June 2001), the Communication 'Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action' (1998), the Commission Communication 'Towards an urban agenda in the European Union' (1997), and the European Sustainable Cities Report (1995).

1.8.1 Urban Design

The WG final report refers to EU level policy relevant to sustainable urban design, for example the Amsterdam Treaty of Sustainable Development, and also to other efforts such as the Sustainable Land Use working group. Other European initiatives mentioned include the Green Paper on the Urban Environment (Commission of the European Communities 1990), the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESPD) and ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observatory). UN Habitat initiatives such as the Global Urban Observatory and network of local observatories are also recommended.

1.8.2 Urban Construction

The construction WG emphasises that a clear and coherent top-down message is necessary, while recognising that a very large spectrum of stakeholders and actors must be reached and coordinated. Of relevance to sustainable construction is the Architects' Council of Europe policy on sustainable architecture and the European Climate Change programme, which requires national level climate programmes related to the Kyoto Protocol, encouraging energy efficiency in building.

Of particular interest is the International Standard EN ISO 14040 Series, which has enabled the life cycle assessment approach to become more routine and predictable.

Realising that the results of building assessments need to be placed in context, according for example to type, age and use, the construction WG refers to the energy performance certificates required under the new EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings, which must accordingly be produced whenever a building is sold or rented.

1.8.3 Urban Transport

European efforts named by the transport WG begin with the 'April resolution' of the European Union Ministers' of Transport Council (2001), which among other things offers a definition of sustainable transportation. The structural funds regulation 2000-2006 is also noted with its funding programmes (INTERREG III, Urban II; in addition: LIFE, Research Framework, etc). The White Paper on European Governance proposes to open up policy making while complementing policy tools with non-legislative instruments. The White Paper on "European Transport policy for 2010: time to decide" emphasises support for and dissemination of good practices as well as investments in research projects.

Finally, concerning data collection and monitoring it is proposed that the OECD indicators and data collection approaches be used as a foundation and starting point for further related projects.

It is argued that the following initiatives be coordinated:

- Trans-European Networks (evaluate proposals with respect to sustainable criteria)
- cohesion funds (link funding to sustainable principles)
- air and noise quality directives (require compliance)

1.8.4 Urban Management

The urban management WG recommends a number of (sustainable) planning and management approaches, such as Local Agenda 21, EMAS, and Urban Audit.

A wide range of other data collection and management systems are proposed including the European Common Indicators (ECI) and Cumulative Impact Assessment and Territorial Impact Assessment (CIA / TIA). Information systems and networks are encouraged such as the European Environment Agency / European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) and the ESPON 2006 programme Integrated tools for European Spatial Development. Various planning methodologies are discussed, for example the Open Method of Cooperation (OMC /see White Paper on Governance).

The WHO City Health Plan (CHP) and City Development Health Plan (CHDP) are given a great deal of attention as good examples of comprehensive and integrated planning at the local level for health and sustainable development. These models are offered through the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe.

The urban management WG in addition to the above list of existing programmes and initiatives also proposes the following programmes and projects as basis for further action:

- Sustainable Cities' Civic Leadership Programme for local government officials
- Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
- National Environmental Awareness Action Plans
- National Action Plans for the Urban Environment
- European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET)
- Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) and Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA)
- Urban Framework Directive

2. Overview and comparison of the candidate countries

As a next step, after the results of the four working groups have been synoptically summarised and compared, there follows an overview of the situation in the candidate countries, in addition the most significant barriers to more sustainable urban development will be elaborated. The Candidate Countries' Report¹, which was submitted in July 2003, will be used as a basis for this process as well as the analysis of examples of good practice presented in chapter 2.2. In this report, amongst other things, problem complexes and barriers in the four thematic fields were identified and described in detail. At this juncture, therefore, only those which it is felt to be the most fundamental problems and barriers will be summarised and conflated.

Following on from the latter, selected good practice case studies or examples from various candidate countries will be cited and described, the Communication "Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment"² and a number of EU programmes which are of relevance for the four thematic areas will be considered. This will enable fields of action, key instruments and tools, which will be referred to in the final chapter, to be listed in rank order, and indicated which seem appropriate – at the most diverse levels of players – to provide solutions to the problems and to overcome barriers.

2.1 Problem areas and barriers in candidate countries

Bearing in mind that candidate countries and EU member states are in fact basically comparable, and also the many and various overlapping elements in the four thematic areas covered by the WGs, it does not seem realistic to differentiate particular problem fields and barriers in the candidate countries along the lines of the four thematic areas.³

Against this background, the following main problem areas and barriers may be identified:

- the dynamic nature of the **complete system change** in the former socialist countries, political changes which were so prevalent in the 1990s, repeated harmonisation with EU regulations and directives (often step by step only) and traditional (or obsolete) professional training undergone by many urban planners and political decision makers. Such factors have led to difficulties in almost all countries (and the towns and cities in them), including the following:
 - insecurity in municipal planning and other departments;
 - in some cases abrupt changes in specified policy strategy and objectives;

¹ Twelve Candidate Countries' Overview Report, EA.U.E on behalf of DG ENV, July 2003

² Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment, COM(2004)60, 11.02.2004

³ in this respect, cp. the Twelve Candidate Countries' Overview Report, EA.U.E on behalf of DG ENV, July 2003

- discrepancies in timing, with overlapping aspects in different planning areas (e.g. in traffic and transport and in land use planning);
 - main points of emphasis on developments in towns and cities in fields that are to some extent incompatible with sustainability criteria (economic development; economic location policy; extension/developments in infrastructure / road building; in some cases with EU funding);
 - decisions based on serving patronage and clientele, projects and developments that are not compatible with existing, and democratically agreed, plans.
- In all the candidate countries, over the past ten to twelve years, **local authority independence and self-government** have increased. Nevertheless, some countries still have, comparatively speaking, a strongly evidenced centralised urban planning and decision making system. While municipalities in all the candidate countries have assumed increased responsibilities in recent years, their financial resources have not risen in proportion but have either remained unchanged or even declined. In fact, lack of funds is one of the most often stated hindrances for more sustainable urban actions (surely used once in a while as an excuse, but nevertheless a factual barrier) and one which in the course of analysing the good practice cases proved to be in some instances a decisive hindrance (cp. chapter 2.2).
 - in all countries there is - sometimes with a reference to forthcoming EU membership - **clear political prioritisation of economic development** and increase in standards of living. Objectives in the sustainability agenda are by comparison much further down the line. As one result of this priority ranking, the majority of countries and cities placed an emphasis on improving technical infrastructures including the extension of road networks. EU programme packages are often used to support this type of measure, where the contribution to sustainability is at best borderline.
 - a **civil society** with definite influence on national and on local government actions has come into being in all candidate countries, however, generally speaking it is less clearly delineated than in member states. All candidate countries have passed comprehensive and tiered legislation, delineating areas of **public participation and information** in planning procedures as well as for large individual projects. At the same time it can be observed, however, that implementation in almost all countries has taken place only very hesitantly. There are two important barriers involved in this lack of action:
 - resistance, disinterest and lack of information on the part of administrators and politicians (in actual fact, in the course of analysing the good practice cases (cp. chapter 2.2) problematic or complete absence of cooperation with the respective local authority and/or within the body itself proved to be the most frequent barrier which needed to be overcome when implementing projects);
 - to some extent, civil society can only exert weak influence (absence of public interest; not yet established NGO and interest group structures; particularly in the former socialist states, there has been in some cases perceptible distrust of state-run public information and participation campaigns, which are still superficially dismissed as 'propaganda').

- the role of **public-private partnership** and of commerce in urban management is rather limited. Although in some cases, classic municipal tasks such as spatial planning or local public passenger transport (generally in smaller municipalities) are now being carried out by private enterprise, apparently there is considerable resistance in some municipal authorities towards cooperation with the private sector. One reason may have to do with lessons learned in some of the countries (especially in the first few years after the radical system change), with patronage and corruption involving a number of municipal projects. Another reason stems from the fact that cities and towns (especially urban development planners) witnessed how, during the process of restitution of real estate property (which in the meantime is more or less concluded), privatisation of municipal land resulted in loss of an important steering instrument, without any timely adequate substitute. (In some situations, for example, the early, in part unsystematic rush to privatise apartments in large, system-built housing estates is now impeding renovation/renewal; however, there are also instances in which this privatisation itself has proved to be a help in financing development of this kind.)
- urban **planning procedures** generally take place in a **sectoral** context. Integrated planning activities are an exception. Frequently there is a lack of long-term planning, particularly of a strategic nature. Only in very few cases do transport questions and spatial planning, for instance, observe similar standards, aims and time frames. In most cases, responsibility for different fields of planning and decision making (such as land use planning, transport planning and construction) lies within the jurisdiction of different departments and institutions, in some cases even at different spatial / administrative levels. In addition, these various planning fields are often irreconcilably different, not only in terms of time frame, but also in some cases in spatial or physical dimensions. Countries with comparatively speaking pronounced centralised planning and decision making structures have an additional problem, in that decisions are taken far from the concrete problem areas, thus the principle of subsidiarity is not being observed in this context.
- **cooperation** and correlation between municipalities and the respective **surrounding area** is an exception rather than a rule in all the fields of action in the four thematic areas. This lack or absence of cooperation is particularly detrimental in the field of transport and traffic and with regard to urban sprawl; to some extent it is due – or at least as a contributory factor – to national administrative legislation. Greenfield development is being fuelled by rivalry between municipalities and the surrounding areas with their smaller settlements. Towns and cities lack resources to initiate countervailing steering financial instruments, or else this is contrary to national or EU laws.
- implementation and enforcement of regulations in most of these countries is considered to be in need of improvement. **Innovative instruments and indicators** enabling sustainable development to be monitored are present in the extreme minority of cities. Information gathering and analysis is carried out in rather traditional ways, very often on an ad-hoc basis, not very systematically. In a number of instances, even application of 'traditional' monitoring and analysis procedures is unsatisfactory. GIS systems are still rarely used, except in some larger cities. Only in a few cases has development (or even use) of indicator systems been undertaken to benchmark and measure, at least in certain fields, sustainable development.

- levels of **knowledge and information** concerning sustainable urban development are often unsatisfactory. On the one hand, there is still a majority of urban planners who completed their professional education in 'socialist urban development', which in part followed quite different models than training in member states. On the other hand, sustainability criteria have been integrated into training curricula for urban planners, architects and civil engineers in only in a few cases. Sustainability is in general terms far more rarely incorporated into professional training than in most member states.
- the specific **spatial and functional structures** of many of the former socialistic cities differ considerably from those of western European towns and cities and contribute to hampering to a large extent more sustainable urban development (mono-functionality); increasingly accentuating spatial developments (decline of inner cities) first offered and now continue to offer easy targets for pressure from investors (pressure on land use). On the other hand, it provides certain opportunities for improving local amenities in residential areas (open spaces) or for more sustainable spatial structures (mix of functions in city centres). Spatial structure in the majority of the towns and cities (mono-functional structuring in many formerly socialist-influenced municipalities, uncontrolled sprawl in Malta) leads to far greater difficulties in implementing more sustainable development when compared to the position in member states.
- all of the candidate countries are struggling with decay **and decline in (historical) town and city centres**, which in some cases has reached a level hardly ever encountered in any member state. Migration from urban areas to the surrounding settlements or countryside is an unbroken trend. On the other hand, there is in some instances tremendous pressure on land use in these areas by private (and even some public) commercial enterprises, investors and developers. These problems were aggravated by unclear and varying restitution, giving rise to unclear ownership situations and liability, and also by lack of funding. As a result, CEE inner cities or town centres quite often include a mix of less competitive shops and workshops, old residential and commercial buildings lying vacant or under-used, as well as individual, scattered buildings fully restored or newly built for commercial, residential or institutional use.
- **urban sprawl** is continuing in all the candidate countries at such a pace and to an extent seldom experienced in any member state, and is often accompanied by the phenomenon of shrinking municipalities (within existing administrative boundaries). There are in essence two reasons for this phenomenon:
 - industrial and commercial development on greenfield sites, generally in ribbon developments alongside roads and motorways, which are frequently accessible only by using private individual transport (these estates also in some cases represent severe competition for inner city commercial and trading operations and have contributed to the decline of city centres, e.g. large new shopping centres);
 - in particular the newly emerging and comparatively affluent (higher waged) middle class is moving away from urban districts into the surrounding areas.

- in contrast to urban sprawl, many towns and cities are experiencing **dereliction** on former industrial, commercial, railroad or military sites. Due to in part unclear ownership, uncoordinated planning, financial restrictions, absence of financial instruments and sometimes severe contamination, cities are very often unable to bring these urban **brownfields** back onto the property market. It seems, however, that frequently planners and politicians are even not aware of this problem (and associated problems such as negative effects on land/sites in the vicinity).
- (pre-fabricated) **large housing** estates are an extremely common feature throughout all former socialist countries (on average, more than 40 % of all inhabitants in major cities live in estates of this kind); because of their dimensions and their problems (actual and potential: renovation needs, inadequate building technology and insulation, missing local amenities, absence of social and other types of infrastructure, mono-functionality, social decline, segregation and crime) they represent a very particular problem for ten out of the twelve candidate countries. The tasks of improving and renovating these estates are made more difficult, because for very many years the housing industry was not sufficiently developed, and a major part of the apartments themselves are privately owned, while the built land is either in local government or other ownership. There are few pilot or model projects, and financing of such renovations by means of bank loans, due to lack of back-up security via land or real estate values and also the unclear costs, will remain a remote possibility, and thus will be dependent on (infrequent and scarce) government subsidies.
- **increases in motorisation** levels have proceeded so rapidly that in some municipalities higher levels have now been reached than in many towns and cities in member states. Whilst numbers of private (passenger) cars per inhabitant in EU member states rose only by some 20 % over the last decade, figures in the candidate countries rose on average by some two-thirds. In some countries it has doubled, in some cities even quadrupled. While urban sprawl - besides the 'psychology of private car ownership' (freedom and prosperity) - is one of the main reasons for the tremendous increase of private motorised transport, the driving force behind increases in urban goods transport is economic growth and prosperity. Contemporaneously, dramatic decreases in PPT (public passenger transport) use have been recorded. In this way the municipalities (with the exception of Malta and Cyprus, where PPT is anyway of marginal importance) are losing one of the very few positive features of improved sustainability policies. The resulting problems associated with motorisation (congestion, parking etc.) are increased by out-dated vehicle fleets.
- overall, a number of problems have developed in towns and cities in the candidate countries at such a pace that initiating and applying instruments, methods and tools which might be used in resolving these problems could not possibly keep up with the process.

In summarising, the differences in the problems being faced in the candidate countries and in EU member states are more of a quantitative than of a qualitative nature in the majority of fields. It must be admitted, however, that in some cases the sheer size of a problem and the (temporal) dynamics of its development present such a huge hindrance that in effect the problem itself becomes a barrier. As a consequence, conceivably there

is some differentiated weighting to be attached to the proposed strategies and solutions put forward by the WGs (cp. chapter 4). In addition, there are several 'special problems' which exist only in the candidate countries (for example, that of large housing estates), which should be taken into account in proposals which will be made for the enlarged EU.

2.2 Good practice in urban development

The following section will briefly present abstracts⁴ of a number of good practice case studies from towns and cities in the candidate countries. These cases will be examined and analysed in chapter 2.2.2, with regard to conditions for success, hindrances, to transferability and to their potential ability to overcome barriers and to furnish fundamental solutions to the problems, in short: with regard to lessons to be learned. The results of this analysis have been incorporated into chapter 2.1.

As most of the projects and programmes described below are still ongoing, evaluation of lasting results and effects on the urban environment or on the management structure of towns and cities is hardly possible. It was decided therefore to use a rather broad, admittedly to a certain degree subjective, definition of good practice: a project or programme is considered to be good practice if instruments and tools are used which are not commonly in use in other cities of the country at issue nor obliged by law and regulations, and/or if results verifiably or probably will contribute towards more sustainable urban development. The reasons which led to any one particular case study being included in a category are briefly outlined in the abstracts section of each case.

When selecting these case studies on the one hand efforts were made to take account of each of the four priority themes. On the other hand, it was important to have as far as possible equal emphasis on all of the candidate countries. Nevertheless, the case studies included might in the first instance be classified in the two fields of urban management and urban design. A number of the studies cover (naturally) several fields. However, it would be premature at the end of the exercise to conclude as a result of this imbalance that sustainable urban transport and sustainable urban construction are lower in priority to be addressed than the other areas. Such a conclusion would be beyond the scope of this study. However, those involved in this review, in particular through the outcomes of the "Twelve Candidate Countries Overview Report " are persuaded that this uneven distribution of case studies does to some extent reflect the current reality of the situation. Thus, for example, traffic-calming measures and pedestrianised areas certainly do fall into the category of good practice in the field of urban mobility as given above: measures, which in the context of the respective country (as a result of the rapidly increasing personal motorised transport and the prevailing political priorities)

⁴ More detailed descriptions of these case studies are to be found in the appendix. In addition, in the appendix is also a list of numerous further projects identified by interview partners and resource persons involved in the "Twelve Candidate Countries Overview Report" produced in July 2003, as good practice examples in their own countries.

are without doubt to be considered as innovative, but which in the pan-European context rather reflect the state of previous decades.

2.2.1 Good practice – abstracts

Theme	Sustainable Urban Management
Country	Romania
City	Bucharest
Population	2.5 million
Project	Local Public Management Enhancement in Romania
Main topics	Improve inter-sectoral and international cooperation; improve management structures and communication
Abstract	<p>In August 2001, a cooperative programme was completed by the Romanian National Institute of Administration, six Romanian Training Centres (RTCs) and various local authorities, with the aim of improving public management capacity at local government level in Romania. Local authorities in Romania have been facing increasing degrees of responsibility at the local level as a result of an on-going national process of decentralisation. This programme of institutional development and training for urban management in Romania was intended to enhance managerial and administrative skills of local public officials to better prepare them for a wide range of decision making situations.</p> <p>The project began in mid-1997, and after the establishment of a project coordinating office, carried out a training needs assessment (conducted by 20 graduates from the Netherlands Institute of Housing Studies (IHS), which proved a positive experience), organised meetings of all RTCs, a successful 3 month-long Training of Trainers (in the second half of 1997, attended by 25 professionals) and a one-week RTC development meeting for directors.</p> <p>The project also aimed to strengthen the capabilities of six RTCs for local government (in Bucharest, Calarasi, Craiova, Sibiu, Iasi and Cluj) and a department in the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, responsible for training county representatives (staff of the regional prefectures). RTCs have training programmes both for elected local officials and for appointed municipal staff. For this project, the centres utilised existing training materials on aspects of public management, and also developed new curricula pertaining to sustainable development. The three year project included: field specific curriculum development, training and trainer instruction, seminars and follow-up. The assistance of international managers and training experts was seen as an important aspect of the instructional courses. The desired outcome of this programme was to build upon the capacity of several local government organisations, identify key gaps in performance and develop and implement locally-appropriate strategies to improve their public management practices. Trickle-down effects from these exemplary local governments are expected to have positive influences at the national level.</p>

	The project was financed by the MATRA Programme of the Dutch government, and it has contributed to an increased capacity of all partners for future international projects, preparing them for USAID and PHARE funding. In particular, the relationship between RTCs and the government associations became stronger through this project.
Theme	Sustainable Urban management
Country	Slovakia
City	Rimavska Sobota
Population	24,000
Project	Involvement of NGOs and local authorities in urban sustainable development in Slovakia
Main topics	Information and public participation; indicators of sustainable development; solid waste; improve inter-sectoral and international cooperation
Abstract	<p>In 2001, Rimavska Sobota won a place among the cities honoured in the "Cities Toward EU Compliance Competition" and received an EU grant for further improvement of its waste management systems. Within the framework of the Slovak Republic National Strategy of Sustainable Development, adopted in 2001, the city of Rimavska Sobota also developed a strategy to involve NGOs in local processes of public decision making and environmental management. The project addresses opportunities for evaluating individual cities according to the European Commission Working Group for the Municipal Environment recommendations on Common European Sustainability Indicators - 2001.</p> <p>The project has sought to increase involvement of the public in decision making processes at local level through provision of transparent data to citizens and to assist with implementing sustainability indicators through involvement in processes related to evaluating planned (investment) activities in the city. Opportunities for cooperation among project partners, NGOs and the local authority of Rimavska Sobota have been sought in the areas of sustainable development strategy and environmental legislation.</p> <p>The pilot project has resulted in the creation of a plan for economic and social future development of the city, improvement of waste management through public participation in separated recycling, and publication of a brochure on the project entitled "Common European indicators of sustainable cities development - pilot project in the Slovak Republic". The plan for economic and social development incorporates analytical results from the application of EU Sustainability Indicators, and this project has become a model for local environmental management improvement in Slovakia.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Management
Country	Bulgaria
City	Sofia
Population	1.2 million

Project	Local model for sustainable development and Euro-integration (LMSDE) – Ecozone Sofia East
Main topics	Local Agenda 21; land use and planning; improve inter-sectoral and international cooperation; information and public participation
Abstract	<p>The pilot Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Sofia East Ecological Zone, incorporating the LMSDE (Local Model for Sustainable Development and Euro-integration), has been prepared for an area situated to the east of Sofia. It proposes a model for sustainable development of the area, defines a number of pilot projects and provides a structure for implementation. The EMP, with its political and financial support, is to be a model for Euro-integration in support of governmental policy. It is to provide rehabilitation and preventative measures.</p> <p>The project deals with European Commission Plan 2000 requirements, and acceleration of and strengthening the accession process in compliance with the EU Common Position for the accession countries and the UN Principles of Sustainable Development.</p> <p>The work involved a newly developed Master Plan for Sofia, an innovative urban plan for integrated management policy, indicators and a pilot projects package, as well as development of Local Agenda 21.</p> <p>The project is being implemented by ASDE (Agency for Sustainable Development and Euro- integration) - Ecozone Sofia. ASDE has been implementing the EMP in close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Waters and the municipality of Sofia, coordinating progress with the various pilot projects, as well as monitoring sustainable development indicators and environmental conditions.</p> <p>Since 1999, there have been multiple pilot projects concerning energy efficiency, such as establishing a consortium for energy efficiency with RWE Solutions, Stadtwerke Leipzig and the Municipal Bank of Sofia). Other initiatives involved national and international partners, including EA.UE in Berlin, Bayerische Staatskanzlei, Regional Environmental Centre, UNDP, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Technical University of Munich, DLR, Bulgarian Aerospace Agency, Bulgarian Academy of Science, the municipality of Plovdiv in Bulgaria, etc.</p> <p>Work is currently on-going, with many pilot projects in search of funding in order to go forward with implementation.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Management
Country	Hungary
City	Szekesfehervar
Population	110,000
Title	Urban Development Concept of Szekesfehervar
Main topics	Mobility and transport; increase use of public transport; urban renewal/ urban rehabilitation

Abstract	<p>The Urban Development Concept of Székesfehérvár is an exemplary perspective development plan for a dynamic and developing Hungarian city; it was prepared and harmonised with an environment concept and also with physical plans/-ing.</p> <p>The strategy was distilled from other strategies on special themes important to city development and recreation (tourism, human resources, housing, environment etc.).The strategies were prepared by municipal internal department (Economic Development and City Marketing Department) in cooperation with external experts. The main objective in implementing a development concept was to turn the city into a marketable enterprise by reforming the municipal organisation into a less bureaucratic system. Outsourcing and public private partnerships for some community services are reasonable means in order to achieve greater market orientation. Székesfehérvár is to become a vital partner in Hungarian economical development.</p> <p>With its attempt to anti-bureaucratic reforms and further strengthening a prospering region, instead of trusting traditional principles of administration and economic cooperation, this project can be seen as a good example for sustainable urban development</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Management
Country	Poland
City	Elk
Population	55,000
Project	National Program for Environmental Protection Pilot Project in Elk
Main topics	Information and public participation; Local Agenda 21; environmental education
Abstract	<p>Elk is the largest town in the Warminsko-Mazurskie province with a population of about 55,000, situated in the centre of a region known as the 'green lungs' of Poland, in the north-eastern corner of the country. The town of Elk is located on the high shore of Elk Lake and on the River Elk, and as such, has pollution issues affecting local water resources.</p> <p>The Pilot Project for Environmental Protection in Elk began as early as 1991, as an initiative of the National Environmental Action Programme approved by the Polish Parliament in the same year. Funding for the programme for the improvement of water quality in Elk Lake and Elk River was received from the Action Programme for Environmental Protection in central and eastern Europe in 1996. A primary feature at the beginning of the programme was an environmental assessment of Elk Lake and Elk River, leading to an environmental action programme for long-term use by Elk Town Council. A grant from the American Agency for Environmental Protection to the National Environmental Action Programme, and assistance by other national organisations enabled waste water facilities to be modernised and led to ongoing technical measures to improve water quality in the area around Elk. Technical water quality remediation and sanitation related to reclamation of the town's landfill area were at the top of the community's prioritised list of issues affecting environmental health through water quality and were also the first to be dealt with through the pilot project; water qualities in Elk Lake and the River Elk</p>

	<p>have improved.</p> <p>A further objective of the Elk pilot programme was to develop a local spatial management plan containing principles of sustainability as outlined in the AGENDA 21 initiative, to create a community environmental action plan to conduct economic activities in an appropriate way and to increase ecological awareness of local residents. This aspect of the pilot project took longer to complete, because it was generally conducted by volunteers and the roles of the various stakeholders were not clearly defined. However, related programmes sponsored by the town of Elk, such as founding the Elk Educational Centre, furthered implementation of the Elk Programme for Sustainable Development. A subsidy from the Regional Ecological Centre in Budapest (REC) pays for publishing a quarterly newsletter called 'E3' and for other environmental action. Elk is also a member of the European Creative Sustainability Network.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Management
Country	Czech Republic
City	Prague
Population	1.2 million
Project	Environmental Information System of Prague (IOZIP)
Main topics	Environmental education; improve inter-sectoral and international cooperation; public information and participation
Abstract	<p>The Environmental Information System of Prague (IOZIP) dates back to the 1980s. Currently it is a huge data collecting system, updated and technically improved on a regular basis. The system collects and processes environmental data on the Prague area from a variety of sources; it provides comprehensive information to city management officials, experts and the generally interested public, by means of printed publications, CDs and particularly via municipal web sites. Through IOZIP yearbooks, maps, thematic studies and statistics on Prague environment are made available. The project is mainly financed through the city's annual budget. Besides collecting and providing data and referring output, one of the main objectives of those involved is to promote this information system to the Czech public and to international experts. This is achieved especially through cooperation in EU environmental programmes and projects and in international networks.</p> <p>We consider this project as good practice because it provides a comprehensive source of information for sustainable urban development and manages cooperation between different municipal and private bodies in the field of sustainable (re)creation. The data is maintained on a regular basis and new technologies are implemented as financial sources are provided. The staff responsible make great efforts to promote the programme at regional as well as at international level.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Management
Country	Latvia

City	Riga
Population	815,000
Project	Mezaparks Sustainability Planning Project
Main topics	Local Agenda 21; information and public participation; land-use and planning (neighbourhood development); indicators for sustainable development
Abstract	<p>Mezaparks is a suburban district of Riga, considered by some to be the first so-called 'garden city neighbourhood' in Europe, established in 1901 and originally known as Kaiserwald. Today it is an attractive and expensive suburb of Riga, known for its houses in the Art Nouveau or Jugendstil design and its 400 hectares of recreational park.</p> <p>In 1997, the Mezaparks Neighbourhood Development Association (MNDA) was formed to promote the sustainable development in Mezaparks. In 2002, the MNDA, within the context of the Mezaparks Sustainability Planning Project, and co-financed by the EU Phare ACCESS Programme with Riga City Environment Centre Agenda 21 and the City of Helsinki Environment Centre, developed a Mezaparks Neighbourhood Sustainability Plan (the plan) and Indicators of Sustainability in Mezaparks (ISM). The process of developing the plan and ISM helped to raise awareness amongst local residents with regard to sustainability, urban management and development planning issues, and encouraged residents and stakeholders to take greater responsibility for local community development and management.</p> <p>Economic growth in Riga is resulting in increase in construction activity in the historical centre of Riga and in attractive green space areas near lakes and waterways, including Mezaparks. Unfortunately, development is uncoordinated and the interests of investors dominate in the decision making processes of municipal administrators. Lobbying work undertaken by the residents of Mezaparks and MNDA lacked quantitative data on the economic, environmental and social impacts of new developments and on Mezaparks.</p> <p>The project was instrumental in raising awareness in the community about development issues and promoting citizen involvement. However, in the post-project period it has been difficult to maintain the momentum that was generated during the 16 months of the project. In 2004, MNDA will be publishing an environmental newsletter every two months with funding secured from the Riga Environmental Protection Fund. This will help boost information dissemination and community involvement. Additional sources of funding will need to be sought to implement some of the actions defined in the plan for which MNDA and residents are responsible.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Management; Sustainable Urban Design
Country	Slovenia
City	Ljubljana
Population	570,000
Project	RE Urban Mobil

Main topics	urban renewal / urban rehabilitation; improve inter-sectoral and international cooperation
Abstract	<p>In 2002, the City of Ljubljana, together with the municipalities of Leipzig (Germany) as coordinator of the project, Bologna (Italy), Leon (Spain) and ten universities / professional institutes successfully participated in an international city regeneration project entitled Mobilising re-urbanisation under conditions of demographic change (RE Urban Mobil).</p> <p>The project intends qualitatively to improve quality of life and vitality in inner city areas. The aim of the project is to analyse re-urbanisation potential and obstacles in inner-city residential areas and to develop instruments, incentives and strategies for appropriate and long-term use of these areas, taking into consideration changing demographic conditions. New partnerships between local government and interest groups are to be sought to develop a joint and long-lasting strategy for urban regeneration. Outcomes of the project will include new strategies for re-urbanisation. This project is cofinanced by the EU.</p> <p>The City of Ljubljana, departments and public utility companies have developed a set of parallel activities allied to the RE Urban Mobil project. The two main branches of the initiative are called 'Ljubljana – my city', focused on buildings, and 'Imago Sloveniae', a cultural initiative to encourage the vitality of central areas. Within the 'my city' campaign there are three areas of urban action: improvement of urban open spaces, renovation of building facades and roofs and removal of obstacles in the built environment. The new project is less ambitious than 1980s regeneration plans but more economical and therefore more realistic.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Management / Sustainable Urban Design
Country	Cyprus
City	Nicosia
Population	230,000
Project	Nicosia Master Plan
Main topics	urban renewal and/or urban rehabilitation; improve inter-sectoral and international cooperation
Abstract	<p>Nicosia is the capital city of Cyprus, a divided city and a landmark of international heritage. What is called the 'Buffer Zone', which has divided the Greek and Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of Nicosia since 1974, runs through the historic centre of the city. With rapid population growth in Nicosia in the second half of the last century, mostly through unplanned urban development, the city has sprawled leaving the ancient centre neglected and its infrastructure disintegrating.</p> <p>In 1979, the Greek and Turkish communities of Nicosia agreed to prepare a common plan for the city. The Nicosia Master Plan (NMP) followed in 1981, with a long-term physical plan projected to 2000. The project was placed under the umbrella of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. The development objective of the NMP Project focused on improving the existing and future habitat and human</p>

	<p>settlement conditions, producing positive economic impacts and on the need to concentrate and consolidate the growth of the city in order to revitalise the historic city centre. The plan was organised in three phases, and in the third phase a study of the socio-economic profile showed that private initiative had failed to save the historic area from deterioration.</p> <p>The unusual circumstances prevailing in Nicosia as a divided city often thwarted successful urban preservation and rehabilitation policy implementation for the historic conservation areas. It became evident that public intervention was the only means to improve the existing situation and stimulate private initiative in the desired directions - toward housing rehabilitation and pedestrian schemes. For example, architectural renovation and rejuvenation of residential areas on either side of the buffer zone is currently under way: the Chrysaliniotissa and Arab Ahmet housing projects have been given funding from the UN High Commission for Refugees.</p> <p>The pilot schemes relating to the selected zones of the study area constitute the first substantial step towards implementation of the NMP policies. The impact of these projects has already begun to stimulate private initiative in the areas of commercial activity and housing rehabilitation.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Transport
Country	Czech Republic
City	Prague
Population	1.2 million
Project	Prague Integrated Transport
Main topics	Mobility and transport; improve inter-sectoral and international cooperation
Abstract	<p>Prague is one of the leading European cities for number of cars per capita. Along with its extensive road networks, this phenomenon has forced the municipality and public transport company to develop innovative solutions to maintain and improve the competitiveness and schedules of public transport services.</p> <p>Prague's public transport company has been stimulated by a series of progressive measures passed by Prague City Council. A system for restricting and reorganising parking in the city centre was introduced in 1992, with positive market-based and traffic regulation results. Shortly thereafter, the Prague Integrated Transport (PIT) network was created. PIT is a collaboration of all public transport services in Prague, which are incorporated into an overall management plan and system. It represents an advanced form of public passenger mass transport aimed at ensuring efficiency, quality and flexibility by way of standardised transport documentation. Coordinated timetables, interchange terminals and reliable information are important elements of the system. Another successful aspect of PIT has been the 'Project of Surface Public Transport Priority in Prague', which established public transport priority over private cars as a policy principle. Improving rapidity and punctuality of public transport ensures more frequent use of public transport, resulting in greater</p>

	<p>economic effectiveness for the municipality and the customers.</p> <p>The most recent development in PIT has been an automated monitoring system implemented in the tram and bus networks. This remote, electronic monitoring network is still awaiting uniform implementation, but once complete it will enable traffic managers to address problems instantaneously and adjust traffic patterns and transport frequency to demand conditions.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Transport
Country	Poland
City	Gdansk
Population	460,000
Project	Gdansk Cycling Infrastructure Project
Main topics	Information and public participation; mobility and transport; climate protection
Abstract	<p>On 01 June 2001, the Polish Ecological Club (PKE) received US \$ 1 million on behalf of the Cities for Bicycles network, from the Global Environment Facility within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The award enabled a project to reduce transport-derived greenhouse gas emission through development of a model infrastructure installation programme in Gdansk to help individual citizens change their primary mode of transport from private motor cars to bicycles.</p> <p>The Gdansk cycling and alternative living community is perhaps the most vibrant in Poland. In 1995, it became the first city in Poland to sponsor a Cycling Task Force for advancement of cycling-friendly urban policy development. Through the work of the Cycling Task Force and the Cities for Bicycles network, Gdansk became the first city in central Europe to receive a large award from the Global Environment Facility for bicycle routes.</p> <p>Based on pre-project polling regarding interest in better cycling facilities and infrastructure, the project is designed to fulfil some of the great interest and demand for better facilities in the Gdansk area. Once complete, it will be analysed and summarised as a model for implementation in other cities. After some unexpected delays, the project is currently under way and is expected to be completed in 2004. Upon completion, Gdansk will be the first large city in Poland to have a complete, inner-city cycling route network.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Transport
Country	Slovak Republic
City	Kosice
Population	240,000
Title	Regional integrated transport in Kosice (KORID)
Main topics	Mobility and transport; increase use of public transport; improve management structures and communication

Abstract	<p>In line with the EU harmonisation process with regard to mobility, traffic and transport are very important priorities. The quality of traffic has direct influence on overall opportunities for implementing an integrated regional and social development plan, and thus significantly supports the process of more sustainable development. The main purpose of the regional integrated traffic system in Kosice (KORID) is to provide a high standard of service for the area by means of public transport capacity integration and significant changes in overall management of individual (motorised) traffic. To achieve sustainable changes in the modal split an inter-connected system of transport, linking trains, trams, buses and trolley-buses has been created.</p> <p>The strategy for regional integrated transport in Kosice was chosen as good practice example for development of a sustainable urban environment because it aims to find solutions to several problems of the region at the same time. By means of this concept the economic situation of the industrial region can be improved as well as the urban environment of Kosice and its surroundings. Safety and health of inhabitants and the environment can be improved through reducing the proportion of individual motorised transport. Funding sources and actors are mainly local, but international partners are involved in the development process.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Design
Country	Romania
City	Sulina
Population	6,000
Title	Sulina Rescue 2000 An urban plan for Sulina town revitalisation by developing the local cultural heritage (PHARE Project, EURART Project)
Main topics	land use and planning; economic concepts; improve management structures and communication
Abstract	<p>At the end of the 19th century Sulina was a prosperous and picturesque town. Today Sulina is a declining settlement in the sensitive area of the Danube delta. The project Sulina Rescue 2000 created a town master plan in which a specific development strategy for the local community was proposed, based on its historical and architectural heritage and values to stimulate cultural tourism as a viable alternative.</p> <p>By developing a master plan and a strategy for future investment the Sulina Rescue 2000 project provides good opportunities to city officials and potential investors to follow a set of guidelines for sustainable urban development.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Design / Sustainable Urban Management
Country	Czech Republic
City	Ostrava
Population	321,000

Project	Park in Fifejdy – the Place for Living
Main topics	Information and public participation; increase green areas; environmental education; urban renewal; improve inter-sectoral and international cooperation
Abstract	<p>The Fifejdy Park project has brought green and a new sense of place to the Fifejdy-Ostrava housing project, an urban area lacking vegetation. The project has applied a method of action planning developed in the U.S.A. and UK, involving extensive public participation, together with a German method for building natural gardens for kindergartens in conjunction with parents, teachers and volunteers. Fifejdy Park was organised by the Vita Citizens' Association in Ostrava.</p> <p>Park in Fifejdy – the place for living was organised to develop both interest and in sensitivity among members of the local community for their immediate environment through intensive communication and outreach and by addressing real needs and wishes of local residents. Last but not least, a new park has been planned and built in a cooperative way, with results that motivate further engagement and initiatives. The project was inspired by the Pittsburgh CELP (Central European Linkage Program). Partners have included the City of Ostrava, as well as local schools and residents. It was funded by the City, along with Czech and non-Czech foundations (Heinz Endowment, Rockefellers' Brothers Fund, Open Society Fund Prague, Foundation Partnership, C. S. Mott Foundation).</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Design / Sustainable Construction
Country	Hungary
City	Budapest
Population	1.8 million
Title	Urban Renewal in Ferencvaros district of Budapest
Main topics	Urban renewal / urban rehabilitation; architecture and construction; improve inter-sectoral cooperation and management structures
Abstract	<p>This strategic pilot project on urban rehabilitation is located in a high-density central area of Budapest in the declining 9th district. Its intention was to restructure the old built-up area that suffered generally speaking from indifference during communist rule and due to a difficult social situation. The main success of the project was the foundation of a public-private-partnership leading to adoption of a French model for SEM (société d'économie mixte - third sector organisation) in the corporation of SEM IX Inc. The project was awarded several international prizes and has been extended on a national level.</p> <p>The urban renewal project in Ferencvaros can be considered as a success story of transformation in urban development. Sustainability is provided through several aspects of the concept: the PPP model, actual renovation processes in the area, new buildings and open spaces and changes to the social structure of the inhabitants to the benefit of the area (gentrification processes). All this makes the urban renewal project a good practice example for sustainable development in the urban environment of Budapest.</p>

Theme	Sustainable Urban Design; Sustainable Construction
Country	Poland
City	Warsaw
Population	1.6 million
Title	Reconstruction of Natolin Wyzyny housing estate in Warsaw
Main topics	Housing and new settlements; urban renewal / urban rehabilitation; reduce energy consumption; architecture and construction
Abstract	<p>The Natolin Wyzyny housing estate is but one of many large housing estates in Warsaw build in large panel construction methods. The almost complete destruction of the inner city of Warsaw during the Second World War and a great demand for residential buildings created the necessity for mass construction in the mostly state owned housing sector. After the political changes and the start of economic transformation the housing sector was re-organised, resulting in a huge great of privatised apartments. Nowadays the once modern housing estate consists mostly of out-dated housing stock in private ownership. Reconstruction is essential for sustainable development of the local environment of the estate and living conditions. This reconstruction and improvements to the surrounding environment were achieved in the Natolin Wyzyny housing estate by using rental income, profits from privatisation, revenues from commercial investment in the project area, and with special subsidies from the Polish government.</p> <p>The reconstruction of Natolin Wyzyny housing estate in Warsaw is regarded as good practice because firstly it was initiated by a new local institution - the Housing Association - that secondly used mainly local financial means and thirdly because the results achieved led to a model of sustainable funding, management organisation and maintenance to improve living conditions and the environment in the housing estate.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Design / Sustainable Construction
Country	Estonia
City	Tallinn
Population	430,000
Project	Renovation of prefabricated buildings in Mustamae district
Main topics	Housing and new settlements; urban renewal / urban rehabilitation; reduce energy consumption; architecture and construction
Abstract	<p>The Mustamae district of Tallinn is a typical example of large housing estates in eastern Europe from the point of view of technical, social and financial problems and the built infrastructure. Today, more than 30 years after the buildings were erected, the housing stock is out-dated and living conditions do not meet modern standards. There are two main barriers to necessary improvements: the construction methods used (large panel or slab technique) and financing opportunities for reconstruction. To identify possible methods and</p>

	<p>barriers in this housing estate, a pilot project including renovation of 15 dwellings was successfully carried out, leading to further stages of renovation and reconstruction in this area. One of the main targets was to improve energy efficiency of the buildings. Local and international funds have been used in implementing the strategy. A renovation process is intended to be carried out in this area, involving most of the dwelling stock, other buildings and the local environment. The project partners aim to turn Mustamae into one of the most popular neighbourhoods in Tallinn.</p> <p>The case study is selected because the organisational and technical approaches used are new. As it is one of the first projects to be realised in Tallinn, it serves as a model for further work on building renovation in Estonia and elsewhere in eastern Europe. A model for organisation and management is being developed, involving different partners from local government, owners associations and foreign institutions.</p>
Theme	Sustainable Urban Construction
Country	Lithuania
City	Vilnius
Population	580,000
Title	Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation Strategy
Main topics	Urban renewal / urban rehabilitation; renovation; economic concepts; culture
Abstract	<p>The Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation Strategy was developed in 1995/96 by an international group of Danish, Scottish and Lithuanian experts, with the support of the Norwegian and Danish governments and the Edinburgh Old Town Renewal Trust. This strategy was the first document on Old Town revitalisation, covering not only architectural and urban development conservation but also other aspects related to the entire city life, i.e. economic, political, and social considerations, based on international experience developed in both Lithuania and other countries of the region. In 1997 the strategy was adopted by the national government. By implementing a sustainable strategy for conservation and modernisation of valuable buildings in the Old Town, the city of Vilnius and its partners aim to improve living and working conditions in this area, to attract tourists interested in Vilnius as part of the World Heritage and nonetheless to attract national and foreign investors in order to improve the economic situation of the city. The strategy includes establishing a special agency, OTRA, providing information for potential investors and the public and co-ordinating all sub-projects.</p> <p>The strategy for revitalising Vilnius Old Town has been chosen as good practice example for urban management because it combines two vital aspects for sustainable urban development: preservation of cultural heritage and improvement of infrastructure, living and working conditions for modern life. This is achieved in co-operation with international as well as national experts and partners. Funding is provided through local, national and international sources.</p>

2.2.2 Good practice in urban development – overview and analysis

Despite the reservations expressed in the introductory section, it would not be correct to conclude that good practice is less common in the candidate countries than in EU member states. As was mentioned in section 2.1, however, with regard to more sustainable urban development there are to some extent specific problems in these countries, but in the first instance greater hindrances to implementation. The table which follows at the end of this chapter summarises in a synoptic style those case studies mentioned above from the point of view of objectives and results.

In the case of the vast majority of these projects, integrated plans or planning procedures were applied, or else integrated planning methods as well as innovative (to some extent only in the context of the country in question) instruments and procedures were used – all ways of proceeding which are not only called for as a top priority by the four working groups, but which also play a decisive role in assessing more sustainable development in the most varied range of indicator systems⁵. (The fact that precisely in this sphere in some of the projects considerable friction areas developed – in particular with regard to horizontal and vertical cooperation in and with local authority bodies, is quite a different matter and one which will be discussed at a later stage.)

Of critical significance for the success of these projects was also as a general rule their close links to international networks and international cooperation structures.⁶ Quite a number of projects was carried out with support from EU member states, not only as regards content, but also with their financial support. Although in candidate countries when compared with member states there is a less well-developed 'NGO culture' (cp. chapter 2.1), yet groups in this category were in nearly half of the projects important actors, in some instances even the initiators. In some projects cooperation between administrative bodies and NGOs is even regarded as one of the essential conditions of success. (Friction within such cooperation jeopardises success to a decisive degree, as may be illustrated in some of the other case studies, cp. below).

If specific, project and topic-related objectives and outcomes are for the time being disregarded, then the priorities of the fields of activity involved in the projects which have been examined may be listed in order as follows:

- integrated plans / planning / action programmes
- use and improvement of innovative tools and instruments (incl. indicators)
- international cooperation

⁵ cp. for example European Common Indicators. Towards a Local Sustainability Profile, Final Report, September 2003

⁶ This statement may however be due also to a methodological error, arising from the manner of data capture, and particularly from the comparatively low number of case studies. Cooperation-type projects may well be more internationally known, better documented and thus tend to be cited by the contact and resource persons and in relevant literature rather than other projects/efforts. However, the point remains quite clear, that in the case studies here described international cooperation and exchange of experience/lessons learned were a decisive factor for their success.

- increasing public awareness / public participation / NGO involvement
- improving horizontal, integrated cooperation
- improving vertical cooperation
- improving cooperation beyond administrative boundaries
- improving data availability / monitoring / benchmarking
- public-private partnership
- capacity building and increase in commitment
- dissemination and exchange of experience
- innovative fiscal instruments
- subsidiarity, in the sense of decisions and actions taken close to the citizen/to the problem

If the projects are examined with regard to problems and hindrances with which they were confronted or which put their success at risk (and in some cases still do), then the following areas need to be particularly mentioned:

- cooperation between individual (groups of) actors, particularly between administrative bodies and NGOs, as well as between the various administrative bodies and administrative levels was in some instances full of conflict, barely perceptible or else diminished in the course of the projects. The reasons for this can on the one hand be found in the specific characteristics of projects, nevertheless in the majority of instances it was those sorts of structures which were described in section 2.1 which had their part to play. In some of the case studies the NGOs concerned were quite considerably out of their depth/not up to the task (cp. on this point as well section 2.1).
- the second most important obstacle was constituted by financial difficulties. This is especially the case when considering long-term projects, in which, once public-derived funding support or financing has come to an end, there is a lack of follow-up finance or support and the municipalities do not incorporate this support in their budget (which once again links up with the difficulties mentioned above). From the point of view of this report's compilers, this is moreover a fundamental problem for any project in the field of urban development, which generally speaking cannot be 'self supporting'.

In addition, attention must be also drawn to a specific obstacle which concerns primarily projects for rehabilitation/renewal in system-built housing:

- with the one exception of the project in the district of Warsaw, privatisation of apartments in the wake of the political and other changes (in some of the instances apartments had been privately owned before this as well) proved to be a decided hindrance in re-structuring this type of residential area. Since apartments are the property of individual private owners, but not however the land and/or the building as such, which remain in public ownership or belong to companies or associations, both financing and coordination of improvement measures are very difficult (cp. sections 2.1 and 4.3).

All in all, this evaluation exercise of good practice case studies leads to certain conclusions which are very much in accordance with the results obtained in section 2.1, as well as with the WG results. This point will be picked up and amplified in chapter 4.

		Bucharest	Riga	Rimavska Sobota	Sofia	Szekefelvehar	Elk	Prague	Ljubljana	Nicosia	Prague	Gdansk	Kosice	Sulina	Ostrava	Budapest	Warsaw	Tallin	Vilnius	
theme	Sustainable urban management	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x										
	Sustainable urban transport									(x)	x	x	x							
	Sustainable design		(x)		(x)				x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	(x)
	Sustainable construction				(x)				(x)	(x)						x	x	x	x	x
objective and/or effect	improving cooperation beyond administrative boundaries				x		x			x	x		x	x						
	improving horizontal, integrated cooperation	x			x	x	x		x	x	x		x					x	x	x
	improving vertical cooperation	x			x	x			x	x				x		x	x	x	x	x
	improving data availability / monitoring / benchmarking			x	x			x			x	x								
	use and improvement of innovative tools and instruments (incl. indicators)		x	x	x	x		x				x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
	capacity building and increase in commitment / dissemination and exchange of experience	x			x															x
	international cooperation		x		x		x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x
	public-private partnership /				x	x			x							x	x			x
	increasing public awareness / publ. Participation / NGO		x	x	x		x	x	x				x			x	x	x	x	x
	integrated plans / planning / action programmes		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
	innovative fiscal instruments				x	x												x		(x)
subsidiarity principle	x			x																

3. EU programmes and approaches

3.1 EU-wide programmes and initiatives

The four WGs have only to a certain extent explicitly considered existing EU (wide) programmes. However, it is our contention that the potential they represent with respect to sustainable urban development, their strengths and weaknesses, ought to be analysed, at least in essence. The purpose of this would be to steer the revising and renewal processes with effect from 2006 (the majority of current programmes are due to run out in 2006) so that they will more decidedly promote sustainable urban development. With this in mind, those most significant programmes and initiatives - from the authors' point of view - will be briefly described.⁷

Table 2: Selected EU programmes and initiatives

Funding - cofinancing of single programmes or Community initiatives	Structural Funds	ERDF
	duration: 2000 - 2006	ESF
		EAGGF
		FIFG
	Cohesion Fund	
	Solidarity Fund	
Community initiatives - development concepts, framework programmes - cofinanced by the Structural Funds	INTERREG III (2002 - 2006)	ESPON (up to 2006)
		INTERACT (up to 2006)
	URBAN II (2000 - 2006)	
	LEADER+	
	EQUAL	
Action programmes	Framework programmes	6th EAP (2001 - 2010)
		6th FRP ⁸

⁷ for further details: cp. annex

⁸ The research programme will not be further considered in this context; only now are initial results being made known. These initial results will however be of great significance in the further development of the Thematic Strategy, because they answer some questions in the field of urban development hitherto unclear, but in the first instance also raise open questions and reveal lacunae in research.

		ERDF
		LIFE
	Single programmes / projects	CIVITAS (2002 - 2005)
Programmes for non-EU member states		PHARE (2000-2006)
		ISPA (2000-2006)
		TACIS
		SAPAD

It is our view that these programmes, i.e. their substance, could represent significant approaches towards more sustainable development in the towns and cities of the new member states.

3.1.1 ESDP – European Spatial Development Perspective

Although developed primarily by the member states, the ESDP is closely integrated into EU policy processes, is seen by the WGs as one of the key European approaches towards sustainable urban development and is therefor briefly outlined.

The ESDP is to be understood as a framework for action which is not legally binding but depends on the principle of voluntary adoption. Within this framework the different perspectives of spatial and political development of the EU are summarised and recommendations for action on different political levels are given.

The ESDP calls for "development of a balanced and polycentric urban system, a new urban-rural relationship". It states that cities and regions should complement each other and requests that towns and cities should:

- control their spatial growth
- ensure the mixture of functions and social groups
- manage the urban eco-system responsibly
- improve the transport system in technical, ecological and economical ways, and
- guarantee the maintenance of basic infrastructure, especially in smaller cities and deprived regions.

As the formulated policy approaches and aims are expressed at a very general level, its impact depends very much upon ways found to implement these approaches. Experience to the present time indicate rather that towns and cities need (some) support in implementing the recommendations, either from the national level of the country concerned, or at Community level.

3.1.2 EU programmes and initiatives

ERDF – European Regional Development Funds

This fund cofinances mainly productive investment leading to the creation or maintenance of jobs, infrastructure, local development initiatives and the business activities by small and medium-sized enterprises.

There are different Objective regions in which different targets of development are accomplished. Whereas the focus in Objective 1 regions mainly lies on building infrastructure, Objective 2 regions are supposed to include rehabilitation of deprived quarters and improvements in the environment.

Within the ERDF the Community initiatives INTERREG III and URBAN II are financed.

INTERREG III

The INTERREG III Community initiative mainly follows the ERDF guidelines for Objective 1 regions. There are three strands under which measures are to be taken, some of which have a high degree of relevance for the four thematic areas dealt with in this report:

- joint guidelines and programmes for planning and managing areas between agglomerations close to borders, paying particular attention to the guidelines of "Sustainable urban development: a framework for action";
- developing joint cross-border strategies for regeneration of historic urban centres;
- promoting sustainable development through cooperation between urban and rural areas;
- spatial development strategies, including cooperation among cities and rural and urban areas, with a focus on promoting polycentric and sustainable development, including:
- improved cooperation in metropolitan areas and 'gateway' cities;
- building strategic alliances and networks among small and medium-sized towns and cities;
- awareness raising on long-term spatial perspectives and promotion of institutional networks.

INTERACT – Part of the INTERREG Community initiative

Programmes running under INTERREG have gradually become more and more important in establishing the community idea of the European Union. Thus, more than half the overall budget granted for Community initiatives was allocated to the third round of INTERREG starting in 2000. Through responding to special challenges and demands of participants in single projects, INTERACT functions as an important junction for the INTERREG network. INTERACT priorities cover the following areas:

- INTERREG management support
- INTERREG development: local and regional initiatives
- Cooperation and management of transition in border regions with candidate countries
- technical assistance.

ESPON 2006 Programme – European Spatial Planning Observation Network

ESPON, the cofinanced research programme, was created to complement INTERREG III and as an instrument for achieving progress in implementing the ERDF. The core aim is to examine the spatial development of the EU 15 by linking the respective national institutions responsible for regional development, and with effect from 2004 with a particular focus on the new member states.

Seven objectives have been mapped out:

- deepen the benefit of national research programmes through a stronger focus on Europe and transnational cooperation. This includes analysing actual conditions and drawing conclusions for further development;
- specify the policies under the ERDF;
- improve and develop orientation for instruments and institutes which are of importance to the implementation of the ERDF;
- promote the enhancement of the spatial aspect of the Structural Funds, Community policies and national policies;
- contribute to and give advice for improved coordination of spatial decisions;
- create an interface for the different horizontal and vertical levels participating in regional development;
- build a network for the fragmented spatial academic community of Europe.

URBAN II

The Community initiative entitled URBAN II aims at regenerating urban areas in crisis. Special focus lies on an integrated economical and social approach. To be eligible under URBAN II the communities and/or the neighbourhoods have to fulfil certain preconditions, such as a high level of long-term unemployment, poverty and exclusion, a low level of economic activity, a high number of ethnic and minority groups, a particularly rundown environment etc.

The main objectives of URBAN II are:

- to promote the formulation and implementation of innovative strategies for sustainable economic and social regeneration of small and medium-sized towns and cities or of distressed urban neighbourhoods in larger cities;

- to enhance and exchange knowledge and experience in relation to sustainable urban regeneration and development in the Community.

Phare

PHARE is one of the three pre-accession instruments assisting the candidate countries. Eligible under Phare are all projects concerning structural and material building and rebuilding of administrative levels of the countries concerned and adopting the *acquis communautaire*. Projects should also aim at strengthening the administrative and programming capacities of these countries as well as supporting investment in economic and social cohesion. Upon accession, countries are scheduled to be ready to meet priorities of the Structural Funds.

Projects funded under Phare belong to three categories: EU norms, structural actions, and large scale infrastructure. Structures in question concern of course planning levels of urban development. Through this, Phare assists in smooth transition towards sustainable development in the urban environment in the candidate countries on a structural and political basis.

Projects supporting cross-border cooperation under Phare are to evolve towards the Community Initiative INTERREG, although in the case of some projects during the pre-accession period quite considerable differences in times for project submissions and approvals were apparent. Factors such as this can lead to delays in carrying out projects.

ISPA – Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession

Under ISPA three sectors of development are to be assisted: environment, transport, and technical assistance. ISPA mainly concentrates on the implementation of 'investment heavy' directives in the candidate countries, which are considered to be necessary for accession. As with Phare, only large-scale projects are to be funded under ISPA (not less than €5 million).

Environmental issues that can be funded include projects in the fields of air or water pollution and waste management. Through ISPA, candidate countries are intended to reach the environmental standards prescribed in the *acquis communautaire* as quickly as possible. The transport sector is basically oriented towards a Trans-European Transport Network (TEN) as described in the Council recommendation of the Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment (TINA) for the candidate countries.

LIFE – Financial Instrument for the Environment

LIFE was established in 1992 as a financial instrument and is currently in its third (and final) phase. Through LIFE three thematic and/or spatial fields are covered: nature, environment, and 'Third Countries'.

'LIFE Environment' mainly cofinances demonstration projects which are designed to link the research and development area with policies and practical solutions. One of the five priority areas is integration of sustainable environmental protection in spatial planning and policies, especially in an urban context. The focus lies on projects with

model character: new technologies are to be tested for the first time on an industrial scale and to be prepared for broad application.

Within LIFE Environment, candidate countries projects can be funded. So far, only Romania has been granted aid for cooperation.

CIVITAS – Cleaner and better transport in cities

The CIVITAS initiative consists of six different more or less independent project groups. Two of them (Meteor, Guidemaps) are occupied with monitoring, evaluation, awareness raising, support for development of strategies and implementing solutions. Within the other four groups (Vivaldi, Tellus, Trendsetter, Miracles) strategies and pilot projects for the 19 participating cities have been designed and if possible implemented. Involved in these processes are five cities from eastern European candidate countries: Prague, Pecs, Bucharest, Gdynia and Kaunas. Partnership and cooperation between these cities is to ensure a broader effect on development in each of the pilot cities and beyond.

Measures taken within the CIVITAS initiative are basically the same for each of the project groups: clean public or private vehicle fleets, restriction to access in certain urban areas, integrated pricing strategies, collective passenger transport, innovative use of vehicles (i.e. car sharing), logistic structure (transport of goods), transport management systems (ITS). The projects differ, however, in the focus they place upon single measures.

3.1.3 Some considerations

The EU programmes which have been referred to all offer many and various opportunities to underpin more sustainable urban development. The increased attention being given to networking, the exchange of experience and public participation and stakeholder involvement in these programmes is a very positive step. In particular where the candidate countries are concerned, this aspect should in the future (and in revised/re-issued programmes) be emphasised even more clearly.

There is, however, some concern that areas eligible for Structural Funds may not be taking full advantage of the opportunities to pursue urban sustainability. Objective 1 and 2 programmes, Phare and INTERREG and other programmes do not necessarily support sustainable actions, and the Commission could probably do more to ensure that opportunities to address this goal are maximised. Obviously, agreed objectives (between different DGs), quantifiable targets and measurable indicators to monitor EU programmes are still not in place.

Assessment criteria such as those above should also consider whether projects which are given financial support, precisely those which are of a purely investment nature, are in actual fact dependent on funding; secondly, whether frequently very short funding periods for projects which in the broadest of meanings concern institution and capacity

building, do not thereby stand diametrically opposed/in conflict with fulfilling their objectives.

Though detailed consideration of EU directives and regulations is beyond the scope of this report and of the tasks of the WGs, it is felt to be fruitful to refer in this context to some of the findings and views of the Expert Group on the Urban Environment:

"The Commission has worked to embed the messages of the Framework for Action into its various measures, ... and the results of this are apparent both in 'mainstream' activities and in new measures specifically to promote urban sustainability at local and regional levels. But we find that:

- with some notable exceptions the Commission has so far made greater efforts to embed the policy messages ... into funding programmes than into legislative processes or new legislation; ...
- in general in this field it is clear that EU instruments do not yet form a truly coherent package supporting comprehensive, well-defined policy goals."

3.2 Communication "Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment"

3.2.1 The Communication

The Communication "Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment" which was issued in February 2004 is the current outcome of an one and a half year long consultation and discussion process. In it have been incorporated reflections emanating from stakeholder consultations, Working Groups and expert groups' work and studies drawn up as part of the thematic strategy development process. The Communication forms part of a series of many and varied activities by the Commission on questions concerning the urban environment, a series initiated by the Green Paper on the Urban Environment which was presented in 1990. It will form the basis for the "Thematic Strategy" which is to be presented by the middle of 2005. In the next number of months it will be continue to be discussed and re-worked in comprehensive consultation procedure and in Working Groups.

The Communication proposes a number of key measures which if implemented could lend themselves to improving the situation of the urban environment. The point of main emphasis for these measures is to be found in the scope of the four "priority themes" (urban management, urban transport, urban design and construction). However, in addition generic or over-arching measures are also referred to.

These proposed measures are from the point of view of the authors at least in part appropriate, to enable those concerns which were outlined in 3.1.3 to be mitigated. They may be summarised as follows:

Table 3: Actions proposed for the Thematic Strategy

	Urban Management	Transport	Construction	Urban Design	urban sustainability in general
planning / plans	environmental management plan (cities > 0.1 m)	urban transport plan (cities > 0.1 m)			
guidelines (issued by EC)	guidelines for management system(s)	White Paper as guidelines for framework in the member states	common methodology for evaluation	for high-density, mixed-use planning, definitions for brown and greenfields, exploration of possibilities for guidelines on other issues	support by means of guidelines, testing of possible limit or standard values
indicators (issued by EC), data collection	(referred to chapter 4 of the Communication)	indicators to be developed by the Commission	development of indicators for life-cycle costs	monitoring of land use as indicated by EEA	key indicators and monitoring the effects of the Thematic Strategy
furthering education/training and research/information (by EC),	education/training, research, exchange of experience	measures in public relations/information, research, exchange of experience	examining possibilities	examining possibilities	reporting procedures concerning the situation of the urban environment, targeting research towards knowledge/know-how deficiencies as ascertained in the

					context of the Thematic Strategy, checking programmes with a view to opportunities to integrate urban development
institutions		support of transport-related capacities of Energy and other agencies			national/regional focal points for the urban environment
requirements to be fulfilled by member states	assuring management system(s) and appropriate training	drawing up framework for local transport	adoption and adaptation of methodology, national construction programme, application of sustainability criteria to public tenders / competitions	ensuring sustainable settlement patterns (in particular brown / greenfields, density, climate change)	furthering common European indicators in municipalities; putting in place national strategies; nominating national centres, increasing awareness
specific, in some respects more technical proposals, miscellaneous proposals		particularly alternative fuel	particularly in the fields of energy and (solid) waste		integration within Community environmental policy (environmental topics); integration of sustainable urban development into cohesion policies

The majority of these proposed measures are directed to the Commission itself. However, in addition a number of requirements and expectations are being made of the member states (and/or towns and cities in them), of which in our view the most significant and most comprehensive is the requirement for environmental management and transportation plans in cities and agglomerations of more than 100,000 inhabitants. The Commission will underpin this requirement by means of guidelines. Similar support has also been promised for municipal activities in the fields of "Construction" and "Design".

A further point of main emphasis will be created in indicator and monitoring systems which enable overall sustainability or sustainability of individual areas within the priority themes to be checked. Furthermore, education/training, research and information will continue to represent a central focus of efforts.⁹

3.2.2 Some considerations

Taken as a whole, the proposed measures are in agreement with the proposals made by the four Working Groups as well as with the views of the authors of the present report with respect to the Candidate Countries. In our view the following subjects are particularly important for these countries:

- furthering of training, exchange of experience and research
- guidelines and methodologies
- indicator and monitoring systems
- integrated plans and planning (cp. on this point the following as well)

Those measures proposed in the Communication in the relevant fields are conducive to furthering to a great extent a more sustainable urban development in the Candidate Countries.

Nevertheless, with the exception of one or two topics the proposals contained in the Communication are less concrete and specific than measures proposed by the Working Groups. Making proposals more concrete in some fields could, we contend, be productive. For example, in the field of Construction it is stated "the Commission will explore opportunities for training, guidance, exchange of experience and further research ...". It is however precisely in this sector where in the Candidate Countries there is a high level of need for (further) training and information.

In the context of the country analysis results the conclusion can be drawn that in some respects there are discrepancies between EU programmes and the pre-accession measures and political priorities on the one hand and sustainability objectives on the other. From this one may therefore conclude that EU programmes and activities need to

⁹ Why the Communication currently remains relatively restrained in this respect in the fields of Construction and Design is not immediately evident to the present authors. In these areas it is proposed only to "examine ... opportunities for training", whereas in the field of transport, for example, there is a specific statement that "the need for guidance and training ... will be assessed." (cp. also section 3.2.2)

be brought even more tautly into correlation and coordination with one another. Those measures proposed in the Communication for increased integration in Community policies are definitely pointing in the right direction. However, there is a danger (as instanced in the past, cp. also section 3.1), that without substantial internal monitoring and intensive correlation, 'urban measures' will be supplementary requirements, but will not be really integrated into existing policies and programmes.

The call for integrated plans and planning represents for the Candidate Countries, in which probably sectoral, non-integrated planning approaches are more prevalent than in member states, a most significant step in the right direction. The requirement for plans and planning of this nature may well also contribute towards influencing political priority setting in these cities in a positive way, and exert a salutary pressure in the direction of overcoming sectoral and regional boundaries where administrative bodies cooperate. Nevertheless, in our view the following points need to be kept in mind:

- guidelines which are yet to be elaborated concerning these plans ought to take into account existing approaches, and provide those municipalities in which approaches of this nature have already been applied with opportunities to further develop their approaches (not to have to make radical changes);
- this applies particularly to indicators and methods which will be used in checking or monitoring implementation and effects of these plans (or of other areas too);
- in the case of possible checks and in capturing data concerning the urban environment, a reasonable balance needs to be struck between effort and outcomes, to avoid tying down resources in the municipalities to an unnecessary extent. It must also be ensured that the municipalities do not go away with the impression that simply by providing the data all other requirements have been met;
- EU member states are characterised by widely varying municipal administrative and decision making structures. This wide diversity will be even further increased by the accession of 10, later of 12 new member states. In the face of this complexity the terminology and concepts used in the Communication need to be examined very carefully to prevent misunderstandings arising. Thus for example the term 'agglomeration' in the context of requirements for an environment management plan is a justiciable term in very few countries and one which may lead to unclear allocation of competence.

Despite these provisos the approaches and proposals contained in the Communication are in a position to further and to support sustainable urban development in the accession states in a decisive fashion. The sincere expectation (and hope) is that by means of the consultation process up until the Thematic Strategy is finally put before the Council one or two more concrete expressions may be included. The final result should not in any sense draw back from the position reached in the present form of the Communication. In the view of the authors for instance, specific, Europe-wide applicable instruments (for which there are successful examples in other fields), such as for example the envisaged "labelling of construction materials", must not in the course of further discussion be sacrificed to other (commercial) interests.

4. Recommendations: fields of action, approaches, key instruments and tools

4.1 Generic reflections and recommendations

As is shown by comparing the WGs' results and their recommendations (chapter 1), they concur to a very large extent – disregarding concrete suggestions which are specific to a particular theme – in their overarching objectives. In table 4 an attempt has been made (disregarding very topic-specific recommendations) to attribute recommendations made by the four WGs to generic fields of action.

Using this comparison system a unified order of precedence with regard to the priorities can be derived. The various fields of action can in this way be attributed to the following priority precedence categories¹⁰:

- capacity building / increase in commitment / training / exchange of experience / dissemination
- national / EU-wide action plans / standards / guidance
- national / EU funds / funding

- improving vertical and sectoral cooperation
- improving data availability / monitoring, benchmarking
- improving EU monitoring and report system(s)

- use and improvement of innovative tools and instruments
- innovative fiscal instruments
- improving horizontal, integrated cooperation

- increasing public awareness
- coherence between EU policies
- improving cooperation beyond administrative boundaries
- public-private partnership
- subsidiarity in the sense of decisions and actions taken close to the citizen/to the problem and/or at the appropriate level

Because some of the fields of actions objectively speaking have only an insignificant part to play for specific priority themes, and therefore were not dealt with at all or only as a secondary consideration in a particular Working Group, they are as a result under-represented in this comparison. Nevertheless, for individual priority themes they may still play a decisive part. To give an example, it is quite clear that 'cooperation beyond

¹⁰ Not all WGs undertook to allocate stringent priority precedence in their recommendations. Thus to some extent there is a derived attribution interpreted by the authors of the present report, based on the nature of description and on the context in the WG reports.

administrative boundaries is not relevant for the 'construction' field, however, for 'transport' it is vitally important.

Table 4: Tabular comparison of WG results

	Urban Management	Urban Design	Urban Transport	Urban Construction
improving cooperation beyond administrative boundaries	x	x	xx	
improving horizontal, integrated cooperation	xx	x	x	xx
improving vertical cooperation	xx	xx	xx	xxx
improving data availability / monitoring, benchmarking	xxx	xx	xxx	x
use and improvement of innovative tools and instruments	xx	xx	xx	x
capacity building / increase in commitment / training / exchange	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
improving sectoral integration	x	x	xx	xx
public-private partnership		xx	x	x
increasing public awareness		xx	xx	x
national / EU-wide action plans / standards / guidance	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
innovative fiscal instruments	x	xx	xx	xx
national / EU funds / funding	xxx	xxx	xx	xxx
subsidiarity principle	xx	x	x	
coherence between EU policies		x	xxx	x
improving EU monitoring and report system(s)	xxx	xx	xx	xx

priority level of recommendations:

x: low

xx: medium

xxx: high

In spite of this, indications concerning future activities by the Commission (or other actors) may be derived from this comparative weighting with regard to over-arching and more general fields within sustainable urban development. One may with confidence assume that the maximum synergetic effects could surely be produced in fields of action given a high level of priority by all four WGs.

As the difference between member states and the candidate countries is of a quantitative rather than qualitative nature it is an obvious conclusion that the WGs' recommendations can to a large degree be applied to the candidate countries and to their urban environment situations.

Nevertheless, if it is a question of allocating priorities to these recommendations, this is a different matter.

An evaluation of the problem complexes and barriers in the candidate countries (chapter 2 and "Twelve Candidate Countries' Overview Report", July 2003) indicates that as far as the soon-to-be member states are concerned, particular importance should be attached to the following fields:

- improving sectoral, vertical and horizontal cooperation
- capacity building and training
- public participation and awareness raising
- monitoring and benchmarking
- innovative instruments and tools (including integrated planning approaches)
- overcoming financial constraints

This variant weighting of fields of action when compared to the WGs' results can be explained quite naturally due to the different recent roots of urban development and urban management in the Candidate Countries. To cite an example, it can hardly seem surprising that, in countries which up until 15 years ago had an entirely centralist system of government, administrative bodies act (and think) in far more pronounced sectoral and non-integrated ways than in the 'old' member states. In addition, the situation is aggravated even more by the fact that, during the period pre-accession, such ways of acting were frequently determined by economic considerations and from an endeavour to approximate (material) standards of living for the inhabitants to those of the EU.

All steps towards implementation within the fields of action mentioned above can be supported and promoted at the European level:

- when dealing with such complex thematic areas such as urban management and urban design, it would seem that – amongst other factors extrapolating from the results of the WG on Urban Design – 'softer' instruments such as **'soft laws' and broad, strategic directives** can provide meaningful support frameworks for more sustainable urban development. Thus, for example, the Expert Group on the Urban Environment came to the conclusion that the European Commission's Communication entitled 'Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union : A Framework for Action' has had positive impacts and been a driver "of change in national systems of spatial planning and environmental protection, with

environmental legislation and horizontal measures being especially significant, and that in the current policy climate this influence can only increase."¹¹ Specific directives, on the other hand, would be – in the view of the Expert Group – unworkable and of little added value "because of the great diversity across Europe in the extent and nature of these problems." On the other hand, soft instruments and recommendations can promote and underpin more sustainable urban development, precisely in the candidate countries – which to a greater extent than member states lack commitment and knowledge of the rules of the game.

- whereas up to the present time in the pre-accession preparation 'economic cohesion' was uppermost in the mind, at the very latest once the countries have joined the EU, 'social cohesion' and thus (not only economic) sustainability will necessarily play a more central part – that is, if integration is not to be put at risk. In particular the Structural Funds, but in addition a number of other programmes and initiatives (cp. chapter 3), should, it is contended, be much more firmly oriented towards sustainability criteria, and be available for urban development processes. It is true that the majority of relevant programmes and initiatives will not be reviewed or revised until 2006, nevertheless, the proposals contained here and those put forward by the WGs ought to be included in renewal/revision preparatory phases if they are to be effective up to and post-2006.
- since only some of the candidate countries will enter into full membership in 2004, there must be well-directed harmonisation and support instruments put in place for those countries joining the EU at a later date. Otherwise there is a danger that the gap between countries will expand, making social and economic cohesion even more difficult and thus unnecessarily increase the resulting costs.

4.2 Recommendations on the four priority themes

The following recommendations regard the four thematic areas, and are primarily outcomes from interviews and written exchanges with resource persons¹² in the new Member States and Candidate Countries – decision makers, administrators, planners and NGO representatives. These recommendations are also derived from an analysis of other research done on the Candidate Countries, and are seen as complements to the WG recommendations presented earlier in the Report.

¹¹ Expert Group on the Urban Environment, Towards more Sustainable Land Use, January 2001

¹² cp. Annex

4.2.1 Sustainable urban management

Local level

- Supporting an exchange of strategies among local authorities with the objective of replacing sectorally-based decision-making processes with integrated long-term approaches;
- revising urban plans (and local strategies for sustainable development where they exist) on a regular basis (for example every 2 – 5 years), to provide a consistent and current framework for decision-making;
reliable budget planning over periods of several years to ensure funding of foreseen urban management and planning activities;
- sustainable and more efficient system of local financial instruments including for instance taxation of pollution and land take and other financial steering instruments;
- creation and adoption of more binding and transparent procedures to formalise integration of public and stakeholder consultations into the mainstream of municipal planning and decision making.

Coordination between administrative levels

- An authority should be designated for the coordination, overseeing and monitoring of all local initiatives undertaken in the context of a national strategy for sustainable development, and also to improve cooperation between different spatial administrative authorities, i.e. cities and their surrounding rural areas;
- national authorities responsible for planning and the environment should be encouraged to seek closer formalised cooperation with local authorities to better monitor implementation of and compliance with the provisions of legislation.

National and EU level

- Implementing new funding programs and reorganising present funding schemes and programmes to support sustainable urban development;
- further development of ecological taxes on pollution and other disincentives regarding environmental pollution and land take;
- stimulating participation of community stakeholders in planning and decision making by means of financial incentives;
- regular and wide-range dissemination of demonstrations of new methods and the results of 'best practices' and model projects.

4.2.2 Sustainable urban transport

Local level

- Shaping coherent public transit policy concerning restructuring of municipal transport companies, modernising vehicle fleets, introducing new fare systems,

implementing new coordinating bodies for transit, reducing operating costs and improving the quality of services;

- seeking additional external financial resources for processes of re-organisation due to the huge investments involved;
- developing sustainable transport plans with an integrated approach to transport planning, land use and development planning;
- promotion of alternative modes of transport by providing facilities for bicycles in areas with dense traffic, and through raising awareness for non-motorised modes of transport such as bicycle use and pedestrians by participation in campaigns, e.g. the pan-European initiative 'In town without my car!';
- considering the historic urban structure when preparing plans and including traffic schemes as part of the master plans, e.g. parking restrictions in city centres, car-free zones especially in historic centres;
- placing special attention on problems involved in the development of retail shopping centres on greenfield sites.

National and EU level

- Re-working, re-thinking and reconsidering national and Community programmes used for (major) infrastructure measures, including (major) highway construction, in accordance with sustainability standards;
- revising strategies for the planning and development of national road networks (that are in some cases decades old), with respect to sustainable development principles;
- improving communication and cooperation among traffic and transport planning processes and networks at the local, regional, and national levels (also eventually at the European level, e.g. concerning Trans-European Networks);
- revising taxation policies on car ownership and registration, and on fuel prices, to reflect environmental costs;
- national and EU co-funding for pilot/demonstration/investment projects that promote sustainable urban transport and traffic.

4.2.3 Sustainable urban design

Local level

- Incorporating sustainability considerations within all urban plans, applying integrated and eco-systems approaches;
- involving a wide range of stake holders such as business groups, NGOs and the wider public;
- raising awareness for and disseminating relevant information by means of public meetings and testing new forms of community stakeholder participation for decision making;
- ensuring transparency and easier access to public information, and creating databases to enable better decision making.

- creation of public-private partnerships for the realisation of large and complex programmes in urban development;
- better communication between local authorities and investors can contribute to informing their decisions on construction, and on influencing investors to consider more sustainable development, improved transport connections, social services, etc;
- better enforcement of existing legislation, e.g. against illegal construction;
- introducing 'differentiated' fees and taxes for utilities such as waste, waste water, etc;
- assist builders in investing in existing buildings and land (e.g. developing tools and instruments for brownfield reuse);

EU and national level

- Further elaboration among different laws and regulations for regional development, economic development, environmental protection and access to public information;
- facilitating cooperation and coordination in urban planning especially with respect to smaller towns and rural areas;
- support town networks, and exchanges of experiences and technologies.

4.2.4 Sustainable construction methods and techniques

Local level

- Better enforcement of existing relevant policies;
- establishing new administrative control bodies to review construction processes;
- encouraging more cooperation among investors, producers, local and national authorities and supervisory institutions;
- integrating environmental departments into utilities, public transport companies, etc.;
- more emphasis on the re-use of existing buildings and the re-use of building materials;
- support the use of local and traditional building technologies and materials.

EU and national level

- Strengthen regulations dealing with rights and responsibilities concerning sustainable construction at local level;
- improve incentives and regulations to stimulate sustainable construction methods, e.g. tax exemptions and grants for sustainable construction;
- introduce and further develop financial instruments (such as eco-taxes on resource use, for example on gas and oil, to facilitate use of more efficient and sustainable products and technologies by the building industry);

- offer advantages to companies developing and using environmentally friendly products, e.g. certificate or label programs, public lists of companies, national and European awards;
- introducing specific standards and indicators to measure the sustainable development performance of construction and building;
- clear targets set for the goals that are being pursued (energy consumption, renewable energy use, emission into the atmosphere, waste and water management, use of renewable resources, etc);
- allocation of more substantial funds for R&D activity;
- better use of existing financial and structural tools from EU funds.
- support pilot projects and the wide publication of best practices;
- information disseminated among all stakeholders in the building industry;
- establishing research and training centres;
- implementation of the EU directive for energy saving in buildings.

4.3 Supplement: large prefabricated housing estates as a 'special problem' in the candidate countries

As the enormous prefabricated housing stock, the habitat of a large proportion of the inhabitants in the candidate countries, is severely endangered, it is felt necessary to add some recommendations regarding this specific challenge.

The physical decay of buildings and of technical infrastructure are proceeding rapidly, due to maintenance deficits and lack of legal and administrative provisions to undertake the necessary repairs. The social situation is often deteriorating as the estates become victims of the social and economical polarisation within the emerging housing markets. The inhabitants' lack of financial means, problems of involving the financial sector on a long term basis and inadequate management structures after privatisation all hinder attempts undertaken by cities, owners and housing organisations to improve living conditions on these estates.

If it is not possible to improve their competitiveness on the housing market, many of today's estates may be doomed to becoming the European poorhouses of tomorrow. The consequences of such a trend will be a threat to the social stability of the cities in candidate countries, and ultimately all of Europe.

It is therefore our recommendation:

- intensified cooperation and networking is required in order to develop workable solutions and in transferring successful best practices in a European context. This should include member states' experience and give all central and eastern European candidate countries the opportunity jointly to develop strategies which are based on local needs and local opportunities;

- fast and efficient involvement of the financial sector, international support for a revolving fund are required, in order to start up a process which refines itself and encourages differentiated action;
- model projects should be implemented with the support of European institutions and EU programmes, the state and private housing sectors;
- a precondition for the development of practical strategies would be increased research and networking concerning technical and financial needs, directed towards knowledge transfer of best practice in central and eastern European as well as western countries;
- due to the crucial importance of the large housing estates with regard to social cohesion in the enlarged European Union, the (revised) structural funds should offer opportunities to renovate and revitalise these estates. The following considerations should be borne in mind:
 - potential Objective 2 areas (e.g. capital city agglomerations, where a considerable proportion of the inhabitants lives in these estates) should also be included;
 - for those candidate countries becoming members of the EU at a later date there should also be funding provision made available, because the buildings are decaying rapidly and any delay will lead to higher costs and in the end to a catastrophe in the housing systems in some of these candidate countries.