European Urban
Knowledge Network

ONE YEAR
PACT OF AMSTERDAM

EUKN REPORT

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Executive summary

The Pact of Amsterdam, adopted during the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 30 May 2016, established the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU). This marked an important milestone towards the reinforcement of the urban dimension in EU policy. Through its multi-level governance framework, the UAEU aims to carry out eleven actions whose long-term goal is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of EU policies in urban areas (Chapter 2). Based on desk research and data gathered through interviews and surveys targeted at key stakeholders, this report, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, assesses the progress, (expected) impact and spin-off effects of the UAEU, one year after its launch. The results are to be read as a first stock-taking of this ongoing and ambitious project and process. This report seeks to contribute to the further development of the UAEU to ensure its optimal delivery.

The assessment of the progress of the eleven actions shows that the twelve thematic Partnerships have successfully been established, even though their development is still in progress. The three sets of four Partnerships – established during the Dutch, Slovak and Maltese EU Presidencies respectively – are in different working phases. The procedure, in terms of schedule and deliverables, has been streamlined and the experiences of the first four pilot Partnerships have fed into the development of the eight others. The demanding but promising multi-level working method is praised by all partners. However, there are also concrete obstacles to the success of the Partnerships. These relate to the level of available human and financial resources and expertise, the involvement of partners and process management. External support and resources, provided by the European Commission and the Technical Secretariat, are therefore crucial. Cross-sectoral cooperation (inter-Partnership collaboration and work on cross-cutting issues) would need to be further developed in the upcoming working phases (Chapter 3). The ten other actions, in which the European Commission and EU organisations play a strong role, must also be considered as work in progress. Some are at the stage of implementation, but further information could be made available on the planning and progress of others. These actions are essential to make the work on urban issues at EU level more coordinated (Chapter 4).

The progress made on the UAEU lives up to expectations about its (political) impact on multi-level collaboration, both horizontally and vertically. In terms of horizontal collaboration, the focus on coordination of urban topics within the European Commission, and the inter-institutional cooperation at EU level, seem to have been reinforced. In terms of vertical collaboration, the UAEU governance fosters direct coordination between Member States (MS) and the European Commission. The Partnerships also built a bridge between cities, Member States and EU institutions. This reinforced multi-level coordination can eventually strengthen the position of cities in EU policy-making. However, the long-term outcomes of the UAEU with regard to the reinforcement of the urban dimension of EU policy highly depend on the implementation of the Partnerships' actions and their influence on the post-2020 Multi-annual Financial Framework including Cohesion Policy. These will be decisive to ensure a structural impact of the UAEU. To this end, the support of EU institutions and Member States to embed the UAEU politically is crucial.

Lastly, the first spin-off effects show that, at national level, the UAEU led to new forms of cooperation between local authorities and Member States and fostered the debate on urban development. At international level, the European Commission made a voluntary commitment to contribute to the New Urban Agenda through the UAEU at the Habitat III conference. However, the link between the UAEU, the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has so far received little attention in the Partnerships (Chapter 5).

Following the summary of key findings (Chapter 6), the report concludes with eight recommendations for taking the UAEU forward. They emphasize that the momentum of the UAEU must be kept alive. All relevant stakeholders should realise conditions for the experimental method of multi-level governance exemplified by the Partnerships to succeed, to achieve its full potential, to have impact on EU policies and to become institutionally embedded (Chapter 7).

1 Introduction

1.1 Urban Agenda for the EU background

The Pact of Amsterdam was adopted at the Informal Meeting of EU Ministers responsible for Urban Matters on 30 May 2016 in Amsterdam. It constitutes a major milestone for urban policy coordination in the EU, and was the highlight of a generally acknowledged successful Dutch Presidency in the field of urban matters. Council conclusions on the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU)[1] were adopted on 24 June 2016; this implied a formal endorsement of the Pact of Amsterdam. The Pact of Amsterdam and the Council conclusions are the expression of the political commitment to deliver the Urban Agenda for the EU to realise the full potential and contribution of urban areas towards achieving the objectives of the European Union and its Member States. The UAEU aims to establish a more integrated and coordinated approach to EU policies and legislation that affect urban areas. More specifically, it aims to involve urban authorities in the design of relevant policies, in full respect of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

1.2 Objective of the progress report

One year after the adoption of the Pact of Amsterdam, the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations wanted to assess the first results of the Pact of Amsterdam. The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) was commissioned to carry out this assessment and to present it at a national meeting focused on the progress of the UAEU. The objective of the report is therefore to present a first stock-taking of the UAEU. To this end, the study analyses and assesses the progress made on the eleven UAEU actions listed in the Pact of Amsterdam, the impact of these actions (including the expected impact on the post-2020 EU policies), and their spin-off effects at Member State and international level.

1.3 Research questions and methodology

The main research questions addressed in this report are:

1. What progress has been made regarding the eleven actions listed in the Pact of Amsterdam?
2. What is the impact of these actions regarding the strengthening of the urban dimension in EU policy?
3. What is the spin-off of the UAEU at national and international level?

This report focuses on the development and progress of the UAEU and the experiences of stakeholders within its multi-level framework since the adoption of the Pact of Amsterdam on 30 May 2016 until May/early June 2017 (the time at which the research was conducted). The procedures and objectives stated in the Pact of Amsterdam and its Working Programme provided a basis for the evaluation. A mixed method design was used:

- Desk research,
- Online surveys among four different stakeholders' groups: Partnership coordinators, representatives of Member States, EU institutions and organisations, and a selection of Dutch cities, and,

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[1] A list of abbreviations is attached to the report in the Annex (Table 1).

- Skype, telephone and face-to-face interviews with selected Partnership coordinators, relevant representatives of EU institutions and organisations, Member States and Dutch cities (see Table 2 and 3 of the Annex for further details on the survey respondents and the interviewees).

While some of the data is representative for the survey respondents and interviewees (especially the Partnership coordinators), other data cannot be regarded as fully representative due to the limited size and scope of the survey and interviews given the short timeframe. Therefore, the data set should be interpreted as a set of experiences, opinions and expectations that provide input for discussions on the further improvement of the UAEU process and procedures. In addition, numerous written sources were analysed through desk research to strengthen the basis for describing and evaluating the progress of UAEU actions.

2 The Pact of Amsterdam

2.1 Objectives and scope of the UAEU

The Pact of Amsterdam sets out the objectives, scope, themes, operational framework, and actions of the UAEU. The respective parts are briefly discussed here. A short presentation of the process leading to the UAEU is also attached to the Annex (Text 1).

Building on the acknowledgement of the role of urban areas in "achieving the objectives of the Union and related national priorities" (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016: 5), the Pact of Amsterdam postulates that the impact of EU legislation on urban areas needs to be tackled in an integrated way. Also, it holds that urban authorities should be better involved and mobilised "in the design and implementation of EU policies" (ibid.).

Three pillars of EU policy-making and implementation are at the heart of the UAEU:
- Better regulation: EU policies, legislation and instruments are to be implemented more effectively and coherently. The UAEU shall contribute informally to the revision and design of EU regulation, mindful of the minimisation of administrative burdens for urban authorities.
- Better funding: The UAEU shall identify, support, integrate, and improve sources of funding for urban areas at the relevant institutional level. Instead of creating new funding, this pillar addresses the improvement of funding opportunities.
- Better knowledge (knowledge base and exchange): This aspect relates to the critical need for good data in pursuit of evidence-based policy-making. The knowledge base on urban issues and the exchange of best practices is to be fostered.

Considering the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the actions of the UAEU are guided by twelve priority themes:
- Inclusion of migrants and refugees,
- Air quality,
- Urban poverty,
- Housing,
- Circular economy,
- Jobs and skills in the local economy,
- Climate adaptation (including green infrastructure solutions),
- Energy transition,
- Sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions,
- Urban mobility,
- Digital transition,
- Innovative and responsible public procurement.

Eleven cross-cutting issues complement the above list of concrete themes. These range from effective urban governance, an integrated and participatory approach, and sound and strategic urban planning to innovative approaches, urban regeneration, and demographic change.

2.2 UAEU operational framework and actions

The Pact of Amsterdam describes the operational framework of the UAEU and defines the UAEU as "a coherent set of actions of key European actors" and "a new form of informal multilevel cooperation" (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016: 9). The categories of actions are:
a. Themes,
b. Horizontal and vertical coordination, to be delivered by thematic Partnerships as a new instrument for multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation,

c. Impact assessments, with a focus on the possible impacts of EU policy on urban areas,
d. Knowledge, particularly with regard to exchange and monitoring.

All of the eleven actions listed in the Pact of Amsterdam belong to at least one of the four categories set out above.

The operational framework and the Working Programme of the Pact of Amsterdam specify the governance of the UAEU, whose activities are steered by the Directors-General responsible for Urban Matters (DGUM), organised by the EU Member State holding the Council Presidency together with the European Commission (EC). Their aim is to transparently develop the UAEU process further. When addressing the UAEU, the DGUM meeting involves Member States (MS), the EC, the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), and EUROCITIES, thereby strengthening the multi-level dimension of the governance framework. Moreover, DG meetings include as observers Partner States, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the European Parliament (EP), the European Investment Bank (EIB), URBACT, ESPON, EUKN, and other stakeholders where relevant. The Urban Development Group (UDG) acts as an advisory and monitoring body to the DGUM.

3 Assessment of the progress of the Partnerships

Main Findings

The establishment of the Partnerships:
- The selection procedure of the partners in the Partnerships is now formalised.
- Criteria for a balanced composition are taken into account in this procedure.
- All levels of government are represented in each Partnership, and the partners show a deep interest in the innovative working method.
- However, concerns might be raised about the unbalanced representation of all city sizes, the level of involvement of Member States in the last set of Partnerships, and the absence of universities, businesses and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) managing authorities as partners in the Partnerships.

The Partnerships' state of development:
- The Amsterdam Partnerships serve as pilot Partnerships to experiment feasible deliverables and planning, and as models for the Bratislava and Malta Partnerships.
- The Amsterdam Partnerships managed to follow the streamlined planning and reached the phase of identifying concrete actions, although the level of concreteness and formalisation varies.
- The Bratislava Partnerships followed a more streamlined procedure from the start and managed to define their thematic scope.
- The upcoming Public Feedback (in summer 2017) and the implementation of the actions of the Amsterdam Partnerships will be crucial for the future proceedings of the Partnerships.

The Partnerships' multi-level cooperation process:
- Overall, the experimental working method proposed in the Pact of Amsterdam has been implemented successfully and the role of the Technical Secretariat (TS) and of the EC is generally described as valuable and helpful.
- Concrete obstacles include:
  - The insufficient (human) resource endowment of the majority of coordinators and partners,
  - The lack of financial resources available (at local level), especially for travel and logistical expenses,
  - Some deficiencies in the partners' expertise, hence the importance of external stakeholders' support,
  - A perceived overburdening of the Partnerships with demands and deliverables, pressed in a tight and inflexible schedule.
- Partnerships ask for more flexibility and tailor-made support, and some coordinators would have liked to see broader (strategic and organisational) guidance and support, also in terms of human resources, from the TS.
- Inter-Partnership collaboration can gain momentum and be fostered by the TS when the Actions Plans are published.
- A clear, streamlined strategy regarding the work on cross-cutting issues is lacking.

Thematic Partnerships are the main delivery mechanism of the UAEU and referred to as the first UAEU action in the Pact of Amsterdam. They consist of a multi-level cooperation framework that involves stakeholders from different levels of government; cities, Member States, EU institutions and other stakeholders at European level (Annex Table 5). In their specific policy field, each of them works on the three-fold focus of the UAEU: improving EU regulation, funding and knowledge.

This chapter assesses the progress of the twelve Partnerships. The chapter first analyses the establishment of the Partnerships. Secondly, it describes their state of development. Third and finally, it takes stock of some elements understood to be crucial to the functioning of the multi-level governance structure.

The assessment is based mainly on an analysis of progress reports prepared for the DGUM and UDG meetings and on data gathered via the surveys and interviews. It focuses on the Amsterdam and Bratislava Partnerships, which are sufficiently advanced to draw lessons from them.

3.1 Establishment of the Partnerships

Because a good level of involvement and appropriate expertise of partners is a key condition for the progress of the Partnerships, it is crucial to have an understanding of the different aspects of the Partnerships' establishment; both the selection procedure itself and its result – the composition of the Partnerships. The Pact of Amsterdam does not discriminate city size and/or regions but a balanced composition is a key condition to cater to some basic principles of a comprehensive multi-level cooperation framework, such as inclusiveness, subsidiarity and proportionality. The composition of the twelve Partnerships being fixed, this section assesses the extent to which the principles of a balanced composition were applied.

3.1.1 Selection of the priority themes and focus on regulation, funding and knowledge

The twelve themes were agreed upon by the DGUM meeting under the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the EU. The selection of the twelve priority themes and the three-fold focus of the UAEU partly resulted from the results of the Public Feedback conducted in 2015 by the EC on the key features of the UAEU (EC, 2015). The compilation of priority themes was further elaborated thanks to the survey launched among Member States in July 2015 by the incoming Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU, and the three workshops organised by the EC, in which Member States, cities and other stakeholders participated (The Netherlands Presidency and EC, n.d.).

Most surveyed Member States are satisfied with the priority themes selected. However, one Member State representative pointed out that the final compilation of themes was not transparent enough. Furthermore, most surveyed and interviewed Member States find the three-fold focus of the UAEU relevant and apt.

3.1.2 Selection procedure of the partners in the Partnerships

Participation in the Partnerships is on a voluntary basis, but partners are expected to commit and dedicate resources. In order to ensure a balanced composition, each Partnership should be composed of representatives of:

- Five Member States,
- Five urban authorities (cities – but it should be noted that regions, Partner States, city consortiums or national city umbrella organisations can also be nominated as partners instead of an urban authority),
- The European Commission, through the relevant Directorate Generals,
- Other stakeholders (like EIB, EESC, CoR, experts, umbrella organisations, knowledge organisations, NGOs, businesses).

The different types of partners, as well as big, small and medium-sized cities, should be represented in the Partnerships, and have a large geographical spread (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016).

Selection procedure for the Amsterdam pilot Partnerships

For the Amsterdam Partnerships, which were launched under the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the EU in late 2015, an informal procedure was adopted. It was based on demonstrated interest, both from the coordinators and from the participating partners. Umbrella organisations (CEMR and EUROCITIES) nominated cities and Member States were invited to join. This participation was discussed by the DGUM.

Selection procedure for the Bratislava and Malta Partnerships

The procedure for the eight remaining Partnerships, which were established after the adoption of the Pact of Amsterdam, was more formalised. It was based on six criteria to ensure a balanced composition:

1. Geographical balance (cities, but also MS from across Europe);
2. Size of cities balance (representation of big but also small and medium-sized cities);
3. Expertise (partners should be real experts on the topic involved);
4. Capacity (human and financial resources should be made available by the partners);
5. Network capacity (partner's network and ability to link up with other ones);
6. EU outlook (work on challenges on an EU scale).

The Joint Proposal for the launch of the next UAEU Partnerships proposed by the Slovak Presidency and the EC was discussed at the meetings of the UDG and the DGUM. The Partnership Survey showed a broad interest from MS and cities on all eight remaining themes. On the basis of a declaration of interest by candidate partners (the candidate coordinators submitted a scoping paper) the four Bratislava Partnerships were confirmed by the DGUM. A similar procedure was followed to establish the Malta Partnerships, which were approved by the DGUM under the Maltese Presidency. As part of the Trio Presidency, the Netherlands still played an important role in this process.

Surveyed Member States are generally satisfied with the establishment of the Partnerships (Annex Chart 1). This is certainly linked to the fact that they were directly involved in the selection process. However, it would be necessary to reach out to the cities that were not selected to have an informed understanding of how the selection criteria and decisions were perceived by all candidate cities, with regard to clarity and transparency.

Motives and expectations of partners

The Partnerships rely on a voluntary approach. The main reasons to engage in a Partnership are:

- One the one hand, in terms of content, the surveyed Partnership coordinators and EU organisations stress the expected influence on the EU political agenda and the improvement of EU regulation, access to funding and knowledge exchange as key motives (Annex Chart 6). Some Partnership coordinators point to a focus on funding (Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, Urban Mobility, Urban Poverty), while others emphasize regulation (Air Quality, Energy Transition, Urban Mobility), and for still others, knowledge exchange features as a key aspect (Air Quality, Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, Jobs and Skills, Urban Mobility, Energy Transition). In addition, the influence on post-2020 policy and funding (European Social Fund, European Structural and Investment Funds) is mentioned as a crucial motive by some respondents.

- On the other hand, in terms of process, the experimental and promising nature of the Partnerships' multi-level governance model is perceived as a key incentive to engage in the UAEU. More specifically, the reinforcement of the role of cities in policy-making thanks to the

multi-level framework, which corresponds to the needs expressed in the previous European urban policy agreements and declarations (Leipzig Charter, Toledo and Riga Declarations), is pointed out.

3.1.3 Composition of the Partnerships[2]

Balance between Member States and urban authorities

The number of partners in the Partnerships is between fourteen and twenty-four (Annex Table 5). Local, national and European levels of government are represented in all twelve Partnerships. Furthermore, the composition of the four Amsterdam Partnerships is balanced between the number of urban authorities (five to seven per Partnership) and the number of Member States (four to five per Partnership) involved.

On the one hand, the number of urban authorities increased in the Bratislava and Malta Partnerships. For instance, the number of urban authorities participating in the Partnerships on Digital Transition, Jobs and Skills, Urban Mobility, Energy Transition and Sustainable Use of Land is very high with eight or more. This points out the fact that many cities consider it worth engaging in the UAEU. In contrast, the number of MS partners decreased in the Bratislava and Malta Partnerships, with it being particularly low in the Partnerships on Jobs and Skills, Climate Adaptation, Energy Transition and Public Procurement (Annex Chart 3). Based on the interviews, the declining interest of Member States in the Partnerships can be explained by different factors:

- The total number of EU Member States is naturally smaller than the number of European cities, which makes it easier to have cities willing to be partner and be varied across Partnerships.
- Member States already participating in one Partnership can have a weak incentive to get involved in others. They might lack the capacity to get involved in several Partnerships at the same time. It can also be difficult for the Ministries that participate in the DGUM meetings, usually responsible for urban matters, to reach out to and convince (other) sectoral ministries to commit to a Partnership, as they might not be used to working in a multi-level framework.
- Two respondents mention that some priority themes, such as Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, might be too politically sensitive for some Member States. Other priority themes can be perceived as not relevant enough.

Involvement of the European Commission and the different Directorate Generals

The European Commission is involved in all twelve Partnerships with representation of its different Directorate Generals (DGs). DG REGIO, which manages and monitors the UAEU for the EC, is a partner in all Partnerships. The relevant sectoral DGs also participate in the Partnerships (Annex Table 5). The involvement of DGs underlines that the attention of the EC to the UAEU and to the work of the Partnerships goes beyond DG REGIO. According to interview data, this is critical as it is a key condition for urban challenges to be more and better taken into account by the EC.

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[2] Data used for this section is taken from the following unpublished documents: (1) the progress reports presented at the UDG meeting in Malta (March 2017) for the Amsterdam and Bratislava Partnerships. In principle, their composition is fixed but might still be subject to minor changes, especially regarding stakeholders. (2) The composition proposals following the UDG meeting in Malta (March 2017) for the Malta Partnerships. For the Malta Partnerships, as there is no official composition list available to date, the exact partners might still be subject to changes, which are not reflected in this report. Furthermore, observers have been left out of the count.

Involvement of other stakeholders

Lastly, the Partnerships also involve other stakeholders. A definition and a categorisation of these stakeholders do not clearly emerge from the Pact of Amsterdam. In this report, other stakeholders are understood as; EU organisations (EIB, EESC, CoR), managing authorities of ESIF, universities, umbrella organisations (EUROCITIES, CEMR), knowledge organisations (URBACT, ESPON, EUKN), international organisations, private sector representatives (businesses), and NGOs and civil society organisations. The involvement of these stakeholders in the Partnerships is presented in Annex, Table 5. Various thematic NGOs, economic and social partners, are involved as partners in the Partnerships. Details on the involvement of EU, knowledge and umbrella organisations are provided in Chapter 4.

A striking feature is that no university or private sector representative is present as a partner in the Partnerships. No partner is present as ESIF managing authority either. This might be explained by the fact that no clear and streamlined procedure was implemented to make sure that those three types of stakeholders would be reached out to and nominated as candidate partners.

Representation of big, medium-sized and small cities

Big, medium and small cities are all represented in the UAEU. Nonetheless, there is a clear imbalance regarding the scope of representation. A majority of 44 partner cities have a population size between 100.000 and one million inhabitants (considered as medium-sized cities in this report), 20 cities have more than one million inhabitants (big cities) and 14 cities have less than 100.000 inhabitants (small cities) (Annex Chart 4). Furthermore, in almost all Partnerships, only one or two city size categories are represented. The Amsterdam Partnerships mainly include big cities, but their number declines in the Bratislava and Malta Partnerships, while the small and medium-sized cities are mainly repre-sented in the Malta Partnerships. The number of medium-sized cities is significant in the Bratislava and Malta Partnerships (Annex Chart 5).

These figures should be put in the context of city population size in Europe. The large representation of cities between 100.000 and one million inhabitants in the Partnerships can be explained by the fact that a large majority European cities are medium-sized, with only few cities over one million inhabitants (EU and UN-Habitat, 2017). Besides, it emerged from the interview data that the strong involvement of big cities in the first round of Partnerships might be explained by their capacity to commit to the UAEU. Their involvement is considered positive as they can contribute efficiently with their resources, capacity and specialisation. On the other hand, the low involvement of small cities in the first round of Partnerships can be explained by the fact that they have fewer resources, which might have made it more difficult to commit to the UAEU when the procedure and expected level of involvement were not clearly defined, and the return on investment uncertain.

3.2 State of development of the Partnerships

Since the adoption of the Pact of Amsterdam, the structure and planning of the Partnership work has been specified considerably, with building on the experiences of the first Partnerships as a chief guiding force. At the Coordinators Meeting of 12 January 2017, DG REGIO presented a detailed planning including an elaborated structure of the process and timing of the submission of delivera-bles. As a result, the Bratislava Partnerships have encountered a more structured organisation of the process than the Amsterdam pilot Partnerships (for a detailed timeline of the Partnerships' work, see Table 4 of the Annex). The Bratislava Partnerships will thus continue to profit from the experiences of and with the pilot Partnerships.

3.2.1 State of development of the Amsterdam pilot Partnerships

- **Launch of the Partnerships**: Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the EU in late 2015.

- **Phase**: definition of objectives and deliverables (drafting an Action Plan).
- **Results completed**: organisation of several internal and public meetings and work on draft Action Plans (AP).
- **Future expected results**: submission of draft Action Plan in June 2017, Public Feedback on the Action Plan in summer 2017 and submission and discussion on the final Action Plan at the DGUM meeting on 24 October 2017. The implementation of the actions will follow until the end of 2019, when they will present their final reports.

All in all, the Amsterdam Partnerships have managed to adapt to the mainstreamed planning, but they did so by building on their existing working structures, cultures, and first outcomes. Regarding deliverables, all Amsterdam Partnerships have reached the phase of identifying concrete actions, even though the exact stage of concreteness and formalisation varies. The Public Feedback on these actions will largely determine the further proceedings of the Partnerships towards finalised Action Plans and their implementation. For a detailed overview of the Amsterdam Partnerships' thematic priority areas and other key developments as of June 2017, see Table 6 of the Annex.

3.2.2 State of development of the Bratislava pilot Partnerships

- **Launch of the Partnerships**: Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU in late 2016
- **Phase**: Stocktaking / Identifying bottlenecks and potentials
- **Results completed**: organisation of a kick-off meeting and of internal meetings. Delivery of an Orientation Paper (setting thematic focus) endorsed at the DGUM meeting in Malta in April 2017.
- **Future expected results**: submission of draft Action Plan at the end of 2017/beginning of 2018, followed by a Public Feedback. Delivery of the final Action Plan throughout 2018.

The Bratislava Partnerships have followed a more streamlined procedure from the start. In fact, the surveyed coordinators emphasize that the common agreement amongst partners on the scope and thematic focuses of the Partnership, via the delivery of a required Orientation Paper, is an important achievement. Table 7 in the Annex details the agreed thematic focus and other key developments of the Bratislava Partnerships as of June 2017.

3.3 Taking stock of the Partnerships' multi-level cooperation process

This section takes stock of some elements understood to be crucial to the functioning of the multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance structure of the Partnerships work, a key and highly demanding aspect of the UAEU. These cover the resource endowment provided by the partners themselves (expertise, leadership, active involvement) as well as resources provided by the European Commission (political support and technical assistance through the Technical Secretariat for the UAEU). It also spans across the topic of inter-Partnership cooperation and outreach to external stakeholders. The aim of this Chapter is to give an apt picture of how the actors experience and evaluate the multi-level cooperation in implementing the Partnerships and to assess if resources meet the demands.

3.3.1 Cooperation within the Partnerships

Partners' management, resources and involvement

To start with, two of the nine surveyed Partnership coordinators identify the internal management and the cooperation between partners as a key challenge. This is qualified by coordinators' state-

ments praising the successful organisation of Partnership meetings and maintaining constant involvement of the partners, the trustful way of working together and the dedication of partners, and good and frequent communication between the coordinators as key achievements of their work.

The level of commitment of the partners is generally described as satisfactory. At the same time, the commitment of Member States is sometimes experienced as insufficient. Nevertheless, coordinators acknowledge that the leeway for partners is limited, for instance for meeting external demands, for contracting external stakeholders, and for producing output. One interviewed partner points specifically to the lack of financial resources at the local level. The limiting factor of travel and accommodation costs is also mentioned.

Besides the lack of time and financial resources described above, defining the issues(s) and the scope of the topic, achieving the appropriate level of expertise, and proper know-how to manage the work are also voiced as challenges by coordinators. One interviewee suggests that coordinators need professional support in establishing a clear strategy and methodology in case deviations from the objectives arise from the very beginning of the Partnership work. Even though the resources available to partners in terms of expertise are described as all in all sufficient, attracting external expertise is highlighted by many respondents as extremely beneficial for their work and for streamlining the thematic focus in particular, because its brings highly relevant knowledge and an external and new point of view on the topic.

Internal resources of the Partnership coordinators

As for the resources available for the coordinators of the Amsterdam and Bratislava Partnerships, the picture is also mixed:

- Only two out of nine Partnership coordinators say the time they can spend on Partnership work is sufficient. They can devote between four and forty hours per week to their work as coordinator, depending on the organisational arrangement (full-time or on top of ordinary work activities).
- Only one of the interviewed coordinators works full-time for one Amsterdam Partnership. This is in contradiction with lessons from the pilot Partnerships identified by DG REGIO, concluding that coordinators should work full-time (presented at the Coordinators Meeting on 12 January 2017 in Brussels[3]).
- All in all, the internal organisational support of Partnership coordinators varies, with some receiving human resources support and dedicated budget for conferences or external experts, even though this is not the case for most.

3.3.2 Support and resources provided to the Partnerships by the European Commission and the Technical Secretariat

Broadly speaking, the role of the European Commission is to facilitate and support the implementation of the UAEU, and more specifically the work of the Partnerships through the provision of technical assistance. As stated by DG REGIO in their survey answer, it spends 100 hours per week with a total budget of 1,500,000 euros per year dedicated to the UAEU work. Desk officers from DG REGIO participate in each of the twelve Partnerships and, depending on the theme of the Partnership, sectoral DGs are also involved. The EC organises the Coordinators Meetings, where all coordinators can exchange on their progress and challenges between them and representatives from the EC. Most importantly, the EC (mostly DG REGIO) acts as the main engine behind the UAEU process on the EU level, providing the operational framework for the Partnership work. DG REGIO works in close coop-

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[3] The lessons from the pilot Partnerships were presented by DG REGIO via an unpublished PowerPoint presentation.

eration with the Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Trio Presidency. The Technical Secretariat, composed of ECORYS, EUROCITIES and the EUKN, and commissioned by the EC, provides organisational, operational, strategic, and communication support to the Partnerships (see Chapter 4 with regard to the implementation of other UAEU actions under the responsibility of the EC that can indirectly support the Partnerships).

Even though the support provided by the Technical Secretariat is generally recognised as valuable, data from interviews suggests that some of the Amsterdam Partnerships see room for improvement:

- Some coordinators ask for a more tailored-made approach that would meet the specific needs of each Partnership. For instance, one respondent suggests that it would have been better to have a team completely dedicated to the Partnerships, with one full-time position for each Partnership in the Technical Secretariat sharing the work for content development and administration/communication.
- Some coordinators point out that they would appreciate less pressure on delivering results by predefined deadlines, which do not fully reflect the nature of the Partnership and their own planning for deliverables.
- Some coordinators also fear that the tight planning forces them to publish actions that are not fully developed.
- It is pointed out that the type of support provided by the Technical Secretariat should be better clarified and focus only on basic organisational and logistic assistance.
- It is underlined that the travel and logistics expenses could be more extensively covered by the Technical Secretariat.

On a general note, it is stressed that Partnerships are both a project and a process and that it needs to be understood as a joint exercise of equal partners.

3.3.3 Collaboration between different Partnerships and work on cross-cutting issues

Partnerships do have plans about future cooperation with other Partnerships, but concrete exchange and collaboration still need to be developed. So far, some Partnerships have been collaborating with others mainly to avoid the duplication of objectives, actions or knowledge creation. For instance, the Urban Poverty Partnership cooperates with the Housing Partnership on the exchange of information regarding their work on homelessness to avoid overlap.

In addition, timing is an important factor to take into account; the phase in which partners work towards the implementation of the Action Plans seems to be the most appropriate phase to foster cooperation between Partnerships. It will indeed be easier for the Amsterdam Partnerships to identify synergies with other Partnerships on specific topics and actions after the publication of their Action Plans, because opportunities to collaborate will be more obvious. It is pointed out that the Coordinators Meetings organised by the EC are a good discussion forum to foster inter-Partnership collaboration. The EC and the Technical Secretariat can indeed further facilitate direct connections between the Partnerships.

The Pact of Amsterdam mentions a number of cross-cutting issues to be addressed alongside the priority themes. Some interviewed coordinators emphasize that there has so far been a lack of time or strategy to properly tackle the cross-cutting issues. Besides, data is lacking to clarify the extent to which the cross-cutting issues have been integrated to in the Partnerships' work.

3.3.4 Collaboration with external stakeholders and dissemination of results

The Partnerships sometimes work with external stakeholders that are not partners in the Partnership. Collaborating with a ring of external stakeholders is underlined as a great opportunity to have an external point of view on the relevance of the Partnership's work and actions, but also as strategic

to enhance the visibility of the UAEU. Working with external stakeholders also enables the Partnerships to benefit from additional expertise, when deemed necessary. A majority of the Partnerships collaborate with NGOs, universities, research laboratories and knowledge institutions or think tanks. Besides the cooperation with independent researchers, various associations and networks, Partnerships also engage in collaboration with other external stakeholders such as the OECD, other cities and ministries, consultancies, housing and real-estate companies, political parties, citizens and local community, volunteers, and policy makers. One respondent evaluate dedicated stakeholder meetings as very efficient informal fora for knowledge exchange.

In section 3.1.3, it was pointed out that the universities and private companies are absent as partners in the Partnerships. This is due to the fact that they seem to be more considered as external stakeholders. This is especially true for universities, with which five Partnerships collaborate. However, only two Partnerships (Housing and Energy Transition) work with private companies.

For making Partnership-specific knowledge available to a broader audience, a website dedicated to the UAEU is provided by the EC and maintained by the Technical Secretariat.[4] Sharing outputs via social media and a newsletter is part of their external communication service. Partnerships themselves disseminate results mostly via meetings, seminars, conferences, events, workshops and open talks. Some Partnerships have been very active in this regard, with the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees having organised several working conferences, inviting a broad range of stakeholders.

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[4] The website of the UAEU can be accessed through: www.urbanagendaforthe.eu

4 Contribution of European institutions and organisations to the UAEU

Main Findings

Progress of the UAEU actions under the responsibility of EU institutions and organisations:

- Next to Partnerships, the Pact of Amsterdam lists ten more actions relating to the four categories of actions (themes, vertical and horizontal coordination, impact assessments, and knowledge) to be implemented. EU institutions, notably the EC, and European organisations play a crucial role in this.
- All in all, the implementation of the UAEU actions provides clear links with existing thematic, institutional, and knowledge-related aspects of the improvement of the urban dimension of EU policies.
- The actions in which the EC plays an important role are considered as ongoing work, with the one-stop shop and the organisation of the Biennial CITIES Forum being most concrete. Further information could be made available by the EC on the planning and progress of the other actions, such as Partnership-specific mapping studies, the improvement of urban impact assessments, the alignment of the UIA and the UDN to the UAEU, and the (expected) contributions of JPI Urban Europe to the UAEU.
- URBACT and ESPON have provided very concrete contributions to the UAEU and the Partnerships in particular.

Support provided by European institutions and organisations to the UAEU:

- Key EU institutions beyond the EC, such as the EP, the EIB and the CoR, have showed strong interest in shaping the UAEU process and are closely following its implementation. Their active involvement in the UAEU helps to embed the process institutionally and to ensure that the UAEU gains momentum and recognition on a broader scale.
- Hereby, the EP's and the EIB's specific expertise regarding the goals of better regulation and better funding is of high importance. The CoR and the EESC are key stakeholders ensuring the link with local and regional authorities, as well as civil society representatives. It will thus be crucial to ensure these institutions' deep involvement in the implementation phase of the Partnerships' actions.
- European organisations such as CEMR, EUROCITIES, and the European Interregional Cooperation Programmes are profoundly involved in the Partnership work. The Partnerships are advised to continue to make maximum use of the expertise, networks, and tools provided by these organisations.

Beside the Partnerships (action 1 in the Pact of Amsterdam, dealt with in Chapter 3) and the organisation of the Informal Ministerial Meeting by the Presidency about the progress of the UAEU (action 9, dealt with in Chapter 5), nine other actions are listed in the Pact of Amsterdam. They are supposed to contribute to the overarching aim of the UAEU, namely improving regulation, funding and knowledge exchange, in order to better cope with urban opportunities and challenges. Those actions mainly require the involvement of European institutions and organisations. Many of these organisations are also partners in the Partnerships (see Table 5 of the Annex).

This chapter assesses the progress made with regard to the UAEU actions that fall mainly under the responsibility of the EU institutions and organisations (4.1). Furthermore, it details the overall support of European institutions and organisations to the UAEU (4.2). The findings are based on a total of five respondents' answers to the survey and on seven interviews (partly identical to the survey respondents) (see Annex Table 2 and 3).

4.1 Progress of the UAEU actions under the responsibility of EU institutions and organisations

This section presents the progress of the nine actions, as listed in the Pact of Amsterdam, to be implemented by European institutions and organisations. These actions relate to the alignment of their work and programmes to the UAEU or to the strengthening of the urban dimension in EU policies. The global objectives, timelines, output, as well as challenges encountered are highlighted when relevant.

Action 2: Improvement of the coordination of existing instruments and initiatives

- **Objectives:** This action refers to the EC mapping of urban initiatives and the identification of the key stakeholders related to the priority themes of the UAEU, in order to improve the coordination of existing instruments and projects (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016: iv). The EC indeed intends to create, in collaboration with other DGs, one mapping study per priority theme.
- **Achieved output:** Some mapping studies have been produced, for instance on urban poverty, but have not been published**.** For the topic of air quality, a broad collection of existing EU strategies and policies is available on the one-stop shop website.

Action 3: Improvement of territorial impact assessments

- **Objectives:** This action relates to the improvement of the assessment of territorial impact by looking into better methods and tools when considering the impact of EU regulation on cities (ibid.). It intends to make urban impact assessment standard practice in EU policy-making.
- **Achieved output:** The EC started promoting and working on the urban impact assessment method, which is now a specific category of the EC's territorial impact assessments. DG REGIO carries out urban impact assessment pilot projects using the Quick Scan method of ESPON and collaborating with the Joint Research Centre. The initiative has gained support within the EC as other DGs are also involved in the process. Those pilot projects have not been made available online. Besides, other European institutions are involved; in 2016, the EC, the CoR and ESPON, in close association with EUROCITIES and the CEMR, carried out an urban impact assessment on the New Skills Agenda for Europe (CoR, EC and ESPON, 2016).
- **Future phases and challenges:** The next phase will revolve around the improvement of the method and accessible data, and the mainstreaming of the approach within the EC.

Action 4: Alignment of the Urban Innovative Actions with the UAEU priority themes

- **Objectives:** The EC is asked to align the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) with the selected themes for the UAEU (Netherlands Presidency 2016: iv). The UIA initiative provides cities across Europe with financial resources to experiment with new solutions in addressing urban challenges. The intent is to use the bottom-up ideas arising from the UIA to fuel the work of the UAEU Partnerships (EU, n.d.b): they can provide interesting insights relevant for the UAEU in terms of knowledge exchange.
- **Achieved output:** The topics that urban authorities can address in their proposals for the UIA have been aligned to the twelve UAEU priority themes. The first UIA call for proposals (2016), the second (2017), the third and the fourth (forthcoming) will together cover all the priority themes (EU, n.d.a; EU, n.d.b).
- **Future phases and challenges:** The timelines of the Partnerships and of the UIA do not fully align. It will be crucial to share with the UAEU Partnerships (already during the implementation phase of their actions) the good practices, bottlenecks, and challenges identified within the UIA projects, via a streamlined procedure.

Action 5: Contribution of URBACT to the UAEU priority themes

- **Objectives:** URBACT is expected to contribute to the UAEU by proposing its exchange and learning activities where needed (Netherlands Presidency, 2016b). URBACT intends to bring expertise in terms of knowledge exchange to the Partnerships, and foster the reinforcement of the role and capacities of cities in EU policy-making. The URBACT working method is indeed based on city-to-city learning through transnational knowledge exchange (URBACT, 2017).
- **Achieved output:** URBACT contributes directly to the UAEU mainly via its involvement, as an observer, in the twelve thematic Partnerships. An URBACT programme expert is involved in each Partnership. URBACT tries to adapt its contributions and toolbox to the specific needs of each Partnership. On top of its involvement in the Partnerships, URBACT presented an overview of its potential contribution to the UAEU in collaboration with other EICP (see section 4.2.5) at the DGUM meeting in Malta.
- **Future phases and challenges:** The contributions provided by URBACT are less focused on the improvement of EU regulation and funding. Besides, URBACT is working on the further thematic alignment of its knowledge exchange activities and outputs (capitalisation, dissemination) to the UAEU priority themes. URBACT intends to improve the complementarity and synergy between the Partnership's and its activities, in terms of timing and dynamics, while keeping its own working framework.

Action 6: Alignment of the Urban Development Network to the framework of the UAEU

- **Objectives**: The EC is responsible for the alignment of the work of the Urban Development Network (UDN) to the UAEU (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016: v). The UDN is composed of more than 500 urban areas across the EU. The overall aim of the network is to improve the way ERDF resources are invested by and in cities (EC, 2017b).
- **Achieved output:** The UDN takes the UAEU priority themes into account, but no specific publications or projects on the alignment of the UDN to the UAEU have been publicly issued.

Action 7: Contribution of the Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe to the UAEU

Objectives: The Pact of Amsterdam suggests that the scientific work of the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe should be used as evidence-based proposals for the work carried out in the framework of the UAEU (The Netherlands Presidency 2016: v).

Achieved output: The EC and JPI Urban Europe are exchanging ideas and identifying concrete possibilities regarding the contribution of JPI Urban Europe to the UAEU. Initiatives and projects are yet to be defined and implemented.

Action 8: Contribution of ESPON to the UAEU priority themes

- **Objectives:** ESPON shall contribute to the UAEU priority themes through some of its specific research activities (ibid.).
- **Achieved output:** ESPON published a policy brief entitled "Urban Partnership Themes in a Wider Territorial Context" in May 2016 (ESPON, 2016). This document shares observations, policy considerations and examples of territorial evidence, and information about the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, related to the pilot Partnerships. Furthermore, in collaboration with other EICP, ESPON published a joint contribution to the UAEU (see section 4.2.5). Besides, ESPON contributed jointly with the EC and the CoR to the development of urban impact assessment tools.

Action 10: Organisation of a Biennial CITIES Forum

- **Objectives:** The Biennial CITIES Forum, a place to discuss the progress of the UAEU, shall continue to be organised by the EC (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016: v).
- **Achieved output:** The second edition of the CITIES Forum organised by the EC was held before the adoption of the Pact of Amsterdam, on 2 June 2015 in Brussels (EC, 2017c). The

next and third edition will take place on 27-28 November 2017 in Rotterdam. The programme of the event is not publicly known yet.

Action 11: Development appropriate tools and formats to implement a transparent, inclusive and effective implementation of the UAEU

- **Objectives:** The tools and formats mentioned in this action are not precisely defined in the Pact of Amsterdam.
- **Achieved output:** It is assumed here that it refers to the provision of technical assistance for the Partnerships by the EC, through the Technical Secretariat of the UAEU (see Chapter 3). On top of that, the EC set up the UAEU website and a one-stop shop on topics related to the UAEU and the urban dimension of EU policies in 2016 (EC, n.d.). Even though some pages, notably on the UAEU priority themes, are still under construction, the one-stop-shop provides referrals to the UAEU website and to relevant studies, data, EU legislation, funding opportunities, projects, events, and networks on urban issues.

4.2 Support provided by European institutions and organisations to the UAEU

Beyond the specific actions detailed above, European institutions and organisations provide support to the UAEU in general and to the thematic Partnerships in particular (Annex Chart 7). The nature and scope of the support by different European institutions, programmes and umbrella organisations are assessed on the basis of their (expected) role in the UAEU as described in the Pact of Amsterdam. The support provided by the EC to the UAEU, either through the technical assistance to the Partnerships or through the implementation of specific actions, is discussed in Chapter 3 and in the previous section respectively.

4.2.1 Political support of the European Parliament

The expected role of the EP in the UAEU is to take into consideration the recommendations and results of the Partnerships in the discussions regarding new and existing EU legislation relevant to urban issues (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016). The EP provides political support to the entire UAEU process. A recent briefing of the EP's Research Service (Van Lierop, 2017) takes stock of, among other things, the EP's involvement in the UAEU. Informally, Members of the EP are in contact with the Partnership coordinators. Concretely, the EP's Committee on Regional Development co-organises joint public hearings on the UAEU with the CoR's Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget. Before the establishment of the UAEU, one joint public hearing titled "Towards the Pact of Amsterdam" was organised on 25 January 2016 (EP, 2016). A meeting regarding the UAEU implementation was held jointly by the EP and the CoR on 29 June 2017, welcoming some of the Partnership coordinators (CoR and EP, n.d.), aiming to foster the links between Members of the EP and the Partnerships.

4.2.2 Political support of the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee

The role of the CoR is addressed in the Pact of Amsterdam as nominator of urban authorities in the Partnership selection procedure. Apart from this, the definition of its broader role remains rather general as advisory body to other EU institutions. However, its political support to the whole UAEU process is important. Indeed, the CoR has a strong institutional role to play in the development of the UAEU by promoting ways of cooperation between cities and European institutions, communicating cities' needs at European level and encouraging a territorial vision of urban and rural areas as complementary functional spaces. Early on, the CoR has expressed its support for the creation of the UAEU and continues to stress its willingness to play an active role in its further development. For

instance, the Committee published an Opinion entitled "Concrete steps for implementing the EU Urban Agenda" in 2016 (CoR, 2016) and recently co-organised a joint meeting with the EP (see section 4.2.1). Beyond this political role, the CoR is concretely involved in the Partnership work, for instance via its own members in Partnerships such as Urban Poverty and Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, and additionally as a stakeholder in Digital Transition. It drafted an opinion entitled "Towards an integrated EU housing policy" for the Partnership on Housing.

The EESC is also mentioned in the Pact of Amsterdam in relation to its general advisory role. In a proactive way, it has issued a number of Opinions on the development and implementation of the UAEU (EESC, 2015; EESC, 2016). In line with the composition of the EESC, in continues to stress the relevance to take into account the expertise of civil society organisations and to clarify their role in the implementation of the UAEU.

4.2.3 Contribution of European entities representing urban authorities

EUROCITIES and the CEMR, as entities representing urban authorities, should contribute to the development of the UAEU and take into consideration the outcome of the implemented actions (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016). The main way through which EUROCITIES and the CEMR contribute to the UAEU is their active and strong involvement in the Partnerships. The CEMR is a partner in eight Partnerships and EUROCITIES in twelve. Both organisations provide technical expert support. Besides, EUROCITIES points out its use of the Pact of Amsterdam as a strategic reference document to lobby for the recognition of the importance of cities in (EU) policy-making. EUROCITIES thematic working groups also offer opportunities to present and disseminate insights from its participation in the UAEU to other (non-participating) cities. The CEMR establishes a link between the UAEU and the New Urban Agenda due to its role as the European section of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) world organisation.

4.2.4 Contributions and support of the European Investment Bank

The role of the EIB is to contribute to the work of the Partnerships, support the creation of improved funding approaches in urban areas in coordination with the EC, and to take into account the results of the UAEU for its funding instruments and services (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016). The EIB is actively involved as a partner in seven Partnerships (Annex Table 5). For instance, the EIB leads the action on the grant-loan blending for refugee integration in the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees. Besides, the EIB has a portal on the UAEU that presents a wide range of financial products supporting investments in urban development (EIB, n.d.). The portal can help foster the knowledge of partners regarding EU funding and support them in delivering recommendations. Furthermore, on the implementation side, the EIB underlines its will to carry out the actions that are relevant to its activities. It also intends to integrate the UAEU priorities into its lending, blending and advisory role, to develop further its financing of urban projects through the Investment Plan for Europe and to foster innovative urban financing approaches for the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

4.2.5 Contribution of European Interregional Cooperation Programmes

The main common contribution of URBACT, ESPON, Interreg and Interact to the UAEU Partnerships is the publication of a paper that details how the four EICPs can contribute to the work of the Partnerships. The paper, entitled "Interregional contribution to the Urban Agenda for the EU", underlines that "upon the specific demand by the Partnerships and when relevant, the four programmes, working individually or jointly, can develop tailor-made reports, data and tools, thematic inputs for events, publications, organise policy labs, seminars" (ESPON, Interact, Interreg Europe and URBACT, 2017: 1). It lists the links between their activities and each UAEU priority theme, opening opportunities for further collaboration. It also describes the distinct role that each EICP can play "to support the Partnerships with existing and new knowledge, expertise and networking opportunities" (ibid.).

5 The expected impact of the UAEU

Main Findings

- The involvement of different types of organisations in the UAEU process has established completely new working methods and forms of cooperation based on multi-level governance.
- The UAEU seems to have strengthened and improved the internal coordination and collaboration on urban issues across different DGs in the EC.
- Inter-institutional cooperation on the UAEU – especially between the EC and other EU institutions or umbrella organisations – has also been strengthened.
- The intergovernmental framework of the UAEU underlines the vertical cooperation between Member States and the EC, even though concerns are raised regarding the balance of this cooperation.
- The UAEU multi-level working method led to the creation of new direct communication channels between EU institutions and cities, but EU institutions – and Member States in the intergovernmental process - still hold decision-making power.
- Some forms of coordination between the Member States and local authorities regarding the UAEU emerged, while the UAEU fostered the debate on urban development in some countries.

The long-lasting reinforcement of the role of cities in the policy design will depend on the practical outcomes of the Partnerships. If the Partnerships' recommendations are implemented, it will help to make a stronger case for the practical and innovative solutions that can be developed jointly by European, national, regional and urban authorities. Especially the impact of the UAEU on post-2020 EU policy will be crucial for the (future) position of cities at European level. To influence the post-2020 Cohesion Policy in particular and EU policies in general, the Partnerships have to meet relevant conditions: (1) good timing, (2) concrete and practical proposals with regard to regulations, funding and knowledge, and (3) support by many stakeholders and especially Member States and the EC.

The UAEU may also have international impact. The UAEU is the key delivery mechanism for the implementation of the global New Urban Agenda (NUA) in the EU, which is explicitly acknowledged by the EC, the EP and the MS. It remains to be seen to what extent the Partnerships will address the connection with the NUA in the Action Plans.

Even though it is too early to assess the outcomes and impact of the UAEU, it can be informative to examine the expectations in this regard. Besides, assessing whether the UAEU is on the right track enables to identify possible improvements. This evaluation is based on the expectations expressed by interviewees and survey respondents on the outcomes and impact of the UAEU activities in which they participate (see Table 2 and Table 3 of the Annex for details on the survey respondents and interviewees).

This chapter discerns the expected outcomes or impacts of the UAEU with regard to (1) improving the horizontal and vertical coordination on EU policies with an urban impact, in other words, the establishment of a new multi-level governance model, and (2) strengthening the urban dimension of EU policies in terms of better regulation, funding and knowledge, including the impact on the post-2020 EU policy. A brief section presents some views of the respondents on the future of the UAEU. We will conclude the chapter with an analysis on the links between the global New Urban Agenda and the UAEU to assess the (potential) international impact of the UAEU.

5.1 Impact of the new multi-level governance model

Several interviewees underline that experimenting with a new governance model is one of the most important results of the UAEU Partnerships, and that they hope this will have lasting effects. This new working method is marked by its multi-level governance framework that involves EU institutions and organisations, Member States and urban authorities. The intergovernmental feature of the over-all UAEU governance (which relies on the UDG and DGUM meetings) and the main delivery mecha-nism of the UAEU (the twelve thematic Partnerships) are the two main aspects of this multi-level framework.

The potential impact of the UAEU on the horizontal and vertical collaboration within and between the European, national and local levels of government and their respective position in EU policy making is presented below, based on the observations and expectations of survey and interview respondents.

5.1.1 Impact of the UAEU on the horizontal cooperation at EU level

The involvement of different European institutions, programmes and umbrella organisations in the UAEU process has established a completely new working method based on multi-level governance and has indirectly affected the way those entities collaborate on urban-related policies, issues and challenges.

Impact of UAEU on the internal coordination within the European Commission

The UAEU covers a wide range of themes. At the European level, the involvement of the aligned sectoral DGs within the EC is thus necessary to make sure that the UAEU is supported and fully embedded in the overall European decision-making process.

Many survey respondents and interviewees representing European institutions and umbrella organi-sations stress the improvement of the coordination and collaboration on urban issues and policies between the different DGs within the European Commission. DG REGIO, which is responsible for Regional and Urban Policy and the lead DG with regard to the UAEU, underlines the strong awareness of other DGs of the UAEU and their increasing focus on the UAEU priority themes.

Across the EC, the DGs make positive contributions to the UAEU process. Ecorys, which is part of the Technical Secretariat, stresses the effort made by DG REGIO to involve other DGs. Furthermore, DG REGIO coordinates an inter-service group focusing on urban and territorial issues that led to a sub-stantial improvement of inter-DG collaboration.

Impact of the UAEU on the collaboration between European institutions and with European organisations

In addition to the EC, other European institutions are involved in the UAEU: the EP, the EIB and the CoR. Their involvement led to new inter-institutional cooperation channels. The CoR mentions that the discussions on the UAEU led to the strengthening of its collaboration with the EC, especially regarding the implementation of urban impact assessments. The joint public hearings organised by the EP and the CoR on the UAEU are also an example of this forms of cooperation arising from the UAEU. Besides, the EIB underlines that the UAEU helped to strengthen the cooperation with European institutions on urban issues. Moreover, the EIB established an internal new working group on urban issues to make EIB professionals work together closely on urban issues.

European umbrella organisations, such as EUROCITIES and the CEMR, are also closely involved in the UAEU, mostly through the Partnerships but also via their role in the nomination of partner cities at the UDG and DGUM meetings. The active contributions of EUROCITIES and the CEMR to the UAEU seem to have led to the clarification, formalisation and recognition of their role by EU institutions. However, the connection and collaboration between those umbrella organisations, European Inter-regional Cooperation Programmes and European institutions was already in place when the UAEU was launched. While the UAEU does not seem to have led to completely new forms of collaboration

between those stakeholders, these already existing cooperative relationships might have helped to develop more easily the multi-level governance framework of the UAEU.

5.1.2 Impact of the UAEU on vertical cooperation

Impact of the governance model on the vertical cooperation between Member States and EU institutions regarding urban issues

The governance framework of the UAEU, which relies on the UDG and DGUM-meetings, is the principal channel of vertical cooperation between national and European levels within the UAEU. Many Member States underline the positive dynamics the UAEU fostered regarding the awareness, discussion and multi-level cooperation on urban development at European level. One MS points out that the UAEU brought EU urban policy-making closer to national urban-related discussions and stakeholders. Another MS states that cooperation between Member States on urban topics intensified and is more focused thanks to the UAEU.

However, some concerns are underlined regarding the UDG and DGUM governance. Continuity of the governance framework is a key challenge, as the Presidencies of the Council of the EU chairing the UDG and DGUM-meetings change every six months. The role of the EC in the governance can be perceived as too strong in comparison to the Member States', as some of the respondents' remark. As a matter of fact, the EC funds the Technical Secretariat, which reinforces its role in the UAEU. Furthermore, the next Trio Presidency (Estonia, Bulgaria, Austria) has not planned an Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers for Urban Matters on the progress of the Urban Agenda for the EU, although the Pact of Amsterdam advises to organise at least one meeting during each Trio Presidency (action 9). Such a meeting would be crucial to keep Member States involved and supportive of the UAEU. The role of Member States as a go-between between urban authorities and the EC is critical for the UAEU's capacity to actually successfully improve EU regulation and funding, especially with regard to the post-2020 EU policy.

Impact on the position of cities in EU policy making

Most Partnership coordinators and representatives of Member States agree on the fact that the UAEU has already had a positive influence on the position of cities in EU policy making (Annex Chart 9 and Chart 11). Cities are considered equal partners to Member States and EU institutions in the Partnerships. This cooperation framework gives urban authorities the opportunity to be actively involved in reviewing, designing and contributing to improve EU legislation and funding related to urban matters and discuss those issues with different European stakeholders.

The UAEU also has a wider impact. For instance, the Partnerships are asked by EU institutions to contribute with their thematic expertise during events at European level. Some Partnerships also organise stakeholder meetings that gather any interested third parties – among others, representatives from European institutions. For instance, the Partnership on Housing organised a stakeholder reception in Brussels in March 2017 with representatives from the EP, the CoR and the EC (EC, 2017a). Furthermore, the Pact of Amsterdam itself is a useful reference document that can be used strategically to stress the growing recognition of the importance of cities in EU policy making.

Nevertheless, EU representatives point out that beyond the nature of the Partnership process itself, the long-lasting reinforcement of the role of cities in the EU policy design will depend on the practical outcomes of the Partnerships.

If the Partnerships' recommendations are implemented, it will help make a stronger case for the practical and innovative solutions that can be developed jointly by European, national, regional and urban authorities. There might then be room for a strengthened and structural connection of cities to European policy making. On the contrary, if the Partnerships' actions are not supported and implemented at European level, the interest of the different stakeholders in the multi-level process is likely to decrease.

Member States' UAEU coordination mechanisms between government levels

Several Member States have established a mechanism to coordinate the involvement of local, regional and national authorities in the UAEU Partnerships. Around two thirds of the Member State survey respondents mentioned such coordination mechanisms. However, the nature of these mechanisms differs greatly from country to country. In most cases, the main goal of these coordination mechanisms is to actively foster a national network composed of the various stakeholders involved at all government levels in the different Partnerships in order to ensure an efficient exchange of information on the inputs and outcomes of the UAEU. Some countries, such as Croatia, Slovenia or Finland, established *ad hoc* thematic support working groups that work on the theme of the Partnership(s) the country is involved in.

Communication channels between relevant Ministries, cities and umbrella organisations were (or will be) created in some countries to share information about the work conducted in the Partnerships. Those channels mainly take the form of meetings (Finland, Netherlands, and Norway) or national coordination platforms on urban policy (Austria). Germany, Slovenia and Estonia use already existing policy framework, discussion forums and networks to exchange information on the UAEU. Italy has established a more advanced and structured coordination mechanism (see text box below). The efforts conducted by most Member States to create and sustain vertical coordination within their country underline the solid attention they draw to the UAEU.

The Italian coordination mechanism

Italy has been using an existing structure – the National Operational Programme point for Metropolitan areas (NOPMetro), linked to Article 7 of the Structural Funds – that involves all fourteen metropolitan areas in Italy. The Italian Association of cities, ANCI, is also involved, and brings in the small and medium-sized cities in Italy. The NOPMetro works as an Italian national technical secretariat for the UAEU, by ensuring the national coordination for cities. It creates awareness among cities, and makes sure that deadlines for participation in the UAEU Partnerships are met. All Italian cities were asked about their interest in the UAEU PS. The best candidate cities were supported and proposed as partner cities at the UDG and DGUM meetings by Italy. The selected cities have a responsibility toward the cities that could not participate in the Partnerships; they must act as a leader-city at the national level in the relevant thematic national networks.

Impact of the UAEU on national urban policies

Around half of the surveyed Member States stated that the UAEU strengthened, in one way or another, their national urban policy (Annex Chart 10). However, many others pointed out that the establishment of the UAEU is too recent to draw conclusions on its impact on urban policy at national level. The UAEU seems to have fostered debate on national urban development policies in some countries. In others, like the Netherlands, Italy and Slovakia, the UAEU gave growing attention to multi-level governance and improved the cooperation of national ministries with cities. In the Netherlands, the UAEU was launched almost at the same time as a national urban agenda and the Dutch ministry of the Interior as well as local authorities undertake efforts to link both initiatives, even though this is challenging (further details in Text 3 of the Annex).

5.2 Expected impact of the UAEU on the post-2020 EU policy

The previous section (5.1.2) emphasized that the long-lasting reinforcement of the role of cities in EU policy design will depend on the practical outcomes of the Partnerships. Especially the impact of the UAEU on post-2020 EU policy will be crucial for the (future) position of cities at European level. Although not all Partnerships' recommendations will be relevant for the post-2020 policy, because of

the timing - currently the European Commission and the Member States are involved in developing the post-2020 EU policy – the impact on the post-2020 policy will be most important.

The Partnership coordinators in general expect that the Partnerships' Action Plans and their implementation will promote better regulation, funding and knowledge for urban authorities in the relevant subject areas. The PS coordinators could not specify the expected outcomes yet, because even the four Amsterdam Partnerships still need to finalize their draft Action Plans. However, the coordinators also indicated that these effects depend heavily on the commitment and willingness of (the DGs of) the Commission and the Member States to act upon the recommendations of the Partnerships. As a matter of fact, representatives of EU institutions mentioned more specifically the crucial link to be created between the UAEU and the (next) Cohesion policy. The UAEU has already strengthened and made more stable the position of urban and regional policy in the EU policy by providing it with a strong policy framework. But this needs to be brought further, as the impact (and the success) of the UAEU will mainly rely on the fact that Partnerships' recommendations are taken into account in the post-2020 Cohesion Policy.

Representatives of EU institutions emphasise the opportunities for Partnerships to influence the post-2020 Cohesion Policy in particular and EU policies in general. They have to meet relevant conditions: (1) good timing, (2) concrete and practical proposals with regard to regulations, funding and knowledge, (3) supported by many stakeholders.

Firstly, Partnerships' recommendations to improve EU policy may come in time to impact the post-2020 EU policy. In 2020, the 2014-2020 programming period will end and the European Commission will submit a proposal for the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) by 1 January 2018 (EP, 2017). As the EU budget for the next programming period will shape the priorities of the new EU Cohesion policy, some of the recommendations arising from the UAEU in general and the Partnerships in particular to strengthen the urban dimensions of EU policy should be available in time to be taken into consideration by European institutions and the Member States when developing the EU budget post-2020. The timing is good for the Amsterdam Partnerships regarding the MFF, but it is uncertain whether the Bratislava and Malta Partnerships will succeed in drafting their action plans in time to influence the post-2020 EU policy and budget.

Secondly, all levels of government have a distinct role to play in the delivery of concrete and practical recommendations. Cities are the pillar to provide practical inputs coming from the ground – especially regarding EU funds, which they use at local level. MS and the EC are key on the regulation side; the EC has the knowledge about the existing EU legislation and MS are better used to deal with EU legislation than cities. Partnerships' Action Plans have not been presented yet, so it is too early to evaluate whether the proposals are concrete and practical enough.

Thirdly, recommendations must be supported by all levels of administration and in particular by Member States and the European Commission. Member States are an essential go-between; they have to support those recommendations actively and take on board the relevant sectoral ministries at national level. Indeed, the negotiations regarding the MFF will be conducted between the European institutions and the Member States. In this respect, the diminishing degree of participation of Member States in the more recent Partnerships is a cause of concern. Additionally, a strong commitment of the Commission to take into consideration the recommendations of the Partnerships is mentioned as a key condition to impact the next MFF and Cohesion policy. The EC emphasizes its will examine all the recommendations that will be delivered by the Partnerships. However, a consistent and streamlined approach still needs to be defined for this purpose.

5.3 The future of the Urban Agenda for the EU

Although the future of the UAEU has hardly been a topic of discussion in the interviews and survey, some respondents raised concerns about the fact that the next three Presidency appear to be less

interested in actively supporting and discussing the progress of the UAEU. The CoR has already expressed the strong support to the Urban Agenda in the EU cohesion policy post-2020. It has formulated a series of actions to ensure commitment to future policy development and sustainability of the Urban Agenda for the EU after 2020.

The idea that new UAEU Partnerships may be established in the future got positive response in general. New topic ideas have already emerged from cities and regions, such as food, cultural heritage, health, security and urban innovation. The role of the UDG at upcoming meetings will be important as they will decide upon the process of developing and selecting new priority themes. Nonetheless Partnership coordinators and other urban stakeholders are strong about the fact that no more than twelve Partnerships can be managed simultaneously. All stakeholders agree that the present structure of the UAEU and experiences with the twelve Partnerships serve as a good example for tackling challenges of potential future Partnerships in an efficient way.

5.4 The UAEU, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the New Urban Agenda

The Urban Agenda for the EU, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the global New Urban Agenda (NUA) are closely connected. The Pact of Amsterdam explicitly refers to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015, and in particular Goal 11, which calls upon Member States to "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". This goal was the reason to convene the Third Habitat Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urban development. At this Habitat III Conference, nearly 170 countries unanimously adopted the New Urban Agenda (NUA), on 20 October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador.

At the Habitat III Conference, the European Commission announced its voluntary commitment to contribute to the NUA. It stressed that the UAEU is the key delivery mechanism for its implementation in the EU. This also explains why the Actions Plans of the twelve UAEU Partnerships should include a section on the way the Partnerships will contribute to the SDGs and the NUA goals.

The NUA presents a wide variety of urban topics, priorities, and principles, which are also addressed in the UAEU and its priority themes. For instance, it strongly promotes the concepts of the inclusive city or the city for all, emphasising the need to improve the living conditions of the urban poor and the position of migrants. Both the UAEU and the NUA stress the key principles of "new urban governance", based on equal partnerships between all urban actors, taking into account principles of subsidiarity, proportionality, and multilevel governance.

The European Commission, the European Parliament and Member States have explicitly acknowledged the need to build bridges between the European and the global urban agendas. During the interview conducted for this research, the EC stresses the importance of the linkages between the NUA, the SDGs and the UAEU and its will to foster them. To this end, the EC provides material on this topic to the Partnerships and intends to support them further if deemed necessary after the publication of the Actions Plans. Indeed, it remains to be seen to what extent the Partnerships will address the connection between the global urban agendas and the UAEU in their Action Plans. It is too early to tell if that will be the case, but it would be a missed opportunity to neglect it.

6 Conclusion

The main findings are discussed here, based on the three research questions that guided this report.

6.1 Progress regarding the eleven UAEU actions

To start with, the first research question investigates the progress that has been made regarding the eleven actions listed in the Pact of Amsterdam. The report distinguishes between the assessment of the action related to the Partnerships, which are the main delivery mechanism of the UAEU, and the other ten actions.

Twelve thematic Partnerships established

The assessment of the Partnerships' progress takes into consideration that they are both a project aimed at delivering concrete output and an experimental working method. The twelve Partnerships have been successfully established. The now formalized selection procedure led to an overall balanced composition of the Partnerships: all types of partners and levels of government are represented. However, concerns can be raised regarding the balanced representation of all city sizes, the interest of Member States in the process and the absence of partner universities and businesses, for which no clear outreach strategy has been defined.

Conditions for success of the Partnerships' multi-level cooperation process

Besides, the production of concrete deliverables by the Partnerships is closely intertwined with the realisation of key conditions for success with regard to the multi-level cooperation process. The success of this working method relies mainly on the partners' level of commitment in terms of human and financial resources and expertise. Some deficiencies are pointed out on these topics, underlining the importance of the technical, strategic and financial support provided by the Technical Secretariat and the European Commission and of the content expertise contributed by external stakeholders. The active (political) involvement and expertise of EU institutions and organisations is also key for the Partnerships.

Achievements of the Partnerships and future developments

Relying on this multi-level cooperation framework, the eight first Partnerships have managed to follow the mainstreamed planning and deliver the required output so far. The Amsterdam Partnerships reached the phase of identifying concrete actions, while the Bratislava Partnerships have defined their thematic focus. However, the balance between requirements in terms of deliverables and the time allowed to produce those could be improved in order to ensure both output quality and delivery. A clear strategy with regard to inter-Partnership collaboration and cross-cutting issues will become highly relevant in the implementation phase of the Partnerships' actions in order to ensure an integrated approach to the issues tackled by fostering synergies and avoiding overlaps. All in all, the Amsterdam Partnerships have lived up to their role as pilot Partnerships in that they have served as laboratories to test the feasibility of multi-level cooperation, deliverables and timelines. The experiences gathered during the first year of these Partnership have considerably fed into the establishment process of the Bratislava and Malta Partnerships – and it is crucial that they continue to do so in the upcoming working phases.

The actions under the responsibility of EU institutions: a work in progress

The ten other actions predominantly fall under the responsibility of EU institutions, especially the EC. The actions the EC is involved in must be considered as ongoing work. The one-stop shop and the organisation of the Biennial CITIES Forum represent the most concrete examples of implementation.

The EC has developed appropriate tools and formats to ensure the implementation of the UAEU, mainly through the management of the Technical Secretariat. Besides, the EC is conducting pilot projects of urban impact assessment, which has become a distinct category of the territorial impact assessments. The themes covered by the UIA calls for projects now cover the priority themes of the UAEU.

The need for more information on the ongoing actions

The Commission could make further information and documents available regarding the timeline and progress of actions. This would be especially relevant for the thematic mapping studies for each Partnership, the improvement of urban impact assessments, the alignment of the UIA and the UDN to the UAEU, and the (expected) contributions of JPI Urban Europe to the UAEU. URBACT and ESPON have provided very concrete contributions to the UAEU and the Partnerships in particular.

All in all, the implementation of the UAEU actions shows clear links with existing thematic, institutional, and knowledge-related aspects of the improvement of the urban dimension of EU policies, even though more transparency would be needed on the actual focus and progress made on these actions by EU institutions and organisations alike.

6. 2 Impact of the UAEU on the urban dimension of EU policies

The second research question intends to assess the impact of the progress made on the eleven actions on the strengthening of the urban dimension of EU policies. Indeed, the expected long-term result of the UAEU is the improvement of the effectiveness and efficiencies of EU policies in urban areas. The UAEU actions (are expected to) impact the urban dimension of EU policies in various ways that feed each other.

A clear and already existing impact on inter-institutional multi-level collaboration

Firstly, the innovative and experimental multi-level process, embodied especially by the Partnerships' working method, already indirectly affect the urban dimension in EU policies, even though definite conclusions cannot be drawn as the UAEU is still in an early phase. The UAEU proves to be an important tool in strengthening the multi-level cooperation of different stakeholders in urban policy.

An improved horizontal coordination and collaboration on urban issues within and between European institutions

The UAEU seems to have improved horizontal coordination and collaboration on urban topics within and between EU institutions. There is a general recognition of the UAEU within the EC and the collaboration on urban issues across Directorate Generals has improved. This can facilitate the acknowledgement of the importance and relevance of urban issues and help foster integrated approaches to these topics at European level. Besides, key EU institutions beyond the EC, such as the EP and the EIB, have showed strong interest in shaping the creation of the UAEU process and are following its implementation. Their active involvement in the UAEU helps to embed the process institutionally and to ensure that the UAEU gains broader recognition. This can eventually strengthen the urban dimension of policies within those institutions in particular and at EU level in general. The political support of EU institutions will then also be crucial to ensure the implementation of the Partnerships' actions and recommendations.

The UAEU also implies more inter-institutional cooperation between the EC and other EU institutions and umbrella city organisations, which have seen their role becoming more formalized thanks to their participation in the Partnerships and the governance of the UAEU.

A fostered vertical collaboration on urban policy between levels of government

Besides, the UAEU fosters vertical collaboration between the local, national and European levels of government on urban policy. The UAEU governance framework relies on direct cooperation between the EC and Member States. The Partnerships created a direct communication channel between cities and EU institutions. The Partnerships can eventually reinforce the position of cities in EU policy development as they create opportunities for cities to formulate recommendations in a formalized way. This could help to bring the EU closer to citizens and reinforce trust in EU institutions, which are major contemporary challenges.

Key conditions for a long-lasting and structural impact

Nevertheless, the long-lasting impact of the UAEU on the urban dimension of EU policy will depend on the practical outcomes of the Partnerships and the ten other actions. The alignment of the relevant EU programmes and initiatives to the UAEU can eventually make the work on urban issues at European level more coordinated.

Moreover, the extent to which the actions and recommendations of the Partnerships will be taken into consideration and implemented at European level will be key to strengthen the urban dimension of EU policy. More specifically, the extent to which the recommendations and results arising from the Partnerships will influence the post-2020 MFF, and Cohesion Policy, will be decisive to ensure a long-term structural improvement of EU policies in urban areas and to give more room and priority to urban issues at European level.

6.3 Spin-off effects of the UAEU at international and national levels

Finally, the third and last research question deals with the (un)-expected spin-off effects of the UAEU at national and international level.

Because the UAEU is still in its experimental phase, only expectations and conditions for success can be underlined regarding the impact of the UAEU at international level. The UAEU is officially meant to become the EU contribution to the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and eventually contribute to the SDGs. The impact of the UAEU at international level will directly depend on its outcomes at European level. The linkages between the European and the global urban agendas will also need to be clearly underlined during the Partnerships' implementation phase.

In addition, at national level, the involvement of cities and ministries in the Partnerships led to the creation of some forms of coordination between Member States and local authorities. Even though it is too early to say, these might eventually impact the vertical coordination of urban policy between national and local levels of government.

The UAEU is an ongoing project and process whose progress, (expected) impact and spin-off so far have been assessed in this report, one year after its establishment. It is then crucial that the results arising from the UAEU are re-assessed in the next phases of its implementation. It can indeed already be pointed out that the future progress made on the eleven actions, especially the implementation of the Partnerships' actions and their influence on EU policies of the next programming period, will be crucial to fulfil the long-lasting purpose of the UAEU: improve EU policies in urban areas. Moreover, if the UAEU is understood as a process to be continuously developed further, it will be a remarkable forerunner in more effective, integrated, and inclusive policy-making in Europe.

7 Recommendations for taking the UAEU forward

Realise adequate resources for Partnerships to succeed

Inadequate resources – in terms of human capital, expertise, financial and process support – appear to be one of the main obstacles for Partnerships to achieve optimum results. The DGUM should discuss and plan how to realise adequate resources and support for Partnerships, amongst others by exploring funding possibilities by Member States, the European Commission, or via the EU Structural Funds (ERDF) in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

Take multi-stakeholder involvement seriously

Partnerships do not function as well as they could in all respects because of an unbalanced composition or insufficiently involved and contributing partners. In particular, there are concerns about the declining involvement of Member States in new Partnerships. It should be underlined that the involvement of all categories of urban stakeholders is crucial for the further development of the multi-level and multi-actor character of the Partnerships. Moreover, where relevant, civil society and private sector representatives should be involved as partners in the Partnerships. Those responsible for the governance of the UAEU should also reach out in a structured way to a "second circle" of stakeholders to avoid that partnerships become "closed containers". An interesting approach to consider at the Member State level is the coordination mechanism implemented in Italy to involve cities that showed interest in the Partnerships but were not selected.

Increase the transparency of the partnership process

Commitment of new and existing partners can only be assured if the selection procedures are fully transparent. Transparency is essential for maintaining broad support for the UAEU and its Partnerships. The UDG and DGUM should agree on methods and procedures to improve the transparency of the selection procedure.

Establish linkages between the Partnerships and relevant institutions

The UAEU is still in an experimental phase, but can only live up to the expectations if it becomes embedded institutionally, including the involvement of institutions that are not directly responsible for urban policy. The dissemination of outcomes must take place in a coordinated and transparent way on all governmental levels. All institutional partners need to be involved in the implementation of the actions and recommendations of the Partnerships, including sectoral ministries of Member States, other Directorate-Generals in the European Commission and the European Parliament. Lastly, better use should be made of existing multi-level institutions such as the REFIT platform, the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB), the Urban Development Network and JPI Urban Europe. At sub-national level, the Partnerships should be embedded in metropolitan regions and regional cooperation networks, allowing cities of all sizes to participate.

Strengthen the political relevance of the UAEU for the post-2020 budget period

The Partnerships play a key role in raising the political relevance of the UAEU. There is a need to participate as soon as possible in the ongoing debate on the post-2020 budget period. Member States and EU institutions should use the recommendations of the Partnerships to influence the negotiations regarding the next MFF. Strategic coalitions of key political actors on the EU level should make sure the UAEU will actually strengthen the position of cities in EU policy.

Unlock the full potential of the Partnerships by fostering ownership and exchange

Partnerships provide only optimal results if all partners take ownership of the Partnerships. Free-riding should be avoided. This requires favourable conditions for the Partnership process, including

sufficient time and support for the partners to agree on a clear focus and to find common ground at the start of the process. Moreover, the European Commission and other central actors should facilitate more substantial cooperation between Partnerships and the recognition of the cross-cutting themes within the framework of integrated urban development. This can be achieved by establishing dedicated meetings beyond the Coordinators Meetings, to be organised by the Technical Secretariat.

Start discussions on the future of the UAEU now

The momentum of the UAEU must be kept alive, also after the current Trio Presidency of the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta. A discussion on the further development of the Urban Agenda should start under the Trio Presidency of Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria. This discussion should not be limited to new priority themes, but should also include debates on the financial endowment and the longer-term institutional embeddedness of the UAEU.

Ensure strong linkage between European and global urban agendas in Action Plans

The European Commission has voluntarily committed itself to use the UAEU as the key delivery mechanism for the New Urban Agenda. It is also the EC's contribution on urban issues to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda including the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, the links between the European and global urban agendas have so far received little attention of the Partnerships. Therefore, the European Commission should ensure that the link between the New Urban Agenda and the UAEU is clearly addressed in the Action Plans, inter alia by providing content and expert support to the Partnerships to foster this linkage.

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Annex

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Tables

Abbreviation	Name
AEDES	Association of Housing Corporations
ANCI	Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani (National Association of Italian Municipalities)
AP	Action Plan
AQ	Air quality (Partnership)
CA	Climate adaptation (Partnership)
CE	Circular economy (Partnership)
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CoR	Committee of the regions
DG	Directorate-General
DG ENER	Directorate-General for Energy
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DGUM	DG Meeting on Urban Matters
DT	Digital transition (Partnership)
EAPN	European anti-poverty network
EC	European Commission
ECF	European Cyclists Federation
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
EIB	European Investment Bank
EICP	European Interregional Cooperation Programmes
EP	European Parliament
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
ET	Energy transition (Partnership)
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
H	Housing (Partnership)
HEAL	Health and Environment Alliance
IPO	Interprovinciaal Overleg (Association of Provinces of the Netherlands)
IRPP	Innovative and responsible public procurement (Partnership)
JS	Jobs and skills in the local economy (Partnership)
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MPG	Migration Policy Group
MR	Inclusion of migrants and refugees (Partnership)
MS	Member State
NBS	Sustainable use of land and Nature-Based solutions (Partnership)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOPMetro	National Operational Programme point for metropolitan areas
NUA	New Urban Agenda
OyPoA	One Year Pact of Amsterdam
PoA	Pact of Amsterdam
PS	Partnership
PSC	Partnership coordinator
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TS	Technical Secretariat
UAEU	Urban Agenda for the EU
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UDG	Urban Development Group
UITP	International Association of Public Transport
UM	Urban mobility (Partnership)
UP	Urban Poverty (Partnership)
VNG	Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten (Association of Dutch Municipalities)

Table 1 – Table of abbreviations

In total 151 persons have been contacted and asked to fill out the survey. Ultimately, 31 surveys responses have been received, covering five representatives of EU institutions and organisations, eleven Member States (13 responses), nine Partnerships (10 responses in total with no responses from three Malta Partnerships) and three Dutch cities. Out of 20 initially planned, in total 17 skype, phone and face-to-face interviews have been conducted to elaborate on their survey responses. The interviews have been conducted with: four Partnership coordinators (the four Amsterdam Partnerships), seven representatives of EU institutions and organisations (EC, EP, EIB, CoR, EUROCITIES, URBACT and the Technical Secretariat of the UAEU), three representatives of Member States and two representatives of Dutch cities (G32 network of Dutch cities and Utrecht).

Interview type	Interviewees	Interviews conducted	Survey type	Respondents	Survey responses
EU institutions and organisations		**7**	EU institutions and organisations		**5**
	CoR	1		CEMR	1
	DG REGIO	1		CoR	1
	ECORYS	1		DG REGIO	1
	EIB	1		EIB	1
	EP	1		EUROCITES	1
	EUROCITIES	1			
	URBACT	1			
Member States		**3**	Member States		**13**
	Estonia	1		Austria	1
	Germany	1		Croatia	2
	Italy	1		Cyprus	1
				Estonia	1
				Finland	2
				Germany	1
				Ireland	1
				Italy	1
				Netherlands	1
				Norway	1
				Slovenia	1
Partnership coordinators		**4**	Partnership coordinators		**10**
	AQ	1		AQ	1
	H	1		CE	1
	MR	1		DT	1
	UP	1		ET	1
				H	1
				JS	1
				MR	1
				UM	1
				UP	2
Selected cities		**3**	Selected cities		**3**
	G32-Zwole G32-Zaanstad	2		Utrecht	1
	Utrecht[5]	1		The Hague	1
				Tilburg	1
	TOTAL interviews	**17**		**TOTAL survey responses**	**31**
	Interview invitations sent	20		Survey invitations sent	151

Table 2 – Interview and survey information

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[5] The interview with representatives from the City of Utrecht was conducted with both interviewees together, while the G32 interviews with representatives from cities Zwolle and Zaanstad have been conducted with each interviewee separately.

Interviewee	Role
Bharti Girjasing	City of Utrecht
Aldert de Vries[6]	City of Utrecht
Jiri Burianek	European Committee of the Regions
Judit Torokne-Rosza	European Commission – DG REGIO
Jan Maarten de Vet	ECORYS (Technical Secretariat of the UAEU)
Gerry Muscat	European Investment Bank
Jan Olbrycht	European Parliament
Dorthe Nielsen	EUROCITIES
Peter Rhebergen	G32
Herman Swen[7]	G32
Eedi Sepp	Member State – Estonia
Tilman Buchholz	Member State – Germany
Sandra Gizdulich	Member State – Italy
René Korenromp	Partnership coordinator – Air Quality
Michaela Kauer	Partnership coordinator – Housing
Sabina Kekic	Partnership coordinator – Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees
Valerie Lapenne	Partnership coordinator – Urban Poverty
Emmanuel Moulin	URBACT

Table 3 – List of interviewees

Amsterdam Partnerships

Inclusion of migrants and refugees		Air quality	
10 March 2016	Kick-off meeting	May 2016	Approval of the Action Plan
10 May 2016	II Partnership meeting	30 May 2016	Pact of Amsterdam
30 May 2016	Pact of Amsterdam	24 June 2016	General Affairs Council conclusion
21 September 2016	III Partnership meeting	10-13- Nov 2016	European Week of Regions and Cities
10-11 Nov 2016	Working Conference-Housing and Reception	end 2016	Launch of the further Partnerships
11 Nov 2016	IV PS meeting	end 2016	One-stop-shop online
end 2016	Launch of the further Partnerships	beginning 2017	Launch of the remaining Partnerships
beginning 2017	Launch of the remaining Partnerships	Jan-July 2017	First recommendations
7 February 2017	Political roundtable	12-13 June 2017	Partners National Workshop, London
16-17- Feb 2017	Working Conference-Education and Work	mid-June 2017	Preliminary results
17 February 2017	V Partnership meeting	June 2017	Partnership meeting
March-April 2017	First draft Action Plan	July 2017	Preliminary recommendations presentation
15 March 2017	Partnership meeting	July-Aug 2017	Public Feedback
30 March 2017	VI Partnership meeting	September 2017	Preliminary recommendations revision
end May 2017	Draft Action Plan	end 2017	Cities Forum Report by the Commission

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[6] The Utrecht interview with Bharti Girjasing and Aldert de Vries was conducted with both interviewees together.
[7] The G32 interviews with representatives from cities Zwolle and Zaanstad have been conducted with each interviewee separately.

17 May 2017	Working Conference, Ams., by Open Society	**Housing**	
18 May 2017	VII Partnership meeting	30 May 2016	Pact of Amsterdam
1 June 2017	Public Feedback via Futurium	24 June 2016	General Affairs Council conclusion
June 2017	Draft AP/Public Feedback	July 2016	Meeting
June 2017	Meeting Working Group	September 2016	Meeting
September 2017	VIII Partnership meeting	10-13 Nov 2016	European Week of Regions and Cities
December 2017	IX Partnership meeting	Dec 2016	Meeting
Urban Poverty		end 2016	Launch of the further Partnerships
30 May 2016	Pact of Amsterdam	end 2016	One-stop-shop online
24 Jun 2016	General Affairs Council conclusion	beginning 2017	Launch of the remaining Partnerships
10-13 Nov 2016	European Week of Regions and Cities	22-23 March 2017	Partnership meeting
end 2016	Launch of the further Partnerships	23 March 2017	Final Composition proposal for DGUM meeting
beginning 2017	Launch of the remaining Partnerships	June 2017	Partnership meeting
19-20 Jan 2017	Partnership meeting	June 2017	Drafted Action Plan presentation/Public Feedback
31 Mar 2017	Draft Action Plan	October 2017	Partnership meeting
27-28 April 2017	PS meeting/Review of the draft	December 2017	Partnership meeting
June 2017	Final Action Plan	end 2017	Cities Forum Report by the Commission
end 2017	Cities Forum Report by the Commission		

Bratislava Partnerships

Digital transition		**Jobs and skills in the Local Economy**	
30 May 2016	Pact of Amsterdam	30 May 2016	Pact of Amsterdam
end 2016	Launch of the further Partnerships	end 2016	Launch of the further Partnerships
end 2016	One-stop-shop online	beginning 2017	Launch of the remaining Partnerships
beginning 2017	Launch of the remaining Partnerships	22-23 February 2017	Kick-off meeting, Brussels
16 February 2017	Kick-off meeting, Finland	March-Sep 2017	Stocktaking
March 2017	Orientation Paper validation	15 March 2017	Draft Orientation Paper review/DG meeting
April 2017	Orientation Paper endorsed at DGUM meeting	April-Dec 2017	Preparatory Actions
June-July 2017	Partnership meeting, Sofia, Bulgaria	25-26 April 2017	II Partnership meeting, Brussels
Summer 2017	Partnership meeting	6-7 June 2017	III Partnership meeting/World CE Forum, Helsinki
3 September 2017	Subgroups Workshops/Meetings	Aug 17-Sept 18 2017	Defining Objectives and Deliverables

15 September 2017	Subgroups Input Finalised	20-21 September 2017	IV Partnership meeting, Brussels
January 2018	First draft Action Plan officially presented	9-11 October 2017	V Partnership meeting, Brussels
September 2018	Final Action Plan	9-12 October 2017	EU Week of Regions
18 Sept-end 2019	Action Plan implementation	29-30 November 2017	VI Partnership meeting, Brussels
Circular economy		10 November 2017	end 2017
		Dec 17-Jan 2018	First draft Action Plan
30 May 2016	Pact of Amsterdam	January 2018	First draft Action Plan ready
end 2016	Launch of the further Partnerships	September 2018	Final Action Plan available
end 2016	One-stop-shop online	Oct 18-Dec 19 2018	Action Plan implementation
beginning 2017	Launch of the remaining Partnerships	December 2018	Report
February 2017	Draft Orientation Paper	**Urban Mobility**	
22 February 2017	Kick-off meeting		
2 March 2017	Draft Orientation Paper/UDG meeting	30 May 2016	Pact of Amsterdam
April 2017	Orientation Paper validation	end 2016	Launch of the further Partnerships
4 April 2017	Orientation Paper approval/DGUM meeting	beginning 2017	Launch of the remaining Partnerships
May-June 2017	II Partnership meeting	23-24 Feb 2017	Kick-off meeting
June 2017	Stocktaking	March 2017	Draft Orientation Paper
10 June 2017	Analysis of the work	May 2017	II Partnership meeting/Draft discussion
Oct-Nov 2017	III Partnership meeting	mid-May 2017	Final Orientation Paper available
November 2017	Research	June 2017	III Partnership meeting/11 Federal Congress on National Urban Development Policy
10 November 2017	Report submission	September 2017	IV Partnership meeting
January 2018	First draft Action Plan officially presented	November 2017	V Partnership meeting
10 January 2018	Report submission	December 2017	First draft Action Plan
Jan-Feb 2018	Online consultation of the stakeholders	end 20717	Cities Forum Report by the Commission
April 2018	Online consultation of the stakeholders	February 2018	Consultation on draft Action Plan
September 2018	Final Action Plan	3 May 2018	Partnership meeting, Brussels
from September 2018	Concrete actions implementation	14 Jun 2018	Partnership meeting, Hamburg
until December 2019	Action Plan implementation	middle 2018	Action Plan approved by the DGUM
December 2019	Final Report	end 2018-2019	Action Plan implementation

Table 4 – Partnerships' timelines

	MR	AQ	UP	H	DT (1)	JS (1)	CE	UM	CA (2)	ET (2)	NBS (2)	IRPP (2)
NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL INSTITUTIONS (Number of partners)												
Member States	4	4	5	5	6	3	4	5	3	2	6	3
Urban authorities (3)	5	5	7	5	9	9	6	10	6	10	8	7
TOTAL	**9**	**9**	**12**	**10**	**15**	**12**	**10**	**15**	**9**	**12**	**14**	**10**
EUROPEAN COMMISSION (1 = Involved, 0 = Not involved)												
DG AGRI, EC	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DG CLIMA, EC	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
DG CNET, EC	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DG EMPL, EC	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
DG ENER, EC	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
DG ENV, EC	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0
DG GROW, EC	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
DG HOME, EC	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
DG MOVE, EC	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
DG REGIO, EC	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
DG RTD, EC	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Joint Research Centre, EC	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**3**	**8**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**3**	**2**
OTHER STAKEHOLDERS (1= Involved, 0 = not involved)												
AEDES	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CEMR	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
CoR	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Consortium Clean Air Ruhr Area	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ECRE	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ECF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
EIB	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
EUROCITIES	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EUKN	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eurochild	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EAPN	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEANTSA	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HEAL	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Europe	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Union of Tenants	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MPG	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
POLIS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
UITP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
UN HABITAT	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
URBACT	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**6**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**
TOTAL (ALL PARTNERS)	**18**	**21**	**20**	**18**	**20**	**18**	**19**	**24**	**15**	**17**	**19**	**14**

Table 5 – Member States, urban authorities, European Commission and other stakeholders' involvement in the UAEU Partnerships[8]

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[8] (1) The list of stakeholders involved is not finalized in the UDG Malta progress report (March 2017) of those Partnerships. (2) Some partners were still to be confirmed in the composition proposals of the Malta Partnerships (3) Understood here as cities, regions, city consortiums or national city umbrella organisations.

Data used to create this table is taken from the following unpublished documents:

(1) The progress reports presented at the UDG meeting in Malta (March 2017) for the Amsterdam and Bratislava Partnerships. In principle, their composition is fixed but might still be subject to minor changes, especially regarding stakeholders.

(2) The composition proposals following the UDG meeting in Malta (March 2017) for the Malta Partnerships. For the Malta Partnerships, as there is no official composition list available to date, the exact partners might still be subject to changes, which are not reflected in this report.

Furthermore, observers have been left out of the count.

Partnership	Focus themes	Specific milestones
Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees	Work and entrepreneurship Housing Reception and community building Education Cross-cutting theme: vulnerable groups	Bottlenecks and potentials have been identified by external experts via four scoping papers.[9] Three Working Conferences (November 2016, February and May 2017) have been conducted to define actions and to consult with migrants and refugees. An advisory board, to be staffed by (former) migrants and refugees, is to be established.[10] The draft Action Plan will be discussed in Public Feedback in summer 2017.
Air Quality	Modelling city-specific situations Mapping regulatory instruments and funding in the EU Air Quality Best Practices Guidelines for Cities' Air Quality Action Plans	A stakeholder consultation on Air Quality Action Plans was conducted via the UAEU website in May 2017 and a stakeholder workshop was organised on 13 June 2017.[11] The draft Action Plan will be discussed in Public Feedback in summer 2017.
Urban Poverty	Child poverty Regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods Homelessness Vulnerability of Roma people Two transversal themes: access to quality services and welfare and data	A scoping note, developed by two URBACT experts, formed the basis for thematic concentration. The Partnership organised (together with the EUKN) a seminar to reach out to stakeholders in Athens in September 2016. The draft Action Plan will be discussed in Public Feedback in summer 2017.
Housing	State aid and social housing Finance and funding General housing policy	External experts conducted studies on the funding and delivery of affordable housing

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[9] The four scoping papers commissioned by the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees are available at the UAEU website at https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/inclusion-of-migrants-and-refugees/library.

[10] More information on the advisory board is available at https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/content/migrant-advisory-board-be-established-new-approach-tackling-integration-challenges.

[11] This consultation can be accessed at https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/content/survey-air-quality-action-plans-and-related-info-0.

		supply in European cities and on affordable housing in central and eastern Europe.[12]
		A guidance paper on EU regulations and public support for housing has been issued. A toolkit on affordable housing policies is being elaborated.
		DG REGIO commissioned an expert to support the development of the draft Action Plan. The Partnership sees the Action Plan development as an open process. The actions identified so far will nevertheless be discussed in Public Feedback in summer 2017.

Table 6 – Amsterdam Partnerships' focus themes and specific milestones

Partnership	Focus themes	Specific milestones
Digital Transition	Future health and social care Urban planning E-government Future learning and skills development Fostering 5G and other Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) Two horizontal themes: data and standardisation, business models	The Orientation Paper was validated in March 2017. The draft Action Plan is to be delivered in January 2018, final Action Plan in September 2018.
Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy	Valorisation of Research and Development Business locations Public services Effective local government	The Orientation Paper was endorsed in April 2017. The stocktaking phase is to be completed in June 2017 with the publication of a report on existing frameworks and initiatives by the EC. An online stakeholder consultation is planned for the broadening of the debate on an internal screening. The draft Action Plan is to be delivered in January 2018.
Circular Economy	Urban resource management Circular business enablers and drivers Circular consumption	The Orientation Paper was endorsed in April 2017. The draft Action Plan is to be delivered in December 2017.

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[12] The reports drafted for the Partnership are accessible at https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/housing/library.

Urban Mobil-ity	Active modes of transport and the use of public space Innovative solutions and smart mobility Public transport for the city/re-gion and multi-modality Governance	The Orientation Paper was endorsed in April 2017, the revised Orientation Paper pub-lished in June 2017. An external expert (University of Manches-ter) has been commissioned in June 2017 to support narrowing down the thematic focus. The draft Action Plan is to be delivered in December 2017.

Table 7 – Bratislava Partnerships' focus themes and specific milestones

Charts

The date used for the creation of charts and tables is extracted from the survey answers analysis. The indicator "N" positioned in the bottom-left corner of the chart specifies the number of survey respondents whose answers were analysed in order to create the chart.
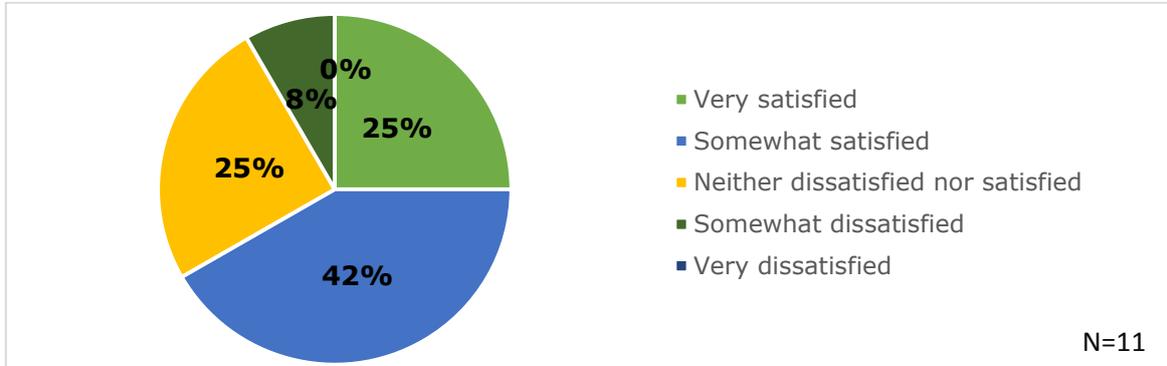
Chart 1 - Level of satisfaction of Member States regarding the establishment of the Partnerships
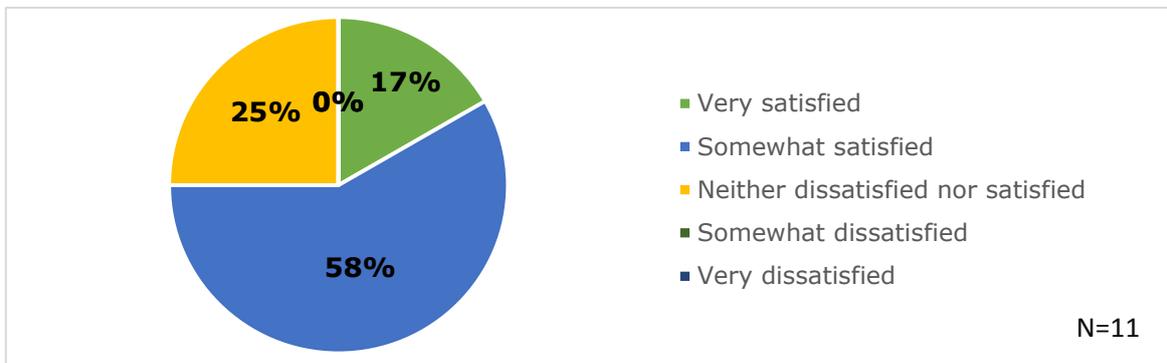
Chart 2 - Level of satisfaction of MS regarding the composition of the Partnerships
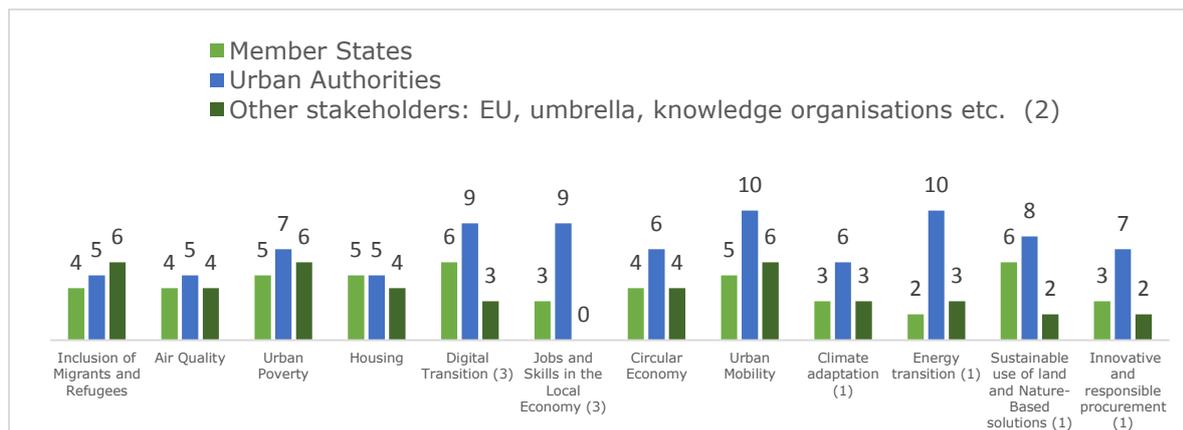
Chart 3 - Number of partners in the UAEU Partnerships – by type of partner[13]

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[13] Data used to create this chart is taken from the following unpublished documents: the progress reports presented at the UDG meeting in Malta (March 2017) for the Amsterdam and Bratislava Partnerships. In principle, their composition is fixed but might still be subject to minor changes, especially regarding stakeholders. The composition proposals following the UDG meeting in Malta (March 2017) for the Malta Partnerships. For the Malta Partnerships, as there is no official composition list available to date, the exact partners might still be subject to changes, which are not reflected in this report. Furthermore, observers have been left out of the count. (1) Some partners were still to be confirmed in the composition proposals of the Malta Partnerships. (2) Does not include
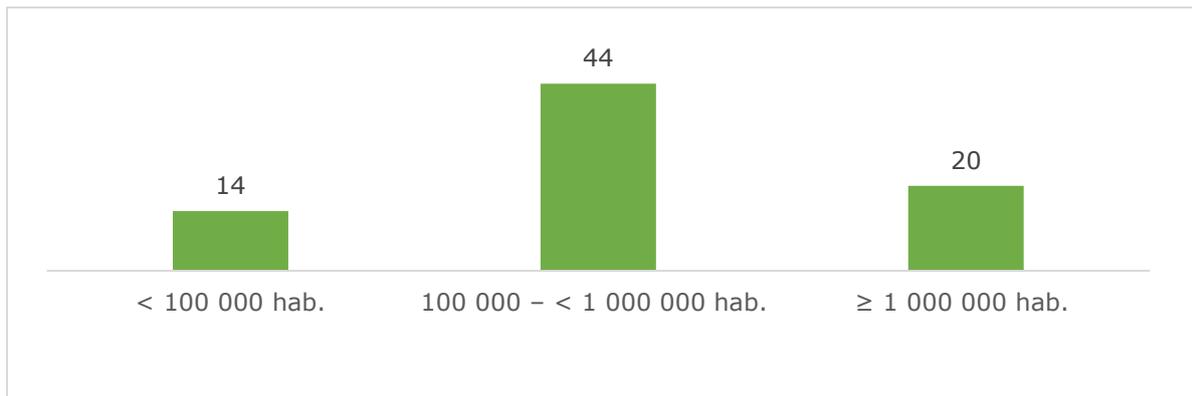
Chart 4 – Total number of cities across the Partnerships – by city size[14]
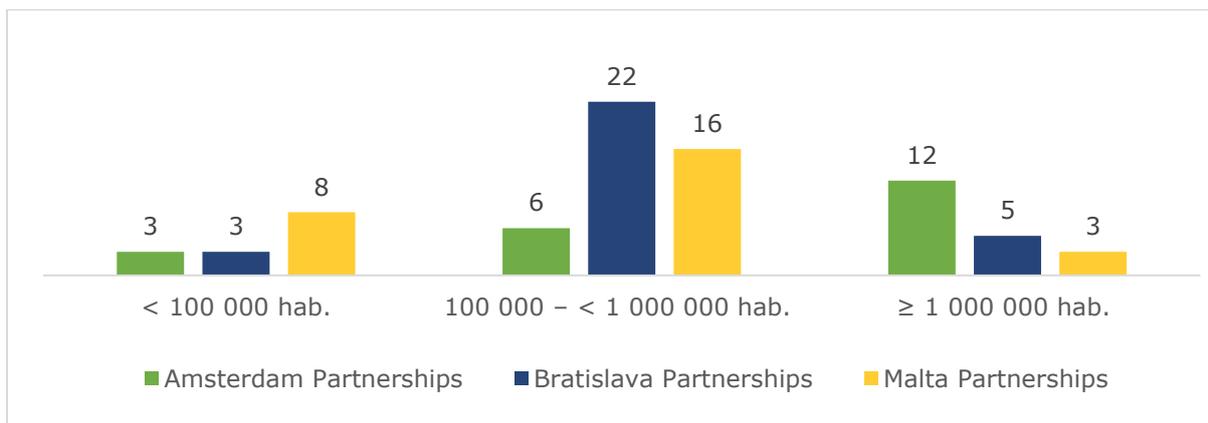
*Chart 5 – Number of cities present in each set of Partnerships – by city size[9]*
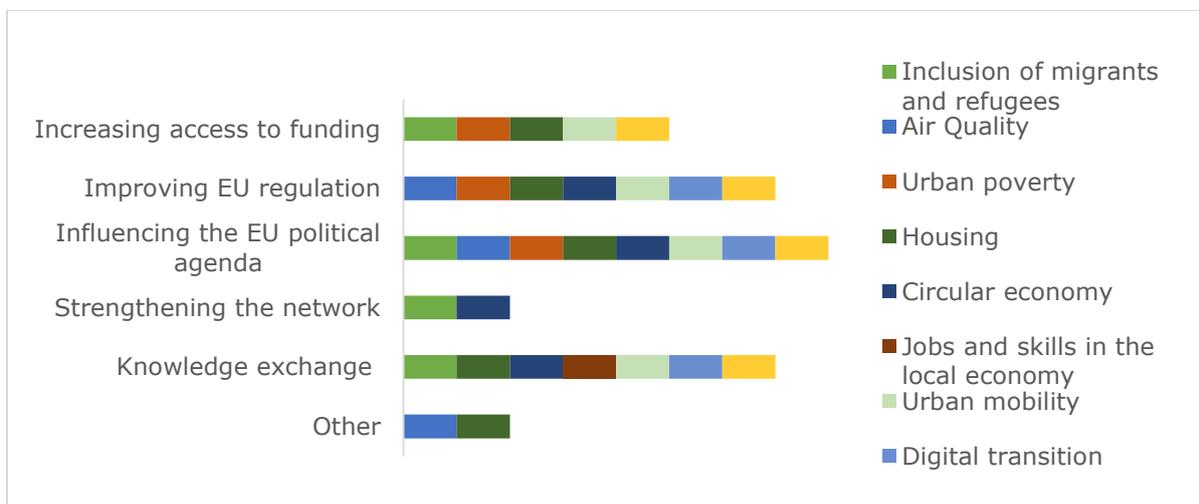
*Chart 6 – Reasons of Partnership coordinators to engage in the Partnership*
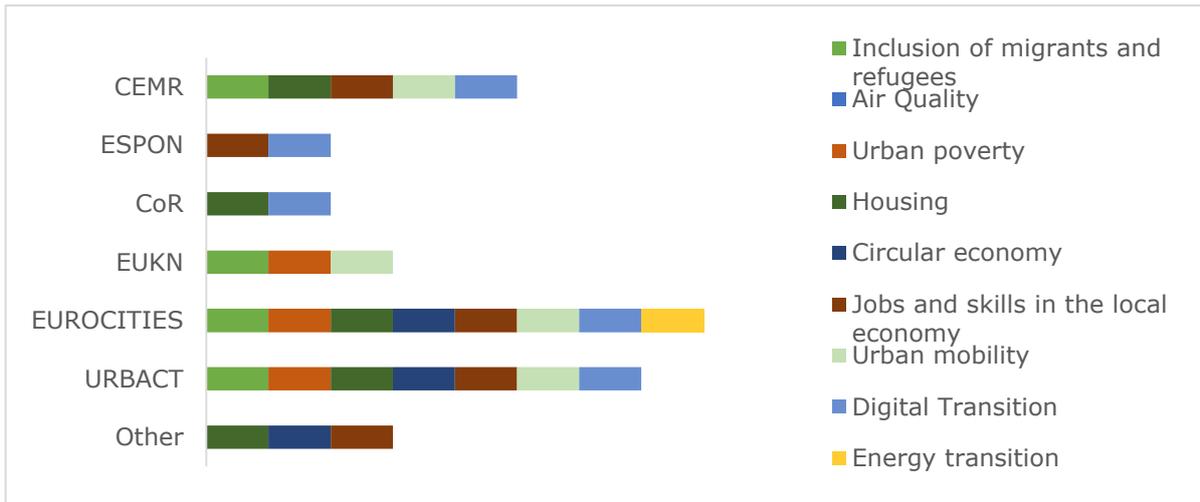
Chart 7 – Partnerships' external support
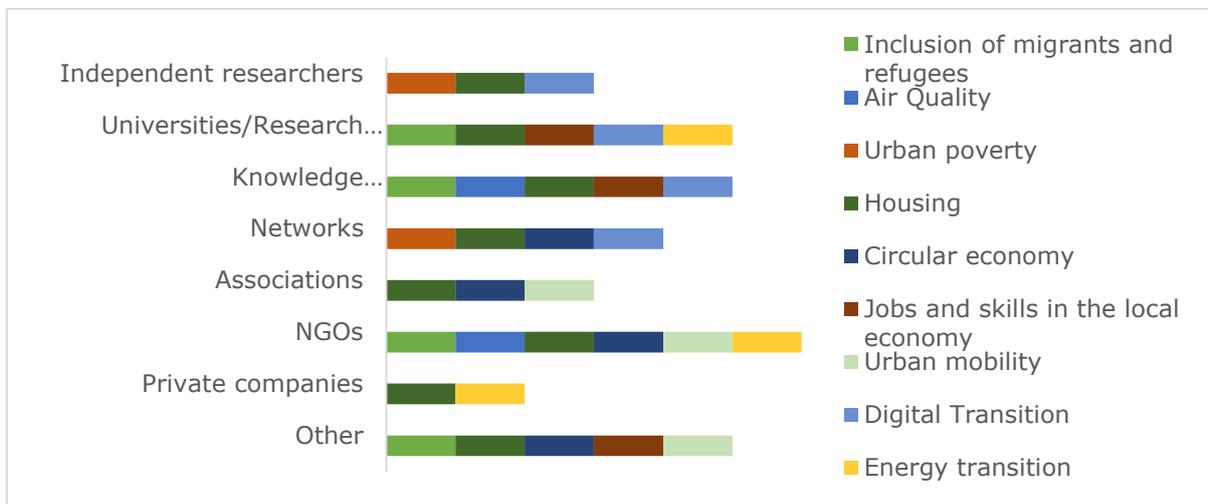
*Chart 8 – Partnerships' cooperation with other stakeholders*
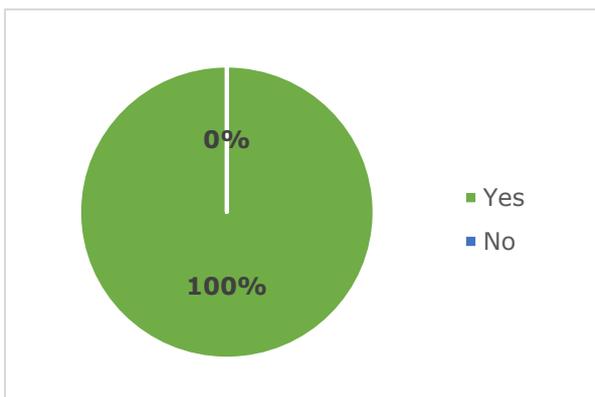
Chart 9 – Member States' answer to the question: "Do you think that the UAEU has a positive influence on the position of cities in the EU policy-making process?" (left)
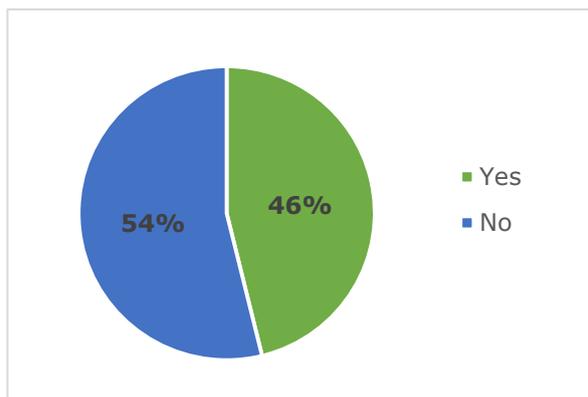
Chart 10 - Member States' answer to the question: "Did the UAEU strengthen your National urban policy?" (right)
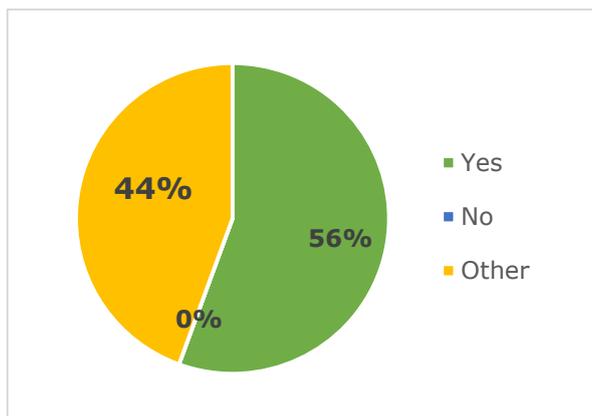
Chart 11 – Partnership coordinators' answer to the question: "Do you think that the UAEU has a positive influence on the position of cities in the EU policy-making process?"

Texts

Text 1 - The process leading to the Urban Agenda for the EU

The Pact of Amsterdam represents the political commitment to deliver an Urban Agenda at EU level. It is the result of a long process of close cooperation between Member States, the European Commission and other European institutions and networks, cities and city associations, and urban stakeholders. Some milestones of this recent political development are summarised below.

Initially, EU-level debates on urban development have been developed "primarily within the framework of intergovernmental cooperation" (Van Lierop, 2017: 2). A shared vision of sustainable urban development has taken shape through declarations signed at Informal Ministerial Meetings on urban and territorial development, including the Leipzig Charter, the Marseille Statement, the Toledo Declaration, the Poznań Conclusions and the Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020. The EU Presidency trio of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg supported "calls for more concrete action" (ibid.). The 2015 Riga Declaration prepared the ground for the further development of the UAEU. An EU-wide consultation process organised by the incoming Dutch Presidency and subsequent workshops organised by DG REGIO led to the selection of a number of priority themes. In November 2015, the Directors-General (DG) responsible for urban matters approved the list of priority themes as well as the selection and working method for the four pilot Partnerships. Finally, in 2016, the Dutch Presidency saw the adoption of the Pact of Amsterdam, the creation of the pilot Partnerships, and the adoption of Council Conclusions explicitly referring to the Urban Agenda (Van Lierop, 2017: 3).

European institutions and networks have, for their part, substantially shaped the discussion on the UAEU for many years and have thus stimulated and informed the intergovernmental process. The Commission contributed to the development of a shared vision on urban development with its Cities of Tomorrow Report (EC, 2011). The 2014 Communication on the urban dimension of EU policies (EC, 2014) was accompanied by the launch of a public consultation, whose results are summarised in the May 2015 Commission Staff Working Document (EC, 2015). The European Parliament fuelled the debate inter alia through an encompassing own-initiative resolution on the urban dimension of EU policies of 2015 (rapporteur Karin Westphal) (EP, 2015). As the EU institution explicitly representing local and regional authorities, the Committee of the Regions contributed notably via its 2014 Opinion titled "Towards an Integrated Urban Agenda for the EU" (rapporteur Bas Verkerk) (CoR, 2014).

Text 2 - Phases and deliverables of the Partnerships

The Working Programme of the UAEU in the Pact of Amsterdam sets out five working phases for all Partnerships to follow during their approximately three-year duration. These are:

1.	Stocktaking: identifying the work that has already been carried out on the topic of the Partnership and potential available sources of expertise and funding;
2.	Identifying bottlenecks and potentials;
3.	Drafting an Action Plan to address those issues;
4.	Implementing the Action Plan; and
5.	Evaluating the results of the Partnership (The Netherlands Presidency, 2016: viii).

Text 3 - Local authorities and the UAEU: a Dutch example

This section focuses on the perspective of cities on the UAEU and the efforts to link national and EU urban policies. The Netherlands has been chosen as an example because the report is meant to provide input not only at EU-level, but also to a national meeting on the UAEU. This section is based on an analysis of survey responses and interviews with participating cities (Amsterdam, The Hague and Tilburg) and interviews with two representatives of the City of Utrecht and two representatives of the G32 network of middle-sized cities.

Participation of Dutch partners in the Partnerships

Dutch cities are well represented among the partners of the Partnerships. The four largest cities in the Netherlands (also known as the G4) all participate in a Partnership, as well as four middle-sized cities (members of the G32 cities network of middle-sized cities): Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Haarlem and Tilburg. In addition, Dutch ministries participate in two Partnerships. The Dutch partners (co-) coordinate four Partnerships in total.

Motives and opportunities to participate in a Partnership

The motives for participating and the expectations of Dutch cities do not significantly differ from those of participating cities from other Member States, as expressed in the survey. The themes of the Partnerships in which Dutch cities participate are always linked to priorities on the local agenda, to ensure mutual reinforcement.

Unintentionally, we also received information about non-participating cities. In September 2016, the G32 network of middle-sized cities explored among its member cities whether they were interested in participation in specific UAEU Partnerships. 25 cities expressed their interest; however, only four cities took the step to actually participate. According to the G32 respondents, reasons why these cities have chosen not to participate include: budgetary constraints, no overlap of the PS themes with the city's priorities, the high level of abstraction of the priority themes, and the assumption that European projects are too complicated and time-consuming. The G32 respondents also indicated that it is easier for larger cities to free up capacity (staff and resources) for PS participation than smaller ones.

Still, many non-participating Dutch cities continue to maintain a keen interest in the UAEU and like to be kept informed about the progress and insights of the Partnerships. However, the EU infrastructure for the provision of information and communication on the UAEU has to be improved in their opinion, for instance, by improving the information published on the UAEU website (more information and keeping it up-to-date).

Support structure and networks for Partnership participation

The ministry of Interior and Kingdom relations has set up a Taskforce Urban Agenda to discuss EUUA issues with other ministries, the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG), the Association of Dutch Provinces (IPO), the G4 and the G32 network. Currently, issues of participation in the Partnerships are discussed quarterly, and all cities participating in Partnerships are represented.

Some representatives of Dutch local authorities emphasise that regional cooperation should receive more attention in the UAEU. Cities habitually collaborate with the surrounding municipalities and other local stakeholders in metropolitan or urban regions. For instance, Utrecht as partner in the Air Quality Partnership had already established a close cooperation with the Utrecht Province and municipalities and knowledge institutes in the Utrecht region in the Health Urban Living programme. Their participation in City Deals of the national urban agenda and in the Air Quality Partnership of the UAEU is linked to this public health priority. The city uses the contacts with municipalities and knowledge institutes in its region to share knowledge and receive feedback.

Relationship between the UAEU and the national urban agenda

The Netherlands has developed a policy agenda around the future of Dutch cities since 2015, known as *Agenda Stad*. The main instrument of *Agenda Stad* are City Deals: public-private agreements on collaboration on innovative solutions for urban transition tasks (PBL, 2017: 4). City Deals are comparable to the UAEU Partnerships. As mentioned above, some cities – like Utrecht – are involved in both City Deals and Partnerships in order to tackle more effectively their urban challenges or reinforce their regional strengths. However, respondents of local authorities indicated that Partnerships and City Deals vary greatly in nature and are often difficult to combine: City Deals are highly flexible and developed from the bottom-up, while Partnerships are rigid and formally structured in a more top-

down manner. In addition, most themes of the national urban agenda and UAEU are not congruent. Nevertheless, both urban agendas share the objectives of improving regulation, funding and knowledge exchange and experimenting with new forms of cooperation. The links between both agendas is discussed on an *ad hoc* basis in the Task Force Urban Agenda and meetings on the national urban agenda of the DGs of Dutch ministries. Linking City Deals and UAEU Partnerships is stimulated by the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, but is primarily the task of the participating partners.