



Connecting cities
Building successes



URBACT Annual Conference 2012 3-4 December 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark

The Annual Conference of URBACT - a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development - will bring together urban practitioners, policymakers and experts from across the EU, to investigate solutions to the critical challenges faced by EU cities.

Target Audience

Practitioners and policy-makers involved in urban development at local, regional, national and EU level, URBACT project partners and experts, other cities, national authorities, EU institutions, as well as research institutions and managing authorities of operational programmes are invited. This conference is open to all interested in the urban field, whether or not part of the URBACT community.

Theme and Workshops

The conference is built on the European Commission's [report](#) "Cities of tomorrow – Challenges, visions, ways forward" (October 2011), which highlighted many of the major challenges that hundreds of cities in URBACT projects were trying to solve through sustainable urban development.

Six parallel workshop sessions will be organised covering main challenges facing EU cities

Drawing on evidence from URBACT – in particular, project results and lessons, - and other European Territorial Cooperation programmes, we will discuss how cities can tackle six key issues:

- How can cities create more jobs;
- How can cities foster active inclusion through social innovation;
- How can cities fight against the socio-spatial divide;
- How can cities deal with the urban shrinkage;
- How can cities improve buildings' energy efficiency;
- How can cities develop low carbon urban environment through better mobility and accessibility.

Plenary Sessions

Alternating with these workshops, various plenary sessions will be organised.

The opening plenary will set the scene for the whole conference in a dynamic way. The challenges outlined in the European Commission's report "Cities of tomorrow – Challenges, visions, ways forward" will be introduced. The newest plans about the post-2014 Cohesion Policy will be highlighted.

An international plenary session, with a panel of leading international experts, will raise the debate about how Europe's urban distinctiveness raises important questions for professionals and policy-makers.

Plenary sessions will also cover the discussions underway on the future of the Cohesion Policy, European urban policies and the goals for Europe 2020. Representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, Member States, and cities, will present their perspectives and points of view about these core issues.

The new URBACT III programme will also be the object of a plenary session.

Conference Speakers

Plenary speakers will include Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy; Jan Olbrycht, Member of the European Parliament, President of the URBAN Intergroup; Carsten Hansen, Minister for Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs of Denmark; Normunds Popenis, Deputy Director-General - Convergence, Competitiveness

and Cross-border programmes of Directorate-General for Regional Policy; Frank Jensen, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen, as well as other European Commission representatives.

To broaden the debates, this conference will present worldwide perspectives and the major urban models discussed by an international panel of city representatives and experts. Susan Fainstein, worldwide recognized expert on urban planning, author of "The Just City" (July 2011); Lie Tie, director of the China Centre for Urban Development at the National Development and Reform Commission; Patricia Torres, specialist in urban development and housing in South America, from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); and Alessandro Balducci, professor of planning and urban policy, vice rector at the Politecnico di Milano, will be part of this round table.

The six workshop organisers - Eddy Adams, Antonio Borghi, Sally Kneeshaw, Alison Partridge, Hans Schlappa and Ivan Tosics - will present their works and intervene at various stages in the plenary sessions on both days.

Exhibition and Special Events

An exhibition area will expose the six workstream's key focus points and findings, the works of other European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (INTERREG IVC, ESPON, INTERACT) and European Commission Directorate General for Regional Policy. The URBACT community will be represented, with its works and findings.

The URBACT Café will allow conference participants to meet and exchange in a spontaneous and informal way, with delegates from their country and in their own language.

The URBACT conference also will give the opportunity to visit and enjoy the host city, Copenhagen, through a set of organised events: a treasure hunt, study visits, a boat tour on the harbour, a dinner facing the "Little Mermaid", symbol of the city, as well as a photo exhibition of the host city by the photographer Muriel de Seze.

Conference Website and Participants Social Network

A dedicated conference website - www.conference2012.urbact.eu - presents in details all the aspects of the conference – the programme, the themes and points of discussion, the speakers, registration details and information on the trip and stay in Copenhagen.

This conference website will feature the social network of URBACT Annual Conference 2012, where the participants will be able to network and connect with conference speakers, organisers and participants before, during and after the event and participate in online discussion groups.

Registrations

Registrations are now open via the conference website. In order to facilitate the coming and participation to the interactive parts of the conference, specific details are asked – notably on speaking languages for interpretation. Participants are asked to make a preference choice on the two workshops out of the six which they would like to participate in. Any other requirements (e.g. regarding catering) may be specified.

There are no registration fees. Registrations will close on 9 November 2012.

Dissemination Tools & Visuals

Find here a link to the dissemination tools and visuals you may need to communicate about the URBACT Annual Conference 2012: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/urbact/sets/72157631622215724/>

Contacts

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Thank you for your interest and support to the URBACT programme.

**Best Regards,
The URBACT Team**
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