

10th European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) (Oslo, Norway: 6-7 September 1994) on "A strategy for sustainable regional/spatial development in Europe beyond the year 2000"

Resolution No. 1 on Strategies for sustainable development in urban regions of Europe

The ministers attending the 10th session of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT), held in Oslo on 6 and 7 September 1994,

Having examined the report submitted by the Norwegian minister as well as the background material,

*Note that:*

- regional development in Europe has been characterised by substantial growth in the area and population of cities, which has led to social problems and pressure on the ecosystem; given current trends, this development is likely to continue;
- all urban development policies must be holistic, focusing on the economy, social problems and environment, and should be designed and drawn up as an integral part of wider regional planning policies and also with an eye to the needs of future generations;
- the establishment of the European Single Market and its widening to include further countries is expected to increase economic competition between cities and regions, which benefits in general the most attractive and richest regions and thus generates population shifts and increases the difficulties of finding work for less favoured populations;
- the present situation calls for new development strategies in order to change unsustainable life-styles and consumption patterns, and secure the resource base for future generations; economic and regional policies must be reconciled with the laws and limitations of nature;
- national, regional and local policies in the field of urban structure have a significant effect in increasing or reducing pollution; and the planning of urban regions can have long-term effects on the environment on a European and global level;

- it is desirable that modern technologies and resources should be used to improve the standard and amenity of life for city-dwellers as well as contribute to the creation of similar living conditions for the whole area;
- it is necessary to introduce new values and perspectives into the planning process and for this reason it is essential that the experiences of both men and women are taken into account in the planning process; urban planning should favour a concern to foster sustainable urban development and, if necessary, a change in people's life-styles; such sustainable planning needs to be based on democratic decision-making processes; women's experience and traditions should have a stronger impact on regional/spatial planning;
- it is essential that decision-making on urban development should take account not only of short-term economic and financial considerations but also of long-term social implications in the fields of transport, security and environmental protection;
- utilising already built-up areas and the potential in existing infrastructure might limit urban sprawl and stimulate environmentally friendly transport systems;
- protecting the health of city-dwellers is a fundamental factor that should also be taken into account in all urban spatial planning;
- it is necessary to co-ordinate urban development policies, inter-city transport network programmes and schemes for the development of rural areas;
- priority should be given to planning and financing infrastructures for essential and indispensable public utilities and services (waste treatment, sewerage, water supply, public transport, energy saving, etc.), equally in densely and sparsely populated areas;
- public education and information is needed to bring about a change in habits and create awareness of the problems inherent in urban life;
- in terms of security, social harmony, law and order, the social and human cost of poor urban planning is very high in the medium to long term;
- in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity and with respect to national competencies, local (and, if applicable, regional) authorities are also responsible for any scheme aimed at organising and improving the living conditions of city-dwellers, with the active participation of those concerned;
- the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) will be held in Istanbul in 1996; they support active co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Economic Commission of Europe for the preparation of this conference;

*And recommend:*

a. that, in the framework of the programme of activities to be implemented, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

- fosters at international level the creation and development of complementary networks of cities and territorial entities, particularly in transfrontier areas;

b. that the governments of member states:

- examine solutions of the problems of regions in a general framework and support dialogue between urban and other regions;

- foster at national level

- i. co-ordination between towns and urban networks, in order to avoid unbridled competition, wastage of resources and the provision of under-used public amenities;

- ii. urban and rural planning ensuring balanced territorial development conducive to the creation of a homogeneous, complementary and efficient entity capable of self-development;

- iii. co-operation, co-ordination and dialogue between cities and adjacent rural areas so as to permit the harmonious long-term planning of urban areas and their hinterlands;

- iv. the future development of cities of a manageable size;

- encourage controlled land use, especially by giving priority to rearrangements of existing infrastructure and re-conversion of declining industrial and urban areas;

- ensure a balanced distribution of all main national and/or local public services throughout the country, along with the preservation of such services, possibly on a part-time basis, in less populated urban areas;

- take initiatives to increase women's participation in regional/spatial planning;

- in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity:

- i. promote cross-sectoral responsibility for sustainable development at all levels, ensuring that environmental considerations and the "precautionary principle" become an integral part of plans, policies, programmes and projects in the public and private sector;

- ii. reassess and redefine, if necessary, the distribution of town-planning roles and powers between the state and other levels of government;

iii. draw up for the whole country some basic guidelines to be observed at local (and, if applicable, regional) level with regard to the inclusion of environmental considerations in urban planning, urban waste management and the control of urban energy consumption;

– request those responsible at local level:

i. to encourage a high standard of urban architecture, and protect and revitalise city centres of historical and cultural importance;

ii. to encourage a social mix and the co-existence of different population groups in urban areas, in order to prevent and limit conflicts between different sections of the population;

iii. to encourage all initiatives for sustainable development of specific regional and local potentials;

iv. to take into account in their politics the provisions of the Urban Charter of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe;

v. to encourage women's participation in political bodies and develop clear guidelines for women's active participation in the decision-making process in local plans;

vi. to encourage a focus on children's and young people's interest in planning;

vii. to encourage better living conditions by developing green areas as part of the urban infrastructure, in order to secure recreation areas, preserve nature and maintain biological diversity;

viii. to undertake pilot projects to plan and develop urban transport systems that promote an environment with reduced needs for car transport in cities and clear criteria for air quality, noise emission levels, energy use and accessibility of public transport;

ix. to encourage local authorities to develop, in conformity with Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 of the Conference of Rio de Janeiro, goals and strategies for local management of the environment within local spatial planning;

– launch national information campaigns – in co-operation with local and regional authorities for urban planning, as appropriate – in order to secure the

support of the population concerned, particularly when the changes proposed entail a substantially different life-style;

- take adequate steps to ensure that the cost of medium- to long-term investments in local public infrastructures and amenities is fairly shared between the different generations;

- introduce, if necessary, financial equalisation arrangements, which favour sustainable forms of long-term investment, the re-allocation of existing infrastructure and all kinds of co-operation and solidarity between different urban areas.