



PRESS RELEASE - 14 February 2014 - BRUSSELS

Moving towards an EU urban agenda?

The European Commission is organising the 'Cities of Tomorrow - Investing in Europe' forum on 17-18 February to establish how the urban dimension to EU policy-making can be strengthened.

Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, EUROCITIES president and mayor of Warsaw, says:

“We are pleased to see the spotlight on cities. The forum will provide space to discuss how to improve the way urban strengths and challenges are reflected in EU policies. An EU urban agenda would add value if it can help connect EU policies with an urban dimension, and strengthen the involvement of cities in EU policy and programme development.”

EUROCITIES, the network of Europe's large cities, believes that an EU urban agenda should be based on a practical and coherent approach that directly involves city authorities:

Urban coordination

Strengthening the coordination of initiatives and policies with an urban dimension will help ensure integrated, joined-up action, as well as better and quicker results. The appointment of Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for regional and urban policy, as the political lead coordinating urban issues across the Commission was a good move. Following this up with resources at sufficiently high level to support implementation will help drive the process.

Urban dialogue

To ensure input from cities, a stronger direct dialogue with mayors and city authorities is needed. The impact of current models for city involvement should be assessed and the methods that bring the best results should be applied more broadly. This will help ensure that initiatives more closely match needs on the ground and that innovation taking place in cities can be captured and fed into EU policy development.

Urban days

Holding bi-annual summits for urban stakeholders that include European, national and city-level government would keep urban issues high on the political agenda. These would be opportunities to assess the impact of EU policies on cities and to consider the urban dimension of forthcoming European initiatives.

On Monday 17 February, as part of the Commission's two day forum, EUROCITIES and CEMR are jointly hosting a seminar on the local perspective of a future EU urban agenda.

Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz says:

“Our cities are the drivers of the European economy and of innovation. They are key players in climate action and front-line managers of social cohesion. An EU urban agenda should set a framework for new ways of working together, for engaging cities directly in developing and delivering more joined up policies.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

- EUROCITIES statement on an EU urban agenda: <http://bit.ly/1kcSpd1>

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EUROCITIES is the political platform for major European cities towards the European institutions. We network the local governments of over 130 of Europe's largest cities and 40 partner cities that between them govern some 130 million citizens across 35 countries.