

EFAP Ljubljana Declaration

European Forum for Architectural Policies (EFAP)

Ljubljana Declaration on Urban Regeneration & Climate Change

Ljubljana, 17 June 2008

Preamble

The role of integrated urban planning and design in combating climate change in urban areas, within the context of sustainable development, was raised during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2008 in response to the Leipzig Charter on sustainable European cities, agreed on at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Territorial Cohesion and Urban Development in May 2007. EFAP took the opportunity of its meeting in Ljubljana in June 2008 to address the importance of urban regeneration in meeting the challenges of combating climate change,

Combating climate change is a priority of the European Union, and EFAP stresses the importance of the role of architecture and urban planning and design in providing successful, sustainable, democratic, resilient and attractive cities in changing climate conditions.

The great majority of European citizens now live in cities and it is essential to ensure these continue to provide liveable, economically vibrant and culturally rich environments. The quality of the built environment is an essential part of life in successful European cities, an idea captured in the sense of "Baukultur", as described in the Leipzig Charter. But cities, while providing the potential for highly energy efficient ways of life, are also the places most threatened by climate change, whether by increases in temperature and sea levels, the frequency of storms, flooding and epidemics or the impact of the heat island effect.

Buildings contribute more than 40% of all CO₂ emissions in Europe and an overhaul of the existing building stock is necessary to ensure that their emissions are reduced by 2020 as part of the overall EU commitment to carbon reduction and to the mitigation of future climate change.

The commitments on climate and energy policy made at the Spring EU Council in 2007, with the subsequent energy-climate package from the Commission are ambitious but also necessary. Energy efficiency together with security of supply are defined as the key ingredients for achieving the integrated climate and energy policy of the EU and its sustainable development strategy.

The European Forum for Architectural Policies considers that:

1. Spatial and urban planning and design, architecture and construction play an essential role in mitigating future climate change and adapting the built environment to climate change that is already inevitable.

2. In the face of inevitable climate change appropriate solutions and responses should be incorporated in all policies, development plans and designs by all those concerned.

3. Adapting cities for a changing climate requires both area-specific measures and wider European strategic policy development. Cities must continue to function effectively, economically, socially and environmentally while retaining their individual identities and competitiveness.

4. In planning and designing compact cities an appropriate balance between built-up and green areas needs to be achieved in order to help control temperatures in urban areas, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and assure biodiversity, water circulation and diminish the risk and impact of floods.

5. Adaptation to climate change requires a change in approach to the design of buildings and external spaces to ensure they provide good quality living and working conditions. Critically, it will also require the adjusting the design of buildings to allow them too to be comfortable and energy efficient under more extreme weather patterns, with minimum ecological footprint.

6. Mitigation of future climate change requires urgent work regarding major portion of the existing building stock in Europe which is inadequately energy efficient.

7. Architectural quality is valued by and is of significance to everyone in society. It must play a central role in a co-ordinated response to climate change in all territories of the EU.

Therefore the European Forum for Architectural Policies

Strongly reiterates its earlier calls on the EU institutions to take account of the architectural dimension in all EU policies and measures intended to combat climate change and to incorporate this into existing policies wherever possible and appropriate;

calls on the Commission and all Member States to draw on the positive contribution of architecture to territorial cohesion within the EU Cohesion Policy and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy to ensure that architectural quality and, more generally, the quality of the built environment, receives proper attention in the future development of these actions;

calls on the EU institutions to provide adequate resources for relevant research programmes;

calls on the Member States and regional authorities to make full use of the current programming period of the EU Structural Funds and Cohesion Policy for the renovation of housing and supports the action of the European Parliament in seeking to extend this to all Member States;

urges authorities at all levels to adopt integrated and holistic approaches to sustainable urban development particularly in the process of upgrading the existing physical environment and to significantly reduce the eco-footprints of those urban communities within their control, particularly urban sprawl;

stresses the importance of national and regional governance frameworks, including at local community level, for evaluating public policies for the improvement of the built environment;

underlines the special role of the financial institutions in ensuring that the objectives of sustainability and overall quality are achieved in the built environment through adequate benchmarking procedures;

calls for a greater involvement of the professional representative organisations in the governance process and stresses their capacity to assist in devising holistic approaches towards implementing adequate and concrete solutions in preserving the public interest;

calls on educational institutions to address both adaptation and mitigation strategies for tackling climate change in their educational, training and vocational skills programmes;

recognises the essential role of civil society in improving the quality of the built environment and achieving a change in individual and corporate behaviour;

commends the Slovenian Presidency for its focus on urban regeneration in the context of climate change and strongly urges the following presidencies to build on this critical initiative;

welcomes the initiative of the upcoming French Presidency include the broader topic of architecture and sustainable urban development into the preparations of EU Council conclusions.