

The Implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU

JASPERS-CoR Dialogues

Workshops

Brussels, 1 December 2016

Vienna, 9 May 2017

Gdansk, 5 July 2017

Athens, 10 July 2017

Sofia, 13 September 2017

JASPERS Networking Platform

Jointly with the Smart Development Division (SDD)

In cooperation with the Rail, Air, Maritime (RAM) and the Energy
and Solid Waste (ESW) Divisions

Summary Report And Key Messages

Overview

The JASPERS-CoR Dialogues, a series of workshops which took place in Brussels, Vienna, Gdansk, Athens and Sofia between December 2016 and September 2017, were part of the wider “Reflecting on Europe” initiative launched by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR)¹. The latter initiative, comprised over 50 events throughout Europe.

The JASPERS- CoR dialogues have provided a platform for JASPERS and EU funding beneficiaries to discuss technical planning issues related to the use of EU funding. As such, it proved to be a valuable tool for collecting feedback and suggestions.

Designed as a combination of presentations and case studies that facilitated a discussion forum with national and local authorities, the Dialogues aimed at assisting local communities and cities to implement the Urban Agenda for the EU and identifying ongoing and future support needs from JASPERS. The EC DG REGIO Urban Unit was involved in preparation and the delivery of the events.

In keeping with its mandate and operational procedures,² the engagement with national, regional and local authorities led to the definition of new JASPERS assignments related to urban areas.

JASPERS advisory support is offered to interested ESIF³ managing authorities and/or beneficiaries focusing on a tailored urban advisory package with the aim to raise the quality of EU-funded urban development strategies and projects.

¹ An e-survey was used to collect feedback from each workshop and the outcome of this will feed into a report expected to be adopted during the CoR's plenary session on 4 and 5 July 2018. The e-survey can be accessed at: www.cor.europa.eu/debate.go

² JASPERS assignments are formally agreed with the relevant ESIF Managing Authority and detailed in a project factsheet.

³ European Structural and Investment Funds

1. Brussels workshop (1 December 2016)

The event brought together 140 participants from the Committee of the Regions, the EC, the EIB, ESIF managing authorities, as well as regions and cities, which have benefitted from JASPERS' assistance or may draw on it, as well as private companies, investors and representatives of various European bodies.

The seminar focused on the key challenges to smart city development and the Commission (DG Regional and Urban Development) policy approach. In this context, it examined the administrative and financing aspects of such development, the need for local capacities to prepare and implement cities' development programme(s), and the practicalities of working with the EIB and national development banks.

Smart City programmes are typically multi-sector, covering urban regeneration, social housing, sustainable urban mobility, waste management and energy efficiency.

Concrete cases on how to unlock cities' potential were analysed, such as:

- The Six City strategy in Finland, which emphasises innovation to improve citizens' quality of life drawing on ERDF resources as allocated through article 7 of the ERDF Regulation
- Integrated transport development in the Slovak Republic, to improve the connectivity and accessibility of cities
- The potential to use the new Extreme Light Infrastructure research facility as a catalyst for the urban transformation of Magurele, Romania.

These case studies illustrated JASPERS Smart Urban Development advisory value added in supporting sustainable smart specialisation, urban mobility and research infrastructure.

Discussions focused on the utilisation of ESIF for smart urban development, with special emphasis on the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) mechanism.

The intention to hold a series of local workshops in 2017, jointly organised between JASPERS and the Committee of the Regions was welcomed. Expressions of interest to host and/or contribute to such workshops came from cities and regions in seven countries: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Greece and Bulgaria.



2. Vienna workshop (9 May 2017)



Mr Hudák, EIB Vice-President

With an opening speech by EIB Vice-President Hudák, the event focused on **municipalities' capacity to deliver on the EU Urban Agenda and provided an overview of the budget available under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for urban development.**

The workshop was attended by **60 participants**, mostly from city departments (Plzeň - Czech Republic), Prešov - Slovakia), Novo Mesto - Slovenia) and Budapest - Hungary) and national ministries of those countries and included two interactive group sessions on:

1. Cross-sectoral topics (i.e. multi-stakeholder engagement, integrated and sustainable planning and development)
2. Sector-specific topics (i.e. smart development, energy efficiency, smart urban transport)

During these group sessions a number of issues were raised, such as strategy and project development on which JASPERS could provide support for the preparation of ESIF-backed urban programmes, including smart city projects, irrespective of their spatial scale or financial volume.



Plzeň (170 000 inhabitants) has been successfully developing an engineering-based technology centre which will extend into a new area closer to university. The city places a particular emphasis on urban transport and the development of an interconnected mobility system (“mobility as a service” concept). Public transport electrification in Plzeň is currently 64%, mid-term objective – 2025: achieve 100% (tram, trolley buses and e-buses).

Prešov (90 000 inhabitants) is one of the four Slovak regional centres working on the Smart City strategy. The “Smart City of Prešov 2050” strategy is currently being drawn up and should be finished by June 2018. Sectoral concepts of this strategy, including a SUMP, have already been established, with a particular emphasis on urban transport, energy efficiency and the environment. Prešov faces challenges in the co-ordination of projects and its implementation capacity, therefore the city is interested in knowledge exchange with relevant cities with Smart City experience, and needs technical support to prepare the strategy and to develop the investment programme making it possible to use several financing sources.

Novo Mesto (36 000 inhabitants) has been active in developing and implementing a smart development strategy. JASPERS could support addressing several challenges, including the need for synergy between areas of mobility, urban renewal and energy efficiency, the follow-up of infrastructure projects for regeneration of urban areas, and “Smart” solutions.

Budapest (1.8 million inhabitants) has been developing a “Smart City” approach for many years. The Hungarian capital’s vision for 2017-2030 focusses on energy transition, urban mobility, innovative public procurement, climate adaptation, and air quality improvement. JASPERS continues to be involved in a number of major projects in several sectors

2. Gdansk Workshop (5 July 2017)

The event was opened by Mr Struk, Marshal of Pomorskie Region, and attracted an audience of 60 participants from various Polish cities and regions.



Mr Struk, Marshal of Pomorskie Region

Presentations were held by Mr Dawidowski, Head of the Investment Projects department of Gdańsk City Hall, Ms Maciejewska, Advisor to the Mayor of Słupsk and his Plenipotentiary for Sustainable Development, Mr Obijalski, Head of Urban Regeneration of the city of Łódź and Ms Zajączkowska, Deputy Mayor of the city of Lebork.

These presentations were followed by an overview of the smart urban development and urban transport divisions of the JASPERS programme and by two sessions. The first featured inputs from the Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot Metropolitan Area. The second, which included contributions from the Region of Lubelskie and the city of Łódź, focused on the contribution that JASPERS can provide to cities in the use of financial instruments such as the Integrated Territorial Investment, urban regeneration programmes or multi-source finance schemes.

Municipalities pointed at particular needs as regards JASPERS advice, including:

- Articulation of broader strategies to ensure the coherence of spatial interventions
- Integration of smaller projects into larger development schemes
- Stakeholder involvement

- Potential mediation among various local governments to help the production of metropolitan development schemes
- Monitoring and evaluation of urban development programmes or projects

In the past 13 years since joining the EU, **Poland** has enjoyed strong economic growth, which is also based on the impact of about EUR 90bn in grants for infrastructure projects from the EU. Many of these projects were managed at national level (ministries, national agencies/companies) and were supported by JASPERS.

JASPERS experts may also help regions and municipalities at the preparation stage of their infrastructure projects to be funded from ESIF.

The city of **Gdańsk's** strategy embeds spatial development as well as sector-specific policy objectives in urban transport, education, health and culture. Flood protection and urban transport projects have been successfully supported by JASPERS. Advisory support may be requested in other sectors as well, namely regarding urban regeneration, the restructuring of brownfield sites and peripheral urban areas, mostly in preparation of projects for the 2021-2027 programming period.



In the urban development strategy of **Słupsk**, funding is ensured for a transport hub with elements of priorities for public transport, the thermo-modernisation of buildings, improving the efficiency of outdoor lighting and the Słupski integrated revitalisation project.

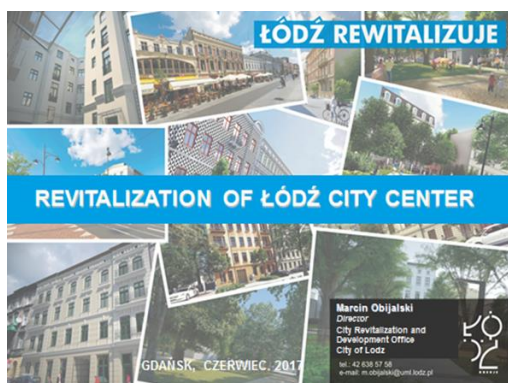
The **Pomorskie Region**, one of Poland's economically most dynamic areas, has been using JASPERS in a variety of projects. The 30 JASPERS-supported development

projects in the region include the completion of the road infrastructure to connect the harbour with the city and the airport, the extension of the tram network and the metropolitan railway, as well as projects related to water protection, building regeneration, parks, sports and educational infrastructure. One of the particular challenges in this scheme is the integration of private transport companies. In organising smart transport, the region focuses on an integrated transport offer combining different ways to move around the metropolitan area, matching bicycle infrastructure with public transportation and private cars, from towns all the way to the harbour and the airport.

JASPERS-supported projects in the region are embedded in the regional and metropolitan planning systems: the metropolitan bicycle network around Gdansk involves 40 municipalities, while the metropolitan ticketing system brings together more than 20 towns.

Łódź, Poland's third biggest city, is also a long-standing JASPERS partner. The Łódź Municipality understands public undertakings as drivers of urban transformation, focusing on the improvement of quality of life through combining hard and soft interventions in cross-sectorial projects. This comprehensive rehabilitation programme takes place through public dialogue, the involvement of NGOs and private companies and a series of consultations.

The city's recent development projects include municipal social housing, the modernisation of the local library network, investment in tram and railway projects, a series of micro-rehabilitation projects, and programmes promoting entrepreneurship. Cooperation with JASPERS helped the Municipality of Łódź to create bundles of individual projects and build a coordination strategy between different elements of a broader regeneration project including 100 key projects.



3. Athens Workshop (10 July 2017)

The Athens event attracted 100 participants from Greek Managing Authorities and cities across Greece. The workshop was opened by Mr Patoulis, President of KEDE, and Mr Kalogeropoulos, President of EETAA, both Members of the European Committee of the Regions.

Kostantinos Verlamitis, President of the Greek Deposit and Loans Fund, highlighted efforts in supporting the liquidity of local governments and providing integrated financing actions in two directions:

- Standardisation of technical specifications, procedures and equipment (for example, the same evaluation standards for decision making)
- Assistance in the design and control of tender documents (for example, in the field of energy efficiency) and in the set-up of jobs within municipalities

Other presentations followed, given by Mr Katsifaras, Governor of the Western Greece Region, Mr Drosis, Head of the Managing Authority of the Attica Region, Ms Kokkinidou, Head Officer of Programming and Development Department of the Municipality of Serres, Mr Stratigeas, Managing Director of the Municipality of Rhodes, and Mrs Dimou, Senior Architect-Design Manager at Anaplasia Consulting Engineers SA.

Managing Authorities provided valuable insights on the challenges and opportunities Greek authorities are currently facing.

Many presented their plans currently under development and shared some of their achievements and challenges.

The City of Serres (80 000 inhabitants) is implementing a set of ITI measures drawing on a total of EUR 5m in funds from ERDF and ESF. These measures focus on the development of a plan for the city centre, for which Serres aims at an integrated strategy creating local employment through entrepreneurship interventions. As selection and project development are well ahead, Serres could use the help of JASPERS in integrating projects from different thematic objectives, helping to ensure that infrastructure projects have the best impact on local society in terms of local

economy, environmental issues and social cohesion, and researching possibilities of additional funding from other sources and combinations of different funds for new projects. For the local SUMP⁴ and its implementation, JASPERS could also help to transfer its knowledge from other similar cities.

In **Rhodes**, the urban development strategy aims at creating a new growth hub with tourism, culture and entrepreneurship through the upgrading of the commercial port of Akantia, a new marina and new shipyards, combined with the implementation of the necessary internal transport and other environmental measures. The city also needs support for a number of measures for which funding is not ensured.

During the discussion in working groups, other municipalities referred to the need to obtain support for urban development strategies, to be used for ITI during the current period of financial planning but also in preparation for the next period. Smart urban development is considered key to maximising the impact of funds from EU and other sources. JASPERS role apart from support at a strategic level, may be to review the prioritisation of projects as regards eligibility and quality for EU funding and EIB financing.



⁴ Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

4. Sofia workshop (13 September 2017)

The Sofia event was opened by the Mayor of Sofia, Yordanka Fandakova, who highlighted Sofia's involvement in the Digital Transition partnership of the EU Urban Agenda.

Denitsa Nikolova, Deputy Minister for Regional Development, expressed Bulgaria's commitment to the EU Urban Agenda goals that will be reinforced during the Bulgarian EU presidency, in the first six months of 2018.

Tanya Hristova, Mayor of Gabrovo and Head of the Bulgarian delegation of the local authorities at the Committee of the Regions, underlined that support from JASPERS and engagement with the EU Urban Agenda helped in creating a dialogue between different national and local organisations and civil society, as well as in improving the quality of life at many locations.

JASPERS has supported 24 major projects in Bulgaria drawing on about EUR 4bn in Structural Funds, including many key urban transport and healthcare projects, as well as those concerning waste management. According to representatives of the National Association of Municipalities, JASPERS contributed to increasing the capacity of Bulgarian administrations to develop projects and sustainable management models.

Representatives of Bulgarian municipalities presented some of the challenges they face and the strategies they implement or aim to implement with the help of JASPERS.



In **Sofia** (1.3 million inhabitants), a city experiencing a modest population increase, JASPERS has played an important role in helping with the planning and implementation of spatial development processes; wherever JASPERS participated, the project quality was higher. However, as ESIF funds constitute an important part of the city's budget, given the changing cohesion policies it is increasingly important to assure the stability and sustainability of investments in the long term, including a better understanding of the municipality's capacities for infrastructure maintenance.

In **Ruse** (150 000 inhabitants), projects worth EUR 30m within the framework of the municipality's multi-layer set of strategic documents are ongoing (mainly urban transport and urban regeneration) and another set of projects worth EUR 25m is under preparation (urban transport, culture, bio-energy production). Here there is scope for JASPERS to advise on a range of elements including the modernisation of street lighting and the preparation of a future technology park starting with a science competence centre amongst others.

The **Gabrovo Region**, comprising over 100 municipalities with a population of 177 000, is facing the challenge of delivering services to its dispersed population. Unlike in Sofia, decreasing population here also means decreasing revenues, and quality of life and economic opportunities are key factors to keep people in the region. In the context of its smart development strategy, Gabrovo aims to create a system that will facilitate more than 80% of daily tasks, including the management of engineering grids, public transport stations, waste containers, etc. The region is also seen as a pilot field for energy efficiency projects; with the aim of reducing energy use by 20%, Gabrovo has been active in building energy-passive public buildings and renovating prefabricated housing complexes.

The region's capital **Gabrovo** (64 000 inhabitants) invested about EUR 100m in urban renewal and urban development over the past period. Smart development is based on a sophisticated geographical information system with information on cadastre and regulatory determinations, transport (including road state), grid infrastructure (water, gas, power, telecoms, etc.) plus information on cultural and social facilities; further elaboration shall aim at accurate 3D applications. The city's urban transport system is being modernised through a number of individual measures but a consistent SUMP has not yet been established. Energy efficiency measures focus on public and

residential buildings and also aim to include street lighting modernisation. The overall objective of these measures is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% in 2020.

The city of **Burgas** (220 000 inhabitants) is working with an integrated plan for urban regeneration and development including core objectives related to the urban, social and business environment and focusing on intelligent urban development, accessibility, energy efficiency, the socialisation of cultural heritage, improvement of access to services, education, new business models, innovation, technologies and entrepreneurship. Since 2009, Burgas has been working with JASPERS on an integrated public transport project, combining infrastructure investment with institutional changes, and developing a smart governance model to make sure funds are used in an efficient way and they produce the best effect.

Similarly to Burgas, many cities working with JASPERS highlighted their need for external consultancy in their development projects, to help them reorganise their organisational models in order to achieve higher efficiency.

Conclusions

The local workshops highlighted the importance of considering interventions in urban areas on the basis of a holistic, place-based, approach in pursuit of smarter, more sustainable, cities and communities. Under the umbrella of the Urban Agenda for the EU, urban authorities employ integrated strategies and associated (local) urban plans to realise their city's vision.

The definition and prioritisation of measures to achieve the city's strategy and plans will reflect local needs and challenges and aim to utilise the city's assets and planned investments to their maximum advantage. In this context, top-down and bottom up approaches meet.

Smart City strategies and capacities

Cities are looking to exploit the urban fabric and infrastructure to improve citizen's quality of life, the city's competitiveness, and the urban sustainability. A smart city plan or strategy comes in many shapes and sizes but will necessarily be holistic in nature and multi-sector in scope; notwithstanding the fact that, at times, it starts from more sector-specific points of departure such as sustainable urban mobility plans or strategic energy action plans.

An overall smart city strategy seeks to capitalise on the potential of urban data and ICT, build and enhance the city's RDI capacities and relies on many stakeholders including public and private actors as well as knowledge institutions and citizens.

Furthermore, since the use of innovative technologies and ICT can contribute to the efficiency of the urban system, embedding technological solutions into local planning is crucial. Smart governance and organisational efficiency are required to ensure the efficient use of funds and to support the organisation.

Many cities struggle in having a clear understanding of what is meant by "Smart City", which has led to a dependence on external experts and companies in offering solutions – a situation that leaves cities having difficulties in selecting the most appropriate solutions for their needs. JASPERS, upon request, can provide individual advisory and capacity building support to municipalities on the identification of objectives and elaboration of prioritisation and selection criteria and methodological tools to inform the selection of the most appropriate solutions.



Great importance was attributed to the need to improve governance and human resource capacities within administrations. Regional core cities often **struggle in coordinating common projects with municipalities within their metropolitan region**, as in the case of urban data and transport infrastructure. JASPERS has experience and may provide guidance.

Another relevant theme was the integration of private investment into the development of smart urban strategies. Offering a consolidated advisory package, JASPERS, in collaboration with its URBIS partners, may provide advisory support to the preparation of projects or programmes, which draw on ESIF and beyond. This advice may also relate to the preparation and implementation of the Integrated Territorial Investment tool and could further look into the use of financial instruments and other financial sources alongside grants. Grant blending and the use of financial instruments may be applicable in cases where smaller-scale projects are bundled to include e.g. urban regeneration, housing, energy efficiency, etc.

Smart urban mobility

As one starting point for a smart and sustainable city strategy, cities prepare transport and mobility plans including Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. The workshops addressed the question of the relationship between mobility plans and urban development plans. While in some cases urban mobility plans take account of key economic centres and untapped or underutilised assets, in many others, transportation plans are designed separately from other urban plans. Furthermore, mobility plans are often infrastructure-dominated and do not attribute sufficient weight to operational costs and organisational requirements, so are subject to regular modifications and adjustments.

The integration of various modes of transport and planning beyond municipal borders was considered essential to achieve modal change, make best use of existing infrastructure and capacities and create conditions for integrating transport and land-use planning.

When new transportation infrastructure is well-connected to a broader urban development strategy – for instance in the case of new or renovated railway stations like the one in Łódź – it can serve as an agent of change. The need to combine access to new mobility systems with public space renewal, seeking to change behaviour and demand in the mobility context through design has also been brought forward in much smaller urban contexts (e.g. on the Greek island of Chios). However, the competences required for public space renewal are not always available when developing urban mobility plans.

The importance of stakeholder involvement for the establishment of mobility plans was also raised.

Soft interventions can be important tools to ensure long-term sustainability and user engagement, and communication is crucial in this process.

Conflicts between different user groups, tourists, locals and goods transportation companies have to be addressed as well. Examples were given in Greece. Port cities (Rafina, Igoumenitsa) have similar road-related transport and life-quality conflicts, related to their role as major hubs between the mainland and islands. Coordination with local and central governments is needed to give a better-conceived role to tourism and goods transport in transport management.

Energy efficiency

A shift toward a low-carbon economy is one of the key drivers of smart city strategies also in light of the commitments by mayors as reflected in the Covenant of Mayors relating to energy and climate action. The number of energy efficiency projects and schemes among JASPERS assignments is relatively limited, due to their smaller financial volume.

The combination of smaller projects with larger schemes may create conditions for JASPERS involvement into the development of these schemes and the contribution of other parts of the EIB to their financial engineering and implementation. Furthermore, if smaller projects to improve the energy efficiency of public buildings are combined with other public tasks including street lighting, etc., the flexibility of the use of attributed ESI funds and the impact of the funds may improve. Energy-related smart development projects therefore need to comprise various aspects of energy efficiency and infrastructure development.

In some contexts, financial instruments and grant schemes are in competition: the potential opening of grants for energy efficiency makes financial instruments less attractive. This is particularly relevant when municipalities come up against with public debt ceilings and prefer to wait for a potential grant. More coordination is therefore needed between agencies that operate with grants and financial instruments.

