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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL IB

External Relations: Southern Mediterranean, Middle and Near East, Latin America,
South and South-East Asia and North-South Cooperation

Latin America Directorate

Economic Cooperation Unit



URB-AL / INFO



Information circular No 7

July 1998

The URB-AL Programme in brief

Objective:

To develop direct and lasting partnerships between local participants in Europe and Latin America.

Activities:

- *Eight thematic networks focusing on issues of mutual interest to act as permanent frameworks for cooperation, and generating various joint projects cofinanced by the European Commission.*
- *Two biennial political and technical meetings between mayors and representatives of towns in Europe and Latin America.*

Participants:

Towns, urban areas and regions of countries in Europe and Latin America.

Duration:

Four years.

Launch of network No 2

"Conservation of historic urban contexts"

International Seminar of the URB-AL Programme
organised by the Province of Vicenza (Italy)

The launch of the URB-AL network No 2, on the theme of "Conservation of historic urban contexts", was a landmark event in view of the growing recognition of the link between promoting cultural heritage and improving the quality of life in towns. The topic covers "heritage" in the widest sense, in all its forms. The international launch seminar of this network was held on 15 and 16 May 1998 in Vicenza.

Over 160 people attended the event, including 103 representatives of towns and local authorities, 64 in the EU and 39 in Latin America. The other participants were from a variety of institutions working in the field of heritage conservation, notably UNESCO, the Italian-Latin American Institute (ILAI) and national ministries for education and culture.

Historical heritage has intrinsic value as an economic resource in the world economy. Projects to rehabilitate historic contexts, monuments and sites are therefore intended to spark not only cultural and social development, but also economic and productive activity.

The issue of conservation of historic urban contexts requires coordinated action at international level, giving countries and institutions with common problems the chance to discuss them, compare their situations and cooperate. The synergies thus created will make their action to safeguard and promote the common heritage of humanity more incisive from a human and social point of view.

This is an approach that fits the framework and objectives of the URB-AL Programme perfectly. The purpose of the “Conservation of historic urban contexts” network coordinated by the Province of Vicenza is to encourage members to pool their experience, identify common priorities and set up mechanisms for joint action to find solutions to heritage conservation problems. This will include joint projects, developed in common by members of the network in order to extend and put into practice the exchanges generated by the meetings.

The launch seminar discussed the problem of maintaining historic old towns (in the broadest sense, not only buildings and monuments protected at present), with an emphasis on the smaller building trades, the environment and historical/archaeological sites.

At the plenary session, inaugurated by Ms Manuela Dal Lago, President of the Province of Vicenza, in the presence of the Representative of the European Commission, a “working document” drafted by three heritage conservation experts was presented and discussed. The working document served to help the participants compare and test the various cultural and methodological strategies employed in safeguarding historic architectural heritage in European and Latin American countries. They also defined common strategies for maintaining and conserving the urban landscape, now and in the future.

The plenary session was followed by workshops. Four working groups were organised on topics arising from the working document.

1. Conservation and social identity: re-use and/or revitalisation.
2. Socio-economic, urban and functional issues, problems, and perspectives in developing historic contexts
3. International and national norms, legislation, and legal instruments for the regulation and promotion of historic contexts.
4. Theory, techniques and technology of buildings and construction.

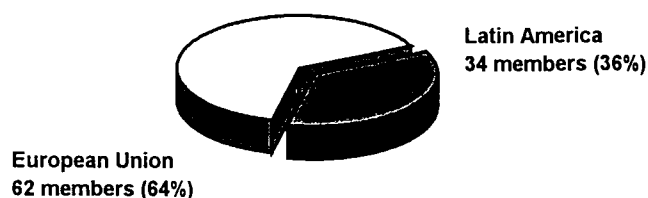
Levels of participation in the working groups were high, so that the issues were thoroughly debated. The topics reflected participants’ concern to discuss the subject primarily in relation to their problems and experience with work already begun or ongoing.

Other aims were to pinpoint specific issues, which might generate joint projects, and to bring together potential partners in such projects. The **initial deadline for the submission of joint project proposals** to the Commission was set as **31 October 1998**, in accordance with the procedures set out in the URB-AL Programme Guide. New deadlines will be set in 1999 and 2000 following the annual working meetings of members of the network.

The President of the Province of Vicenza and the President of the Region of Veneto officially brought the seminar to a close.

The creation of an active network of towns, offering possibilities for exchanges and practical achievements, aroused high hopes among the local authorities represented. The Province of Vicenza, as coordinator of the URB-AL network No 2, has set up a network that now has 96 members. Of the 33 countries eligible to participate in the URB-AL Programme, 20 are taking part in this network, with 64% of members coming from eight EU Member States and the other 36% from 12 Latin American countries.

Distribution of network No 2
"Conservation of historic urban contexts"



All information concerning this event is available from the Province of Vicenza and from the URB-AL Technical Secretariat (see p. 10). In addition, since such networks may have up to 150 members, towns and local authorities that wish to join the network and participate in its activities may contact the person in charge of coordinating the network at the address below.

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The URB-AL Programme biennial meetings

First biennial meeting organised by the City of Lisbon on the topic of "Urban Regeneration"

In the context of the URB-AL Programme, the European Commission charged the City of Lisbon with organising the first biennial meeting between mayors and representatives of local authorities from eligible countries in the European Union and Latin America.

The first biennial meeting, on the topic chosen by the City of Lisbon, "Urban Regeneration", was held in the Portuguese capital on 12 and 13 June 1998. The event was attended by 130 participants from nine Latin American countries and six EU Member States. There was a strong Brazilian presence and major delegations from Spain and the host country, Portugal.

The major objectives of the biennial meetings are to encourage participants to share their experiences, to pinpoint problems, policies, strategies and measures for fostering participation by local people in towns, and to make progress on a top priority urban issue by means of appropriate solutions.

In both Europe and Latin America, urban problems require innovative modes of action and widespread participation to conserve, preserve and revitalise the urban heritage. Keeping people in city centres and preventing the drift to the suburbs is an increasingly important issue in the concept of the sustainable city. Renovating buildings and making them fit for habitation, restoring historic buildings, creating employment and improving social conditions, fostering forms of mutual aid and solidarity, eradicating alienation, such are the problems which urban regeneration must resolve.

The first biennial meeting was an opportunity for the participants to pool their expertise and to theorise about everyday problems and issues, on the basis of Lisbon's experience of urban regeneration.

On the basis of the working document drafted by three specialists led by the Head of Urban Regeneration of the City of Lisbon, the following topics were picked out and discussed in more depth by four working groups:

1. Concept, theory and practice of Urban Regeneration.
2. Process of degradation on the neighbourhoods: how and which.
3. The Urban Regeneration: which implications.
4. The methodology of the Urban Regeneration.

The workshops were a forum for more in-depth discussion of urban regeneration expertise and practices. Participants also discussed and amended **the text of a declaration and an action plan on Urban Regeneration.**

This document, which represents the tangible outcome of the Lisbon meeting, was signed in the VIP room of Lisbon City Hall by the mayors and/or their representatives at the conclusion of the meeting.

The signatories undertook to develop practical urban regeneration projects in their towns in accordance with the broad lines of the action plan. They will send regular reports to Lisbon City Hall, which will circulate the information to the other participants and to all interested towns and local authorities.

In this way, awareness has been raised about the importance of mobilising local decision-makers around the issue of urban regeneration. The City of Lisbon will follow up the campaign with assistance from the European Commission.

The summary record of the biennial meeting will be published on the Internet at the earliest opportunity. All local authorities interested in the working document or the text of the Lisbon declaration and action plan can contact the URB-AL Technical Secretariat (see p. 10) or the person responsible for the event, at the address below.

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The second biennial meeting is to be held in a Latin American town in the year 2000. The European Commission is currently studying submissions from Latin American towns that have offered to organise the meeting.

The venue and subject of the Programme's second biennial meeting will probably be published in the next issue of **URB-AL / INFO**.

Details of networks No 1 - 5

Networks and topics	Coordinator
➤ No 1: <i>Drugs and towns</i>	Santiago (Chile)
➤ No 2: <i>Conservation of historic urban contexts</i>	Vicenza (Italy)
➤ No 3: <i>Democracy in towns</i>	Issy-les-Moulineaux (France)
➤ No 4: <i>The town as a promoter of economic development</i>	Madrid (Spain)
➤ No 5: <i>Urban social policies</i>	Montevideo (Uruguay)

The coordinators for the five networks are:

1. *Drugs and towns*

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2. *Conservation of historic urban contexts*

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3. *Democracy in towns*

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4. *The town as a promoter of economic development*

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5. *Urban social policies*

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The five networks currently have 414 members in total, representing 180 local authorities in the EU and 234 in Latin America. A list of members of each network, by country, is available from the URB-AL Technical Secretariat. It will be posted on the URB-AL Programme's Web site in the third quarter of 1998.

At present the 33 countries eligible for the Programme all participate in at least one network, with the exception of Ireland. Total participation, by country, is as follows:

EUROPEAN UNION	MEMBERS	LATIN AMERICA	MEMBERS
Austria	1	Argentina	35
Belgium	7	Bolivia	6
Germany	7	Brazil	34
Denmark	1	Chile	44
Spain	44	Colombia	20
Finland	3	Costa Rica	15
France	26	Cuba	3
Greece	9	Ecuador	7
Italy	46	El Salvador	3
Luxembourg	1	Guatemala	5
Netherlands	2	Honduras	6
Portugal	25	Mexico	14
Sweden	2	Nicaragua	10
United Kingdom	6	Panama	1
		Paraguay	5
		Peru	10
		Uruguay	12
		Venezuela	4
Total EU	180	Total LA	234
Grand Total: 414 members			

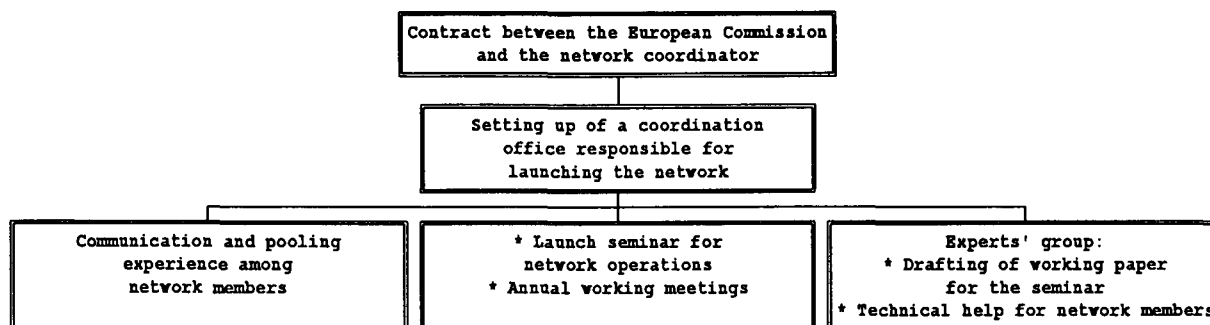
News of networks No 1 - 5

The city of Santiago de Chile, the coordinator for network No 1, "*Drugs and Towns*", has submitted proposals to the Commission for joint projects drafted by network members. The deadline for proposals was 30 April 1998. The project proposals are currently under examination, in three stages:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ➤ URB-AL Technical Secretariat | Admission criteria |
| ➤ High-Level Technical Committee | Assessment of project content |
| ➤ DG IB (European Commission) Committee | Financial assessment / selection |

At present, the members of network No 2, "*Conservation of historic urban contexts*" are drafting proposals for joint projects, which they must submit to the Province of Vicenza by 31 October 1998. The Province of Vicenza will in turn submit the proposals to the Commission.

Once the contracts with the Commission have been signed, the coordinators of networks No 3 "*Democracy in towns*", No 4 "*The town as a promoter of economic development*" and No 5 "*Urban social policies*" will organise the activities for which they are responsible, as set out in the Programme Guide.



As soon as the dates for the launch seminars for the three networks are set, they will be posted on the URB-AL Programme's Web site.

NB *To ensure that networks No 3, 4 and 5 have full access to the expertise of all the towns and local authorities which expressed an interest in connection with the various proposals submitted at the coordination stage, the Commission would urge all interested parties to contact the network coordinators.*

Selection of coordinators for networks No 6, 7 & 8

- No 6 "Urban environment"
- No 7 "Management and control of urbanisation"
- No 8 "Urban mobility"

Three calls for proposals were published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, C Series, No 58, of 24 February 1998, with a view to selecting coordinators for the three networks. The deadline for expressions of interest was 4 May 1998. The Commission received a large number of proposals, which are now under consideration by the High-Level Technical Committee (HLTC), in accordance with Commission procedures. The candidates selected in this initial phase will receive full instructions to enable them to submit a detailed financial and technical bid. These detailed proposals will also be examined by the Commission, with technical assistance from the HLTC.

Once the selection procedure has been completed, full particulars of the towns coordinating networks No 6, 7 and 8 will be published in the Information Circular, so that towns interested in joining the networks can contact them.

The High-Level Technical Committee

Members	
Manuel Camacho Solis	José Emilio Patricio Rodé
María Luisa Cerrillos	Cornelia Poczka
Hector Dada Hirezi	René Schoonbrodt
Per-Håkan Slotte	Jaime Torres Lara

The HLTC is currently:

- Evaluating joint project proposals from network No 1, "*Towns and Drugs*";
- Examining expressions of interest in networks No 6 "*Urban environment*", No 7 "*Management and control of urbanisation*" and No 8 "*Urban mobility*".

The HLTC's opinions and proposals will be forwarded to the Commission, which will select joint projects from the Santiago network for financing, and first-round candidates to be invited to submit detailed proposals for the coordination of networks No 6, 7 and 8.

The URB-AL Technical Secretariat

The URB-AL Technical Secretariat, selected via public tender by the European Communities, has been operational since 1 May. It provides general support to Commission staff with the implementation of URB-AL Programme activities.

The Technical Secretariat comprises four people with the following responsibilities:

- Coordination
- Administration
- Information
- Secretariat

The Technical Secretariat has two main tasks:

1. Information and promotion

- ⇒ Information about URB-AL.
- ⇒ Promotion of the Programme and action arising from the biennial meetings, networks and joint projects.

2. Assistance with the implementation and monitoring of activities covered by URB-AL.

For more information on URB-AL

Information Circular No 8 will be published in the fourth quarter of 1998. If you wish to subscribe and/or receive further information on the URB-AL Programme, please contact the URB-AL Technical Secretariat at the following address:

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If necessary, you may also contact the European Commission at the following address:

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All issues of **URB-AL / INFO** are also on the Internet in six language versions (German, English, Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese) at:

⇒ <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg1b/URB-AL/urb-al.htm>

In addition, you may obtain information on URB-AL from the EC Delegations in Latin America and from the EC Information Offices in the Member States of the European Union (see addresses on cover page).

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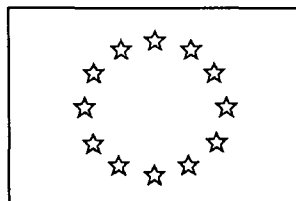
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