



USEAct
Urban Sustainable
Environmental
Actions

* Editorial by
Gaetano Molura
USEAct Lead Partner

* Introduction by
Emmanuel Moulin
Director of the
URBACT Programme

* The point of view
of Ivan Tosics URBACT
Thematic Pole Expert

* Focus on the theme
Vittorio Torbianelli
USEAct Lead Expert
Pauline Geoghegan
USEAct Thematic Expert

* The contribute
of the ad hoc Expert:
Didier Vancutsem
LUMASEC Lead Expert

*** Special contribution
on Planning in Spain
by Adolf Sotoca

** Interview to the
Mayor of Barakaldo
USEAct Project Partner

** Interview to the
Mayor of Viladecans
USEAct Project Partner



Planning Tools
and Planning
Governance
in Spain

USEAct Newsletter issue #1



Connecting cities
Building successes





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Images:

Cover: The image of the cover is a work of the Italian artist Blu, <http://blublu.org/>

pag.7 The image represents the cover of the final report Cities of tomorrow - Challenges, visions, ways forward - (October 2011) edited by the EU Commission

pag.8 top Klaus R. Kunzmann, The European green grape

pag.8 down A picture of the Blu wall in Belgrade (Ph. I.Tosics)

pag.9 The images are extracted by: José Antunes Ferreira, Beatriz Condessa, Joana Castro e Almeida, Pedro Pintos (2010), Urban settlements delimitation in low-density areas - An application to the municipality of Tomar (Portugal), Landscape and Urban Planning 97 (2010)

pag.10 The pictures are taken by Gaetano Mollura during the first Kick off meeting in Viladecans (may 2013)

pag.13 The image represents the areas involved in the USEAct project, City Council of Barakaldo

pag.14 The image represents the situation of the City Council of Viladecans, involved in the USEAct project

pag.15 A Revolta, Pontevedra. A typical image of the outskirts of a Spanish city before and after the Real State bubble (source: www.nacionrotonda.com)

pag.16 top: Partial Territorial Plan for a medium size city next to Girona. On the legend, right-up corner, the three main categories of rural land (source: Departament de Territori i Sostenibilitat, Generalitat de Catalunya)

pag.16 down: Three policies, eight tools, multiple actions: recent set of planning initiatives in Catalonia, 2008-12 (diagram by the author A.Sotoca)

Contents:

INTRODUCTION

- 5 Editorial**
by Gaetano Mollura *Lead Partner*
- 6 Introduction**
by Emmanuel Moulin *Director of the URBACT Secretariat*
- 8 Title**
by Ivan Tosics *URBACT Thematic Pole Expert*

FOCUS ON THE THEME

- 9 Land take and industrial added value: a compass for the USEAct project**
by Vittorio Torbianelli *USEAct Lead Expert*
- 10 Quality a key issue for USEAct partners**
by Pauline Geoghegan *USEAct Thematic Expert*
- 11 A Plea for strategies of integrated land use management**
by Didier Vancutsem *USEAct Ad hoc Expert*

FOCUS ON THE CITIES

- 13 Interview to the Major of Barakaldo** Mr. Alfonso Garcia
collected by Pedro Jauregui, to the Major
- 14 Interview to the Major of Viladecans** Mr. Carles Ruiz Novella
collected by Viladecans USEAct Team

SPECIAL SECTION *Planning Tools in Spain*

- 15 Urban Growth Management-Policies and Tools. Potentialities and Failures of Planning Tools in Catalonia 2006-12**
by Adolf Sotoca *Invited Expert*

WHO WE ARE

- 17 USEAct Team in Barakaldo**
- 18 USEAct Team in Viladecans**



The USEACT Partners

Observer Partners

-  City of Naples (Italy) *Lead Partner*
-  Baia Mare Metropolitan Area (Romania)
-  City of Barakaldo (Spain)
-  Buckinghamshire Business First (UK)
-  City of Dublin (Ireland)
-  City of Nitra (Slovak Republic)
-  Østfold County (Norway)
-  Riga Planning Region (Latvia)
-  City of Trieste (Italy)
-  City of Viladecans (Spain)

-  Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality(Turkey)
-  London Borough of Southwark (UK)

USEAct Kick off Meeting

27th 28th May 2013, Viladecans (Spain)

USEAct Second Thematic Seminar

1st 2nd October 2013, Nitra (Slovak Republic)



Gaetano Mollura is an Italian architect, project manager of the Urban Planning Council Department of Naples and expert in Urban Integrated Approach Development, Gaetano has been involved since 1994 in major European Programmes promoted by the European Commission in the framework of the Urban Development Policies (URBAN I and URBACT I and II). As expert attached to the URBACT I French Secretariat (freelance position) he provided expertise to the cities of new Member States in the framework of the Support for Cities project. Currently he is the coordinator of the USEAct Thematic Network.



Vittorio Torbianelli is Professor in Applied Economics at the University of Trieste. He is the Lead Expert of URBACT II USEAct network. His research is focused on urban and regional economics, transport economics, maritime economics. Expert in planning and evaluating complex forms of intervention aiming at urban and territorial management and development.

Emmanuel Moulin is civil engineer and urban planner with an education in France and Germany and has a long experience in the various fields of urban development. In the last 30 years, he led agencies and departments at local (Lille/Valenciennes, Rouen, Lyon, northern Paris area) and central level of the French Ministry for Environment, Housing, Transport and Urban development, and was responsible for urban planning, housing and land policy, urban renewal for deprived neighbourhood, transport, protection of environment. In the mid eighties he was also sent by the French Ministry after the fall of the wall during four years to work for the German Ministry for Housing, Transport and Urban development for the construction of the new government district in the center of Berlin. Besides, in the last ten years, he was responsible for the training on urban and territorial development of French senior civil servants, architects and urban planners, organised by the School for architecture "Ecole de Chaillot" and the School for civil Engineering "Ecole des Ponts Paris-Tech". He is head of the Secretariat of URBACT since the beginning of 2012.



Pauline Geoghegan is architect and freelance consultant in Urban policies, with expertises specifically in social inclusion, local development and revitalisation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and transnational European networking facilitation.



Iván Tosics is one of the principals of Metropolitan Research Institute (MRI), Budapest. He is sociologist (PhD) with long experience in urban sociology, strategic development, housing policy and EU regional policy issues. Since 2011 he is one of the Thematic Pole Managers of the URBACT programme. He teaches at the University of Pécs, Department of Political Studies, Doctoral School. He is vice chair of the European Network of Housing Research (ENHR).



Didier Vancutsem is an international consultant with large experience in Urban and Regional Planning, Landscape Planning, Infrastructure, Environmental Management and Integrated Strategies. Based in Munich / Germany, he operates in interdisciplinary teams in the elaboration of urban and regional strategies, and conducts research activities in European and international projects. He is professor / lecturer at the Université Libre de Bruxelles Faculty of Architecture and other universities in France, Germany and Russia. He was Lead Expert of the URBACT Lumasec project. As Secretary General of ISOCARP, the International Society of City and Regional planners, he is also member of different professional societies, honorary appointments in Europe and worldwide, AESOP representative and IFLA Europe Delegate.

Adolf Sotoca is Professor. PhD. Architect and Urbanist. He teaches at UPC_BarcelonaTECH since 2002 and he is currently Visiting Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. He has been invited to teach in several prestigious universities in Europe, such as ETH Zürich, Berlage Institute Rotterdam or the IUA di Venezia, among others. He is also panelist or board member of several international institutions on Urbanism, such as the European Postgraduate Master of Urbanism, the International Forum of Urbanism and UN-Habitat. His field of expertise is the regeneration of obsolete and declining residential areas. He is lead researcher of several EU funded programs and author of a vast number of publications. Prof. Sotoca is also co-principal of CSArchitects, an acknowledged architectural firm based in Barcelona.



“The themes of protection of empty land and the reuse and re-functionalization of inner urban areas are among key European strategies for the cities’ sustainable development and growth. Particularly, the link between land consumption and models for land-use management both in cities and in metropolitan areas, with special attention to the Urban Growth Management, are becoming a matter of high importance.

In this context the USEAct project aims at exploring the urban development interventions and new or improved settlement opportunities for people and businesses, using existing locations without consumption of further land. Each partner is engaged to develop integrated action plans focused on reducing land consumption, to allow at the same time, a sustainable urban change through a better reuse of inner urban areas.

The thematic pillar of the project is: how to link Urban Growth Management Planning Tools and incentives/ procedures/ partnerships to implement good interventions in urban areas. We can reach these targets through the activity of the thematic network and the exchange of experiences and knowledge, towards the denition of an integrated framework”
Introduction to the Kick off Meeting



Editorial

Gaetano Mollura
Lead Partner

This first issue of USEAct project Newsletter is meant to be the first of a series of “tributes” to themes and cities that have hosted the meetings of the thematic network. The purpose of this newsletter is to promote the USEAct project and to focus on the network themes, giving attention to the partners involved.

Particularly, in this first newsletter, we want to share, with the URBACT community and beyond, a wide investigation of the theme **“Planning tools and Planning governance for Urban Growth Management”** as feedback of the presentations and discussions during the USEAct kick off meeting in Viladecans (Spain). At the same time the newsletter aims to offer the political and technical representatives of each partner an opportunity to present their own point of view on the theme of the USEAct Network and to the local technicians involved in the USEAct to introduce themselves so that they can have, as key partners, wider visibility.

Another aim is to collect material about the project that can be made available and read by those who wish to deal with certain themes in specific political and territorial contexts either in Europe or elsewhere. Finally, the USEAct project Newsletter aims at maximizing the **capitalization and dissemination of the results of the activities** that the thematic network of the URBACTII Programme has planned for the entire duration of the project (Feb 2013 - April 2015) in a short and easily accessible way. For this reason it is planned to publish seven newsletters, one after each USEAct Seminar with the exception of the final seminar as on that occasion the newsletter will be published before the seminar, to introduce it.

Obviously, each issue will be improved and expanded with the help of the partners involved by adding interviews and/or contributions made by their own local ‘stakeholders’ involved in the implementation of the local action plans .

The opportunity to have the **interviews of the local political representatives of the different city partners** will give the possibility to organize a round table during the final meeting between the mayors / local political representative and National and European representatives. So starting with the above mentioned interviews, with the same questions to the different Mayors/local political representatives, we will provide the opportunity to know the outputs and initiatives at

European and National levels **to fight against urban sprawl** and obtain sustainable urban development of cities and regions. This first issue will provide a short introduction to the thematic network, by the Director of the URBACT Secretariat and a contribution to the USEAct Theme by the thematic Pole Manager of the URBACT programme. A first section is dedicated to the theme “Planning tools and Planning governance for Urban Growth Management”, the topic of the USEAct kick off meeting in Viladecans, with contribution of the LE and TE experts involved in the network.

A thematic contribution by the USEAct ad hoc expert enriches the issue. He has been invited on the occasion of the kick off meeting to share his experiences and outputs of the LUMASEC network – URBACT II, connected with the USEAct themes.

A special section is dedicated to the two Spanish cities, Viladecans (host city of the the kick off meeting) and Barakaldo, in relation to the USEAct themes and goals, taking in account their National context (through the voice of the Barcelona UPC University, Viladecans LAP stakeholder) and the point of views of the Mayors. It highlights the contribution of the Spanish delegates involved in the USEAct implementation.

Finally, I hope that this initiative will contribute to highlight the strategic role of the cities and the involvement of their representatives/citizens for the success of the URBACTII Programme.

“Urban Planning Tools are a crucial factor for an effective “Urban Growth Management Integrated Policy”. During the first Thematic Workshop of the USEAct Project, partners will have the occasion to discuss what is actually and what could be the role played by these specific tools within the UGM strategies carried on in the different local contexts. Specific attention will be paid to two main aspects: outline and functionality of urban planning tools within UGMIP frameworks, and governance issues and problems in Urban Planning”.

Kick off Meeting Concept Paper



Introduction

Emmanuel Moulin

Director of URBACT Secretariat

The USEAct project has taken the courageous decision to work on a challenge that is key but also one of the most complex cities have to deal with, notably controlling urban development through an urban policy that brings together all the operational, financial and urban development tools it has at its disposal.

Although the cities in the USEAct network find themselves in very different situations, they all have to deal nonetheless with the phenomena of more or less uncontrolled spatial growth, commonly referred to as “urban sprawl”.

The repercussions of uncontrolled urban sprawl are well known. To begin with they should be properly identified and highlighted by all the parties involved in such a way that any integrated action strategy that will be subsequently implemented can enjoy the widest possible support among the population, its elected representatives and social and economic players.

The European Commission report **“Cities of Tomorrow”** published in 2011 very aptly describes the many negative outcomes of urban sprawl. Urban sprawl makes organising services complicated; it gives rise to an increased risk of social isolation. Since urban sprawl frequently happens outside local authorities’ administrative areas, the taxation basis that funds public services cannot be matched with the geographical distribution across the area of those using the services. Given the low population density with urban sprawl, the use of private cars becomes unavoidable resulting in increased energy consumption and congestion. Urban sprawl promotes spatial segregation and social exclusion by accelerating the way that different areas of the city become differentiated socially. Furthermore for these different city areas this often brings with it a loss of their functional diversity and commercial functions, and for smaller or more economically fragile cities this can even lead to the decline of their centre. Urban sprawl contributes to the loss of agricultural land, to growth in land sealing and consequently to an increased risk of flooding in urban areas; it is one of the main reasons for the loss of biodiversity and overuse of natural resources. Urban sprawl also has a very negative impact on the quality of the surrounding landscapes, and the attractiveness of the city and its hinterland.

Strategic planning across the whole urban area is necessary (Functional Urban Area –FUA)

An initial difficulty arises from the fact that for it to be effective public action has to encompass the whole geographical area sharing the same services and the same jobs; in other words the territory covered by people making their daily journeys. This is the urban area that in almost all European countries covers territory occupied by several local authorities and so coordinated action is required from them all since the city at the centre cannot act on its own! **From 2014-2020 the European Commission will be highlighting the problems cities have with urban-rural relations**, providing a great opportunity for action for work to be done on controlling urban spread. Joint strategy and joint spatial guidelines should be devised across whole urban areas. Natural areas and vulnerable farmland need to be protected but at the same time the real estate needed for development has to be promoted in appropriate areas with good public transport connections. To do this, the elected representatives need to have the right technical tools that will allow them to carry out observation of the territory over time and essential preliminary studies, promote dialogue between the various local authorities about the challenges they all share and prepare for consultation between all the parties involved. This is exactly the role of the town planning agencies (about fifty in total) that have been set up in France since the end of the sixties in almost all urban areas (FUA) with over 100,000 inhabitants; they could be a source of inspiration.

How this needs to link with intervention in existing urbanised spaces: urban renewal

Strategic planning that seeks to steer urban development without being closely linked to far-reaching intervention in the existing urban fabric in order to foster its renewal is doomed

to failure.

Economics is the prime reason driving investors to build on non-urbanised spaces, agricultural and natural spaces, since this turns out to be a far less costly option than working with space that has already been urbanised. The cost of purchasing plots of land in an urbanised area is far higher and does not include the considerable outlay required to “recycle” them (the cost of cleaning up and rehabilitating the land etc.). Purchase procedures are very complex, the plots of land are scattered all over, buildings are occupied, consultation with the inhabitants is long and drawn-out and the regulatory framework onerous (town planning and environmental regulations, etc.). In well-located sectors, where the private investor is willing to invest because of an expected increase in land and property values, firm public control is required to supervise the private action and guarantee social mix, urban quality, public spaces and services for the population. In other sectors, to make private investment possible, public action will have to be even more proactive in its interventions, and this includes being financially proactive. There are considerable resources that are needed, particularly in Central and Eastern European cities, for the development of industrial waste land, run-down communal residential housing areas, etc.

So particularly with regard to this subject, it is clear that an integrated approach to urban development is indispensable, whether this means intervention on a territorial scale or getting everybody involved on board. It only remains for me to hope that through drawing up Local Action Plans, all the USEAct project partners will collaborate and work together effectively so that they formulate responses that fit the situation of every one of the cities.



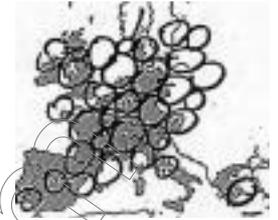


Fight against urban sprawl to achieve more sustainable forms of urban development

Iván Tosics

Thematic Pole Manager of the URBACT programme

"... you have big grapes, you have small grapes, you have sweet ones, you have tiny ones, you have growing ones, you have flourishing ones, others are suffering and shrinking ... each grape is one of our metropolitan regions..." (Klaus Kunzmann)



The USEAct network is addressing a very difficult and complex topic. The fight against urban sprawl is of key importance to achieve more sustainable forms of urban development.

In my contribution to the Viladecans meeting I emphasized the importance of integrated urban (strategic) planning and the crucial issue of metropolitan (functional urban area) cooperation as the most appropriate spatial level of integrated planning. In my opinion these are the most important factors with which the land use decisions of local municipalities can be influenced.

Mono-sectoral (e.g. solely economic or predominantly environmental) decisions might be effective in their own sector but create usually more externalities as problems they solve. For example, economic development often 'eats up' the remaining green-field areas, whereas strict environmental policies (such as zero-emission housing) often lead to large increases in the financial burdens on the poor. In optimal case all sectoral decisions should be controlled regarding their effects on other sectors. This would need strong policy schemes (national, regional or local) for integrated planning; appropriate tools (both for investments and for management); special inter-disciplinary organizations managing the integrated process and citizen participation. Besides, integrated development requires the ability (and willingness, openness!) to choose sub-optimal solutions along each of the dimensions in order to reach better balance between all dimensions.

For integrated planning functional urban areas matter. The administrative borders of local municipalities have usually been established many decades or even centuries ago and do not express any more the real limits of the urban area.

Analysis shows that in Europe the continuous (morphological) urban areas are in average 1,7 times larger than the administrative city areas, while the functional urban areas (which delimit the territory from where most people commute to work in the city) are in average 2,3 times larger. This means that the 'de-facto city' is plus 70% (with functional measures plus 130%) larger than the 'de-jure city'. From this it follows that **the territory of integrated planning should be the functional urban area instead of the city itself.**

There are new and useful research results existing which can

well be used in functional area thinking and policies. In the presentation I have reviewed the OECD methodology to calculate functional urban areas, the existing URBACT evidence on metropolitan governance issues, the preliminary results of the EURO CITIES Metropolitan Areas Working Group (analysing the types of metropolitan governance in 20+ European cities) and the results of the PLUREL FP6 project about the importance of financial and sectoral policies in the creation and functioning metropolitan areas.

In the concluding part of my presentation I have referred to the new tools foreseen for the 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy period. **For the topic of USEAct the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) tool seems to be of special relevance.** This aims for a place-based integrated approach, potentially on metropolitan area level, in the case of larger cities. Through ITI-s the metropolitan areas could get multi-fund support to prepare and implement their integrated development strategies. The ITIs could include on local (smaller municipalities) and neighbourhood level the Community Lead Local Development (CLLD) tool which would allow for people-based integrated interventions in smaller areas.

Thus the new EU Cohesion Policy would allow in the functional urban areas to create ITIs, led by the core cities. To be successful, such ITIs would preferably need defined boundaries and some type of (at least delegated) fixed institutional structure. The ideas to be developed in the USEAct network could contribute to the development of ITI type policies and structures in the partner cities and could contribute with new policy ideas to its better implementation.





Land take and industrial added value: a compass for the USEAct project

Vittorio Torbianelli
USEAct Lead Expert

To reduce land take and to develop the re-use of urban areas is an aim that can be achieved with adequate integration of many tools, both direct and indirect, at different levels. The frameworks of national legislation and regional planning can play important roles, giving guidelines and implementation regulations for the cities. Currently, in South Europe, various countries, among others Spain and Italy, are particularly active in “recovering” land lost in the past.

Just to mention a recent example at national level, a draft law from the Italian Environment Ministry (Summer 2013) addressed proposing quantitative limits to use of agricultural land for the councils, anticipating rewards and incentives for municipalities that respect the constraints, foreseeing also the obligation of the councils to identify the priority areas for urban re-use.

At regional level, defining clearly the “urban areas” and the “rural areas” (proposing for the future strict limits or even a ban on construction) is also a model that has in recent years been gaining ground. As an example, the **territorial plan of Catalonia** can be cited, with the “three” area categories (SU, Surb, SNurb). In Italy, the Region of Tuscany is currently working on a framework plan aimed to prevent residential investment in areas defined as “non-urban”, a fact that is generating strong tension between councils and builders associations. The idea of marking a line around the urbanised territory and establishing what can and cannot be done before and beyond the line is important, and requires sound town planning analysis to create reasonable, certain and shared criteria for the identification of these areas. But within this highly “limiting” approach to planning it would be important to also have flexible instruments to “select” and “direct” the constraints, keeping in mind the various categories of investment. If residential and retail space investment, which has characterised much urban expansion in the last two decades, must undoubtedly find “limiting” instruments, it must not be forgotten that other developments (primarily qualified “productive” settlements located near main infrastructures) remain essentially to keep companies, jobs and added value to the territories.

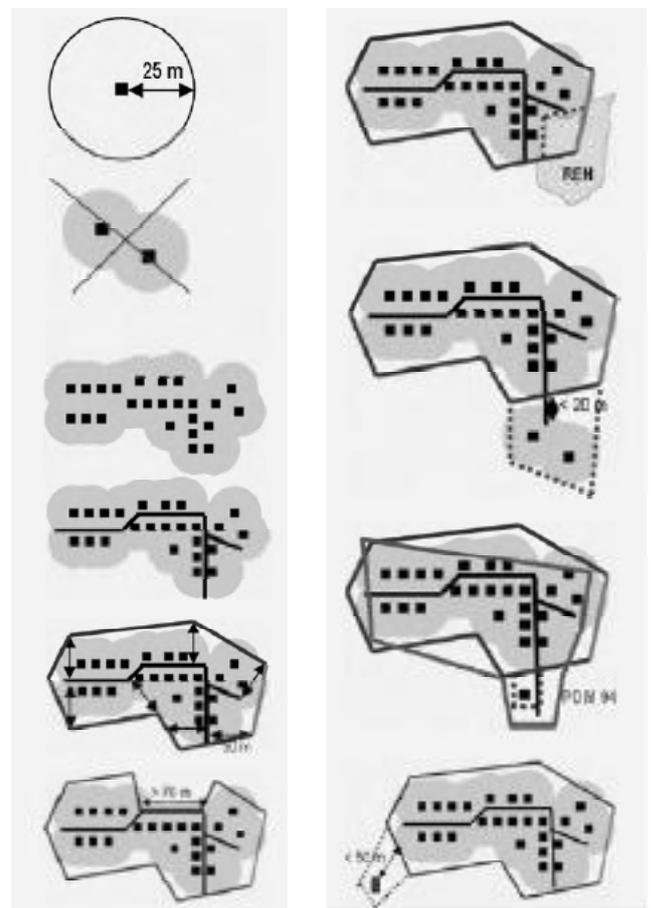
In short it can be stated that the right way is to follow the “**reduction**” of the “**rent-seeking**” drivers from urban transformation in favour of “production-oriented” ones. But the need to favour these “productive factors”, speculatively, means it is

necessary to emphasise them also within the “urban growth management” debate.

It is thus maintained that at national legislative level, as well as at the level of the regional plans or individual municipalities, strategies and approaches aimed at reducing land take should be capable of “recognising” the different long-term impacts and socio-economic values generated by different settlement types.

Faced with the decline of European industry, the target declared by the European Commission of a “reindustrialisation” of Europe that starts, as stated by vice-president Tajani, from the local level, also needs to balance policies of the **reduction of land take with the creation of added value of an industrial nature** through new productive investment, always from the perspective of the highest protection of qualified environmental resources. So far, the perspective with which the urban plan works to create space for companies and for work must remain fundamental also in the URBACT framework.

Having started the second stage of the USEACT project with the thematic seminar on “Planning tools and planning governance for Urban Growth Management and reusing urban areas” at Viladecans, with interest in developing planning tools to reactivate the production activities in a dimension of a metropolitan area is the greatest hope in this direction.





Quality a key issue for USEAct partners

Pauline Geoghegan
USEAct Thematic Expert



Concerning the shared issues around the question of quality that have been highlighted by the USEAct partners during the preparation of the Baseline Study, the most frequent relevant key words pertaining to quality are 'Community', 'Participation', 'Communication', 'Sustainable development' and 'Environment'. These concepts can be considered as a red line of quality running through our project, facilitating our shared objective of integrated development.

The concept of quality across many policy areas

During the USEAct meeting in Viladecans, we heard of initiatives which exemplified these concepts, from USEAct partners and beyond.

- **Reinforcing the community**, for example avoiding gentrification of newly revitalised central areas (for example in Naples), but also interventions in deprived neighbourhoods, or avoiding evictions.

- **Participation**, such as generating 'ownership' of plans to densify inner city areas, and neighbourhood development plans. In Viladecans for example we heard about the experiences of creating groups between mayors and businesses for the creation of pedestrian streets: under the Neighbourhood Act it is compulsory to have a local support group for each district and under the District contracts all residents talk with the city hall and draw up a document describing what they want.

- **Communication**, for example communicating to the community, developers and administrations of the benefits of newly developed densities. In his input on Integrated strategies towards land management – "Best Practices, among Elements of integrated land use management strategy, Capacity Building", URBACT Thematic Pole expert Ivan Tosics highlighted three examples of this communication:

- Active communication of land use tasks to stakeholders and citizens by sensitizing to the land as resource and not as tool.
- Building up co-operation with existing participatory networks like e.g. the Local Agenda 21 to establish two-way learning processes.
- Considering public administration and other stakeholders as target groups in addition to the involvement of citizens. Education and training of institutions and people in order to develop skills regarding tools and the processes.
- Sustainable development and environment, for example cooperation with the third sector associations on Sustainable Development of European Cities for a zero increase in land use, developing relationships with anti development lobbies, treating historical areas as an asset, not a threat, to development and/or reaching higher densities in urban areas to favour preservation of surrounding areas for agricultural activities. Cooperation with the third sector will be encouraged, and hopefully formalised, during the life of USEAct: the purpose of such cooperation is not only to help to reinforce, rather than hinder, relations between cities and civil society, but also has the potential to secure the sustainability of the objectives of the project. Linking together the USEAct Urbact Local Support Groups also has the potential to increase the interaction between stakeholders across Europe.

These issues, and more, such as how to ensure quality housing at the core of an integrated urban strategy with zero land growth, are the building blocks for the ongoing exchange and learning within USEAct over the coming months.





A Plea for strategies of integrated land use management

Didier Vancutsem
USEAct Ad hoc Expert

From almost 75% today, around 80 % of European citizens will be living in urban areas by 2020. Levels of urbanisation vary widely among Europe's regions, and tend to be highest in northern countries. Urban growth is disproportionately occurring in the hinterlands of existing large cities and in the medium-sized and smaller cities (urban sprawl). Furthermore, urbanization has a great impact on climate, natural resources management and land consumption, but also on financial returns and social cohesion.

The European 2020 Strategy and the Toledo Declaration identify climate and resource management as one of the three most important challenges for European cities; with **"Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"**, the European Commission determines **the main priorities for Europe's future**. According to the EU Toledo Urban Declaration (June 2010), land-use aspects are critical. A central conclusion of the URBACT LUMASEC Project has been the need of Strategic Management of Land-use, by understanding the process of managing the use and development of land, in which spatial, sector-oriented and temporal aspects of urban policies are coordinated. It covers the debate about norms and visions driving the policy-making and sector-based planning in both the strategic and operative time spans, as well as the spatial integration of sectoral issues, decision-making, budgeting, participation, implementation of plans and decisions and the monitoring of results and evaluation impacts (see www.urbact.eu/lumasec).

We have to consider the land as essential resource for next generations!

Every year in the European Union, more than 1000 km² of undeveloped land is transformed into housing, roads, industry and recreation infrastructure. Also, the European Environment Agency has estimated that there are today as many as 3 million brownfields sites across Europe.

We are all aware that the suburbanisation and urban sprawl are bringing spatial and social segregation for our cities. Furthermore, cities and regions are struggling with the huge consequences of the unplanned land consumption and the increase of urbanized areas in a not proportional dimension to urban growth: an higher demand on energy consumption, an increased cost of development externalities resulting in reduction of competitiveness of cities, and a diminution of soil

environmental services capacity resulting in global climate problems.

Furthermore, a common legislation at European level for the sustainable use of soil resources has not been adopted until now. What would be the benefits of a balanced land use management? By developing their **strategic land use management**, cities and regions would achieve the following aspects:

- A sustainable prevention and/or adaptation to **climate change**
- An important step towards building **resilient areas**
- An interlinking of different layers of intervention to **integrative approach** against political fragmentation
- The building of **sustainable financial policy** for municipality
- A better **environmental protection** and development
- The building **sustainable transport** infrastructure

The steps towards an integrated strategy of land use management? The elements of building an integrated land use management strategy can be identified on several levels, especially on the spatial pattern level, on the governance level and on the capacity building level.

Furthermore, a strategic land use management on the regional level should, on one side, identify in a comprehensive way the inner development potentials, develop mobilizing strategies and evaluate in a realistic way the implementation time steps. On the other side, it is necessary to take precautions measures to avoid –sometimes inevitably- outskirts urban developments, in respect to unsure prognosis.

A balanced strategic land use management should manage the land use and building land (re) production in the sense of a regional system management, and optimize for the territory:

- according to economical, social, ecological and urbanistic criteria,
- related to quantity, quality, situation and priority levels,
- in a participative, cooperative regional process.

A strategic land use management means also planning, active implementation and experimental projects instead passive "supply planning"...! It should have its main focus in mobilizing surfaces for inner development, in the support of land saving building and in land recycling. Also, it has to prepare in time and foresightedly the necessary building plots development (outside development): early clarifying the settlement areas with clear linkage to the regional system, in which central challenges have to be addressed: climate fair city, social integration, new mobility and energy-efficient building.

Useact Partners in Spain





The point of view of the City of Barakaldo by the Elected Member

Interview, by Pedro Jauregui, of the Major Mr. Alfonso Garcia

What is the importance and the priority level your city organization ascribes to the development of "Urban Growth Management" and strategies for reduction of soil consumption? What are the expected benefits from your administration?

Right now, Barakaldo is facing a key moment on its future definition as a city. After a decade of a deep urban transformation, where much of its obsolete industrial soil has been transformed and regenerated, now, Barakaldo must face its restoration and renovation interventions as its main future urban planning goal.

What is the role played by your organization to develop planning tools for "Urban Growth Management" with the aim of less land use and what is, in general, the degree of strategic and operational cooperation with the other authorities (national, regional, local) on the specific "Land use" issue? What are the most positive and the problematic aspects of territorial cooperation?

Barakaldo Municipal Government has promoted through the development and management of its UGM, several interventions on urban obsolete areas, either industrial or residential degraded areas, upon no new soil consumption strategies. There have been some management examples of collaboration with the different institutions inside Bilbao Ria 2000 public society framework, where all the public institutions are represented, that made the transformation of the Urban-Galindo area possible with the involvement of the EU through the integration on the Urban Programme (EU). This intervention itself, as the activity of the public society Bilbao Ria 2000, has been recognized as one of the international urban renovation best practices.

What are tools and strategies for "urban growth management" Land Use/Reuse/Refitting, how they are used to support urban regeneration(s) in your city?

At the moment, where we must reflect on the overcoming the previous urban development models in the recent past, our goal is double: On one hand, we have to face the urban renovations of areas with a high obsolescence rate with a high obsolescence rate areas (previous industrial zones or residential degraded neighborhoods), with sustainable urbanism criteria (environment, economic, social, etc.). On the other hand, we need to intervene in the pre-existing city, either on city or building scale, not only for stability or esthetic reasons, but because we need to guarantee its sustainability, the quality of life and the improvement of the economic and social tissue, etc. Therefore, public participation and complicity is compulsory, so that they have to become the necessary protagonists in these kind of processes as a guarantee for success.

What would be your request to the European Commission for a real support on policies on land use?

The actual restoration process difficulties, due to the lack of public financ-

ing combined with the crisis affecting low income, low pensions and families with high unemployment rate, means that those urban areas where restoration interventions are more requested, are the ones where that critical situation is particularly important. Therefore, the implementation of those incentive programs and policies through the intervention of the local institutions and stakeholders (no matter if they are public or private partnerships, or any other type that enhances its viability), must be considered as a priority.

What would be your request to your National and Regional authorities for a real support on policies on land use?

The enhancement of this type of proposals on National and Regional scale must be based upon a global revision of our legal framework, considering the different administrative and government levels, in order to adapt to the new reality. At the same time, new economic-finance and taxing policies must be deployed to define and enhance renovation, regeneration and restoration operations in our cities.





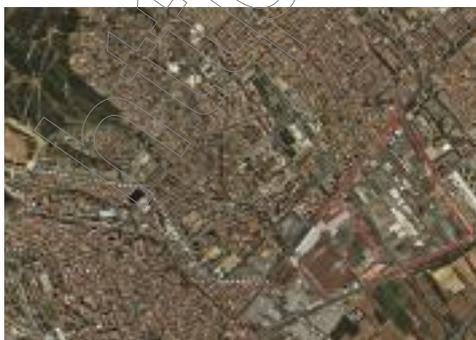
The point of view of the City of Viladecans by the Elected Member

Interview, by USEAct Team, of the Major Mr. Carles Ruiz Novella

What is the importance and the priority level your city organization ascribes to the development of “Urban Growth Management” and strategies for reduction of soil consumption? What are the expected benefits from your administration?

The city of Viladecans has a significant amount of undeveloped land; part of this territory belongs to the Natura 2000 Network, due to our commitment to sustainability. This commitment is the reason for which we fight to preserve those places that should be excluded from the city growth process. Furthermore, in recent decades the city has prompted an intense process of modernization and transformation making a very accurate “Urban Growth Management” policy indispensable. With all these efforts, we hope to contribute to the definition of a more complex, more sustainable, and ultimately more liveable city for our citizens.

What is the role played by your organization to develop planning tools for “Urban Growth Management” with the aim of less land use and what is in general, the degree of strategic and



operational cooperation with the other authorities (national, regional, local) on the specific “Land use” issue? What are the most positive and the problematic aspects of territorial cooperation?

One of the highlights is the constant concern maintained by the government teams to define the growth of the city in a global and comprehensive sense. Therefore, two strategic plans were approved (1994 and 2005) and a Local Agenda 21 (2000) was established. Territorial preservation has always been present in our goals as a priority, and this commitment has been growing and defining. Also, during these years there have been an increase number of legal reforms at national and regional level that have facilitated the territory maintenance. However, cooperation has often been more effective during the elaboration and processing of territorial plans at regional or plurimunicipal levels. The most positive issues have been those projects and plans that had allowed the areas that should be protected for their special values (natural, landscape, agricultural...) to be defined. About the negative balance, we could include as problematic aspects those related to the definition of border areas, about which it is difficult to reach a consensus among the various levels of government, especially when there is a lack of provision of financial resources from the competent authorities or administrations.

What are tools and strategies for “urban growth management” Land Use/Reuse/Refitting, how they are used to support urban regeneration(s) in your city?

It is not possible to emphasize any particular tool or strategy, the goal consists in seeking the best solution for each neighbourhood or area: in some cases it has been to opt for “refitting”, others for “reuse” or even the mixed application of these instruments.

Lately, it is being carried out actions that are agreed with residents and their representatives, that are integrated into

a mandate commitment called Neighbourhood Contract. This methodology allows us to be more efficient and responsive to citizens’ concerns, improving the management of public and economic resources available, which are currently very limited.

What would be your request to the European Commission for a real support on policies on land use?

Although it should be understood that territorial planning policies and those related to land use are developed in a regional or almost local framework, it would be positive to have European tools to support reuse / refitting / retrofitting interventions. These measures are very necessary for most European urban areas, because urban environments must be adapted to the needs of habitability, sustainability and new technologies. It is important to think about tools which are applicable in residential neighbourhoods and economic activity sectors, because the whole city must be launched.

What would be your request to your National and Regional authorities for a real support on policies on land use?

Until recently, national urban policies were just devoted to the definition of suitable territory to be urbanized. This vision has led to a clear tendency to increase urban land, as a result land reservation gained importance. Through new legislation this trend has been corrected but, at the same time, there has been an excess of regulation. It would therefore be desirable to simplify and clarify the applicable sectoral legislation. The quantity and complexity of regulations could favour the presence of illegal urbanized territories or unlawful activities. Furthermore, we reiterate the need to provide economic policies to preserve the territory. Often protective measures to preserve environment have been provided, but they were not accompanied by a budget for its management and maintenance.



Urban Growth Management, Policies and Tools. Potentialities and Failures of Planning Tools in Catalonia, 2006-12

Adolf Sotoca Garcia
UPC Barcelona University



The recent Catalan experience constitutes a paradigmatic example of the urban & regional planning dynamics in relation with the economic cycles: there is probably no other European case-study where such a quantity of planning and legislative initiatives were approved in such a short period of time.

In 2006, after the **National Act for Housing Affordability** was approved in 2005, the draft of the **National Housing Plan (PTSH)** was initiated. The preface of the PTSH, presented to the public for the first time in 2007, clearly stated the goals of the plan: The PTSH is the guiding framework for housing policies implementation in Catalonia over the next ten years, through the optimization and improvement of existing homes and the construction of new dwellings, only when necessary, on already classified land for development. The plan is also empowered to set up programs and guiding public policies in housing.

Not only the physical conditions of the dwelling unit but also the quality of public spaces, the sufficient provision of facilities and the mixed offer of non-residential activities are proved to be key factors in attracting residents to central urban cores. Based on that assumption, two different plans approved in Catalonia during the period tackled the urban regeneration by improving the public infrastructure, namely streets, public space and collective facilities.

The approval of the NA in 2004 foresaw a five-long year program of funds addressed to the urban regeneration of neighborhoods with special difficulties. Ninety-two neighborhoods around Catalonia benefited from a program that meant a total investment of 1.5 billions of euros, being 990 millions of them coming from direct public investment.

The **Urbanizations Act**, approved in March 2009, handles the problem by proposing two main lines of action: on the one hand, the Act proposes the extinction of those "urbanitzacions" where urban conditions don't match the very basic urban standards. On the other, the Act proposes the legalization of those areas where, by very punctual interventions of physical improvement, the basic standards of urbanity can be achieved.

The NA and the UA are framed in the competences that the

Autonomous Government of Catalonia is empowered with: Regional Planning and funding programs.

However, a stronger intervention in the regulatory processes of land value was missing since the national Land Act of 1998. In 2008 a remarkable step forward was done: **the amendment of the Act provided a new frame for land taxation**. However, the prescriptions of the Act were still very generic and no special incentives for Urban Growth Management were included in the final version of the text.

Five more years were necessary to better address the issue of UGM: **in September 2013 the Act for Rehabilitation, Regeneration and Renewal (also know as the 3R Act) is approved**. The Act aims to be a revulsive action against the accelerated decline of the building industry in Spain. Originally conceived to intervene at the architectural scale, the first draft of the law specifically fostered the rehabilitation of the Spanish housing stock by funding eco-rehabilitation private initiatives based on the **promotion of energy-efficiency technologies**. The first draft also promoted the rental-market by tax-wave for landowners.

After social and political discussion, a deeper analysis of the financial feasibility of the program suggested that the implementation of the program should be based on a larger economy of scale. It was considered that, the larger the interventions, the bigger impact of social and economical revenues would be. It was also a political will to shift the base economy of the building industry from small size entrepreneurs to medium and large size companies. Therefore, since a larger scale approach seemed appropriated, the second version of the Act tackled not only the rehabilitation at the architectural scale

but also the regeneration -that is to say improvement of larger urban areas- and renewal -namely the replacement of obsolete residential areas-. At the urban scale the act proposed some unknown, and very controversial, specific actions such as the wave of land taking in renewal interventions, the promotion of private consortiums for public land management (thus blurring the limits between public and private domains) and a set of tax benefits for developers of urban renewal interventions.

The run of the program is still too short and it is difficult to assess its impact either in the building industry or in the spatial planning of our cities. And that is especially true in a context when the speed of urban transformation has slowed down substantially. But it can be certainly said that **the 3R Act will probably readdress the focus of the building industry from extension to inner cities regeneration.**

All the tools showed above have the common goal of addressing the pressure that the real state market had on the physical spatiality of cities. Catalonia's experience also shows, on the other hand, the contradiction between the increasing speed of urban processes and the difficulties in addressing them. The planning apparatus is unfortunately seen too often as a mean to validate autonomous urbanization processes once they are consummated. However, some interesting lessons can still be inferred from Catalan case-study:

The Catalan experience demonstrates that Urban Growth Management can (and probably should) be tackled from different approaches. Either preservation of rural landscape, containment of new developments or improvement on the existing urban fabric seem to be appropriate UGM strategies but not powerful enough when applied separately. An integrated UGM policy considering the three strategies simultaneously might be the most efficient and rational approach.

UGM should not be a response to specific conjuncture but on the contrary, a long-term will. However this long-run vision

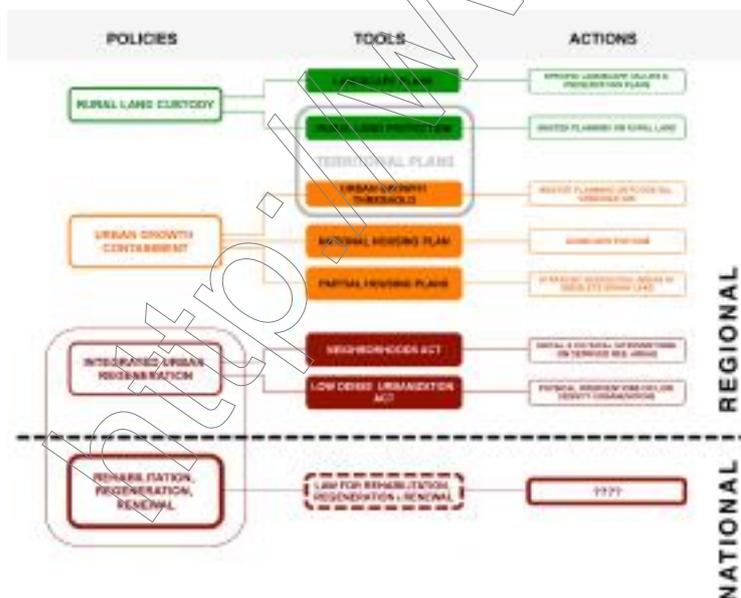


should prove to be efficient in giving short-run solutions when required by urban dynamics. The apparent paradox between long and short term planning might be easily overcome by distinguishing between urban policies and planning tools:

Urban Policies should have the largest possible scope. Instead of giving specific responses to the ever-changing urban dynamics, the planning framework should capitalize on durable, regional and long-term urban policies.

Planning Tools, at the local scale, should constitute the means of urban policies implementation. Flexible and closely attached to specific problems, they should be conceived as the translation of long-term visions on the territory, providing efficient and short-term solutions for specific problems.

As seen we face simultaneously the regional and the local, the general and the specifics, the long term and the short run. In this context, URBACT-USEAct seems to me the ideal framework where to come up with some answers to future challenges. URBACT, being the most prominent urban program in Europe, is capable to feed the European planning framework with criteria for long-term urban policies. USEAct, on the other hand, is currently sharing and exploring different planning tools that, at the local scale, will deal with the specifics of Urban Growth Management in several and diverse local contexts. The challenge of dealing with both approaches is ahead of us. The solution is, hopefully, at our hands. Let's work!





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Spanish architect and researcher on urban interventions, I have been practicing for over 15 years in several architecture and urban planning projects. At the same time, I have been teaching at San Sebastian School of Architecture (Basque Country University, UPV/EHU). In the last years, I have developed a deep research activity on urban studies related to the consolidated city urban interventions according to the new Spanish legal regulations, and have been an active member in the Phase I of the USEAct project. In Phase II, as ULSG coordinator I will be in charge of the different working groups, formed with professional experts in the five pillars of the urban regeneration Legality, Urban, Construction, Economy and Social (L.U.C.E.S.= LIGHTS).

At the same time, I will take care of the communication and networking tools, in order to enhance the participation of the different agents involved



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Technical Architect since 1991 I have taken part in public and private practice urban planning teams. Since 1998, beginning of the city transformation process after the industrial reconversion I have been member of the Barakaldo's Urban Planning Office.

After the slow down of the urban activity in 2008 and considering that the actual Urban General Plan is 90% done, I have been committed to participate on European cooperation projects such as URBACT Networks Local Coordinator, integrating Barakaldo in the NetTopic network (2nd Call), for New Governance Models and in the USEAct network (3rd Call), Urban Sustainable Environmental Actions on new public-private management scenarios, where NetTopic project knowledge and tools will also be applied.

As urban applied information systems expert, I am part of the Citizens and Territory committee, responsible for restructuring and georeferencing all the municipal information, key instrument on the best tools for new management scenarios



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Enric Serra holds a degree in Architecture at Polytechnic University of Catalonia (ETSAB - UPC). From 1993-1996 he worked as a Coordinator for "Proposals for Barcelona Rivers Regeneration" at Metropolitan Barcelona Area (AMB).

During 8 editions, from 1999 to 2011 he was the responsible of the Agreement collaboration with the Architectural Projects Department of Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB). From 2001 to 2003, he worked as visiting Professor of the Master of Landscape Architecture (UPC), he worked as visiting Professor correcting Final Projects at Department of Landscape in University of Pennsylvania School of Design (Philadelphia, 2009).

Nowadays, and from 1999, he is Head of Planning Department in Viladecans City Council. He also has experience in European programs: Life, Concerto, ERDF, FP6, FP7.



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Marina Jarque holds a degree in Political Science and Administration, a master's degree in Public Administration by Esade Business School and a postgraduate diploma in marketing. From September 2009, she is working as director of communications and international relations in Viladecans City Council giving support to the Mayor's Office. She has experience in European-funded projects, both in funding identification, proposal preparation and project development. She has also experience in participating and organising networking activities at local, national and international level. Specialties: Social Innovation, Smart Cities, Public Services, Governance, Information Society



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Mireia Bel has a degree in Political Science and Administration at Autonomous University of Barcelona and a master's degree in Political Marketing: Strategies and Political Communication. She worked as policy analyst at Rafael Campalans Foundation (2009-2011) and as Parliamentary local assistant to a Member of the European Parliament (2012-2013). From September 2013, she is working as international relations technician at Viladecans City Council.

Our first newsletter is dedicated to Raquel Millan which contributed with extreme care and precision to the success of the first seminar of the USEAct network.

Goodbye Raquel, we will always keep in mind your smile!



URBACT II

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 500 cities, 29 countries, and 7,000 active participants. URBACT is jointly financed by ERDF and the Member States.

www.urbact.eu/useact