



THE EUROPEAN GROUP OF EXPERT ON STRATEGIC PLAN AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

An update (June 2010)

During the last International Conference of ReCS (held in Venice last 5th of February) the Italian Network moved a proposal of boosting the current virtual European network of cities with strategic planning. The intention is not to create a duplication, neither to establish another network which could only serve to confuse other EU institutions. It is not even a rival network to Eurocities which could weaken the significant advances which it has made over the past decade. The exact prospectus we have in mind is to create a sort of “experts committee/task force” in urban strategic planning issues as an high qualified policy community that can be a representative for current international associations/EU programs/European city networks (like UCLG, Citylab/Urbact, Eurocities, etc.) in which the debate on local government is already promoted and in which our knowledge and experiments on strategic planning can give a relevant contribution to the definition of the European urban policy.

City experts from Barcelona, Bilbao, Brno, Burgas, Eindhoven, Krakow, Lille, Sevilla, Stocholm and the Italian cities represented by ReCS joined the proposal and committed themselves to promote the initiative.

Other city experts, who were not present in Venice, expressed their interest in joining us (in particular from Birmingham, Munich, Prague and Stuttgart).

Even more, two international Association (United Cities and Local Government - UCLG and America Europa Regions and Cities AERYC) had offered their support to the initiative. In particular UCLG, represented in UN, proposed us to lead the European Working Group of the World Committee on Urban Strategic Planning.

The Group of experts met for the first time in Brussels (9 march 2010). There were discussed some crucial points: how to consolidate the European Group of Experts, which kind of support/resources it needs, which actions to implement soon to make the Group collaboration effective, which other experts to involve, and which institutions/subjects to work with in order to give a valid contribution in the definition of urban European policy.

First of all, the Group decided to try to address together main common objectives and actions with the most important European and global city networks: Eurocities and United Cities and Local Government Association.

ReCS was invited to participate at the last meeting of Eurocities Working Group "City for the Future and Spatial Planning" (Preston 9 of June 2010 within the Eurocities Economic Development Forum) to expose officially the cooperation proposal. At the moment we are waiting for the answer of Eurocities Secretariat to whom the proposal has been directed by the WG.

Regarding UGCL, the Group is finding out several forms of cooperation with the European Working Group of the World Committee on Urban Strategic Planning in the fields of evaluation of strategic planning and promotion of networking initiatives (like the creation of yellow pages for city networks in which are presented profiles, main characteristics and activities of the networks).

The Group got in contact with the Secretariat of Urbact in order to verify a possible sustain, since Urbact programme promote the building up of European group of expert (meeting next September).

Finally we are proposing the organization of a Global Forum on Strategic Planning and local government (next June 2011), as an annual world conference/international debate on world urban issues, namely city planning, to be held every year in a different city and on specific issue. This could be the occasion to strength the cooperation among strategic cities from different countries, to analyse innovative solutions applied in different local governments, to compare urban models, to share experiences/approaches and to address key issues in strategic urban planning.