

SNR Europe Conference

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**Towards Sustainable Communities Across
Europe – a National Government
Perspective**

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- **Context**
- **Research**
- **“Bristol Accord”**
- **Skills**
- **Investment**
- **“Leipzig Charter”**
- **Portuguese Presidency and beyond**

- **Context and priorities**
 - Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas
 - Importance of place in the global economy
- **Urban policy and sustainable communities**
 - what are sustainable communities?
 - what link with urban policy?

- Member states share similar challenges in building sustainable communities
- Cities and urban areas are essential in delivering the Lisbon agenda
- Territorial cohesion plays a role in delivering the jobs and growth agenda across the EU
- EU's Strategy for Sustainable Development will continue play an increasingly crucial role in the future of the continent

In his speech in Berlin on 10th September 2005 the UK Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott said:

“The European Union is a major force in the global trading economy. But there are huge challenges in the new Europe, and one of the most important issues we face is ensuring the future prosperity and sustainability of our towns and cities.”

“Of course all Europeans recognise the ingredients of a sustainable community. They know the importance of a better quality of life, social justice and economic prosperity - but they’ve not always pulled them together into a coherent, integrated approach.”

“ we are in the early stages of a fascinating discussion about sustainable communities in Europe. This discussion will lead to new expressions, new policies and new structures to create stronger and more successful towns and cities - and rural towns and villages.”

What is a “sustainable community”?

“Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.”

Sustainable Communities



➤ **Why create sustainable communities?**

- Support the integration of economic, environmental and social policies
- Promote the establishment of mixed communities, in terms of ownership, and both private and public investment
- Ensure that communities are connected to the wider social and economic mainstream
- Complement cohesion policy generally and build on progress on urban policy specifically, including Rotterdam

- Overview of territorial challenges in all member states
- Building on Rotterdam, positive practice examples and detailed case studies
- Short review of current EIB investment and to what extent it supports the creation of sustainable communities
- Short review of how generic skills contribute to the development of better places

- Overheating of the main urban centres, with rapid increases in house prices and traffic congestion (Ireland, Luxembourg)
- Deteriorating urban living conditions in some core cities, as an outcome of urban decline (Belgium)
- ‘Ghetto’ formation in suburbs of larger cities and towns, social exclusion and segregation (France)
- Social segregation, anti-social behaviour, perceptions of unsafety and limited integration of immigrant communities (Randstad cities in the Netherlands)
- Population loss in cities, due to limited economic opportunities and related emigration – with ageing population and strains on local finance (former Eastern Germany, some W. German cities)
- Rural depopulation, due to inability to adjust to changes in agricultural economy and outflow of young people (France)

- Concentration of population and associated pressures (Athens, Thessalonica – Greece)
- Pressures on urban infrastructure, including transport, land and water due to rapid increase in population and the state of infrastructure (Spanish cities, including coastal zones)
- Lack of affordable housing in larger cities, notably Madrid and Barcelona (Spain)
- Pressure on transport networks, congestion and pollution (North Italy)
- Urban sprawl and uncontrolled (sometimes illegal) development in villages, towns and cities (Greece)
- Urban sprawl, traffic problems and lack of open land as consequence of population pressures (southern Cyprus)
- Rapid urban growth and lack of open space (Malta)
- Limited integration of new immigrants and access to housing (Northern Italy)
- Disproportionate concentration of immigrant communities in the suburbs and certain sections of inner city Lisbon and Porto (Portugal)
- Urban insecurity and crime levels in larger cities (Portugal)
- Ageing and diminishing population, with high shares of elderly people (Trieste, Bologna, Firenze - Italy)
- Stagnation in Southern towns, social problems, loss of population (Italy)

- Shortage of affordable housing and rapid increases in housing costs (Prague, Tallinn, Vilnius)
- Rapid changes in household structure, with housing stock not adjusting (Czech Republic, Poland)
- Low quality of the post WW II housing stock (All C& E. Europe)
- Financial problems of new owners of large housing estates, following privatisation (Hungary)
- Social exclusion issues around the Roma population (Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic)
- High unemployment and poverty in areas of industrial decline (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary)
- General decline of (urban) population due to demographics and (out-)migration (Czech Republic, Poland)
- Population decline and abandoned housing estates due to out migration of non-nationals (Estonia, Latvia)
- Limited financial capabilities of local governments (all C& E. Europe)

- Lack of affordable housing in Stockholm, due to rolling back of council housing and reluctance of private sector to fill this part of market (Sweden)
- Social and ethnic segregation, integration of immigrant communities (Danish cities)
- The (re)integration of immigrant populations and those made unemployed through industrial restructuring (Sweden).
- Lack of development opportunities in smaller and more peripheral towns (Denmark)

Case studies fit a template and cover a broad range of activities including:

- Economic, social, demographic, and environmental challenges and opportunities faced
- Efforts to integrate urban, rural and regional dimensions into development strategies

UK examples:

- Thames Gateway
- Northern Way

Other EU Member State examples:

- Rotterdam
- Valencia
- Helsinki
- Elblag
- Hannover metropole
- Vienna - Bratislava - Budapest corridor

UK hosted an Informal Council of Urban Ministers in December 2005 in Bristol.

- 1) The Bristol Accord - agreed characteristics of a “sustainable community”

Ministers also agreed to initiate two pieces of work:

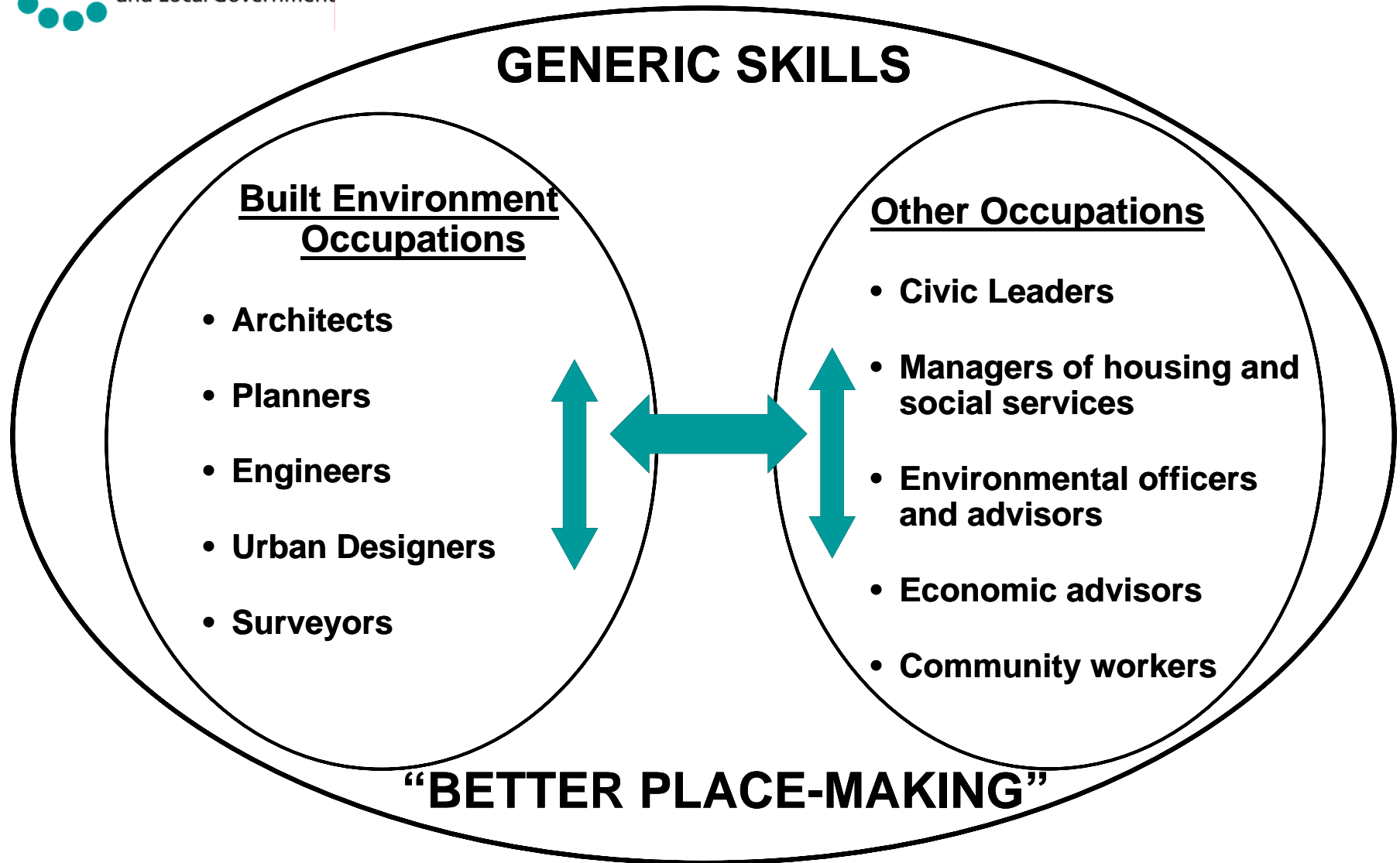
- 2) Skills for sustainable communities
- 3) Impact of European Investment Bank (EIB) loan finance for “sustainable urban development”

- Importance of place-making and urban regeneration
- Market response to ‘professional’ skills demand; market failure concerning ‘generic’ skills
- URBACT/UK Academy for Sustainable Communities Skills ran European Skills Symposium
- Recognition of Skills Commitment at Leipzig Informal May 2007

New skills set for 21st century 'place-making'

- Leadership and governance skills
- Generic skills and knowledge
- Implementation skills
- Partnership skills
- Cross-occupational working
- Professional and technical skills

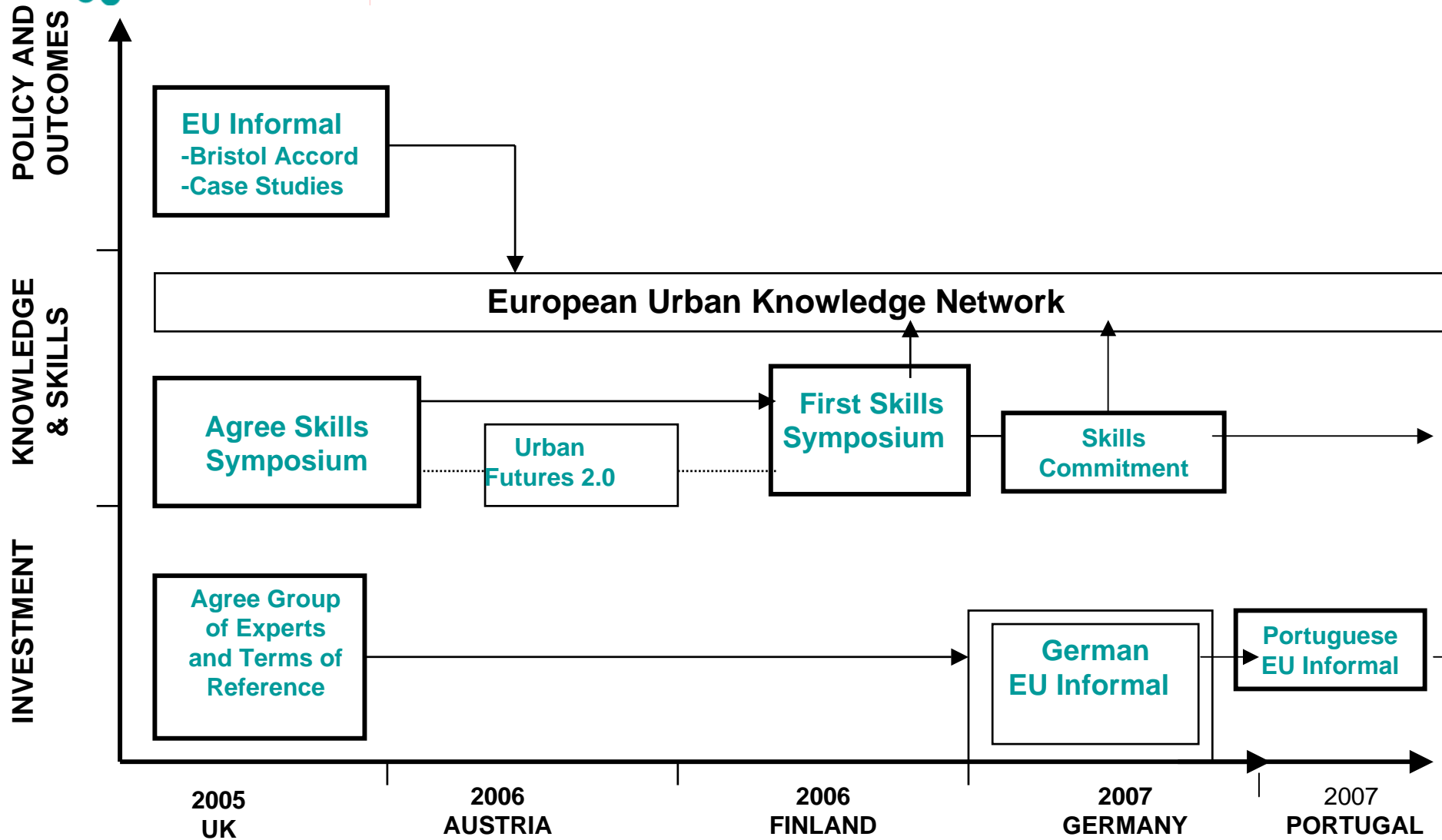




- Structural Funds and Sustainable Communities
- European Investment Bank (EIB) is currently reviewing how better to support EU policies
- How to improve Sustainable Communities outcomes through improved EIB loan finance
- Joint programme of work steered by expert group (EIB/EC/MS) reported in 2007
- Germany to chair expert group from 2007

	Rotterdam	Bristol	Leipzig
<i>POLICY & OUTCOMES</i>	Urban Acquis (policy inputs)	Sustainable Communities approach (policy outcomes)	Leipzig Charter
<i>SHARING GOOD PRACTICE</i>	National case studies	Local/regional case studies	Case Studies integrated urban development.
<i>INVESTMENT</i>	Economic Opportunity Zones	EIB Loans	EIB Loans JESSICA Initiative
<i>KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS</i>	EUKN	Skills Symposium	Skills Commitment

Sustainable Communities Work and Links



At Urban Level:

- URBACT / URBACT II
- EUKN
- Skills Initiative

At European Level:

- Urban Audit
- ESPON / ESPON II
- INTERREG III / IVC

- Builds on the Urban Acquis and the Bristol Accord.
- Integrated urban development pre-requisite for urban sustainability.
- Special attention paid to deprived neighbourhoods within cities.
- Need for systematic and structured exchange of experience, knowledge and best practice at all levels.

- Support for “Regions for Economic Change” and European networks for territorial development
- Promoting closer links between URBACT and Structural Fund Programmes (including cities)
- Promoting integrated urban development including The Skills Commitment (action programme),
- Strengthening co-ordination and co-operation of networks.

- Interregional Forum 2012 September, Lisbon
- Director Generals Meeting 16 October
- Meeting of 1Q Net 14-16 November
- Ministerial Informal Meeting on Cohesion Policy 23-24 November

- To Promote Integration of Urban and territorial agenda.
- Conference on Implementing EU Territorial Agenda
Feb 2008
- Emphasis on high quality/ energy efficient buildings
(urban policy)