



ARCO LATINO contribution to the European Commission's public consultation:

COHESION POLICY AND CITIES:

**THE URBAN CONTRIBUTION
TO GROWTH AND JOBS
IN THE REGIONS**

Barcelona, 17 February 2006

Arco Latino (Latin Arc) is an association of NUTS III local and regional authorities. There are currently 65 active members (38 Italian provinces, 16 Spanish provincial councils and 11 French departments).

The association covers an area of some 320,000 km², in which 43.5 million people live. Altogether, the Arco Latino members represent some 8,000 municipalities.

Arco Latino strongly supports the European Commission's initiative to strengthen and extend the urban dimension in cohesion policy by publishing the document *Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs: Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013*. The association also welcomes the Commission's commitment to incorporate Community Strategic Guidelines (CSGs) into this document, including contributions by the various territories.

Arco Latino considers *Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs: Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013* to be a valuable document due to its wealth of analysis, based on the Urban Audit 2005. It also believes the document to exemplify significant progress in urban issues, as it recognises the cities and local authorities as key partners in achieving the Lisbon objectives.

Arco Latino further notes that this document was presented by Commissioner Danuta Hübner at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Communities in Europe, which took place in Bristol on 6 and 7 December 2005, and welcomes the Member States' recognition of the central role the cities can play in cohesion policy.

Most European cities have achieved sufficient growth, and it is now a question of developing their urban structure and ensuring their cohesion. The cities should not be allowed to grow infinitely, but they should undergo constant development to adapt to new social, economic and cultural needs. The word "growth" is generally used in relation to the economy or jobs, and this use can be considered appropriate. However, when it is linked to sustainability and the environment, the territory and urban development, the word "development" is more appropriate.

Arco Latino welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation, and would like to emphasise the following points in particular:



On Chapter 2: “Urban Realities: Why Cities Matter”

Overall, the Commission’s philosophy is based on the concept of sustainable urban development, with an initial economic approach fully in line with the concerns of the Lisbon Strategy, as well as with Arco Latino’s way of thinking, as well as considering social and environmental aspects. Another key objective of the EU’s Regional Policy, complementary to the above goals, is achieving a territorial balance.

- ***Cities as motors for growth and jobs***

We feel that is important that the document should highlight the role that medium-sized cities and metropolitan areas can play as motors for growth and jobs.

- ***Achieving a better territorial balance across the EU***

As the Commission’s proposal indicates, coordination between city authorities and those of the wider region as well as between urban and rural authorities is necessary. However, consideration should also be given to coordination between the cities themselves (large, medium and small).

There should also be specific reference to the different administrative structures that exist in EU countries, emphasising the fact that second-tier NUTS III administrations which exist in such countries as Spain, France and Italy play an important role in coordinating between cities in many different spheres of activity.

For a better territorial balance it is important to achieve the recognition of the periurban areas with specific Mediterranean difficulties and of the necessity to establish new solidarity relationships between cities and the country.

Proposed guidelines for action.

- Emphasise the role of second-tier administrations in the work of coordinating between cities.
- Support the protection and development of agriculture and periurban natural spaces.
- Include pilot actions city/country.

On Chapter 3: “Attractive Cities”

The four key issues the Commission identifies are crucial to improving urban quality.

We propose that clarification should be provided in this chapter regarding the most important guidelines for action that strategies should follow in the future. This would ensure that all proposals were more cohesive.



- **Accessibility and mobility**

The analysis should include reference to new needs for mobility caused by increasing urban sprawl. Essentially, this concerns the need to connect peripheral areas with the city centre by collective transport means as the best solution environmentally (traffic decongestion, energy saving, air quality) economically and socially. The document should insist that urban sprawl has now become a widespread phenomenon across the EU, and that this trend generates high costs in terms of infrastructure and services.

The reference to deficiencies in air accessibility in the capital cities of peripheral Member States should be extended also to include the main cities in these countries. This would help to reinforce the main transport network, thereby helping to achieve the objective of cohesion throughout EU territory.

Reference to so-called “low-cost” airlines (those that do not form part of the IATA system) would now appear to be obligatory, as these companies seem destined to revolutionise the map of accessibility for European cities and, as a consequence, even Trans-European Transport Networks (TENs) might be redrawn. On this point, we feel that is a need to highlight the role that small and medium-sized airports can play in developing the territory, as they can be crucial for articulating regional spaces (Euro-regions and Euro-territories) and facilitating economic and business relations between cities, apart from their undoubted impact on tourism.

Planning for high speed and freight railway axes should take into account the needs for good links between large peripheral cities, as in the Mediterranean (between Spain and France, and/or the South of France), to compensate for “radiocentric” state tendencies. The railway system should be developed, not only as an inter-city link, but also to link metropolitan areas, both internally and with surrounding rural areas, as well as for freight transport.

In another order of things, we feel that the secondary road network is crucial for ensuring the accessibility of areas where economic activity is concentrated and, therefore, to the cities’ economic competitiveness.

We believe that the document should make reference to insular cities and their connection to the continent, as well as links between islands, a particularly important issue for growth and development in the Mediterranean region.

In line with the thrust of the sector on governance, consideration should be given to transport system planning and management in regional city networks, between local and regional authorities, amongst different regions and at state level. This is an equally important consideration for both local transport networks and planning and operating large, international infrastructure.

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Include actions to improve collective transport in peripheral urban sprawl areas, both internal and links to the rest of the urban fabric.
- Include the need for air accessibility, not only for the capitals of the



peripheral states, but also for large cities in them, particularly those farthest from the capital, emphasising the important role small and medium-sized airports can play.

- Strengthen high speed and freight rail links between cities in the most important peripheral axes, such as the Arco Latino territory.
- Promote railway networks to articulate metropolitan territories and to link these with surrounding rural areas.
- Increase investment in the secondary road network.
- Promote new formulas for shared mobility (“car-pooling”, “car-sharing”, etc).
- Increase links between insular cities and between these and the continent.
- Include the need for cooperation between authorities at different levels to plan and manage transport. Specifically, insist that cities and regions should share in planning and managing large transport infrastructure.
- We consider all the other guidelines proposed by the Commission to be appropriate.

- **Access to service facilities**

The problem of the sprawling city becomes particularly acute with regard to services. We propose a paragraph should be included to reflect the need to support the location of services in areas where there is new demand, and recommend monitoring new expansion to ensure that the needs of new urban development can be addressed appropriately.

Another important concern regards services in areas where there are high levels of social segregation. Here, the provision of diversified services as proposed by the document (“city-wide amenities”) could be reinforced by other policies aimed at attracting residents from different social groups.

Thirdly, we need to draw attention to an important trend in the European Mediterranean region: the emergence of large urban areas used for temporary residence, with a population from northern Europe largely made up of elderly people with special needs as regards access to services. The Arco Latino area is one of those most affected by this trend.

It is important to take into account the specific problems faced by cities with high numbers of second residences, and their effects on the provision of services.

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Include guidelines on access to services by the elderly, even improving home care in such sectors as health.



- Similarly, we should promote information technologies that can benefit the elderly, as well as actions to increase computer literacy and use.
- Include actions for planning and managing access to services for the elderly in urban areas with particularly high concentrations and frequency of prolonged temporary stays, as occurs on the Mediterranean coastline.
- We consider all the other guidelines proposed by the Commission to be appropriate.

- ***Natural and physical environment***

We can divide our comments here into two different subjects: one referring specifically to urban development dynamics (physical environment or urban model), the other to environmental measures in the urban context (natural environment or urban metabolic flow).

a) New section: Urban model:

The considerations on current trends in urban development are, generally speaking, largely emphasising the problem of urban sprawl, for which several proposals have been made in the previous sections.

We propose a reference to the Mediterranean model of the "compact city", where there are greater synergies between activities, use of services and transport infrastructure, as well as less land use and other environmental advantages that should be taken into account.

b) New section: Urban environment

The analysis should include a section on needs regarding air, water, noise and waste pollution and its management. It should also refer to Local Agendas 21, explaining the inclusion of the guidelines already contained in the document.

It is also important to highlight processes aimed at regenerating urban environmental assets such as rivers and natural areas and at integrating them into the urban fabric because, apart from their positive environmental impact, they also have social, cultural and economic benefits.

Once again, governance should also be mentioned here as a basic tool for planning and management. Citizen participation is another important factor.

Proposed guidelines for action:

a) Regarding the urban model:

- Include proposals for planning new urban areas to promote a development model based on medium density levels and avoiding both lower levels and excessive concentration. Particular attention should be paid to containing sprawl in areas with a more compact traditional model, such as the



Mediterranean region.

- We consider that the guideline referring to the regeneration of urban areas to be highly pertinent, but it would be useful to also include reference to the proposals established in Section 8.2, on the need for medium- and long-term urban regeneration programmes.

b) Regarding the environmental aspects of urban development:

- Include explicit reference to promoting alternative energy resources in the cities. Public buildings can be used to pilot pioneering experiments.
- Encourage the alternative energy sources most suited to geographic conditions in each territory. In Mediterranean cities, promoting solar energy should be a priority. Introducing solar gardens can be effective in “sprawling” urban environments.
- Include governance measures in planning and managing energy resources.
- Include measures to promote citizen participation in planning and managing energy resources.
- The guidelines on air, water, waste and transport included in Section 3.3 are considered highly appropriate.
- Promote processes aimed at regenerating urban environmental assets.
- Include actions to support urban development according to available water resources, particularly in countries where water is a scarce resource, such as the Mediterranean countries.
- Promote the use of environmental tools such as the analysis of the life cycle.

- **Culture**

We propose that the analysis should be reviewed to distinguish between:

- On the one hand, recognition of the cultural reality among urban populations. Here, it is important to take several factors into account: for example, the cultural diversity of EU regions, where cities provide a base for cultural enrichment and dissemination; the multicultural situation that results from different migratory phenomena; the tendency towards spatial segregation amongst culturally similar groups, with the risk of degradation when these are linked with poverty levels leading to exclusion; differences in access to culture, particularly its more advanced technological forms, amongst social sectors; and so on. In the Mediterranean countries, for example, there is a long tradition of multiculturalism whose potential benefits should be tapped.



- And, on the other, from the point of view of cultural production and supply, the different forms of promoting and developing cultural activity: cultural industries engaged in audiovisual and new technologies; more traditional cultural products (books, theatre, etc) developed using new formulas; inclusion of cultural products in the broadest sense (food and drink, historic heritage, cultural tourism, etc). Reference can also be made usefully here to the V Research and Development Framework Programme Key Action: “City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage”.

In all this, we propose the idea of diversity as a decisive cultural contribution to the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. Promoting diversity of identities in all their expressions, enriched by the effects of multiculturalism, is a powerful agent for enhancing attractiveness whose principal base for projection should reside in the cities.

We should point out, too, that the public space and its quality are also aspects of enormous cultural influence. What is more, for southern European cities, use of the public space for such manifestations as travelling markets, town markets or even local shops are cultural phenomena that should be conserved and promoted in preference to other models, that distort the very nature of the city.

Proposed guidelines for action:

a) Regarding the cultural base for the population of the cities:

- Include actions to foster diversification and contact between population groups of different origins, preventing the creation of cultural ghettos.
- Include actions to promote mutual understanding, both of local culture and new contributions.
- Include citizen participation as a basic tool for intercultural dialogue.
- Include governance as a support tool for managing diversity.
- The Arco Latino cities in particular and European Mediterranean cities in general need support as gateways into the EU for new population groups from different regions in Europe, Africa and Asia.

b) Regarding promotion of cultural production:

- Support projects to promote the cultural personality of the regions and cities as spaces for diversity worthy of development. For example, the Mediterranean cultural tradition, a key value in which is tolerance.
- Bringing new technologies to sectors of the population that face the greatest difficulties in using them.
- Formulate medium-term strategies, based on public-private partnerships, to develop the cultural industry in innovative areas.



- Explore innovation in traditional cultural areas (food and drink, folklore, heritage, cultural tourism, etc)
- Promote linguistic diversity as a basic source of urban cultural wealth.

On Chapter 4: “Supporting Innovation, Entrepreneurship and the Knowledge Economy”

Overall, this chapter appears rather lacking in development compared to the importance the Lisbon Strategy affords it. Many cities are already active in planning and managing economic tools to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy, and offer great opportunities for further developing these lines of action.

We therefore propose that the objectives of this chapter should be broadened, and greater coordination provided.

- **Overall strategic action:**

There should be some kind of overall strategic action, bringing together all the sub-sections and linking them to each other. In the economic field, strategic action should, moreover, be linked to the integrating idea of sustainable urban development.

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Include, first and foremost, integrating all other actions, the recommendation to draw up strategic economic plans in which cities define their opportunities and the profiles they hope to develop, taking into account the concept of sustainability and Local Agendas 21.
- Link the guideline on cooperation amongst local partners to these strategic plans. Add employers' associations and workers' unions to the list of participants. Add governance (cooperation with state and regional authorities) to the framework for strategic action.

- **New section: managing large enterprises**

In view of their importance to the urban economy, Arco Latino proposes a section devoted to large enterprises. These can negotiate specific conditions regarding attractiveness, intervene in specific conflict situations, develop strategic lines to support small enterprises in sectors linked to big business or support measures in any of the sections we consider here (social cohesion, environmental quality, etc) that can, in turn, facilitate the development of the large enterprise.

Moreover, despite their great economic potential, the large cities that are not capitals encounter difficulties in attracting large enterprises to locate their headquarters in them. This is due to the attraction effect of the state capitals.



Proposed guidelines for action:

- Include support measures, agreed amongst the different government levels, for the location of central services and activities of high value added for large enterprises in non-capital cities in the great geoeconomic axes, such as Arco Latino.
- Encourage the introduction of the concept of social corporate responsibility.

• ***Actions for SMEs and micro-enterprises***

Attention should be paid to specific sectors that are particularly important to quality in urban areas. These sectors worthy of particular measures include tourism in coastal areas, particularly the Mediterranean coastline, and growing urban tourism.

The document should include references to support for small (and not so small) industrial enterprises that still exist in many cities

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Include measures to support SMEs and micro-enterprises in the tourism industry, with particular emphasis on developing important urban areas, especially on the coast, as occurs in the Mediterranean countries.
- Designate spaces to enable certain industries that are compatible with residential conditions, to remain in the cities.
- Offer support to provide quality locations for industrial enterprises that generate employment for citizens but which are not compatible with residence.
- Develop technology districts in the cities to attract enterprises with high value added and that use clean technologies.

• ***Innovation and the knowledge economy***

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Most measures appear to be aimed at regional capitals. Include action to promote networks enabling medium-sized cities to cooperate in innovation.
- Support the establishment of urban observatories (linked to strategic planning and management) in all cities.
- Ensure that certain private investment initiatives are linked to compensatory investment in rural areas using profits generated in the city, in this way increasing the possibilities of networking in larger territories.



- Encourage cities to cooperate with each other to form clusters, each specialising in one of the elements forming the cluster, and networking together.
- Promote the creation of areas of start-up activities, which attract innovation and allow urban life to the people.

On Chapter 5: “More and Better Jobs”

Generally, speaking, there are no references in this chapter to the informal economy and how the cities approach this. Reference should also be made to women, as the social group worst affected by unemployment, and to the low quality of jobs generated by the construction industry, which is a very important sector in many cities.

- ***The paradox of cities: many jobs, yet high unemployment***

In any case, the picture of unemployment for the most part located in urban centres seems to respond more to the Anglo-Saxon and Northern European urban model, whilst in Southern European and many Eastern European countries the contrast is not so marked, and a large proportion of unemployment is found in the cities on the metropolitan peripheries.

Particular attention should be paid to large residential areas, which are often located in segregated fashion in the form of satellite cities.

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Link these actions to the strategic focus proposed in Chapter 4, enhancing the coherence between policies for promoting entrepreneurship and job creation.
- In cities in Mediterranean countries, concentrate support policies for employment in the low-medium class socio-economic urban peripheries.
- Promote the implementation of Territorial Employment Plans.
- Achieve learning and follow the examples generated by the EQUAL initiative.

- ***Improving employability by raising levels of educational achievement and training***

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Career guidance could be offered specifically at local level, as this is where there is a greater understanding of the real situation on the ground.



- In the Mediterranean cities, particular attention should be given to sectors linked to the tourism industry, as such activities have considerable impact in the region. Training could also be aimed at diversifying activities in areas where there is a high degree of specialisation in tourism industry development.
- Working with tourism industry enterprises to improve concepts of quality.

On Chapter 6: “Disparities within Cities”

- ***Promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities***

It might be useful to bear in mind the interaction between the migratory dynamic and the segregation of residential areas, as the latter phenomenon is accentuated by cultural differences, added to socio-economic disparities.

The document should also make reference to the elderly and the problems of concentration in degenerated urban centres or neighbourhoods lacking services.

Proposed guidelines for action:

- It is essential to include strategies for governance, particularly with regard to managing immigration.
- Promote the economic integration of the immigrant population as a powerful factor in social inclusion.
- Include, too, measures for interaction between different communities in the urban space and in everyday activities (schooling, public spaces, etc), avoid as far as possible spatial segregation amongst the population.
- Rehabilitate industrial estates first established in the 1950s and 60s.
- In the Mediterranean countries, support for inclusion should be linked to action to promote active relations between local and regional authorities and immigrants' countries of origin in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean policy, of which the Arco Latino Association is a good example.

- ***Increased security for citizens***

The analysis should take into account the fact that a high and growing proportion of the prison community is made up of immigrants due to their more vulnerable economic and cultural situation, etc. This fact should be taken into consideration in order to increase and suitably target initiatives aimed at crime prevention and rehabilitating offenders. Besides the groups involved here, attention should also be paid to other persisting marginal groups.

Proposed guidelines for action:



- Include cooperation between security and violence prevention services (justice, social services) and between different levels of the administration. Local authorities need support from state and regional administrations, but in turn provide greater understanding of the situation on the ground.
- Reintroduce more traditional cleaning services in urban areas with a high density of population, in order to contribute to a feeling of security as well as to the cities' image and attractiveness for economic activities.
- The position of cities in European Mediterranean countries as external frontiers and gateways to the EU requires special attention and support with regard to all aspects of security policies. If appropriate approaches are implemented in such areas, this may result in helping to contain problems in other EU regions and territories.
- Promote civic behaviour, particularly in cities where tourism has a particularly important impact.

On Chapter 7: “Governance”

We believe that Chapter 7 should place more emphasis on the cross-cutting nature of governance.

- ***Cities and regions***

An important reflection needs to be made regarding the diversity of powers conferred on local and regional authorities throughout the EU, the result of the Member States' differing models of political structure. Generally speaking, the cities and the regions should be given the powers and financial resources necessary to meet the objectives of balanced economic growth and social cohesion throughout the European Union.

The reference to the need for cooperation amongst metropolitan areas is interesting, as these also feature a huge diversity in terms of the manner in which they are institutionalised.

The need for cooperation between cities and surrounding authorities becomes clearer in view of the variable geometry of relations that exists and the fact that cooperation does not always make sense with the same territories. However, there may be a problem due to the excessive number of authorities involved in managing certain policies, and we should demand simplification and rationalisation.

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Include a recommendation for network action on a regional scale for small and medium cities, and not necessarily adjoining cities.
- Promote more or less formal networks in our territories, and provide support to enable the smaller cities to join in the work of international



associations.

- Promote increased powers on the part of regional and city authorities as efficient instruments for achieving balanced territorial development.
- Support coordinated associative action by local and regional institutions in axes with particularly high potential for economic growth in the EU, as is the case of the Arco Latino territory, in line with cooperation guidelines for the future European cohesion policy.

- ***The integrated approach to sustainable urban development***

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Include the need for links between planning sustainable urban development and the proposal for strategic economic planning introduced in Chapter 4; and Local Agendas 21.
- Support the adaptation of models seeking to achieve sustainability to the particular characteristics and features of each territory, the Mediterranean countries for example.
- Promote an urban planning generating public spaces to compensate for the differences in the availability of private space.

- ***Citizen participation***

It should be noted that the 'Nimby' ("not in my backyard") phenomenon is growing and local and regional authorities must be called upon and empowered to adopt suitable approaches to managing this problem. Different initiatives entailing dialogue processes may be useful in this field.

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Incorporate actions seeking to resolve new conflicts. Encourage cooperation, intervention by mediators, etc.
- Integrate the learning acquired from the experience of certain self-managing movements in the urban sphere.

- ***Networks and exchange of experience***

The report makes no reference to certain areas of cooperation that are growing in importance and which are taken into consideration by European Union cohesion policies. This is cooperation between transnational networks of cities and regions that create "axes", "arcs", "Euro-regions", "little Europes", and even more general types of network in the European sphere. Reference to this can usefully be made in the document with a view to emphasising the urban dimension of European cooperation. In



many cases, this cooperation implies very high growth and innovation potential for the cities.

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Include the promotion of cooperation in transnational networks of cities and regions, both for larger and smaller cities. The Arco Latino model and fostering of its links with the Euro-regions that are taking shape within the association's own territory may be a good example of this.
- Include top-down relations with cities and other socio-economic players and civil society.
- Recognize the long-term condition of strategic plans within local Agendas 21.

**On Chapter 8:
"Financing Urban Renewal"**

- ***Developing financial engineering***

Reference to the JEREMIE initiative is particularly pertinent, as this initiative can give considerable impetus to the economic regeneration of degenerated areas by providing support for small businesses and micro-enterprises.

- ***Public-private partnership***

Proposed guidelines for action:

- Develop specific financial tools to encourage demand for certain services and to combat the informal economy.
- Include promoting coordinated action by different financing sources.
- Include actions to increase transparency and foster citizen participation in adopting financing and management objectives.
- There should be a commitment to a single executor who coordinates all those concerned with the development of large urban infrastructure projects that do not involve only the local administration.

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