



PRESS RELEASE - 15 September 2010 - BRUSSELS

Success of future EU cohesion policy rests with cities



The EU Belgian Presidency, the European Parliament Urban Intergroup and European Commissioner for Regional Policy, have voiced their support for the central role that cities must have in the future EU cohesion policy.

Speaking at the high-level conference organised by EUROCITIES, the Brussels Capital Region and the European Parliament Urban Intergroup in Brussels yesterday, Commissioner Johannes Hahn said:

“The place of cities in delivering 2020 is indisputable, they’re where some of the EU’s greatest assets lie. We need to constantly take into account the European urban agenda. The urban focus is the good way to bring policies closer to citizens; we want to close the policy gap by involving city administrators who best know the needs of the people”

In the context of current EU budget discussions, Hahn added:

“Urban development is a smart investment in the lives of millions of Europeans.”

EUROCITIES’ evidence shows that cohesion policy has greater and longer-lasting impact when economic, social and environmental measures are combined. Such an integrated approach is best led by city governments because they are closest to the ground and are able to bring together all those with a stake in the area’s future.

In his statements, EUROCITIES secretary general Paul Bevan said:

“Integrated development is the way to combine and strengthen the objectives of Europe 2020. This is best done in our cities and functional areas, supported by a strong cohesion policy. Our message is clear: more urban, more impact.”

Also commenting, MEP Jan Olbrycht, Chair of the European Parliament Urban Intergroup, pointed to issues skewing the debate on the future of EU cohesion policy:

“Cohesion policy is about development, not simply redistribution. While, special attention is needed for those areas lagging behind, this should not overshadow the internationally extolled European model of urban development. Europe’s thriving cities are the ticket to the EU’s global competitiveness.”

Referring the experience of Brussels Capital Region and other cities more generally, Evelyne Huytebroeck, Minister for urban renewal of Brussels Capital Region, EU Belgian Presidency, said:

“The ‘sustainable city’ will not be built without major investments in [city] neighbourhoods. This is another reason why an ambitious urban dimension of cohesion policy is needed.”

- ENDS -

Note to Editors

- EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. We bring together local governments from 140 large cities in over 30 countries. Visit: www.eurocities.eu
- EUROCITIES position: More urban, more impact: the future of cohesion policy: <http://tinyurl.com/eurocitiesmoreurbanmoreimpact>