

February 2009



SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Summaries of Projects Funded by the URBAN-NET Pilot Call 2008

Dilemmas of urban network democracy: functional networks, political equality and local elites in a comparative perspective
[Sweden, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands](#)

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One reoccurring idea in debates on public policy is that governing has become a more complex task, demanding broad mobilization of resources and competence. When single authorities and hierarchical decision-making fail, solutions are sought across formal divisions of authority, across organizations and sectors in the public sphere and often in cooperation with private actors. Such "functional networks", however, are not easily reconciled with representative democracy.

The aim of this study is to develop an application for a transnational full research project about urban functional networks, in which citizens participate together with public officials and other local actors to tackle integration and environmental issues, that is, aspects of social and ecological sustainability.

We assume that the emergence, meanings and purposes of functional networks will show differences related to variations in political traditions and institutional and administrative structures. A comparative approach will enable a more systematic overview and analysis of the political conditions and democratic consequences of functional networks in contemporary urban politics. What meanings, purposes and strategies are attached to such urban initiatives and projects, and how are they related to variations in specific national and local political and administrative traditions and structures?

Gender, Diversity and Urban Sustainability
[France, The Netherlands, Sweden](#)

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This pre-research prepares the way for a research project dealing with urban sustainability from a gender perspective. The project will focus on town-planning concepts, urban public policies, special experiments which take into account the variety of discriminations towards women (be they social, racial or gender-related); on the position of women and men in political decision-making, especially within local authorities. This cross-themed, gender approach makes it possible to analyze dysfunctions, to study positive European experiments and to make propositions that will support the gradual building of a sustainable city. European comparison is necessary as the promotion of equality is deeply linked to the European building process.

The study aims at selecting experimental cases, setting-up a methodology, clarifying each partner's role in the project and finalizing a coherent research proposal to be submitted within an URBAN-NET or FP7 call. Three specific tasks will be fulfilled: precise identification of our operational field through the involvement of relevant local authorities; gathering all partners during a large workshop to design the research programme; ensuring project organisation and follow-up as well as the necessary bibliographical research.

Sustainable land use policies for resilient cities (super-cities)
[Turkey, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden](#)

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This project explores the robustness, transferability and sustainability of recent land-use policy instruments for managing urban change. The main emphasis is on dynamic cities where diverse changes are occurring, such as urban growth and population expansion or urban decline and population loss. These changes pose a range of economic, social and environmental opportunities and challenges for cities. Recent policy instruments are evaluated against a number of criteria related to urban resilience including adaptability, manageability, capacity-building and the promotion of quality of life.

The research draws on case studies from four countries where urban dynamics are very different. These differences and specific development paths

will be further explored and illustrated. Turkish cases are used to evaluate policy instruments to control urban sprawl under conditions of rapid growth and population expansion. Portuguese cases are used to assess urban policies under condition of both urban shrinkage and urban sprawl. Dutch cases are used to evaluate policy instruments under conditions of moderate urban growth within a polycentric urban structure. Swedish cases are used to evaluate policy instruments under conditions of moderate urban growth but within a more monocentric structure.

DEGRA - CO Vectors for degradation in privatized large housing estates built during 1950 - 1990 period. Specific diagnosis methods for living conditions

[Romania](#), [Bulgaria](#), [France](#), [The Netherlands](#)

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The project brings into the international debate degradation issues in mass collective housing areas that do not have the status of social housing. Privately owned apartments in housing estates built during the communist regime provide the majority of urban dwellings in important Romanian and Bulgarian cities. Physical degradation is the visible part of a more complex socio-economic decline characterising privatised large housing estates. These have a snowball effect on the future in terms of quality of life in the neighbourhoods, cities competition, market position etc. Analysis of operational experience of rehabilitation of collective housing estates in Holland and France and debates about the principles of urban policies concerning these areas provide a good starting point to improve understanding of the specific problems of Romanian and Bulgarian cities.

DEGRA-CO project focuses on the degraded condominium areas and proposes an integrated approach for analyzing the various dimensions of urban decay of privatised housing estates, in order to provide a correct estimation of the scale and intensity of the decaying phenomena.

Only through an integrated diagnosis can decision makers imagine creative intervention scenarios for sustainable development of the whole city through local housing policy decisions.

CURE – Cultural industries and urban resilience; an explorative multi-level analysis of the contribution of cultural industries to urban resilience

[The Netherlands](#), [Bulgaria](#), [France](#), [Israel](#), [Sweden](#), [Turkey](#)

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Old factories are being converted into offices and premises for cultural industries. Cultural industries are making a significant contribution to the economy of urban areas, boosting economic growth and employment and improving quality of the immediate area. Cultural industries, in principle, have the potential to increase urban resilience and adaptability, as they are one of the mainstays of the emerging post-industrial urban economies and unique sources of innovation for the future of Europe.

Notwithstanding the rapidly rising number of publications on cultural industries, there has been little or no attention paid to their role in urban resilience. The recognition by the European Commission of the role of cultural industries in the context of the Lisbon Agenda further stresses the relevance and urgency of analysing the relations between cultural industries, resilience and sustainable urban development.

The project addresses this gap, as it focuses on the exploration of the capacity of European urban systems to absorb changes, reorganise and re-develop through their cultural industries. Six countries are involved. Two workshops will be organised and preliminary mapping of cultural industries in the selected cities will be carried out as well as the design of a framework for an international comparative analysis.

REPLACIS –Retail planning for Cities Sustainability

[Portugal](#), [France](#), [Sweden](#), [Turkey](#)

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Urban sustainability can be associated with the preservation of diversified retail systems able to respond with efficiency to the needs, wants and desires of different consumers. Recent trends show that different urban retail facilities have distinct levels of resilience that can be empowered by sector and spatial planning policies.

Special focus will be given to the metamorphoses of public space into a consumption object used by

retail developers and place-makers. REPLACIS intends to develop a better understanding of the role played by consumption in the production of new urban developments and to compare the resilience level of different urban retail areas by a set of indicators. The centrality given to consumption induces a dual reading of city retail facilities: (i) the appraisal of retail landscapes as material artefacts, selling of goods and services, (ii) and the understanding of outlets and shopping areas as places of experience.

The methodology to assess the vulnerabilities and the adaptive capacity of the urban shopping districts and retail environments will combine two sets of indicators. One is based on quantitative data and evaluates the dynamics of shopping districts. The other is anchored in qualitative data gathered by questionnaires and interviews, and looks to identify and assess consumer values and sense of place.

Integrating ecosystem services in urban planning

[Sweden, The Netherlands, Turkey](#)

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Spatial planning processes that purposefully integrate socio-cultural and ecological considerations into urban development are required if cities are to navigate towards more sustainable development.

The aim of this project is to explore how integration of the concept of 'ecosystem services' into urban spatial planning efforts could increase urban resilience. Ecosystem services are the full range of benefits society obtains from ecosystems. Resilience is the ability of a system to maintain capacity to lead a continued existence whilst incorporating change.

A group of urban scholars and practitioners in systems ecology and spatial planning from Stockholm, Istanbul and Wageningen will carry out trans-disciplinary research through case study analyses in each of their respective urban landscapes. The project will address two overarching questions:

1. How might a trans-disciplinary practice of spatial planning and governance based on ecosystem services contribute to the emergence of resilient urban landscapes?
2. What can resilience theory contribute to urban spatial planning processes?

Using the common framework of ecosystem services, two themes of analytical inquiries will be pursued:

limitations and constraints in current modes of spatial planning and governance; and examples of integrative urban spatial designs.

The project's scientific relevance lies in generating both theoretical contributions and practice innovations.

Research network for climate neutral cities [Sweden, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain](#)

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This project aims at formulating research questions in relation to another planned project. In cooperation with around 15 other cities in Europe, the City of Stockholm together with the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm is planning an Interreg IVC project application - Climate neutral urban districts in Europe. The overall objective of the Interreg proposal is to support the integration of climate aspects into urban planning processes for urban districts in Europe in order to make a contribution to climate change.

The research network will support the Interreg project in formulating research questions and also in developing evaluation criteria.

Other partners to the research network are:

Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Barcelona;
Delft University,
University of Applied Science, Hamburg,
Université de Technologie de Troyes.

These universities will take part in the project initiated by the City of Stockholm. The research groups have different approaches and contribute to technical as well as social and economic aspects in the project. One of the specific aims of the pre-research project is to formulate proposals for the URBAN-NET call 2009/2010 and proposals under FP7.

The potential of climate change on heat stress in different built structures and cities across Europe

[Sweden, Germany, UK](#)

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Heat waves are predicted to become more frequent, intense and of longer duration as temperatures increase due to climate change. Heat waves will occur on a yearly basis in countries like Sweden, UK and Germany. Several reports predict dramatic increases in heat related illnesses and deaths with large economic

consequences. For example a Swedish report predicts that the increased costs of damage of heat related deaths will be €50-70 billion, constituting half of the total costs from climate change in Sweden 2010-2100. This is more than the increased combined costs of damages from floods, landslides, erosion and hydropower losses. Although northern countries are expected to have profound heat related health effects, few countries have functional accessible national heat health action plans.

The aim of this pre-research is to carry out a pilot study, including simulations of future heat stress in different built structures and cities across Europe using the SOLWEIG model (Lindberg et al. 2008). Yearly, monthly and daily heat stress maps will be produced and aerial means for different built structures will be calculated in order to analyse the interaction between urban geometry and the thermal environment – knowledge that can be used to mitigate heat stress in urban areas.

The pre-research consortium includes researchers working within urban climatology, urban design, biometeorology, epidemiology and environmental psychology across Europe. The results from the pilot study will be presented and discussed at a European workshop with invited research partners, advisory partners as well as other researchers and practitioners involved in urban planning, climate and health issues. Problems and questions arising will constitute the base for a full joint URBAN-NET or FP7 (Environmental program) research proposal.

Towards an optimisation of urban-planning and architectural parameters for energy use in Mediterranean cities [Cyprus, Bulgaria, Sweden](#)

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Recent studies on the influence of climate change on North –European cities suggest that within 50 years they may experience a climate close to that of South-European cities today. This has enormous resource implications when the design and layout of the urban fabric and the individual buildings are not well suited to mitigate extreme conditions. There is therefore a strong need for strategic designs to be developed which would mitigate such environmental changes. Whilst the general cause of overheating of cities is well known, it is not well understood how much influence different urbanization characteristics as well as building materials have on the intensity of the city overheating.

The project aims to investigate the influence of urbanisation in terms of architectural parameters in relation to energy use. Most research hitherto has addressed individual street canyon flows, and the effect of the canyon aspect ratio and orientation. Research will focus on the whole real city, its overall form and the street network, which can be seen as a ventilation network removing heat. In particular, the project will address a typical Cypriot urban site as a generic Mediterranean case.

The complexity of the problem requires an interdisciplinary approach involving computational and experimental methods: Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) simulations, wind tunnel laboratory experiments and field measurements of surface heat fluxes.

Urban tourism and climate change [Sweden, Portugal, Turkey](#)

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Literature shows an urgent need of more knowledge and detailed local consequence studies on how urban tourism patterns will change in relation to global climate change and sustainable development. For some countries tourism will grow for others it will reduce or change with impacts on the economy, employment, environment and social life - is Europe prepared?

The hypothesis for this Urban-net full research proposal is that urban tourism in Europe will change in relation to global climate change. The main objective is to prove the hypothesis by investigating i) the future regional and local climate in respect to thermal comfort and stress, ii) the awareness and knowledge among different actors, iii) the preferences of tourist destinations in respect to season and climate, iv) adaptation strategies and consequences for society.

Case studies including questionnaires and interviews will be carried out in urban regions of Sweden, Portugal and Turkey, focusing on actors involved in tourism and urban planning as well as travellers and researchers. Results will be compiled in a database to be used for future urban tourism recommendations and strategy across Europe.

URBAN_NET will launch a full call for research proposals in September 2009.

Check the website for further details and other transnational research opportunities in the field of urban sustainability www.urban-net.org.uk