Urban Policies and Planning in Europe: An Overview of Recent Developments

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- Peter Hall identified the following factors that affect Europe's urban hierarchy:
- 1. Globalisation and the formation of continental trading blocs.
- 2. The transformation of Eastern Europe.
- 3. The shift to the informational economy.
- 4. The impact of transport technology.
- 5. The impact of informational technology.
- 6. The new role of urban promotion and boosterism.
- 7. The impact of demographic and social

- To this we should also add the challenge of Sustainable Urban Development. This means creating places in which:

1. people want to live
2. meet the diverse needs of residents
3. environmentally sensitive
4. provide a high quality of life
5. are safe and inclusive
6. well planned, built and run
7. provide good services for all
8. do this now and in the future

- EU interest in urban issues and policy since the early 1990s:

  Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union - 1997

  Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action - 1998

  Successive Presidencies have held Urban Forums

- European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) has three basic goals:
1. economic and social cohesion;
2. sustainable development;
3. balanced competitiveness of the European territory
- which are to be "…pursued in combination, with attention also being paid to how they interact." This will take the form of balanced and polycentric development within a framework of competition and cooperation

- But no formal/legal basis in Treaty for EU urban or planning policy
- Nevertheless many policies pursued by EU have impact on cities – most obviously Regional Policy and Structural Funds which do recognise role of urban areas
- Also Transport Policy (e.g.TENs), Economic Policy, Environment Policy, etc.
- Link to Lisbon-Gothenberg Agenda

- Identified cities and urban areas as motors of economic growth and Europe's competitiveness
- But argued more attention needed to be given to inter- and intra-urban inequalities and spatial distribution of growth
- Polycentricity and a balance between competition and cooperation
- Need for area-based approach – strategic and involving citizens
- Need to improve urban government – engage more with citizens

- Each country/city faces different urban problems
- National and local institutions and policy traditions still matter (path dependency)
- But common 'pan-European' way of thinking is emerging – supported/facilitated by the EC

- Traditional planning policies that are largely determined by the inherited approach embodied within planning systems and the professions and politicians that oversee those systems.
- Targeted (area-based) urban policies that seek to address the particular problems of urban areas. Increasingly there is a recognition that such policies need to be part of an integrated approach that is co-ordinated with wider social and economic policies.

- NAO - How European cities achieve renaissance
1. Clear shared vision
2. Clear and strong leadership
3. Clear implementation plan
4. Network of partners eager to deliver
5. Bring resources together
6. Central support
7. Monitoring of progress and impact assessment

- As Michael Parkinson has recently noted:
- ...the importance attached to cities in EU regional policy has waxed and waned during the past decade. Sometimes they have been very high profile; sometimes they have been rather neglected. However, it is absolutely clear that they have recently risen to the top of the European political agenda.
- Thus urban planning and management are likely to grown in importance