

# **Principles of Urban Policy**

**2010 Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Urban policy is a conceptual and systematic activity by a public authority (e.g. EU institutions, a government) aimed at the development of cities. Its objectives are derived from the identification of major urban development problems and from their status and functions in the national settlement and regional structure, and are expressed in the form of six principles. This definition implies a cross-cutting and interdisciplinary nature, i.e. the making and implementation of the policy involves the joint and coordinated involvement of individual sub-policies; regional policy and land-use planning provide a substantive and territorial framework for this coordination.

Principles of Urban Policy is a framework document which aims to coordinate the approach taken by all levels of government to urban development, to propose guidelines and activities conducive to sustainable urban development, and in light of the importance of towns for the development of the Czech Republic, to motivate the private and voluntary sector to support them. Sixty-two per cent of the population of the Czech Republic lives in towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants. Towns make a major contribution to the creation of the country's GDP and provide services that benefit their own population and inhabitants across their conurbation, but also face serious specific problems such as social inclusion, transport problems, and environmental pollution.

Until recently, urban policy was addressed as an integral part of the Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic,<sup>1</sup> which includes urban development and regeneration among regional development priorities. However, the dynamics of urban development, current challenges for a sustainable lifestyle, the volume of investment from European regional and urban programmes, and preparations for the next cohesion policy programming period require the production of a supra-departmental framework for urban policy, summarizing and coordinating the main areas, problems and approaches to the support of their further development.

The need for a conceptual framework for the implementation of urban policy is also in line with European trends in urban policy. The principles of urban policy are based on strategic documents adopted at European and national level. The key European documents include the European Spatial Development Perspective, the EU Territorial Agenda, the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, and the Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The URBAN I and II initiatives, which are currently being implemented in cohesion policy programmes, are also important documents. At national level, significant documents are the Sustainable Development Strategic Framework of the Czech Republic, the National Strategic Reference Framework, the Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2007–2013 and the 2008 Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic.

The Sustainable Development Strategic Framework of the Czech Republic defines the long-term overarching framework for the preparation of other conceptual materials and is an important basis for strategic decision-making within individual departments and for interdepartmental cooperation. This document includes a comprehensive solution to the territorial dimension of sustainable development, particularly through Priority Axis 3 Territorial Development, which is further divided into three priorities (“Consolidation of Territorial Cohesion”, “Improved Quality of Life” and “More Effective Promotion of Strategic and Land-use Planning”).

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<sup>1</sup> Act No 248/2000 on the promotion of regional development, as amended

An important urban policy tool is land-use planning,<sup>2</sup> which, on a national level, creates framework conditions for urban policy formation and implementation via the Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic (SDPCR). The 2008 SDPCR,<sup>3</sup> *inter alia*, implements the EU Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter in the field of land-use planning, establishes framework tasks for related land-use planning activities and lays down conditions for envisaged development plans. In designated fields, axes, corridors and areas, the 2008 SDPCR also sets tasks, conditions and criteria for decisions on changes in a territory, where additional clarification is provided through follow-up land-use planning activities. Besides coordinating land-use planning activities, the 2008 SDPCR is also used to some degree to coordinate other sectoral concepts, policies, and strategies which touch on land issues. The 2008 SDPCR is a policy which must be respected in the production of land-use planning documentation and in territorial decision-making.

The principles form a comprehensive framework for the development of the urban policy concept in the Czech Republic for the period after 2013. They underline the importance of cities as centres concentrating the population, the country's economic strength and an innovative milieu. Urban development must be based on principles of sustainable development, which allows economic, social and environmental objectives to be interlinked. A prerequisite for sustainable urban development is a strategic and integrated approach to urban development programming, to the fostering of balanced relations between town and region and between town and countryside while enhancing the area's natural efficient relations, and to the application of mechanisms interconnecting activities of each level of government and other stakeholders, i.e. a multi-level, partnership-based approach to territorial governance.<sup>4</sup>

The implementation of these approaches requires the incorporation of an urban dimension into sectoral and cross-cutting policies combined with greater exploitation of the cohesion policy to support the development of this dimension. The inclusion of territorial cohesion as the third dimension of cohesion policy in the Lisbon Treaty lends legitimacy and weight to this requirement. Regionally-based programmes financed by the Structural Funds are a natural backdrop for addressing urban problems, including social issues and enhancements in the quality of life in towns, social integration and the reinforcement of local communities' identity and sense of belonging.

Given the variety and diversity of conditions and the different factors conditioning the development of our towns, it is essential, from the position of the State, to address only those areas and issues that are relevant and appropriate for this level. For this reason, it was decided that principles capable of guiding the basic conceptual path to be followed in each area of urban policy were a suitable means of implementing the Leipzig Charter and other related documents of European urban policy. Reflecting its nature, this issue was broken down into six principles, which are further divided into strategic guidelines<sup>5</sup> and development activities.<sup>6</sup> For each principle, there is a description of its characteristics and the underlying basis, and the various strategic guidelines and development activities are accompanied by their brief characteristics and focus.

Significant changes to the content of the urban support concept cannot be expected halfway through the 2007–2013 programming period. In this light, it is more feasible to propose

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<sup>2</sup> Act No 183/2006 on land-use planning and Building Rules, as amended (the Building Act)

<sup>3</sup> Government Resolution No 929 of 20 July 2009

<sup>4</sup> Territorial governance is regarded as a process of dialogue and cooperation between all stakeholders in territorial and regional development (EU Territorial Agenda, paragraph I(5)).

<sup>5</sup> A strategic direction is a specific path followed to fulfil a particular principle.

<sup>6</sup> Development activities are specific activities which are implemented through strategic guidelines.

measures of a procedural and coordinating nature that would aid the more efficient implementation of this issue in the methodologies and practices of all levels of public administration, and to prepare suggestions for its inclusion in the economic, social and territorial cohesion policy after 2013.

## 2. SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### 2.1 SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE

The ongoing processes of urbanization in the second half of the 20th century affected not only the regional distribution of the population, but also its breakdown into different size classes of municipalities and towns. The proportion of the population living in towns rose significantly in all regions until the mid-1990s, with district cities and other towns with a population of over 10,000 reporting the fastest growth. Urban expansion was fuelled by the natural population increase within the towns themselves, by continuing migration from rural areas, and by the administrative annexation of originally rural communities. Conversely, the share of the rural population steadily decreased; the smallest communities were depopulated particularly rapidly.

From a historical point of view, the Czech Republic's settlement structure can be described as widespread dispersal, with almost two thirds of its 6,250 municipalities comprising a population of less than 500 as at 1 January 2010. This fact undoubtedly has an impact on regional development and on the system for the financing of municipalities. The largest proportion of rural communities can be found in the administrative regions of Vysočina, Pardubický kraj (Pardubice), Jihočeský kraj (South Bohemia) and Středočeský kraj (Central Bohemia). The smallest share of villages is in Moravskoslezský kraj (Moravia-Silesia), Karlovarský kraj (Karlovy Vary), Ústecký kraj (Ústí nad Labem) and Liberecký kraj (Liberec). The urbanization rate of the Czech population is 70.3%.

The Czech Republic's settlement pattern, with its hierarchical order, is markedly different from the European Union's larger countries. Major metropolitan centres controlling densely populated or geographically large regions were formed in the history of those countries. Specific features of the Czech Republic's settlement structure are the relatively small number of large cities and, in the context of an overall high rate of urbanization, the associated significant proportion of small and medium-sized towns and considerable aloofness due to the border mountain ranges running almost the full length of the country's perimeter, which drastically restricts the cross-border importance of Czech hubs. Apart from Prague, the Czech Republic has only two cities with a population of more than 300,000 (Brno and Ostrava) and three other cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (Liberec, Plzeň, and Olomouc). With six large cities, it lags behind many demographically comparable European Union countries: the Netherlands has 25 cities, Sweden 11, Hungary 9, Greece 8, and Belgium 7. Of those EU Member States with a similar population, only Portugal has a lower number of large cities.

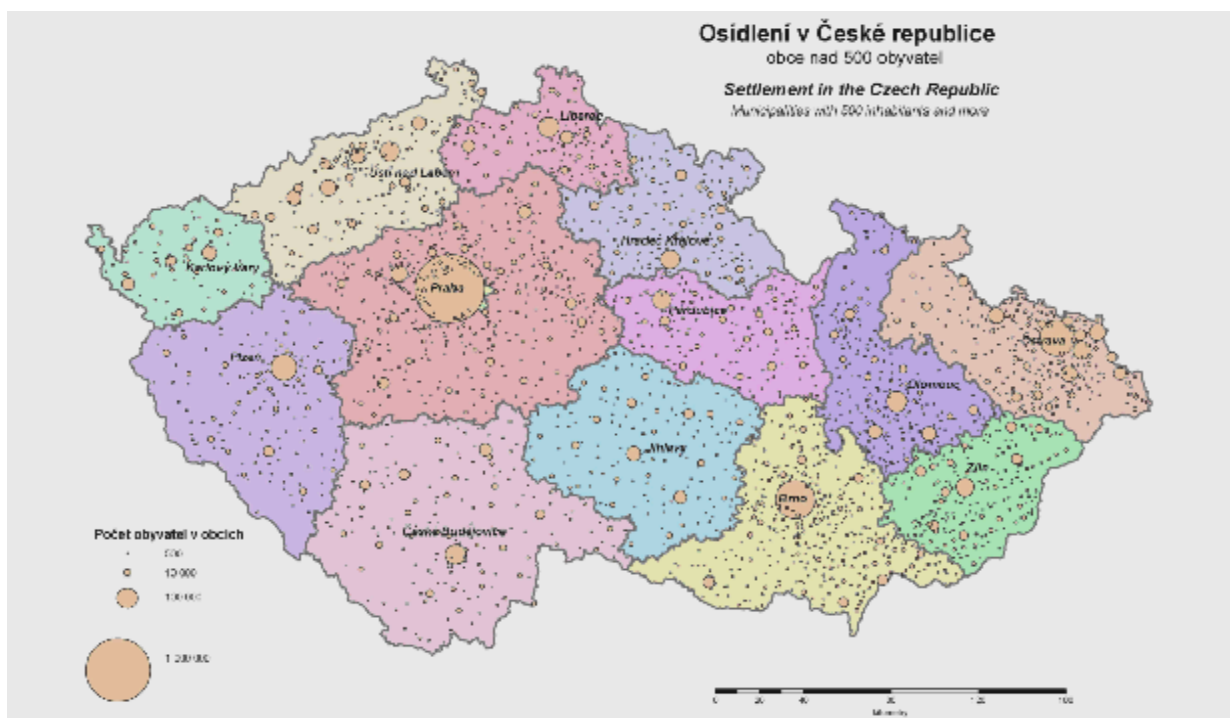
There are significant differences, whether in terms of size, population structure, rate of growth, etc., between the 593 towns. In the Czech Republic, there are only six cities with a population of more than 100,000 (Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Plzeň, Olomouc and Liberec), 15 in the 50–99,000 bracket, and 112 in the 10–49,000 group. Small towns with a population of less than 10,000 account for three quarters of all towns, but are home to less than a quarter of the urban population. In all, 192 towns are rural in nature, so the dividing line between the urban and rural area is blurred. The population density in the Czech Republic has been stable in the long term at 130 persons per square kilometre.

Several new trends emerged in the Czech Republic's settlement pattern after 1990. The country's modest natural growth changed into a steady population decline, and there were changes in regional migration balances and the size classes of municipalities. Births did not start outnumbering deaths again until 2006. Some of the previously popular industrial areas

became very unattractive and started losing inhabitants as the population migrated away, while significant migration gains were reported in Central Bohemia and other districts and municipalities on the outskirts of big cities which had previously suffered from a migration deficit.

A positive migration balance should be a comprehensive indicator of the attractiveness of an area. This fact, however, is no longer so cut-and-dried, since migration is not always directed into the biggest cities, offering the most structured range of job opportunities, but into periurban areas, which offer a better residential backdrop in many respects (environmental, price, etc.).

The tendency is increasingly to promote suburbanization processes, reversing the population trend in the different size categories of municipalities. After many decades of growth, the urban population has been declining in favour of rural communities since 2000. The largest population declines have been recorded in large cities with a population of over 50,000. In contrast, the share of the rural population is increasing slightly in almost all regions. In terms of migration, small and medium-sized municipalities (with a population of between 500 and 5,000 inhabitants), especially those on the outskirts of big cities, come top in the attractiveness stakes. These categories of municipality are now experiencing population growth. Population decline is continuing in the smallest villages; nevertheless, rural areas cannot be regarded as homogeneous as there are significant differences between suburbanized and peripheral areas.



## 2.2 URBAN DIMENSION

Urbanization can be viewed not only as the process of concentrating the population into cities, but also as a complex process with many fronts: demographic, social, cultural, economic, etc. Generally, it encompasses a change in the spatial organization of human society, the process of shaping the development of an urban way of life, the rise of the role played by cities and the penetration of urban elements into the settlement concept as a whole.

Distinctions are being made between individual communities' regional importance and scope. This process leads to the formation of "mainframe" systems, as the kernel of the main conurbations or metropolises, which are integrated with each other and interact with their hinterland. In the Czech Republic, there is a significant semantic distinction between the major population centres and other towns.

Prague, long profiled as the natural centre of Bohemia and the Czech Republic as a whole, is a lower-order international metropolis. Prague is currently one of the most dynamic and most successful centres in Central Europe. However, it is facing several problems, in particular its lack of adequate transport infrastructure and excessive interference with the environment. Its "complex functional size" indicator is more than three times higher than the second-placed city, Brno.

Brno is a higher-order regional metropolis naturally integrating southern Moravia; lower-order metropolises are Ostrava, as the natural centre of northern Moravia and Silesia, and Olomouc, which has great cultural, educational and religious potential. Plzeň is a higher-order mezzo-regional centre. Other mezzo-regional centres and natural centres of the administrative regions are Hradec Králové, Pardubice, Liberec, Ústí nad Labem, České Budějovice and Zlín. The role played by Karlovy Vary and Jihlava as the administrative centres of their regions is becoming stronger. Another town aspiring to the status of a mezzo-regional centre is Tábor, on account of its location, economic strength (in an agglomeration with Sezimovské Ústí and Planá nad Lužnicí), and cultural amenities. The majority of municipalities with extended powers play the role of micro-regional centres.

Compared with most of the EU-15 countries, the urbanization process in the Czech Republic can be characterized by its lower concentration of the population in large cities. The sparsely urbanized areas of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands and parts of eastern Bohemia and northern Moravia are a specific problem. Much of southern and western Bohemia can also be classified among the country's thinly urbanized areas. The dense network of medium-sized and small towns prevents stronger development poles (with the exception of the City of Prague). This is also reflected by the fact that the territorial concentration of jobs is higher than that of people. While half of all jobs in the Czech Republic are concentrated in the 38 or 39 largest towns, half of the entire population is spread out over the 90 or so largest towns.

Large urban agglomerations with diversified economic structure and industries capable of generating growth in their surroundings create development poles. The importance of towns as development poles is the result of the following factors: population and growth thereof, competitiveness and communication links. Not all towns achieve the results necessary in all these indicators to play the role of development poles, and therefore their impact on the surrounding area is limited. Another current characteristic of development poles is their integration into the knowledge-based economy.

The document "Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic 2008", further to the new Land-use Planning Act, defines the Czech Republic's 12 main development areas with a strong concentration of activities of international or national significance: Prague, Ostrava, Brno, Hradec Králové – Pardubice, Plzeň, Ústí nad Labem, Liberec, Olomouc, Zlín, České Budějovice, Jihlava, and Karlovy Vary. The "Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic 2008" also defines development axes of international and national significance (13 in all). This demarcation takes into account links to major transport routes. In terms of regional development, the development axes can be described as conduits spreading socio-economic growth from development poles into the surrounding area, although in some cases they tend to be transport links rather than actual population corridors.



Historical developments in the Czech Republic's population network were shaped by a distinctive group of settlements (municipalities) functioning as micro-regional centres. Micro-regional centres are sites hosting basic amenities (a full-scale – two-tier – primary school, a general practitioner, a pharmacy, a post office with normal opening hours, a basic range of industrial goods in a retail trade network, etc.). Realistically, there are about 1,000 micro-regional centres in the Czech Republic.

Micro-regional centres with a higher population and a stronger economic base offer a broader range of job opportunities, which requires a regular daily commute. Strong micro-regional centres also have an extended range of services, more specialized retail units (e.g. bookshops, furniture stores), restaurants and bars, various craft services, and secondary schools and colleges in addition to a primary school, while health services can offer medical specialists if there is no hospital in the municipality itself. There are approximately 200 such stronger micro-regional centres in the Czech Republic. At this point in time, their network quite neatly matches that of municipalities with extended powers (MEPs).

Medium-sized and towns play the role of hierarchically higher (macro-regional) population centres, with infrastructure used not only by their own inhabitants, but also, of course, by the inhabitants of rural regions. These are sites with a broader range of amenities in terms of specialization, and with job opportunities spread over a large number of industries.

### ***2.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TOWNS IN THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN***

Towns are regarded as basic building blocks of prosperity. The majority of the population lives in towns; 62% of the population lives in municipalities with over 5,000 inhabitants. As they evolved, towns became centres for the accumulation of innovation, progress and wealth, as well as human and cultural capital. Urban regions and towns of various sizes are best positioned to exploit their strengths. Larger towns also have greater financial resources that can be invested in upgrading the technical and civil infrastructure, developing the range of cultural institutions, etc. The most important poles of development in the Czech Republic are the regional cities, especially the City of Prague.

Medium-sized and small towns play an important role in stabilizing the population structure, particularly in rural areas, where they largely provide work and services for the surrounding area. Their importance to a rural region increases the further they are from higher-order centres or metropolitan regions. A basic prerequisite for towns in a rural area to play a stabilizing role is good transport connections between municipalities.

The existence, numbers and structure of entities offering employment and providing services in towns, combined with their accessibility for inhabitants in the hinterland, are essential to the functioning of rural areas and determine the standard of living and quality of life in the countryside. One of the most effective ways of stabilizing (maintaining the population in rural areas) and developing the countryside is to reinforce the service role of towns, which, in rural areas, can act as growth poles of micro-regional or regional significance. Along with rural settlements, they are essential in guiding the sustainable development of the cultural landscape and in the shaping of the landscape pattern.<sup>7</sup>

Hierarchical population centres, where towns play the lead role, are the bones of the settlement system. Their importance can be evaluated using, for example, the indicator of

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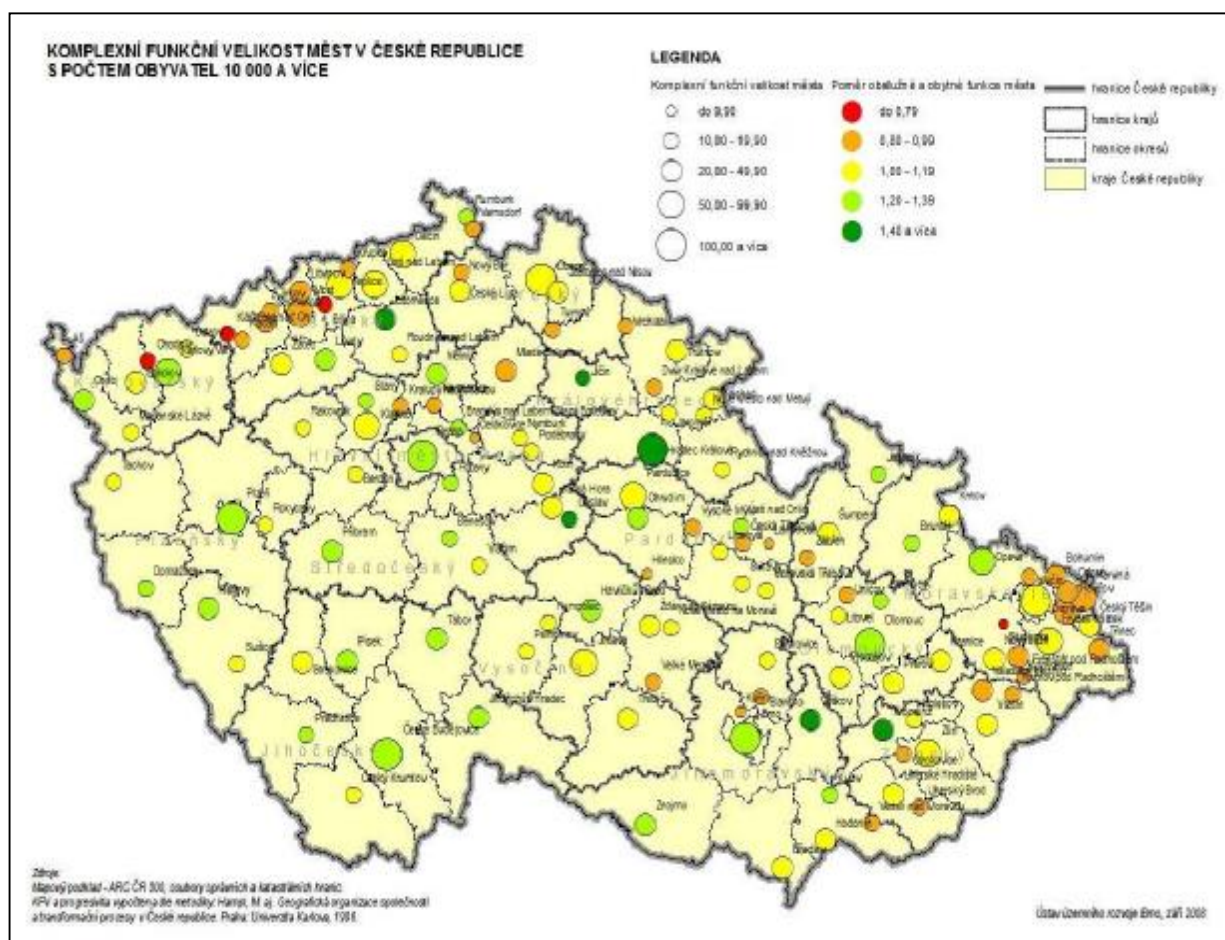
<sup>7</sup> For more details, see the European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, 2000

“**complex functional size**”.<sup>8</sup> The complex functional size is evaluated as the average the fundamental “mainframe” functions, i.e. the residential (R), employment (E) and service (S) functions.

The cartogram below shows the complex functional size of towns and cities in the Czech Republic with a population of at least 10,000. The progressivity of individual towns, expressed as the ratio of the service and residential functions (S/R) is also delineated here. It can be assumed that progressive centres will report a ratio of service and residential functions of more than 1 (indicated in the cartogram in green and yellow).

The cartogram shows that in regions where there is a greater concentration of centres with a higher complex functional size (e.g. in Ústecký kraj and Moravskoslezský kraj), there is a low proportion of progressive centres. By contrast, in regions with a lower proportion of centres (such as in Plzeňský kraj and Jihočeský kraj), the significance of each centre rises and all centres are progressive.

Complex functional size of towns



**Suburbanization** in all its forms – residential, manufacturing and services – has played a major role in shaping broader relations between towns and their hinterland since 1990. Suburbanization – the shift of inhabitants, their activities and certain functions from the core town to the hinterland – is presently the most prominent feature of current developments in settlement structure. People often regard one of the pluses of suburbanization to be the fact

<sup>8</sup> For more details, see Geografická organizace společnosti a transformační procesy v ČR [The Geographical Organization of Society and Transformation Processes in the Czech Republic], Hampl et al., 1996

that residents of large cities can move to a healthier, freer environment without having to forego urban jobs and urban services. Suburbanization can revive the development of small periurban communities and encourage the influx of a younger, more educated population; where population growth is on a larger scale, it can also lead to higher tax revenue for a municipality. In terms of nature conservation, landscape protection and the preservation of the basic settlement balance in an area, there are also certain risk factors attached to suburbanization.

## **2.4 CERTAIN ISSUES RELATED TO FURTHER URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

The growth of urban agglomerations is a current global population trend. The phenomenon of house-building spreading out into the countryside has also hit the Czech Republic, with blanket developments observable around both larger and smaller towns. **Urban sprawl**, economically, socially and environmentally objectionable, is an uncontrolled way of locating residential and commercial activities in the periurban landscape. We use urban sprawl to refer to a situation where the pace of change in the use of land for urban use is higher than the rate of population growth. By providing a framework, the Principles of Urban Policy can contribute to the search for comprehensive solutions to the negative impacts of this phenomenon.

The adverse consequences of urban sprawl include:

- increasing demand for transport links and infrastructure in new locations,
- growing dependence on transportation to get around, especially cars,
- the risk that built-up areas and urban centres will find themselves short of public funds and private capital for the rehabilitation of existing buildings, or current underutilized infrastructure,
- the risk that urban estates will gradually become ghettos with high crime rates and derelict and half-empty housing stock,
- environmental damage, which has direct repercussions on the quality of life of those living in towns or in the surrounding area. The population is encumbered by severe localized problems, such as noise, air pollution, waste management and the impermeability of the landscape.

Those effects are a manifestation of the unsustainable **territorial expansion of towns into the countryside**, typified by the construction of commercial shopping centres, warehouses, and other service facilities in suburban areas. Specific problems arise when houses are built en masse without adequate facilities and public transport services (“satellites”). The shift of numerous urban functions beyond the administrative boundary of towns also leads to inconsistency in the administrative and functional demarcation of the town and the consequent inability to influence the spatial development of the town directly beyond its administrative boundaries. Many intensive economic and social relations are played out at regional level, in the area of an urban agglomeration comprising the core territory of the town and its surroundings.

Towns are faced with a number of other specific problems as they seek to perform their tasks. The roots of these problems are often interrelated and are also connected with lifestyle changes. Many towns are struggling with an **inadequate economic structure**, a deteriorating demographic and social situation (an **aging population**, a rise in the number of single-person households), and a technical, transport and environmental infrastructure and civic amenities that are short on capacity and rely on inappropriate technology.

There are complex **environmental protection issues** in towns. One thorny problem is the negative trend of the build-up of road traffic and the related environmental damage (noise, dust, emissions, congestion); this, combined with the not always suitable transport solutions in central zones and with transport infrastructure inadequate in terms of both quality and capacity, adversely affects the living conditions and health of the urban population. Other problems may be the inappropriate functional use and structure of the territory, the poor quality of urban developments, including brownfields, land degradation, a lack of green areas, building on green areas, etc., which affect the quality of life in a town and reduce its attractiveness. Not least, towns need to respond to new challenges, such as the implications of climate change, energy management, natural resource management and the rationalization of waste management.

In the past, many manufacturing operations were located in towns. In the past two decades, however, they have been in decline, and some manufacturing facilities have been abandoned. Today, these often large tracts of land (**brownfields**) hinder the development of individual parts of towns, and sometimes whole towns themselves, but also offer certain development potential and space for development, e.g. for public services, housing or business activities.

A town's history is reflected in its historical parts. These tend to be urban conservation areas and urban conservation zones. These core areas often constitute full-scale urban complexes whose value lies not in their individual buildings, but in integrated sets of preserved structures, squares, roads and fortifications. In the past, the **care of cultural and historical heritage** was neglected; even today, rehabilitation and restoration work can be insensitive, uniform one-size-fits-all civic amenity facilities are constructed, traffic is allowed to intrude indiscriminately into historical zones, and buildings are used for entirely different purposes than those for which they should be used in historical urban centres.

The **need for housing** in towns was addressed by the mass construction of prefabricated blocks. High-rise housing estates were mainly built in rings around the existing urban fabric, but often penetrated the historic cores of towns. Although this is relatively affordable housing, the current state of high-rise blocks of flats in the Czech Republic has suffered considerably from years of neglect, manifested by impaired functional characteristics, increased operating costs, reduced operational safety and the emerging potential risk of a lower standard of living. Not only the oldest blocks, but also prefabricated buildings from the 1960s and 1970s, have static and technological defects, faulty cladding, loggias, balconies and roofs which threaten the safety and health of inhabitants, and poor energy performance, significantly increasing heating costs. These deficiencies, if left unaddressed, could gradually lead to the devastation of the residential situation, and subsequently to an unwelcome change in the social structure of the inhabitants of these estates.

In some big towns in particular, a **socially damaging environment** is emerging with pockets of poverty in urban and periurban locations, especially in high-rise housing estates. According to data from 2006, there are 300 socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic. These and other factors could become potential barriers to further development.

Urban development cannot be disentangled from regional development. European Union policy views towns as an integral part and driver of regional development. In this regard, the revitalization of towns and thoughtful programming of urban development is inherently a regional matter. Towns influence regional competitiveness and are a source of innovation for the region in which they are located. In the regions, it is necessary to strengthen the competitiveness of towns and focus on reinforcing the functions of weaker centres, creating networks of towns, and developing urban-rural partnerships.

Regional development is affected by the fragmentation of the Czech settlement structure and the low quality and capacity of the transport network (especially roads). This can be addressed by developing an integrated sustainable transport system, completing the motorway network and cross-regional road network, renovating high-speed rail lines and optimizing regional tracks, and resolving the intolerable technical condition of regional transport networks, including the construction of modern and safe infrastructure for cycling and pedestrians. The **availability of transport** is crucial not only for the balanced development of towns and their agglomerations, but also in rural areas and, especially, the peripheral regions. Remoteness and poor transport links to regional centres are factors that help keep unemployment above average and generally slow down economic activities in the area, and this situation is not fully offset by income from tourism and agriculture. Peripheral regions suffer from a lack of entrepreneurial activity and the indifference of investors, who disregard them when deciding where to locate new production facilities.

### 3. THE EUROPEAN APPROACH TO URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The European Union and Member States are aware that towns and urban agglomerations play a decisive role in economic, social and environmental development. Europe as such is looking for a single model that can effectively address issues of urban policy at European level. Different European countries' experience of urban policy over the past decade has paved the way for the establishment of a set of general principles underpinning successful policies in urban development. Given the very diverse geographical locations and institutional, legislative and administrative culture of the individual Member States, specific recommendations in the relevant documents are viewed as an "open" body and framework of possibilities to be implemented at national level.

The documents adopted represent, in succession, the joint action of EU Member States to shape an urban development policy pursuing close coordination with the development of the settlement pattern, with the territorial cohesion policy and with the regional development policy.

The first document dealing with the role of towns and urban agglomerations in sustainable territorial development was the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), drawn up by the European Commission as of 1994. The final draft was adopted in Potsdam in May 1999 by ministers of the EU Member States responsible for land-use planning and regional development.

The aim of the document is to facilitate the integration and territorial coordination of common European space. The planned expansion of transnational transport infrastructure, ecological regeneration of restructured industrial sites and changes in rural regions are all linked to this.

The aim of the territorial development policy is to encourage balanced and sustainable development within the European Union. According to the ministers involved, it is important to ensure that all areas of the European Union consistently achieve the three fundamental goals of European policy:

- economic and social cohesion,
- the conservation and management of natural resources and cultural heritage,
- the more balanced competitiveness of the European territory.

The ESDP provided an appropriate policy framework for the sectoral policy of the Community and its Member States, which has a territorial impact, and for regional and local authorities in order to achieve the balanced and sustainable development of the European territory.

In the interests of closer European integration, the ministers placed a stress on cooperation between Member States and between their regions and local authorities. "Regional and local authorities must work together in the future across national boundaries." The ESDP is a suitable reference document for the encouragement of cooperation which respects the principle of subsidiarity. This document continues to serve as a policy framework for Member States, their regions and local authorities, and for the European Commission, in their respective areas of responsibility.

The ESDP was followed up by the **New Charter of Athens**, adopted at a session of the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP) in Athens in **1998**. The Charter is the work of an international committee of spatial planners, who had started work on the draft in 1995. At an ECTP session in 2003, the Charter of Athens was expanded to incorporate the Vision for Cities in the 21st Century, and was also approved there. The Vision is divided into several

chapters that reflect the challenges of the 21st century, such as the economic, social, environmental and urban interlinking of urban development contexts, and discusses directions and trends in urban development in the future.

### ***3.1 LILLE ACTION PROGRAMME***

During the French presidency in the second half of 2000, the first multi-annual programme devoted more intensely to cooperation in the field of urban policy in EU Member States was adopted; this was the *Lille Action Programme*.

The Lille Action Programme is based on a report prepared by the “Committee on Spatial Development”<sup>9</sup> in 2000. The aim of the report is to give Member States, the Commission and cities a tangible form of grasping urban policy objectives defined at European level, which are also challenges facing cities.

The programme proposes a set of nine priorities:

- the greater involvement (role) of towns and cities in spatial planning,
- a new approach of urban policies on national and Community levels,
- greater participation of citizens,
- greater attention to social and ethnic segregation,
- the promotion of integrated and balanced urban development,
- the promotion of partnership between the public and private sector,
- the diffusion of best practices and networking,
- the promotion of modern technology in urban affairs,
- further analysis of urban areas to deepen the knowledge of interlinked phenomena in cities.

### ***3.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE ROTTERDAM MEETING – THE URBAN ACQUIS***

During the Dutch Presidency in the second half of 2004, the ministers for spatial planning and regional development approved the **Urban Acquis**, summarizing the main principles of a holistic approach to urban policy, at an informal meeting in Rotterdam.

Priority was given to economic competitiveness, social cohesion and quality of the urban environment. The individual priorities must be balanced with each other; cities should have their own cultural identity and be liveable places of choice.

The Urban Acquis, inter alia, stressed the need for integration of sectoral policies at national, regional and local levels and the importance of agreement, partnership and arrangements between various tiers of government. There was also support for the broad involvement of all stakeholders.

Territorially, the Urban Acquis supported a policy focus on the specific needs of towns, on addressing social problems in deprived areas in relation to economic opportunities in the wider region, and on establishing institutional cooperation between towns and regions. It stressed the importance of a balanced urban network and functional cooperation between small, medium and large towns.

Besides the Urban Acquis, the conclusions of Rotterdam 2004 included **recommendations on the implementation of the urban policy agenda at national level**, reflecting the Lisbon and

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<sup>9</sup> Informal Intergovernmental Committee of Representatives of Member States and the European Commission. It was founded in 1989 under the French Presidency to prepare the European Spatial Development Policy.

Gothenburg Agendas, the Knowledge Economy, Social Inclusion and Relations between Town and Region.

The *Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas* combine competitiveness, social inclusion and environmental quality as key challenges for the development of urban policy in all European countries. In order to achieve sustainable development, urban development policy must be oriented not only on the question of the economic potential of towns, but also on their social needs.

The *Knowledge Economy* is a document about towns which make a major contribution to the development of the knowledge economy and the opportunities for successful economic development. There can be no uniform approach to urban policy, but it is necessary to create an approach that maximizes the economic potential of different types of towns. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the coordination and integration of national sectoral policies.

*Social Inclusion* emphasizes the integration of national sectoral policies in matters of housing policy, health care, education, security and employment. Member State Governments should support and strengthen the contribution made by towns to the social inclusion of their inhabitants. It is necessary create compact towns with diverse functions, to prevent chaotic urban sprawl and to implement appropriate programmes to reduce social segregation.

*Relations between Town and Region* is a document that addresses the relationship between a town and its hinterland. The administrative boundaries of towns are small than their “economic boundaries”, which creates problems for further development. This leads to inconsistent administrative and functional definitions and related opportunities for towns to affect development directly beyond their administrative boundaries. A town/region concept promoting integrated territorial development is proposed. In this respect, the document points out that national governments should play a greater role in encouraging and supporting urban development.

### **3.3 BRISTOL ACCORD**

The conclusions of the Informal Meeting of Ministers of EU Member States on issues of sustainable settlements resulted in the *Bristol Accord*, adopted in December 2005, which represented a paradigm shift in the view of urban issues and in approaches to urban development. It resulted in an appreciation of the importance of towns for Europe’s further development, and sustainable urban development became a major topic for further discussion at European level. The approved principles include a comprehensive and coherent framework for ensuring sustainable development, economic prosperity and social justice in times of rapid economic change. Eight characteristics for a sustainable community are defined in an annex to the *Bristol Accord*:

- active, inclusive and safe,
- well run,
- well connected,
- well served,
- environmentally sensitive,
- thriving,
- well designed and built,
- fair for everyone.



### **3.4 LEIPZIG CHARTER ON SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN CITIES**

An important document dealing with the principles and development of urban policy is the *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*, which was approved at a meeting of ministers of EU Member States in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007. Here, the ministers committed themselves, inter alia, to apply the principle of integrated urban development and, at national level, to establish an adequate substantive and administrative framework for its implementation.

The conclusions and recommendations of the *Leipzig Charter* emphasize two sets of issues:

**1. making greater use of integrated urban development policy approaches and, for this purpose, to establish the necessary framework at national level;**

Integrated urban development policy offers a set of instruments and cooperative, effective governance structures and is indispensable for improving the competitiveness of European cities. They facilitate early coordination of housing, economic development, taking into account existing demographic trends and energy-policy conditions.

Within the scope of integrated development, the Leipzig Charter considers the following strategies to be of crucial importance for strengthening the competitiveness of European cities:

- creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces;
- modernizing infrastructure networks and improving energy efficiency;
- proactive innovation and educational policies.

**2. special attention paid to deprived neighbourhoods within the context of the city as a whole;**

The Charter considers the following strategies, embedded in an integrated urban development policy, to be of crucial importance for deprived urban neighbourhoods:

- upgrading the physical environment;
- strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy;
- proactive educational and training policies for children and young people;
- promotion of socially acceptable urban transport.

In its conclusions, the Charter emphasizes the need to establish the main principles of urban development at national level and to create incentives for innovative solutions. The Structural Funds will therefore form an integral part of government aid. The use of these funds must be focused on existing problems and take into consideration the circumstances of individual Member States.

### **3.5 TERRITORIAL AGENDA OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The **Territorial Agenda of the European Union** was also approved on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007. In its basic postulates, it draws on earlier documents on this topic; in particular, it builds on a European Commission document from 1999 focusing on the European Spatial Development Perspective.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> ESDP

Conceptually, the Territorial Agenda of the EU places the issues faced by towns and urban areas into the context of territorial cohesion, elements of the *Lisbon Strategy* concept, and other current issues, in particular the new major territorial challenges. The objective of **territorial cohesion** was added as a third dimension, alongside economic and social cohesion, to the basic legislation of the European Union.

The aim of territorial cohesion is to promote balanced development and strive for greater coherence and effectiveness of various policies (regional, transport, etc.) having a regional impact by removing and preventing regional disparities.

The Territorial Agenda of the EU is a strategic framework which outlines priorities for the territorial development of Europe. It builds on the three prime objectives of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), which remains in force:

- development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural partnership,
- securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge,
- sustainable development, prudent management and protection of natural and cultural heritage.

In the context of the policy for territorial cohesion, the Territorial Agenda sets out the following priorities for territorial development in the European Union:<sup>11</sup>

- strengthening polycentric development and innovation through the networking of city regions and cities,
- creating new forms of territorial governance and partnership between rural and urban areas,
- promoting regional clusters of competition and innovation in Europe,
- supporting the strengthening and extension of trans-European networks,
- promoting trans-European risk management, including the impacts of climate change,
- the strengthening of ecological structures and cultural resources as the added value for development.

### ***3.6 FIRST ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TERRITORIAL AGENDA OF THE EUROPEAN UNION***

Based on the territorial development priorities outlined above, the **First Action Programme for the Implementation of the EU Territorial Agenda**<sup>12</sup> was approved in the Azores on 23 November 2007; the programme is designed to initiate activities aimed at the better coordination of territorial cohesion and urban development policy. The First Action Programme is intended for implementation in the 2007–2011 period. In relation to urban issues, the First Action Programme should ensure that the territorial and urban dimension is adequately taken into account by European institutions when evaluating existing and forming new policies, and that a regional framework is created for sectoral policies. The Czech Republic, through the Ministry for Regional Development, assumed responsibility for the performance of Act 1.1a,<sup>13</sup> which deals with the relationship between towns and rural areas.

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<sup>11</sup> *Territorial Agenda of the European Union*, published on the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007; Part III, paragraphs (13) to (27), pp. 3 to 5

<sup>12</sup> This document was approved under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council on 23 and 24 November 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Act 1.1 – “Prepare and promote policy options to foster coordination between spatial and urban development in the light of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter, at EU and MS level.”

The aim of this activity is to draw up proposals for coordination between territorial and urban development, contribute to the strengthening of polycentric development and innovation through the networking of towns, and to identify the strategies and potential for, and obstacles to, collaboration between towns and the countryside.

### ***3.7 MARSEILLE STATEMENT***

The **French Presidency** followed up on previous efforts to actively promote the putting of the priorities of the Leipzig Charter into political practice. Towards the end of the Presidency, the **Marseille Statement** was approved in Marseille on 25 November 2008.

In its conclusions, it summarized three main issues:

- the implementation of the Leipzig Charter and its integration into the issue of territorial cohesion was support,
- urban development must take into account ongoing climate change,
- the need to apply cohesion policy in the promotion of integrated urban development.

To support the practical application of an integrated approach to urban development, the French Presidency proposed a “**Reference Framework for Sustainable European Cities**”, which provides a forum aimed at promoting multilateral dialogue leading to more effective strategic management, the application of integrated approaches in practice and methods for the evaluation thereof, exchanges of experience in urban development and the sharing of best practices, facilitating the generalization of findings and their subsequent use. The aim of this instrument is to establish a common methodology including, inter alia, criteria and indicators relevant for a common and comprehensive approach in ensuring sustainable urban development in European Union countries.

### ***3.8 INTEGRATION OF URBAN POLICY INTO THE EU COHESION POLICY 2007–2013***

The reinforcement of the importance of the urban dimension was also reflected in the basic regulations for the implementation of cohesion policy. The basic principles of this policy are implemented through National Strategic Reference Frameworks and certain Operational Programmes.

Within the framework of integrated urban development, interventions designed to renovate housing in areas experiencing or threatened by physical deterioration and social exclusion in the Member States that acceded to the European Union on or after 1 May 2004 were acknowledged as eligible for funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The contribution to housing expenditure should concern the provision of good quality accommodation for lower income groups, including recently privatized housing stock, as well as accommodation for vulnerable social groups. Interventions in the housing sector are eligible only if they are programmed within the framework of an integrated urban development operation or priority axis for areas experiencing or threatened by physical deterioration and social exclusion.

Building on the good experience of the URBAN Community initiative, sustainable urban development was reinforced by fully integrating measures in that field into the operational programmes financed by the ERDF, paying particular attention to local development and employment initiatives and their potential for innovation.

In the case of action involving sustainable urban development, the ERDF may, where appropriate, support projects submitted on the basis of participative and integrated strategies to tackle economic, environmental and social problems. These strategies will promote sustainable urban development through activities such as: strengthening economic growth, the

rehabilitation of the physical environment, brownfield redevelopment, the preservation and development of natural and cultural heritage, the promotion of entrepreneurship, local employment and community development, and the provision of services to the population taking account of changing demographic structures.

### ***3.9 EUROPEAN COMMISSION DOCUMENTS ON SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT***

In addition to the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG), the Regional Policy Directorate, in collaboration with other directorates, has drawn up documents supporting sustainable urban development with support from the Structural Funds.

#### **3.9.1 The Urban Dimension in Community Policies for the Period 2007–2013**

This Commission document from September 2007 is based on Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG). The European Union as a whole and cities are currently faced with a two-fold challenge: to improve the competitiveness of cities and at the same time to meet the social and environmental needs of sustainable development. A quality urban environment contributes significantly to making Europe an attractive place to invest and live.

Member States' National Strategic Reference Frameworks and Operational Programmes contain priority axes identifying the urban dimension of development. Cities to be important partners for government bodies at national, regional and local levels, mainly because the city authorities are increasingly responsible for their development. Another part of the publication analyses how the urban dimension is reflected in other Community policies.

#### **3.9.2 Fostering the Urban Dimension**

This Commission document from November 2008 analyses the 316 Operational Programmes for the period 2007–2013 which are co-financed by the ERDF. The urban dimension is presented in them by means of a wide range of activities in urban areas which create basic conditions for the development and stabilization of urban territories (revitalization of urban districts, the renewal and modernization of infrastructure, public services, etc.) and which correspond to their particular needs. The 2007–2013 programming period is the first time in the history of EU cohesion policy that all towns are potential beneficiaries of the ERDF.

A new financial engineering instrument usable for the implementation of programmes related to the development of urban areas is JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas). It can be used to finance sustainable investment, growth and job creation in urban areas of EU countries through the efficient use of public-private partnerships to promote urban development.

#### **3.9.3 Promoting Sustainable Urban Development in Europe**

This Commission document from April 2009 assessed the achievements made in more than two years of implementation of the OP, and sets out further opportunities arising from the use of the EU SF in cohesion policy, particularly in the implementation of urban development programmes.

The European Union, aware of the importance of towns, has long supported the activities for the development and regeneration of towns and urban regions in their efforts to increase competitiveness and social and economic cohesion.

### **3.10 OECD Territorial Development Policy Committee (TDPC)**

The **OECD** (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), through the activities of the Working Party on Territorial Policy in Urban Areas, aims to find approaches to the phenomenon of urbanization, in conjunction with economic growth, utilization of energy sources and climate change, that affect life in urban areas in the world today. The TDPC has produced a series of important studies that evaluate urbanization trends in OECD member countries and in other countries that are not members of the organization. The study **Cities, Climate Change and Multi-Level Governance** has been drawn up. This study aims to establish a multi-level framework for central and local government and to grasp all the relationships between national, regional and local levels concerning the impact of climate change on urbanization, economic growth and the utilization of energy sources.

The TDPC is also preparing a study called **Compact City Policy** to cover the issues of urban sprawl, efficient land use, and the regeneration, concentration and optimization of urban services and transport.

### **3.11 European Parliament – Oldřich Vlasák’s Report on the urban dimension of cohesion policy**

In its 2004–2009 parliamentary term, the European Parliament adopted the “Vlasák” Report on the Urban Dimension of Cohesion Policy in the New Programming Period after 2013. In the report, the territory of Europe is characterized by territorial diversity and polycentric development, a relatively dense urban network and relatively few very large cities. The report also deals with the future orientation of the development of cities, which play a key role in shaping both the spatial and economic environment in Europe. The report recommends that urban development programmes be designed and implemented at local and regional level by those who best understand the needs of the population and are familiar with the business environment.

## 4. BACKGROUND TO THE PRINCIPLES OF URBAN POLICY<sup>14</sup>

The Principles of Urban Policy are based on an external framework formed by the importance of towns for the further development of the European Union and the growing problems related to its sustainability, and on the specific conditions and problems of urban development at national level. Approaches to further handling of this issue and European trends in urban policy are set out in Chapter 3 (The European approach to urban development); the situation in the Czech Republic is described in Chapter 2.

The need for competitiveness, sustainable development and other new global challenges clearly bring to the fore the principles of partnership, cooperation and coordinated approaches at all territorial levels. Thematically, this is mainly due to the effects of climate change, issues of energy consumption, safety and sustainability and efficient use of dwindling stocks of non-renewable strategic resources. Already, many parts of Europe are having to deal with the effects of extreme weather conditions, the quality and scarcity of drinking water, as well as the capacity and obsolescence of grids with impending massive outages. Major threats will be the ageing population and social exclusion, which will place enormous pressure on public budgets and the labour market; this will be coupled by large-scale migration from the world's poorer regions to the European Union. For these reasons, urban problems became part of cohesion policy, and numerous European Union bodies have been making substantial coordination efforts which should help to address this issue in the Member States.

The basic starting point for a coordinated approach to sustainable towns is the Sustainable Development Strategic Framework of the Czech Republic (SDSF), which, in Priority 1 ("Consolidation of Territorial Cohesion") sets Objective 2 as "To strengthen the role of towns as accelerators of growth and development in the region" and Objective 3 as "To ensure sustainable rural development and strengthen the harmonization of relations between town and country". In its other priorities, the SDSF addresses enhancements in the quality of life of the regional population and the more effective promotion of strategic and land-use planning.

Priority proposals for tackling these problems mainly include support for the integrated, coordinated and balanced development of towns, improvements in their competitiveness based on knowledge and new technologies, the stimulation of local employment and the promotion of social inclusion. A prerequisite for further urban development is the long-term strategic management of public administration to ensure the availability and quality of public services and public spaces. Public administration ensures methodological and coordinated support, creates a strategic focus with a local impact, and must promote the creation of platforms for the broad cooperation of all partners, the formation of networks of towns, urban-rural partnerships and the dissemination of best practices among them. The protection of Europe's unique natural and cultural heritage and effective environmental protection are also vital to future development. It is also essential to bear in mind the handling of problems caused by demographic changes, notably the aging population, and the consequent increased demand for social services and the provision thereof, which is linked to the building of infrastructure for these citizens and to the provision of conditions for quality life and the adaptation of urban space to the lives of the elderly population.

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<sup>14</sup> In the preparation of the SWOT analysis, the MRD drew, inter alia, on documents and analyses for the preparation of the National Development Plan, the Regional Development Strategy and the Spatial Development Policy.

The internal framework of the “Principles” is based on conditions specific to the Czech Republic and its development potential. This potential is strongly influenced by population characteristics, the impacts of economic transformation in the 1990s, and the reform of governance. The significant proportion of medium-sized and small towns, the handling of links between towns and the surrounding rural areas, improvements in an urban environment with the physical and moral obsolescence – and inadequacy – of infrastructure, care of the housing stock, management of suburbanization processes, etc., require coordination, collaboration, the use of integrated approaches and the configuration of a functional and efficient system of networks providing public services and coordination with the private sector.

The findings from an analysis of the settlement pattern and urban development issues are set out in the SWOT analysis below, which sums up the main factors that can positively or negatively affect their future development and which constitute the basis for the proposed principles, strategic guidelines and development activities of urban policy.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The growing importance of certain towns and the role of regional centres.</li> <li>• A dense network of small and medium-sized towns in relation to growth poles.</li> <li>• A concentration of economic activities in relation to the positive growth of towns.</li> <li>• The increased availability of certain services and related better quality civic amenities.</li> <li>• A higher education structure among the population.</li> <li>• A skilled workforce.</li> <li>• A wider range of job opportunities.</li> <li>• Transport accessibility in the hinterland of towns and the relatively high density road and rail networks.</li> <li>• Good telecommunications and energy networks.</li> <li>• Attenuation of industrial production in town centres, and the consequent reduced adverse environmental impacts.</li> <li>• Good territorial governance and responsible management by public authorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative population trends and the worsening demographic structure of the population.</li> <li>• A concentration of economic activities in relation to rural displacement and the decline of the rural economy.</li> <li>• Significant socio-economic differences between towns.</li> <li>• Less use of natural, cultural and economic potential.</li> <li>• The occupation of town centres by administrative premises and their primary use for tourism, leading to displacement of permanent residents.</li> <li>• Transport infrastructure lacking quality and technologically obsolete.</li> <li>• The technical condition of housing stock and monuments.</li> <li>• The deteriorating quality of the environment.</li> <li>• Lack of social infrastructure and civic amenities in some areas, particularly housing estates.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An integrated approach to urban development and adjacent regions.</li> <li>• Utilization of resources from European funds.</li> <li>• The promotion of cooperation between the town, countryside and region.</li> <li>• The use of new tools in territorial planning for better functional use of urban areas and their surroundings.</li> <li>• The integration of the knowledge-based economy and new technologies (the development of R&amp;D).</li> <li>• The strengthening of the competitiveness of towns.</li> <li>• The promotion of partnership between the public and private sector.</li> <li>• The remediation and reuse of brownfields.</li> <li>• The dissemination of best practice and cooperation between towns.</li> <li>• An increase in the number of qualified professionals.</li> <li>• Prevention of the social exclusion of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inefficient use of aid from the EU due to an uncoordinated approach.</li> <li>• Insufficient accumulation and use of own financial resources.</li> <li>• A further increase in road traffic without a coordinated approach and without linkages to other sectors.</li> <li>• Population ageing and population decline in large cities and the related lack of social and other services for older people.</li> <li>• An adverse change in the social environment and social structure in large cities and the creation of modern ghettos.</li> <li>• Absence of partners and the public in decision-making on important aspects of urban development.</li> <li>• Continuing urban sprawl and the associated uncontrolled development of the satellite construction.</li> <li>• The continued inefficient use and revitalization of brownfields.</li> <li>• The depopulation of peripheral regions</li> </ul>



<p>vulnerable groups of the population in selected areas through the creation of special programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of extensive cultural heritage and landscape diversity.</li> <li>• Use of the new opportunities offered by road and rail transport, logistics centres and their connection to the region, to enhance the competitiveness of towns and to reduce negative impacts on the environment.</li> <li>• Use of the most advanced information technology to improve efficiency in urban governance and enhance public services.</li> <li>• Public involvement in strategic and community planning and decision-making on urban development.</li> </ul>	<p>and the migration of the rural population to towns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The growing deficit in the financing of infrastructure, repairs to the housing stock and objects of cultural heritage.</li> <li>• Unresolved old environmental hazards.</li> <li>• Non-transparent decision-making by certain public authorities.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deterioration in air quality in certain agglomerations (airborne dust particles, exhaust fumes).</li> <li>• Long-term lack of integration of specific population groups and related threats, such as crime, over-indebtedness, poor educational attainment, etc.</li> <li>• Limited opportunity to address the problems of the agglomeration, including across the administrative boundaries of the town.</li> <li>• Lack of preparedness for the effects of economic and financial crises and consequent greater demand for services to citizens.</li> <li>• Loss of urban green spaces and agricultural land associated with the significant development of residential (and other) construction in towns.</li> </ul>
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## 5. PRINCIPLES OF URBAN POLICY

The starting principle for the creation and application of urban policy is sustainable urban development and integrative economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects. This principle of sustainable urban development is reflected in the urban policy principles below, which are **broken down into strategic guidelines and development activities**. The individual principles cut across disciplines, intermingle and complement each other, and as a whole provide a framework for improvements in the quality of life enjoyed by the inhabitants of our towns and for increasing the attractiveness of towns as places to live, invest and work. The principles should help coordinate existing policies affecting the development of towns and urban areas, initiate consideration for the territorial factor in these policies and support local authorities in implementing an integrated approach to the governance of their towns. The implementation of the principles of urban policy will therefore be based on joint and coordinated action at all levels of government.

### *PRINCIPLE 1 THE REGIONAL NATURE OF URBAN POLICY*

This principle expresses the fact that urban policy is integrally incorporated into regional policy and into the policy of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Urban development and regional development cannot be disunited. Towns are an integral part of regions and centres of their development. Towns, especially large ones, concentrate in their territory economic, social and other functions, which generate their economic strength. It is clear that these towns are drivers of development in their region (and Prague is the driving force for virtually the whole of Bohemia). Promoting towns as development poles increases their attractiveness and stimulates competitiveness throughout the region, including the surrounding rural area. Principles of urban policy, therefore, emphasize the role of towns as poles of regional growth and development.

Its convenient geographical position in the middle of Europe, together with the dynamic development of towns and their related development axes, gives the Czech Republic a comparative advantage in the pan-European area. Agglomeration regions or regions directly linked to European networks are likely to be in an even more advantageous position, reflected in significant growth in the service sector. The result will strengthen the status of these development areas and development axes. Conversely, territories which are located outside the development axes will have less favourable conditions for their further development if they do not offer any other significant development potential, or if there is no policy to encourage maximum use of their potential.

The Czech Republic has several types of rural areas, where different development trends are promoted. This diversity results from their position in relation to areas with high concentrations of population (towns and periurban areas). Rural areas in the hinterland of large cities are affected by suburbanization and are experiencing significant population growth, which affects their development and investment priorities. On the other hand, rural areas far from big cities have long faced problems of depopulation and population aging. It is here that growing importance is being attached to small and medium-sized towns, which, especially in sparsely populated areas, provide access to public services and serve the traditional rural economy and population. Balanced regional development and narrower intraregional disparities require a stronger comprehensive approach to the territory at all

levels, and the refusal to separate the issues of urban areas from and rural areas<sup>15</sup> – indeed, greater emphasis needs to be placed on interrelations.

In the 2007–2013 programming period, urban development issues became part of the economic, social and territorial cohesion policy. In the Czech Republic, at both national and regional level these issues are an integral part of regional and territorial development policies, and the promotion of urban development takes place through their instruments and interventions. Conversely, in this programming period the rural development policy was removed from the cohesion policy and became part of the Common Agricultural Policy, which in terms of urban-rural relations requires greater coordination between the two policies.

### *Strategic guidelines and development activities:*

#### *policy coordination*

- **create links between urban and regional policy, or cohesion policy, and other relevant policies at local, regional, national and European level;**
- **eliminate a purely sectoral approach in strategic and programming documents at national and regional level;**

#### *regional framework for the targeting of support for towns and the development of urban-rural relations*

- **support the development of towns as the natural, integrating centres of regions, exploit their comparative advantages and regional characteristics;**
- **develop and promote the development of urban-rural relations.**

At national and regional levels it is essential to place an emphasis on a comprehensive approach to territories in all policy materials. Not all the documents reflect the differences between regions in the Czech Republic, and therefore it is necessary to incorporate a regional dimension into sectoral strategies and programmes, including consideration of the urban-rural link.

A sectoral approach is quite strongly reflected in documents processed at central and regional level; these documents are narrowly focused on specific issues without forging links with other implemented policies or programmes, and their impact on territories is disregarded. In this light, their coherence must be reinforced so that measures implemented under the various policies or programmes act synergistically in a territory. This synergy will help increase the effectiveness of the activities carried out, with a positive impact on the overall development of the territory.

Interventions aimed at strengthening towns and their clusters as drivers of regional development will encourage the formation of urban networks capable of transmitting development and innovation stimuli in the regions. The integration of their territories will enable towns to link up through infrastructure and transport networks, and improvements in the internal environment of towns will enhance their attractiveness to investors and highly skilled workers.

For the development of urban-rural relations, micro-regional centres offering a wide range of services to their surroundings are particularly important. Their support will strengthen territorial cohesion and lead to the functional integration of the territories of micro-regions.

Suburbanization is shifting some functions of towns beyond their administrative boundaries. Solutions to common interests in periurban areas and the administration of the dividing line

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<sup>15</sup> The frequently mentioned individual solutions imply that there are two types of territories, towns and rural areas, separate from each other, in the Czech Republic.

between urban and rural areas require the coordination of local, municipal and regional authorities. Towns and periurban areas provide services to the whole region in terms of employment, public services, public spaces, welfare centres, and cultural and sporting infrastructure. Rural areas are characterized by a high degree of conservation of a landscape's natural assets, some of which are specially protected, and by specific landscape structures with a sparse population and the predominantly agricultural economy. The countryside is therefore also used for recreation. For the reinforcement of urban-rural relations, micro-regional centres offering a wide range of services to their surroundings are particularly important. Their support will strengthen territorial cohesion and lead to the functional integration of the territories of micro-regions.

Coordinating and organizational arrangements, especially in transport, technical and civil infrastructure and tourism, play an important role in strengthening urban-rural relations.

In the field of public transport (the provision of transport services in a territory), in relation to major towns integrated transport systems are formed helping to interlink the town and its surroundings and enabling people to travel to work, to school, and to service providers. Since the creation of a functioning integrated system is a long process, organizational and coordinating measures in the field of transport services are likely to remain an important tool for deepening the urban-rural relations in the future.

Urban-rural relations are also evident in the building of technical infrastructure, especially in waste management (waste collection, the operation of landfills or waste recycling), water supply and wastewater treatment, and, in terms of civic amenities, in the provision of social services, health care and education (especially of a higher level). Coordinating and organizational measures in the field of tourism facilitate networking and the formation of associations of entities involved in tourism, not only regionally, but also thematically.

## ***PRINCIPLE 2 POLYCENTRIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE POPULATION PATTERN***

An important principle of population pattern development is polycentric development. The Lisbon resolution of the Conference of Ministers of the European Union responsible for regional development (October 2006), in its "Decision on polycentric development", recommends that governments of Member States effectively promote polycentric territorial development through the creation and use of innovative policies, strategies and implementation mechanisms. Polycentrism is viewed as an operational tool supporting territorial cohesion and competitiveness.

One of the problems of developments in the population structure is a tendency towards the excessive concentration of development activities in a few large urban centres. In this respect, the purpose of promoting polycentric development is to ensure that the growth and development of these urban areas does not progress at the expense of other medium-sized and smaller towns. The importance of small and medium-sized towns for the wider region depends on the spatial structure. In less densely populated regions, they may even be important rural development centres and public service providers. In more densely populated regions, there are a range of possibilities for cooperation with larger urban centres or between small and medium-sized towns which are close together, even if they are on different sides of the border. Joint measures may be undertaken in the field of civic amenities, the provision of social services, health care and education (especially of a higher level), the provision of transport services in the territory, an integrated transport system, the building of technical

infrastructure, waste management (waste collection, the operation of landfills or waste recycling) and wastewater treatment, recreation and tourism.

One of the tasks of urban policy, including regional policies, is to create a balanced and polycentric urban structure and to reinforce the inadequate potential of some regional centres and lower-category centres which, in less urbanized areas, could represent such centres. Problems with availability may be created by the peripheral position of some centres in relation to their catchment area. Centres with their own relatively weak demographic background and economic potential, whose role in settlement is important and indispensable, especially in border regions, will need to be supported systematically.

*Strategic guidelines and development activities:*

*balanced and polycentric development of the population pattern*

- **coordinate the creation of land-use planning documents at all levels;**
- **prevent the negative manifestations of suburbanization (urban sprawl);**

*focus of the support and implementation of polycentric development*

- **encourage the development of a settlement structure based on polycentric development;**
- **promote the cooperation and interconnection of urban networks at national and transnational levels;**
- **strengthen development areas and axes of national importance laid down in the 2008 SDPCR and clarified by principles of territorial development, and strengthen development areas and axes of trans-local importance defined by the principles of territorial development;**
- **strengthen relations between towns of various sizes and between towns and rural communities, and promote the principle of partnership.**

The basic concept of polycentric territorial development is established on a national level by the “Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic 2008”. The 2008 SDPCR coordinate national land-use planning priorities with regional principles of territorial development and municipal land-use planning documentation. It is also used to coordinate other territorial development instruments, which include regional territorial development programmes and municipal territorial development programmes.

Development areas defined by the “Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic 2008” are important nodes in the structure of the Czech population; they offer social advantages and disadvantages and serve as engines of economic development. They offer the most jobs and facilities for further education, and are places of business initiative and innovation. However, in their catchment area it is possible to observe polarization, as defined by the centre – periphery formula, and disparities between developing regions and those passing through structural changes. In many of these centres the social balance is at risk; the differences between some residential neighbourhoods are many times more pronounced than between towns themselves. This fact negatively influences attractiveness, competitiveness, social inclusion and security in towns.

At regional level, in order to maintain and develop a polycentric settlement structure it is necessary to use the land-use planning tools available to regions and municipalities, the regional territorial development principles and municipal land-use plans. They are also a means for the efficient utilization and protection of greenfield sites. However, responsibility for the uncontrollable extent of construction depends on the decisions taken by mayors and

municipal representatives, planning authorities and inhabitants of suburban communities, who must influence the scope, location and impact of new construction. Appropriate ways of securing the management and coordination of urban expansion include support for the training of municipal representatives and officials of municipal authorities in land-use planning and strategic development, the interconnection and coordination of the activities of municipal authorities and town halls and their planning offices with other authorities affecting the form to be taken by housing development in a territory (e.g. conservation authorities), and effective arrangements for the involvement of the private sector and citizens through community planning or the application of the partnership principle.

Sustainable territorial development must also be based on the sustainable use of the landscape, associated with coordinated care for natural, cultural and historical assets as undertaken by the Czech Republic upon signing the European Landscape Convention.

The settlement structure must be grasped in a much broader context. This also implies the need for synergy between regional policy and land-use planning and other policies at all levels. These policies must take into account the existence of overlapping polycentric networks and create conditions for their improvement. In practice, this requires effective programme support for the functional economic and social cooperation of all urban systems, including small and medium-sized towns in rural areas, between themselves and between them and their surroundings at all levels of territorial governance. In this respect, the focus should be on overcoming the barriers formed by the borders of territorial governance and cultural, information, transport and other barriers.

In a polycentric population pattern system, small and medium-sized towns form important nodes and connections for rural areas. Towns in rural areas need conditions conducive to the development of local industries and services. The development of a polycentric settlement system and urban-rural partnership relations draws on an integrated assessment of a town and the related rural area as a functional spatial unit interconnected by mutual relations and connections. Therefore, in the future these units should be subject to programme support, including support under the Cohesion Policy. The aim will be to reinforce natural functional relations in a territory (catchment area, commuting), links between settlements of different sizes, and their social and economic functions (the division of roles).

Towns where an MEP authority is seated usually have stronger bonds with their surroundings, extending beyond devolved government: people commute to work and schools, both commercial and public services are provided, and cultural and social activities are available. These centres, with few exceptions, are the “natural” core of a region, attributable to historical ties and practices that have long been developed in the territory. Therefore, when considering urban-rural relations in the Czech Republic, this level can be regarded as relevant.

Another tool with significant potential for the future is the support of partnerships and cooperation between towns and rural areas at local government level and in social, cultural and sports activities, i.e. NGO activities. These activities play a positive role in encouraging people to identify with their local area, and therefore make them more willing to engage in community life; they help intensify relations between a town and its closer and wider surroundings.

The shaping of a polycentric population pattern is a long-term process. The preparation of strategic and programming documents in this area is unthinkable without the participation of a broad platform of public authorities, experts and all stakeholders in the territory. This decision-making activity is crucial for future development and life in the territory. It must therefore respect the stability and natural capacity of sustainability and regeneration in the territory and be under the control of the public.

### ***PRINCIPLE 3 STRATEGIC AND INTEGRATED APPROACH TO URBAN DEVELOPMENT***

Competitive towns must provide their citizens with adequate opportunities, services and quality of life, based on efficient transportation, reasonable infrastructure, and a healthy environment. They must maintain and develop their historical nature while opening themselves to the future. Some of them must face the prospect of demographic changes and population aging. They are confronted with different and conflicting trends; some of them increasingly attract new businesses and residents, while in others the number of jobs and the population are on the decline. In this regard, urban development is a complex process, and there can be significant differences in economic and social prospects from one town to another. Addressing these problems requires a long-term vision for the future and the use of adequate planning tools. Towns should therefore draw up strategic development plans<sup>16</sup> which are consistent with the land-use plan, which will take into account all three dimensions of sustainable development equally, and from which their strategic development priorities can be derived. Accordingly, in recent years European cohesion policy has sought broader application and use of integrated approaches to urban development policy.

Numerous negative impacts resulting from uncontrolled development can be seen in many cases where intensive construction has taken place in the vicinity of some large cities. One promising way of solving this problem is to strengthen the strategic approach to urban development. In the current programming period, the “Integrated Urban Development Plans”<sup>17</sup> have become an instrument facilitating this approach. In the future, these integrated approaches could also extend to territories encompassing their hinterland and catchment region. In this case, interventions will be directed towards full (coherent) areas of towns and regions with a view to applying an integrated approach as efficiently as possible. The systematic basis for the application of this procedure will be the “Integrated Territorial Development Plans”, for which the Ministry for Regional Development is preparing a methodological framework, and which will be one of the requirements for the granting of State and EU aid for the projects implemented. Where the rural surroundings of towns are assisted, the content of these plans will also be derived from the level of coordination between the cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy.

The integrated plans will have the anticipated positive impact if they include landscape planning, i.e. covering the sustainability of natural, cultural and historical assets in a territory which cannot be built up.

The integrated urban development policy requires an objective and comprehensive assessment of all aspects relating to urban development. It is a process in which spatial, sectoral and temporal aspects of key areas of urban issues are coordinated.

#### ***Strategic guidelines and development activities:***

##### ***strategic urban development documents and instruments***

- **implement integrated strategic documents, programmes and plans as a means of managing the development of towns and regions;**

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<sup>16</sup> The term “strategic development plan” encompasses various strategic development documents drawn up by municipalities, towns, micro-regions or other voluntary associations of municipalities. In practice, they can be found under various designations: regional development concepts, economic and social development programmes, etc.

<sup>17</sup> Strategic urban plans and IDPs are concepts as defined in the EIA Act; therefore, the requirements of this legislation must be respected. The decision on whether it is necessary to assess a specific concept is taken on a case-by-case basis.

- **use community planning, Local Agenda 21 and other strategic territorial development instruments;**

*coordination of tools and approaches to urban development*

- **apply the broader use of integrated approaches in urban development policy;**
- **coordinate and integrate activities carried out by individual ministries and regions in the development of towns and regions;**
- **draw up methodological support for the strategic management of towns and regions.**

**Strategic urban development plans** are an essential tool in the strategic approach to urban development. Based on these plans, a town can implement specific projects and fulfil its development vision. The use of strategic planning as a means of local government decision-making is closely linked with the promotion of new trends associated with globalization, the relaxation of trade barriers and the rapid increase in the mobility of capital and labour. Competitiveness has shifted dramatically to regional and local level, which means that the objectives of a town's strategic plan must be integrated and must lead to the increased efficiency of local government and improvements in conditions for business and life in the town.

Strategic planning and an integrated approach are key elements of management in this regard and should provide conceptual support for activities and projects that are mutually reinforcing (have a synergistic effect), i.e. that do not act contrarily and are not mutually exclusive.

A new urban development support tool favouring the utilization of the Structural Funds is the Integrated Urban Development Plan (IDP). An Integrated Development Plan is a set of actions, interlinked in terms of content, territory and time, which are implemented in a specific territory or within a thematic scope in towns, and which aim to achieve a common goal or goals of the region, town, municipality or locality.<sup>18</sup>

An IDP is a town's programming document facilitating the use of subsidies from EU Structural Funds, with an emphasis on ensuring the synergy of interventions under the relevant Operational Programmes and on accumulating resources. The integrated plans are implemented via several individual projects which aim to achieve a common goal or goals of the region, town, municipality or locality, and which may be supported by one or more Operational Programmes.

Common regional and sub-regional development strategies and programmes are a key tool supporting links between urban and rural areas. Their key task is to develop links between towns, for example, by defining joint planning strategies, identifying the features of each nodal centre and developing a common framework for the provision of services. Partnerships play a vital role at local and regional level in creating sustainable communities in urban and rural areas. Therefore, it is necessary, in the strategic management of the sustainable development of towns and municipalities, to ensure compliance with the land-use planning documentation and to use and develop community planning approaches, Local Agenda 21 and other strategic tools to promote dialogue between stakeholders in the implementation of sustainable municipal development, including other integral components.

Experience shows that isolated actions seeking to solve a local problem are very often misguided and generally displace the negative effects being tackled to another location. It is therefore necessary to prepare and implement more comprehensive strategies facilitating the

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<sup>18</sup> Government Resolution No 883 of 13 August 2007 on guidelines for the preparation, approval and evaluation of the Integrated Urban Development Plan.



coordination of specific activities by ministries, regions and towns. In this respect, for the next programming period methodological guidance will be drawn up for “Integrated Territorial Development Plans”; these plans will draw together and integrate instruments, and will purposefully concentrate available resources on addressing the common development problems of towns and their rural catchment area or micro-regions.

For specific areas defined in the 2008 SDPCR, the integrated approach to tackling their problems through Landscape Integrated Development Plans is being verified (Government Resolution No 1569/2009). In the next programming period, the concept of integrated territorial development plans will be expanded as a tool to provide programme support and develop urban-rural relations, i.e. for selected micro-regions.

The reconciliation of interests through the integrated urban development policy forms a basis of consensus between the state, the region, towns, citizens and economic operators. Combining knowledge and financial resources allows for better use of scarce public funds. Public and private investments are better coordinated in this way. To allow for the effective integration and concentration of resources, forms of public, private and NGO cooperation should be encouraged and used along with the search for a wide range of financing options. Private financing is often a necessary “supplement” to public funds. Larger cities may also draw on the European Commission’s “Jessica” financial instrument, using credit facilities made available by banks and private sector partners.

#### ***PRINCIPLE 4 PROMOTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOWNS AS DEVELOPMENT POLES IN A TERRITORY***

Sustainable urban development is determined by three dimensions – economic prosperity, a sound environment and social cohesion. In today’s globalized world, towns cannot be competitive without an economy based on knowledge, the application of modern innovations in the manufacturing process, effective management to minimize the burden on the environment and human health, and the use of the most modern information technology to improve efficiency in urban governance and enhance public services. Against this background, it follows that economic growth in towns must not be associated solely with an increase in the “quantity” of production, the consumption of materials, energy, food, water and the abundance of labour, but it should be grasped in particular as an improvement in the quality of life, greater appreciation of inputs using the best available techniques,<sup>19</sup> a higher proportion of know-how in production value and a higher proportion of non-material needs in GDP.

Towns affect the development of neighbouring rural areas. They are viewed as a major factor determining the competitiveness of the region as a whole. The majority of business operators and infrastructure can be found in their territory, and their leverage is important in achieving economic growth and territorial cohesion. They provide a full range of services and job opportunities, where even people with low skills can find jobs.

Towns are a natural environment for research and innovation and the related business. It is in their interest to create conditions conducive to such activities. Towns benefit the development of science and research in that they have information at their disposal about the specific characteristics of the local business environment and can promote cooperation and the

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<sup>19</sup> Best available techniques (BAT) in the operation of large industrial and agricultural facilities are one of the most significant tools in protecting the environment as a whole; this is the most important part of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) process.

formation of innovative clusters of local partners, including businesses, NGOs, universities, educational institutions and local communities. They have the means to transfer knowledge and experience, e.g. by holding workshops, forums, and exhibitions, and by networking, and they can facilitate effective contact for partners.

The practical application of the results of science, research and innovation requires a sustained increase in the education and IT literacy of employees and employers, which also applies to public administration and public services. Educated and highly skilled people are the bearers of all positive trends today. Their increasing level of education and knowledge promotes the further influx of capacities of knowledge-intensive industries and skilled jobs with higher earnings. It is in the interests of urban development, then, to promote improvements in the education system and, where possible, to foster conditions for a quality range of lifelong learning opportunities and programmes.

An important material prerequisite for the development and quality of urban life is the technical infrastructure, particularly water, energy and other networks. In terms of energy supply, savings have come to the fore; in towns, this places demands on the improved energy efficiency of buildings. Lifestyle and growing mobility are sources of constant increases in road traffic, which worsens traffic congestion and adds to the pollution of the urban environment. Attention, therefore, needs to be paid to the development of urban (and periurban) public transportation, coordinated with urban-regional transport networks, the organization of transport in the town, the definition of quiet zones, and improvements in the transport infrastructure, including infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians. An important mobility factor is the easy walking distance of services and green areas with predominantly recreational functions.

In this case it is necessary to increase the attractiveness and safety of cycle paths, in particular by locating them away from pedestrian traffic and ensuring they are free of collision points and that they do not cross paths with road traffic.

The overall functional arrangement of the various sectors of the town and the quality and appearance of buildings and public spaces are very important in increasing the attractiveness of towns and the quality of life of their inhabitants. A favourable urban environment is an important “localization” factor that attracts knowledge-economy businesses and an influx of educated and skilled residents, and encourages tourism. It encompasses sufficient infrastructure and an interesting architectural and cultural urban landscape, including the town’s attractive natural and social face. The process of planning and managing urban construction and development must embrace and integrate economic, architectural, social, environmental and cultural aspects. A negative trend in the lives of many of our towns is the displacement of residents from the centre, which is then converted into commercial and administrative zones.

In many centres or on the outskirts of towns there are old, disused complexes and buildings – brownfields. They are former industrial, military and port facilities, as well as individual smaller structures, and in many cases pose environmental hazards. Their regeneration is an opportunity to implement projects that meet the criteria of architectural, urban and environmental quality. Brownfields are an opportunity for the functional transformation, modernization and renovation of urban space and for a change in the appearance of the town itself.

Economic development accelerates the further territorial expansion of towns. Urban expansion requires a larger energy supply, more extensive transportation infrastructure and other land grabbing. This process damages the landscape, in particular blighting its natural value, increases greenhouse gas emissions, and is a source of air pollution and noise. This

urban sprawl has a direct impact on the quality of life of the inhabitants of towns and their environs.

For urban life itself, it is necessary to create conditions for improvements in the quality of affordable housing, e.g. by humanizing estates, converting suitable unused buildings into housing, and adding planning-friendly structures in gaps in urban developments while maintaining the share of green space, which plays an environmental, health and recreational role. The quality and social availability of housing is a major determinant of labour mobility. Attention should also be paid to the demographic structure, the needs of families with children, the growing number of seniors and persons with disabilities. These persons are still hampered by many barriers from participating and being involved fully, and on an equal footing, in all activities making up urban life. Existing obstacles mainly comprise the persistent lack of wheelchair access to public buildings, transport, including transport infrastructure, and numerous services provided to the public.

Most of the capacity of medical facilities is concentrated in towns; an increasing emphasis is being placed on this aspect as the population ages. In the context of ensuring equal access to health care, towns also provide these services to their catchment areas. The condition of the buildings and equipment used by urban health facilities must therefore be of a standard consistent with these requirements.

Security, crime prevention and social cohesion are further urban issues. Major problems include high unemployment and social exclusion, which is often localized in specific neighbourhoods or localities, often with derelict housing stock and poor quality environment. Measures aimed at social integration should prevent social exclusion and contribute to security. Adverse living conditions are a significant factor contributing to the higher incidence of problematic forms of behaviour and an increased crime rate. An important priority is therefore to prevent the emergence of socially adverse conditions in certain urban locations, so that these factors do not become potential barriers to further development.

A problem currently being faced by some large cities and medium-sized towns is the proliferation of social differences in some local areas, a matter which could become a threat to social equilibrium. Widening differences in the income of inhabitants will result in a situation where people start moving out of currently socially mixed neighbourhoods where the quality of housing is lagging or obsolete compared to today's standards; this could happen very quickly and on a large scale. In Czech towns, this problem could also affect older prefabricated high-rise estates with low-quality housing and neglected environs.

Towns must promote the employability of those sections of the population for whom finding a job is most difficult, such as young people, older workers, minorities, the long-term unemployed and the disabled.

Culture and cultural tourism are among the fastest growing industries. A cultural environment enhances a town's image, strengthens the pride of local people and gives them an opportunity to identify with where they live. This activity also increases the attractiveness of a town and draws visitors with its urban tourism. An active cultural policy is a valuable tool for building bridges between people of different backgrounds and for improving the integration of newcomers to the town. The need to build and enhance the principles of a multicultural society is connected with this.

#### ***Strategic guidelines and development activities:***

##### ***the stimulation of economic development and business support***

- **create conditions to promote entrepreneurship and an efficient economic structure;**

- encourage a competitive, innovative and environmentally-friendly economy based on knowledge and the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies and activities;
- raise the profile of sustainable tourism in the structure of local the economy;

*science, research, innovation, information technology*

- create conditions for the development of science and its applications, research and innovation, foster communication between the industrial sector, the business community and academia;
- strengthen IT literacy and the use of information technology to improve the management of urban development and the quality of public services;

*investment in human resources and training*

- promote investment in the human factor – training, lifelong learning;

*infrastructure, transport, energy*

- collect financial resources for the reconstruction and completion of urban infrastructure;
- support improvements in energy efficiency and reduced dependence on fossil fuels;
- Design efficient and affordable public transport and integrated transport systems, with links to the wider region, including the provision of access and use by persons with reduced mobility, decrease its environmental impact;

*architecture and the urban environment<sup>20</sup>*

- increase the attractiveness of towns and the quality of public spaces, encourage the creation of a compact settlement structure with mixed functions;
- support the maintenance of cultural heritage in the field of architecture;
- improve the use and structure of the territory;
- make efficient use of old industrial complexes and deteriorating areas, rehabilitate them;
- ensure the creation of an accessible environment;

*housing*

- design healthy, satisfying and affordable housing;

*public health*

- modernize medical facilities and improve their equipment, and arrange for more wheelchair access;

*social cohesion*

- ensure social cohesion, promote social integration, promote safety awareness, prevent social exclusion and any forms of discrimination;
- maintain dialogue and promote solidarity between generations;

*culture, leisure, urban tourism*

- develop cultural policies and conditions for the development of cultural and other activities for leisure;
- encourage the development of urban tourism.

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<sup>20</sup> These activities are, inter alia, defined by the objectives and tasks of land-use planning according to Sections 18 and 19 of the Building Act.

Supra-regional and major regional centres where utilities and administrative functions are intensively developed and which concentrate economic activity and the capacities of educational facilities with good public transportation, allowing the mobility of the population, are major drivers of economic growth. Such centres are a stable element of the Czech Republic's settlement structure and it is necessary to ensure that programmes provide them with support for the development of entrepreneurial activities, develop local and regional cooperation and promote SME networking. Towns should foster conditions that will attract and stabilize businesses and institutions, especially those that create quality jobs. In order to develop them, it is necessary to actively attract and retain educated workers and a general population with tertiary education; the attractiveness of a town, in terms of transport, services, the environment and culture, is one of the deciding factors for these workers.

Towns must develop their own innovation strategy and help to create the widest possible range of education, innovation, research and development available to local businesses and the service sector. In this sense, it is necessary to initiate and coordinate partnerships between businesses, universities and other educational institutions with potential use for lifelong learning and the development of an integrated system of guidance. Their task is the development and modernization of infrastructure for the development of human resources, educational facilities, libraries, health care and social care, which are important for the whole region.

With the technical infrastructure, it is necessary to ensure the adequate capacity of water and energy supply networks, and to modernize and maintain these networks in a bid to be economical in the use of resources and in view of the urban environment, particularly air quality.

For these reasons, the key task is to promote the development of public transport so that it is an equivalent alternative to private cars, and to take measures to reduce road traffic in the central areas of towns. The preparation and implementation of urban transport plans and systems requires close cooperation between towns and surrounding areas and regions, including possible alternatives and combined transport systems, and environmental aspects, such as pedestrian zones, pavements and bicycle paths, "park and ride" car parks, rest areas, etc.

The economic success and competitiveness of towns is closely related to the attractiveness and quality of the urban environment and the range of services offered. Territorial development planning, defining the features and spatial structure of different urban districts, must contribute to this. The follow-up development strategy must include actions for the regeneration of urban cores, the revitalization of neighbourhoods, the completion and reconstruction of buildings, and, as a matter of preference, the regeneration of abandoned and derelict sites (brownfields) and adjustments to public spaces. To achieve this, it is necessary to draw up an idea about how to reuse brownfields, procure the appropriate land-use documents, help resolve the ownership issues, encourage entrepreneurs and investors to implement projects on brownfield sites, and exploit the possibilities of obtaining funds from the SF.

The efficient spending of financial resources requires the monitoring of the aesthetics and functioning of all public urban areas in terms of their adequate operation and maintenance. Increased use of urban cultural and historical sites that promote tourism and draw follow-up service infrastructure also makes a major contribution to enhanced attractiveness.

The appearance of a town benefits from care for the current housing stock, especially in problem areas. Improvements in the standards of housing in new buildings, prefabricated buildings and old, poor-quality houses, which enhance their appearance, the quality of

housing and energy efficiency, also play a role in improving the environment and affect the social policy of a town. By providing appropriate and affordable housing, towns can help to improve living conditions for disadvantaged groups, families or seniors.

In the field of public health care, towns support the modernization, development and equipment of health facilities helping to increase the availability and quality of health care and to improve public health.

Towns, working with NGOs, play a key role in the provision of social services. They deal with issues of social integration and equal opportunities and create conditions to help people at risk of social exclusion or socially excluded persons, including the integration of socially excluded Roma localities, promote activities aimed at creating equal opportunities for women and men with a view to improving the reconciliation of family and professional life, and develop urban systems of social services for elderly or disabled people.

The improving quality of life enjoyed by inhabitants is closely linked to improving conditions for the development of their sporting, cultural and spiritual activities in their free time. In towns, expanding infrastructure for the individual and group leisure activities of children, young people and adults would be a step forward. The public authorities who own the property used for cultural and other public services must invest sufficient resources in the maintenance, reconstruction, and equipment of these facilities. The aim should be to achieve a quality cultural infrastructure that will facilitate the provision of services to the inhabitants of municipalities and towns, various NGOs and associations, as well as visitors, to a sufficient technical, professional and social level.

Towns consistently run cultural policies which are based on the availability of facilities such as cultural and scientific centres, museums and libraries, and help maintain historical, architectural and cultural heritage. These facilities, including those aimed at young people, make towns more attractive to citizens, businesses and, especially, highly skilled workers and visitors.

### ***PRINCIPLE 5 CARE FOR THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT***

Towns are exposed to a number of adverse influences threatening their environment. Many of them are specific, resulting from economic activities in combination with the concentration of the population in a limited space; others are brought into this environment by construction activity. These effects result from a lifestyle that generates high levels of traffic, especially cars, waste production, demands on energy and water, and construction sites. In the large cities, much of the incoming transport comprises long-distance traffic, which creates a daily traffic jams. The competitive ability of the railways is contingent on the construction of rapid long-distance routes offering travel times faster than those that can be achieved by cars on motorways.

The current era also heralds new global threats with risks for the urban environment, such as climate change with violent swings in weather and flooding, growing demand for energy and natural resources, and the negative impact of greenhouse gas emissions. These negative impacts are compounded by the declining areas of vegetation. Vegetation plays an insulating role and is able to absorb harmful substances from the air and reduce human exposure to air pollution. For this reason, reductions in the size of areas with vegetation must be prevented.

Towns must therefore take measures designed to achieve compliance with European Union law, especially as regards air quality, wastewater treatment, waste management, water supply, excessive noise, the revival and development of functional surfaces of vegetation improving

the quality of life in urban environment, etc.. Sustainable urban development is associated with the maintenance of components of, and increases in the size of, natural areas. The attractiveness of towns is enhanced by the emergence and regeneration of near-natural vegetation in a residential setting, allowing for the existence of natural elements in the artificial environment of a heavily urbanized landscape. The rehabilitation and development of these green spaces improves the quality of human life in the urban environment.

Public administration and local authorities must do all they can to promote education and public awareness regarding all aspects of sustainable development, inform citizens about the impact of activities and policies on the environment, enable them to monitor SEA/EIA processes, the outputs of which are the professional basis for design approval or project authorization.

The state of the urban environment significantly affects other elements of sustainable urban development and the quality of life of inhabitants in towns.

*Strategic guidelines and development activities:*

*healthy environment*

- **take measures to improve the various components of the environment;**
- **apply integrated approaches to the handling of environmental problems and related causes;**
- **avoid reducing green spaces in areas where air pollution limits are exceeded;**

*climate change*

- **take measures to avoid the consequences of climate change;**
- **reduce emissions of greenhouse gases;**

*sustainable use of natural resources*

- **make efficient use of water and energy resources;**
- **avoid waste generation and improve the re-use of waste;**

*care for nature and the landscape*

- **care for the landscape and protect the natural environment in towns and in the heavily urbanized landscape (towns and periurban areas);**
- **take care of the system of urban vegetation, improve its structure and include green belts around urban settlements, respect the principle of “tree for a tree, shrub for a shrub”;**
- **protect green spaces and undeveloped land with the potential to play a recreational and ecological role in the interests of the sustainable development of the urban vegetation system;**

*public environmental education and awareness*

- **promote education, provide advice and encourage the exchange of experiences and best practices in environmental management;**
- **raise public awareness of the importance and problems of environmental protection.**

Negative environmental impacts with a cumulated effect in towns require an integrated approach to care for environmental components and interconnection with other urban development policies.

A fundamental issue is that of reducing the adverse effects of traffic, which causes air pollution, emissions of harmful gases and noise, on the environment and public health. Action

needs to be taken relating to the organization of transport (plans, general transport development maps, including quiet zones) in the construction and repair of infrastructure.

Risks introduced into the urban environment by climate change, such as flooding, heat waves, water scarcity, and problems with fuel and energy supplies, need to be tackled on all fronts. Active measures must be directed into reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving fuel and energy, upgrading buildings and increasing their energy efficiency, installing thermal insulation and increasing the share of organic fuel sources. In addition, we need to cut down on our use of these resources, and prevent and recycle waste.

The importance of the land-use plan in dealing with the organization and functioning of urban areas is increasing. In the construction process, it is essential to improve the technical condition, design and energy efficiency of existing buildings, particularly those located in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The urban development policy emphasizes the revival of former (now abandoned) industrial buildings and the restoration of the derelict areas, thus reducing pressure on the use of greenfield sites, the development of green spaces, parks, etc. The conversion and use of these sites will help address problems related to the lack of building space.

Improve the protection and care of public spaces, the system of urban vegetation and other natural components of the urban environment. Protect natural habitats and promote the emergence and expansion of near-natural habitats linked to the urban vegetation system and built-up areas or areas earmarked for development.

Ensure the qualitative development of the urban vegetation system and assess its economic, social and environmental benefits. The urban vegetation system consists of a wide range of types of areas with near-natural plant cover and natural elements and their functional interconnection. It creates conditions for short- and medium-term recreation, it is indispensable in the roles it plays which are important for the urban environment – health (reduction of noise, dust), psychosocial (it assesses aesthetic qualities and has the potential to improve psychological well-being) and environmental (an environment for the presence of other animals, it retains water in the environment, ensures the production of oxygen, etc.), and it must be developed in close relation to the spatial planning of settlements.

It is necessary to protect existing green spaces which play a recreational and ecological role from the unreasonable economic demands of investors, development plans and developers, and to maintain these areas. In the development zones of settlements it is necessary to adequately incorporate green recreational and ecological spaces in the land-use plan and encourage investment in their implementation and care; adjust the size and type of green space, the functional use and civic facilities to the size and structure of the population, its needs, the density and type of buildings, and the broader relations in the territory, and ensure their integration into the vegetation system.

In the interests of the sustainability of the vegetation system, and with regard to the effectiveness of funds spent on the realization and necessary maintenance of horticultural arrangements and landscaping, it would be expedient to increase the share of budgetary resources to finance adequate care for green spaces, including a conceptual approach, the application of appropriate technologies, the appropriate intensity of care, silvicultural interventions in stands, etc. Improvements in the quality of green space maintenance (an increase in the budget allocation for maintenance) will reduce investment costs for the rehabilitation of these areas (parks) in the long run. Ensure the broader application of near-natural landscaping responding, inter alia, to climate change and cutting maintenance costs, without restricting recreational and ecological functions, by making a suitable choice of



species, materials and technologies, and combine them measures altering the water system in order to retain rainwater.

In the interests of the development, deployment and broad application of approaches and technologies improving the environment in an urbanized landscape, and of ensuring the sustainable development of the urbanized landscape, interdisciplinary collaboration and applied research in the fields of ecology and nature conservation, landscape architecture, architecture and construction, city planning, land-use planning and conservation should be supported.

The promotion of mutual cooperation and exchanges of experiences between towns, professional guidance and the training of relevant staff, the dissemination of best practices, networking and demonstration projects also play a major role in improving case for the urban environment.<sup>21</sup>

***PRINCIPLE 6 THE DEEPENING OF COOPERATION, THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS, AND THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE IN SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT***

Sustainable urban development should be incorporated into policy-making at all levels. This integration will enable the public administration to identify, in good time, the causes of emerging problems, prepare solutions more effectively, and intercept such problems early on by means of preventive interventions. Prerequisites for the successful implementation of sustainable urban development are cooperation and the formation of partnerships between all actors involved vertically and horizontally.

Besides permanent dialogue, these partnerships include cooperation in the formation of development strategies, and the process of their implementation and monitoring of outcomes, outputs and impacts. As many relevant partners as possible need to be involved in this process. This platform opens up opportunities for the involvement of citizens, various initiatives of civil society and NGO and private-sector representatives in the decision-making processes that directly affect them, thus preventing the diversion of resources by local interest groups.

Solutions to some problems extending beyond administrative boundaries require specific forms of cooperation. In many areas of population decline, there are problems, for example, maintaining the required scope of services and infrastructure. The competent authorities, as equal partners, should draw up common development strategies and investment decisions, while actively involving other partners.

The principles of subsidiarity and partnership are reflected in the implementation of the multi-level governance model. So far, however, there are still persistent attempts to use mechanisms of power rather than create processes that support an integrated approach. This is reflected in the lack of information about a territory and space, decision-making mechanisms are not sufficiently transparent, financial resources are generally not sufficiently integrated, and it is difficult to reach a consensus on development objectives and priorities between local, regional and central government and representatives of the public.

The adoption of the Leipzig Charter intensified efforts to create networks for the exchange of experience in urban development and the sharing of best practices (e.g. the National Healthy Towns Network). Their actions will form a common and comprehensive process to ensure sustainable urban development. There are already extensive databases of strategies and

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<sup>21</sup> For more details, see the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, Commission, 2006.

projects aimed at sustainable urban development in different countries of the European Union; they are a good source of information on procedures applied and instruments used. Sharing best practice will facilitate the generalization of findings and their subsequent use. Mutual enrichment and sharing of best practices will benefit from the “Reference Framework for Sustainable European Cities”, which, among other things, will pave the way for a set of common monitoring and evaluation processes, techniques and indicators.

*Strategic guidelines and development activities:*

*integrated approach to urban development management*

- **apply new forms of territorial governance (the principle of multi-level governance<sup>5</sup>), based on mutual dialogue between all stakeholders and on the involvement of citizens in the preparation of strategic programming and land-use documents and in decisions on major issues of urban development and the development of towns;**
- **promote partnership and cooperation in the territory, the development of urban-rural partnerships;**

*informative and methodological assistance in urban development*

- **promote the exchange of information and experience at local and regional level;**
- **promote education and the professionalism of institutions at regional and municipal level when deciding on the strategic management of the development of towns and regions;**
- **provide information on the procedures applied and tools used and disseminate the sharing of best practice.**

Urban policy cannot be separated from public administration, which creates the necessary administrative conditions and requirements for the provision of local public services.

In this respect, the following can be specified and applied as key elements of effective democratic urban governance:

- the effective participation of citizens and partners concerning decisions on matters of urban development (including the public, social partners, entrepreneurs and businesses, and appropriate levels of government),
- the principle of subsidiarity and decision-making activity undertaken at the right level, i.e. at the level of the municipality or at local or regional level,
- cooperation with partners and the public in discussing development plans and investment projects,
- a high standard of conduct, communication and education among workers,
- consistent preventive and control activities aimed at preventing biased decision-making and backroom intrigue, and at eliminating corruption, etc.

In the development of towns and urban networks and in the handling of the region's problems, it is necessary to support the implementation of mechanisms that will make it possible to interlink the activities of individual levels of governance (local, municipal, regional and national), i.e. the effective enforcement of the principle of multilevel governance. The application of an integrated approach requires close cooperation among partners.

Urban-rural networking is a key way to strengthen cooperation at local and regional level and to develop partnerships and cooperation between towns and rural areas:

- in the exchange of information and know-how among territorial development actors at urban and rural level, and in the pursuit of polycentric territorial development (e.g. in the form of various seminars or conferences, the involvement of schools, universities and enterprises in the process of cooperation and experience sharing, consultations on possible approaches for the application of territorial development, etc.),
- in partnerships within and between projects (transnational, cross-border, regional, local) aimed at sustainable territorial development (by strengthening cooperation between the entities involved in these projects),
- in the interlinking of business and investments between countries, regions and places (i.e. the joint financing of certain projects with resources from the European Union and national funds at regional or local level, the creation of new job opportunities/employment policy – the interlinking of the European labour market and, consequently, business opportunities),
- in the interlinking of infrastructure (e.g. road, rail and, where appropriate, shipping improvements, the provision of municipal/urban infrastructure – sewage treatment plants, sewerage systems, waste, the environment, etc.).

At the national level, activities will be developed to facilitate access to and the mediation of structured and assessed information relating to the various components of urban development, promoting the exchange of experiences and best practices in the implementation of the integrated development policy.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF URBAN POLICY

The purpose of the Principles of Urban Policy is to initiate a comprehensive conceptual approach to urban development policy. Such a policy has not yet been cohesively prepared in the Czech Republic, and in the current programming period up to 2013 it is dispersed over numerous documents, especially in the Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic up to 2013, the National Strategic Reference Framework of the Czech Republic 2007–2013, the Sustainable Development Strategic Framework, the Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic 2008 and in other sectoral policies and concepts. The basic purpose of the Principles in this period is to help interlink sectoral policies with urban policy, to be a starting point for work on the concept of urban policy after 2013, and, from a material perspective, to contribute to the formulation of its fundamental goals.

The intentions and actions of urban policy are conceived and implemented at national, regional and local level.

The **Ministry for Regional Development** forms a basic urban policy framework at national level and ensures its methodological and programmatic coherence with the approaches, plans and recommendations of EU institutions. In its programme support, the Ministry carries out relevant supporting measures included in the Operational Programmes of the EU Structural Funds, cross-border cooperation programmes and national aid schemes, and coordinates the activities of other ministries concerned in the programming of support for the development of urban areas. It is the coordinator of Priority Axis 3 (Spatial development) in the Sustainable Development Strategic Framework of the Czech Republic, and ensures the implementation of its objectives at regional and local level. In the field of land-use planning policy, it defines the national spatial development policy, establishes framework tasks related to land-use planning activities, and sets conditions for anticipated development plans.

**Sectoral ministries** are involved in the promotion of urban development within their competence through thematic operational programmes and national development programmes. Their conceptual and programming documents reflect the territorial aspect and the development of towns and urban areas.

The **regions** provide specific support for urban development in their strategic and programming documents (primarily the Development Strategy and Regional Development Programme), regional operational programmes and other regional programmes. They apply land-use planning tools to create conditions for the polycentric development of the population pattern, including regulation of the extensive development of settlements. They draw up Regional Territorial Development Principles, analyse the development and status of regional population centres, and in order to reinforce elements of the polycentric population pattern they identify weaker medium-sized and small towns which need assistance if they are to act as development poles or at least stabilize the micro-region.

**Towns** draw up long-term strategic development concepts and plans, which they use as the basis for their development. Cities with a population of more than 50,000 PE also devise integrated urban development plans (in areas housing over 20,000 PE)<sup>22</sup> and preparing projects for implementation under the operational programmes of the Structural Funds and other EU funds. They cooperate with other towns, municipalities and other partners in addressing issues which extend beyond their administrative borders. They also draw up the

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<sup>22</sup> The requirement to draw up an IDP as a condition for the drawdown of funds from the SF for the categories of towns in question is derived from the National Strategic Reference Framework.

relevant land-use planning documentation in accordance with Act No 183/2006 on land-use planning and Building Rules (the Building Act).

The **Association of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic**, a national association of towns and municipalities in the Czech Republic, works as a supporting platform for activities aimed at promoting urban development. Within its structures, towns preparing integrated development plans can meet and address problems in a coordinated manner via the IDP Expert Group of Managers. Technical issues relating to support under the coherence policy and national subsidies aimed at the development of towns and municipalities are handled by the Working Party on Structural Policy, attached to the Regional Committee of the Association Presidium.

The programme arrangements for urban policy are derived from European and national strategic documents. These documents form the architecture of operational programmes and aid from European funds and initiatives and national sectoral and regional programmes, which, based on the principle of complementarity and growing synergy, round off the European cohesion policy.

The cornerstone of “European” support in the Czech Republic – operational programmes – is the National Strategic Reference Framework of the Czech Republic 2007–2013. The Framework, in its strategic objective of “Balanced territorial development”, takes into account the territorial dimension of cohesion policy and the diverse circumstances of individual regions. Its priorities coordinate the various interventions of operational programmes and differentiate their substantive focus and intensity of activity in accordance with the degree of maturity and degree of problems in the regions. This framework includes the interconnection and complementarity of cohesion policy interventions with interventions of the Czech Republic’s internal regional policy. Besides the lagging regions and regions with structural problems, it emphasizes the guidelines for the development of urban areas and towns, including the City of Prague, as development poles in development axes, via which their development stimuli spread into the surrounding area. This determines the frameworks of measures for economic diversification and the improved accessibility of rural areas; with the assistance of the European Rural Development Fund, it improves living conditions in the countryside. It also highlights the problems of peripheral, isolated regions, and links these issues with the cross-border cooperation activities.

To increase the efficiency and added value of public investments, it is necessary, for future development, to intensify and apply integrated approaches and interdisciplinary collaboration, and to capture important and essential synergies between the various types of programme support, allowing for greater exploitation of the territory’s potential, including its individual specific needs. Despite the positive shift, attempts at the better coordination and targeting of assistance towards towns and their environs have not been successful in the current period, thanks in part to the excessive number of operational programmes. Most of the operational programmes are blanket programmes and any synergy depends solely on the ability of applicants to apply more interconnected projects. This is especially true for the large number of small towns in the Czech Republic. For cities with a population of more than 50,000, however, the Integrated Urban Development Plan is a particularly effective means of gathering funds on a large scale to meet their specific needs and thus achieve higher degrees of synergy and the greater impact of this assistance. In addition to the investments made by European funds, the financial resources of some national programmes are also designated for urban development. Here too, however, the programmes (with the odd exception) are of a blanket nature. At another level of government, i.e. the regional level, in view of the limited funds available the subsidy policy focuses more on the support of educational, social, cultural and sports activities in towns and on the support of selected environmental investments.

Current developments in European and national policies indicate that the volume of financial resources available for investment will steadily shrink and that it will be necessary, for the sustainable support of the development of towns and urban agglomerations, to work with other financial engineering instruments – supporting and revolving funds. The first steps in the Moravskoslezsko (Moravia-Silesia) and Jihozápad (South-West) NUTS II regions in the implementation of the JESSICA financial instrument are an example of this. The way forward also lies in the exchange of experience and information, which makes it easier to find the highest quality solutions that have been tried and tested in practice. These activities are mainly covered by the URBACT II Operational Programme, which currently involves five Bohemian, Moravian and Silesian towns in six thematic networks.

The Ministry for Regional Development, in accordance with the terms of the programme, established the URBACT II OP National Dissemination Point (the “NDP”), designed to ensure the transfer of information about the programme and its results to potential applicants – towns. The set objectives will be achieved through the operation and maintenance of the programme website in the national language, regular six-monthly national reports on the activities of the Bohemian, Moravian and Silesian towns and, inversely, regular reports from the Programme Secretariat on the current challenges and new developments. The NDP will also organize joint meetings of programme participants and new candidates, and disseminate information about the outputs of the thematic networks and working groups. Close cooperation with the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic and with regional associations of towns is also envisaged.

Other operational programmes based on the exchange of experience and European cooperation are ESPON, INTERACT II and the Trans-regional and Transnational Cooperation Operational Programmes. The more active use of the huge stock of knowledge provided by the web portal of the EUKN initiative, of which the Czech Republic has been a member since 2009, could also be of great help to our towns. Under this initiative, a focal point similar to that for the URBACT II programme was set up at the MRD to help towns find their way around the online knowledge base; it will also initiate the transfer of good practice from Czech towns to European partners.

To meet **Principle 1 - The regional nature of urban policy**, the greater coherence of individual policies must be ensured. In this respect, the Ministry for Regional Development plays a key role in the coordination and placement of new strategic sectoral documents into the general context in the management of the Czech Republic’s development. These documents should go much further in addressing the territorial and regional dimension and in creating specific tools with respect to the specific potential of a territory. Each newly formed strategic document will have to take account of the broader links with other policies, apply a more comprehensive view in tackling relevant issues, and engage more in multilateral dialogue during the preparation and actual implementation of the document.

**Principle 2 – Polycentric development of the population pattern system** is closely related to the requirements and recommendations of the previous paragraph, and fleshes them out at a lower level of governance, i.e. within the coordination of regions and municipalities. A crucial role in the creation and coordination of land-use planning documentation is played by the regions, which, in the preparation of the Territorial Development Principles, can configure proper coordination mechanisms between towns and propose the functional interlinking of urban networks. They can also motivate and launch activities leading to greater cooperation of stakeholders for a stronger link between the land-use plans of towns and their hinterlands. This successful cooperation can also help reduce some of the adverse effects of suburbanization. The procurement of the spatial analysis documentation of municipalities (at

the level of municipalities with extended powers) and regions, and of land-use plans, is currently also supported under the MRD's Integrated Operational Programme.

All elements of public governance are targeted by **Principle 3 - Strategic and integrated approach to urban development**, which underlines the importance of implementing integrated approaches in the strategic management of towns, regions and the entire territory of the Czech Republic. It is possible and desirable, on the basis of a good example – the implementation of Integrated Urban Development Plans – to devise further cross-sectional concepts at the level of towns and their hinterlands, specific areas, disadvantaged areas or areas with significant development potential, and to ensure their funding in future programmes drawing on European funds or on national grants. For these reasons, the MRD is preparing general methodology for the Integrated Development Plans, which sets out the basic parameters and criteria for creating similar documents. For ease of implementation in the future programming period, it would be appropriate to discuss the possibility of the separate allocation of funds for projects of integrated plans in the relevant operational programmes. Strengthening the methodological support of strategic urban management from national and regional levels is also one of the essential steps to improve sustainable development. However, it is the national level which must set an example to the regions and towns and knit together sectoral policies more while intensifying mutual cooperation.

At the heart of the Principles of Urban Policy is **Principle 4 – Promotion of the development of towns as development poles in a territory**, which highlights the role of towns themselves. For urban policy, this role is pivotal in all contexts. The economic, environmental, social and cultural pillars of sustainable development today cannot be viewed separately and create isolated support for individual areas. Key business support, which gives public budgets the necessary resources, the related functioning labour market and social system of the State, and the protection of cultural and natural heritage, must be addressed integrally and systematically, otherwise it will not be able to deal adequately with the impacts of global challenges.

The Czech Republic, through the Ministry for Regional Development, has been actively involved from the outset (since 2008) in the activities of the Steering Committee and Working Group of Member States and Institutions for the Creation of a Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities, and in the performance of the task set by the informal meeting of ministers responsible for urban policy and designated by the Marseille Statement in November 2008. The Reference Framework is a tool that assists the strategic management and evaluation of sustainable urban development at a new higher quality, because, in addition to taking into account all dimensions of sustainable development, it can be used to configure and assess, depending on the specific conditions of individual towns, links between the individual priority guidelines of development, and show specific examples of solutions and synergies, including warnings of problematic and often controversial areas among all the pillars of sustainable development. The Reference Framework's high added value will also lie in examples of the possible ways of assessing and monitoring the whole process over time; this will also encourage the multilateral dialogue necessary for achieving societal consensus within a town and its surrounding area. Another integral part of this tool will be references to specific examples of good practice, research and innovation in the field of sustainable urban development. In this respect, in the Czech Republic it is possible to build on initial positive experience in the implementation of integrated urban development plans, focused on urban areas, and to extend this experience beyond the administrative boundaries of towns. By grasping the relations between towns and their surrounding area, it is possible to address the development of the whole of the defined area comprehensively and to ensure the sustainable development of the town itself and its catchment area within the scope of mutually beneficial

participation, because the rural hinterland, drawing on the effective delivery of urban public services, can offer many other features which are difficult to access in a town.

The environment under **Principle 5 - Care for the urban environment** is closely linked with all the attributes of sustainable development, and its parameters are significantly reflected in the assessment of the attractiveness of a town and region, and the quality of life therein. At present, we are faced with intensifying extreme weather effects and the implications accompanying them in connection with changes in the earth's climate. It is therefore necessary to exploit existing and future threats and turn them into opportunities opening up space for research and innovation focusing on new technology able to reduce greenhouse gases, provide clean water, recycle waste and generally ensure the sound management of natural resources. The use of new energy-saving technologies, on the basis of cooperation with science and research, investments in public spaces and improvements in the physical quality of housing are also an opportunity for creating new jobs with high added value. The whole process requires interaction with appropriate educational programmes and societal enlightenment to ensure that there is an understanding of and consensus for sustainable development.

Based on the description above, **Principle 6 – The deepening of cooperation, the creation of partnerships and the exchange of experience in sustainable urban development** is met as an integral part of sustainable urban development. Without the effective role of high-quality, knowledgeable and cooperative governance, achieving the set objectives would be impossible. Public administration and local government must be a stimulating factor and motivator of all processes, a communication bridge between the private, public and voluntary sectors, as well as the public as a whole. In the Czech Republic, this will be a long and relatively difficult process, but it is necessary for the future of our country. Active involvement in the European framework and its working structures, which provide extensive possibilities for the use of the good and bad experiences that Western towns and regions have had over the past sixty years, is also important. In many respects, the Czech Republic replicates their past evolution, and it would be pointless to repeat already identified and described mistakes which can be avoided, thus paving the way for greater prosperity and quality of life for the Czech population.

Despite the many negative connotations from the past, it is necessary, at all levels of governance, to promote long-term strategic planning on a greater scale, along with the related strategic management, and to enhance the quality of urban management. A comprehensive view of the handling of sustainable development could, with the cooperation of all partners, result in greater effects with less financial resources (and funding will always be lower than that needed at any given time). These arguments lead to the need to think through the possibilities of the multi-source financing of investment and development activities and to take advantage of other development funding opportunities. Subsidies from the European Union level or the State will not be the largest item in terms of volume in the future structure of public investment, and it will therefore be necessary to create supporting and revolving funds for their financing, with the involvement of private capital in PPP projects and the support of the business sector from a wide array of banking and non-bank instruments.



## **7. FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS DEFINING THE CONTENT AND CONCEPT OF URBAN POLICY AT EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL LEVEL**

### ***EUROPEAN DOCUMENTS:***

Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007–2013 COM(2005) 299  
Renewed Lisbon Strategy  
Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy, EU Council 10917/06  
Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions for the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund  
URBAN I and II initiatives  
Proposal for multi-annual programme of cooperation in the field of urban policy in the European Union Programme – the Lille Action Programme (Lille, 2000)  
New Charter of Athens (Lisbon, 2003)  
Conclusions of the Dutch Presidency on urban policy issues – “Urban Acquis” (Rotterdam, 2004)  
Conclusions of the meeting of Ministers under the UK Presidency on sustainable settlements in Europe - the “Bristol Accord” (Bristol, 2005)  
Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, Commission, 2006  
European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, 2000  
documents under the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat  
Guide to the Urban Dimension in Community Policies for the 2007–2013 period (Commission, September 2007)  
Fostering the Urban Dimension (Commission, November 2008)  
Support for the Sustainable Development of Urban Areas in the EU (Commission, April 2009)  
UNECE documents  
Cities, Climate Change and Multi-Level Governance (OECD study, 2009)  
UNECE documents  
White Paper: European transport policy for 2010  
Ljubljana Declaration on the territorial dimension of sustainable development (Council of Europe, 2003)  
European Spatial Development Perspective (1999)  
Vision Planet (2000)  
The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union (Luxembourg, 2005, supporting documentation for the Territorial Agenda, 2007)  
Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (Leipzig, 2007)  
EU Territorial Agenda (May 2007)  
Cohesion Policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions (SEC(2006) 928)  
Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (SEC(2008) 2550)  
Vlasák Report to the EP on the urban dimension in cohesion policy in the new programming period (2009)

### ***NATIONAL DOCUMENTS:***

Sustainable Development Strategy of the Czech Republic  
Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic 2007–2013  
Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic 2008

National Strategic Reference Framework of the Czech Republic 2007–2013  
 Regional Operational Programmes 2007–2013  
 Thematic Operational Programmes 2007–2013  
 Integrated Operational Programme 2007–2013  
 Cross-border Cooperation Programmes 2007–2013  
 Transport Policy of the Czech Republic 2005–2013  
 Sustainable Development Strategic Framework of the Czech Republic

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CR	Czech Republic
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
Commission	European Commission
PE	Population equivalent
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ECTP	European Council of Spatial Planners
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
EUKN	European Urban Knowledge Network
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
INTERACT	EU programme for external communication and for the promotion of the dissemination of results
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IT	Information technology
JESSICA	Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas
NFP	National Focal Point
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
MEP	Municipality with extended powers
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SDPCR 2008	Spatial Development Policy of the Czech Republic 2008
SEA	Strategic environmental assessment
CSG	Community Strategic Guidelines
SDSFCR	Sustainable Development Strategic Framework of the Czech Republic
SWOT	Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats
URBAN	EU initiative for the regeneration of towns and medium-sized cities
R&D	Research and development
TDPC	OECD Territorial Development Policy Committee