

# URBACT III

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## 2016 CITIZENS' SUMMARY



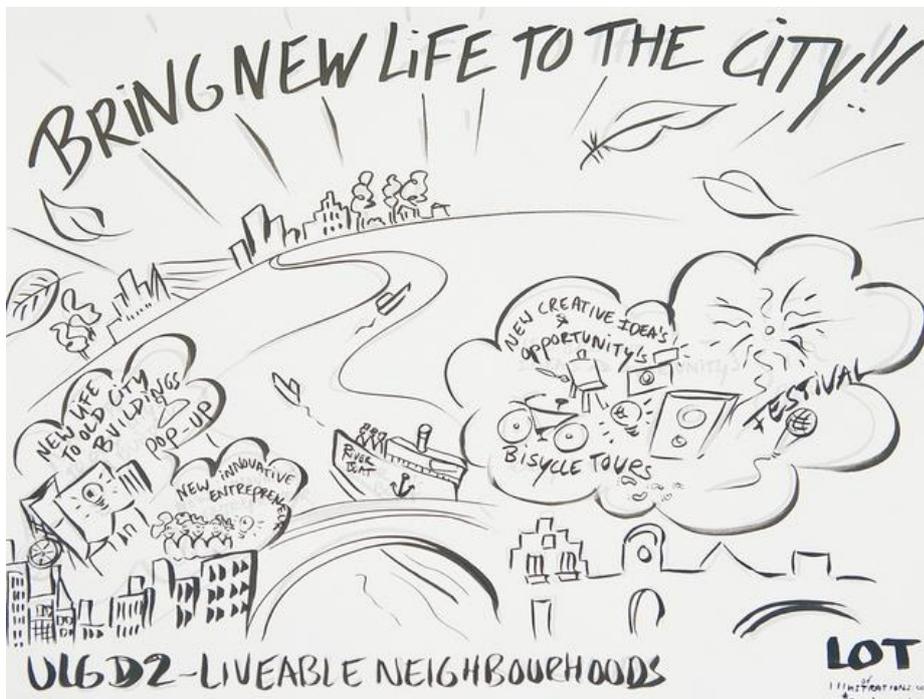
A work session at the 2016 URBACT Summer University in Rotterdam

**E**uropean cities continue to face ever increasing urban challenges linked to demographic change, climate and environmental targets, unemployment and urban poverty to name but a few. The crisis has left many cities dealing with high unemployment and a weakened economy. Under austerity policies and because of a reduced tax-take, cities find themselves with fewer resources with which to combat greater needs.

Since 2002, URBACT has provided alternative solutions to addressing key urban challenges by **promoting sustainable integrated urban development through exchange and learning**. URBACT supplies cities with tools and methods to develop strategies and solutions to high-priority urban issues. As these challenges are shared across the European Union (EU), URBACT is financed by the European Commission and contributes to the delivery of its strategy to prepare the EU economy for the next decade.

URBACT does not finance physical investments, nor does it carry out pilot projects. Rather URBACT uses resources and know-how to strengthen the capacity of cities to build solid strategies and action plans that respond to all the different kind of economic, environmental and societal challenges they are facing today. The **main target participants** of the programme include urban practitioners, city managers, elected representatives, stakeholders from other public agencies, the private sector and the civil society.

The **total eligible budget** of the URBACT III programme is **96.3 M€** for a programming the period 2014-2020. The programme will finance up to 70 transnational networks of cities during its 7 year lifetime.



A drawing realized during the 2016 URBACT Summer University

# 2016

saw the launch of the second call for proposals for cities to work

together in networks in the frame of the URBACT III programme. The aim of this new type of networks, labelled Implementation networks, is to **improve the capacity of European cities to respond to the urgent challenges they are facing in an integrated and participative way**. This means encouraging growth and jobs throughout Europe, and at the same time promoting a more cohesive society and a better environment by involving the relevant stakeholders - among which citizens - in the process.

Cities of similar size which have already developed a strategy or an action plan to tackle a challenge gather in a network to jointly tackle the issue at stake. As partners in such networks, cities share experiences, problems and possible solutions, generating new ideas and learning from one another to manage the switch from theory to practice, from building an action plan to implementing it. Implementation networks provide a frame for cities to learn how to better finance their project, how to include local actors in the decision-making process and how to measure the efficiency of their policies.

In response to the first call for proposals, a total of 15 network applications were submitted bringing together 111 cities covering a wide range of urban-related challenges.

**7 Implementation Networks were approved for a first phase.** During this 6-month period, a budget is available. These networks involving about 60 cities across Europe started their activities in October 2016.



During one of the Implementation networks trainings in Paris

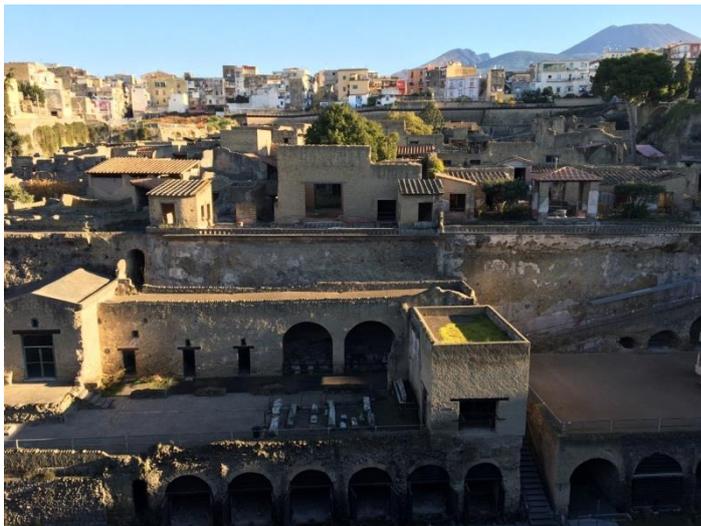
Detailed information on all the approved networks can be found on the [URBACT website](#) but here are some highlights:

Two networks made **culture a central topic** of their project: INT-HERIT aims at revitalising and valorising cultural assets to make cities attractive places to live, work and visit for citizens, while CREATIVE SPIRITS focuses on facilitating the creative ecosystems of cities in order boost entrepreneurship - and thus the economy - in dedicated urban areas.

**Working on, with and for youth is a goal** for 3 networks: Stay Tuned is concentrating on reducing the high rates of early school leaving in cities. JobTown2 intends to develop innovative and practical approaches to tackle youth unemployment. ReGeneration wants to revive cities using an inter-generational approach which focuses on transmission to younger generations.

**Inclusion**, fostering equality between citizens, **is also a priority field** for URBinclusion whose goal is to reduce poverty in deprived urban areas.

The CIA 7 (i.e. Cities in Article 7 on Integrated Sustainable Urban Development) network is a non-thematic project which goal is to understand how cities can better use the funds and tools produced by the European Commission to enhance their development.



Archaeological excavations in the city of Ercolano, and the Vesuvius volcano in the background.



Street art in Waterford.

From May 2016 to June 2018, each partner of the 20 **Action Planning networks** will draft solutions to issues they are facing in their city, such as how to turn abandoned spaces into assets or how to better support local businesses and entrepreneurship so as to foster local employment. This process will involve all relevant stakeholders and bring together the different facets of the issues – social, economic and environmental. This in-depth work follows a first phase during which new cities joined the constituted networks.

The **URBACT Summer University** took place in Rotterdam (NL) one of the most vibrant cities in terms of urban development, on 24-26 August 2016. 430 participants from 28 countries spread all over Europe came together for 3 days to learn how to build better urban policies. Urban practitioners were provided with innovative tools and enhanced capacities to face their local challenges. The Summer University helped cities answer key questions for drafting a solid action plan to address their urban-related issues: how to identify and define clearly the problem at stake? How to involve various stakeholders in your work? How to measure the impact of your policies? Working sessions were completed by inspirational talks as well as informal moments to share with one another.



During the 2016 URBACT Summer University in Rotterdam

In order to better inform cities on the benefits of integrated, participative urban development, **URBACT National Points** were launched in early 2016. Covering 24 EU countries, the 21 National URBACT Points - represented by national ministries, associations of cities or universities - take part in national debates on urban issues. They closely follow and advertise the work of URBACT networks.

Aiming at improving citizens' quality of life in urban areas, the European Commission launched in May 2016 a consultation targeting EU countries and their cities called the **Urban Agenda for the EU**. **URBACT is participating in all of its partnerships** by feeding them with its results and experiences and promoting cities in Europe that have developed interesting practices on issues such as air quality, housing, inclusion of migrants and refugees and urban poverty.



During the 2016 URBACT Summer University in Rotterdam

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

All information related to the URBACT activities can be found at: <http://urbact.eu/>

Do not hesitate to contact us and we will answer you as soon as possible:  
<http://urbact.eu/contact> or [communication@urbact.eu](mailto:communication@urbact.eu)