

Promoting FUA cooperation as a tool to mitigate urban sprawl

Experiences from Urban Agenda on sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions

SUL NBS Partnership

Composition of the Partnership

- Established in 2017 under Pact of Amsterdam;
- Aimed at providing recommendations for **better regulation, finance and knowledge**;
- Inter-governmental cooperation based on stakeholders' networking;
- Works based on the Action Plan (2018) focused on 9 defined actions;

<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/sustainable-land-use>



Action 5: Promoting FUA cooperation as a tool to mitigate urban sprawl

Lack of willingness to cooperate in FUAs and difficulty to reach agreements based on compromise as one of the main obstacles.

Aim:

- Improve knowledge and willingness of different stakeholders to cooperate by showcasing benefits of FUA cooperation (not only related to land use);
- Encourage integrated planning, including strategic planning and spatial planning on FUA level;
- Provide recommendations to the European Commission, but also to national, regional and local levels (guidebook with recommendations as a final product of the action);

Knowledge:

- Partners' experience: Poland (ITI), Stuttgart Region, Cork, Lille and others;
- Study of the Urban Agenda: insights from MS (8) and cities/FUAs (10);

Benefits of FUA cooperation

FUA cooperation benefit	Example
1. Building administrative potential on inter-municipal level	ITI in Poland: delegation of tasks to sub-regional bodies help to build integrated strategic planning and boosting administrative capacity.
2. Strengthening the position of cooperating municipalities (e.g. in lobbying for legislative changes)	In Metropolitan Region of Amsterdam , four biggest cities in the region came together to lobby the national government on social housing and refugee issues
3. Savings for municipal budgets	Bialystok ITI (Poland) – joint purchase of electricity lead to 1,2 mln PLN savings (in the current electricity prices – up to 9,5 mln PLN)
4. Minimizing fragmentation of investments	Strategically planned transit stops in metropolitan transport systems; coordinated cycling paths systems – more efficient transport
5. Lowering competition for external funding (e.g. EU funds) and better quality of EU projects applied	Municipalities exchange on planned investments and funding applications, exchange know-how. Thus, especially smaller municipalities could make safer decisions where it is worth to put money and effort in applying for funding
6. Improved life quality & better socio-economic performance of the whole FUA	Brno ITI (Czech Republic): Between 2014 and 2016 the number of registered job seekers by 25%, in that – in municipalities around Brno, by 32% (effect of ITI?)
7. More efficient housing investments	In Metropolitan Region of Amsterdam , study on densification in FUA revealed the capacity of almost 200,000 more houses.

FUA cooperation in dealing with land use issues

Binding rules and top-down restrictions

1. Integrated spatial planning practices

Stuttgart Region

179 municipalities with 2.8 mln inhabitants

The “Regionalplan Region Stuttgart” is the formal planning document for the FUA, which sets mandatory guidelines for local land use plans. It has the power to restrict growth e.g. „How much/how dense to build?“) and “**Where to build?**“ guidelines.

As the result, the soil consumption for every new citizen is 6 times lower than the average of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg.

2. Integrated strategic planning that covers spatial development issues

Lille Metropole (SCOT territory)

133 municipalities with 1.2 mln inhabitants

Territorial Coherence Scheme (SCOT) is the tool for designing and implementing inter-municipal strategic planning and reference point for sectoral policies, including spatial policy.

The objective is not to exceed an average annual consumption of 135 hectares of agricultural and natural areas but also to build **130,000 new homes**.

FUA cooperation in dealing with land use issues

Awareness rising and bottom-up approach

3. Informal cooperation

Metropolitan Region of Amsterdam

32 municipalities with 2.5 mln inhabitants

230,000 new houses planned by 2040. More recent analysis on densification showed that there is capacity for even 400,000 new houses. New developments are promoted close to existing transport nodes and benefits of densification are mainstreamed to change people's attitudes.

There is no regulation to prevent sprawl, but densification is promoted through soft measures and awareness rising that changes municipalities attitudes towards more sustainable use of land.

More involvement of the state

4. State-FUA letters of interest

Finland

Letters of interest between the state and 6 largest city-regions (close to FUAs) in the areas of land use planning, **housing production** and transport planning (known as MAL).

The state acts mainly as a “guarantor” and “quality assurance” of the joint city-regional plans. The main incentive is the major new transport investments to the region, financed totally or partly by the State.

First conclusions from the Partnership

- FUA cooperation should focus on **optimization and more rational resources management**, including financial resources, in the context of providing agglomeration services and the use of space;
- FUA cooperation should include themes of: **housing**, air quality, mobility and transport, water management, education and labour market, coordinated spatial planning;
- Existing studies (ESPON, OECD) provide necessary evidence, but **political and stakeholders' awareness and willingness are often lacking**;
- Next to building willingness and cooperative culture (by sharing knowledge and awareness rising), providing appropriate regulatory and financial frameworks that enable and encourage FUA cooperation is important;
- **Benefits of FUA cooperation are still not sufficiently recognized and mainstreamed**; they should be better analyzed (e.g. studies on socio-economic indicators on FUA level, improving public statistics to catch changes occurring on FUA level) in order to encourage FUA cooperation;

First recommendations from the Partnership

Better regulation:

- Enable various forms of inter-municipal collaboration (national level) to not restrict willingness to cooperate (top-down delimitation of FUAs are ok, but enable grassroots initiatives as well);
 - E.g. in Poland top-down FUA delimitations for ITI but inter-municipal associations allowed under new self-government law as well (bottom-up initiatives);
- Include inter-municipal / FUA strategies in the national strategic system and promote integrated FUA strategies;

Better finance:

- Provide incentives for establishing inter-municipal / FUA collaboration (European / national level): tax incentives, preferences in projects, additional funding for integrated investments, financing governance body of FUA;
- But also compensation for compromises (see Stuttgart Region);
- Provide technical support (national level) for preparing FUAs strategies/plans (knowledge, expertise, guidance) (see Turin Metropolitan Area);
- Consider using financial instruments as a part of financing (Borkowska, 2018);

First recommendations from the Partnership

Better knowledge:

- Improve knowledge base on FUAs: socio-economic and spatial indicators, more “qualitative” indicators, e.g. on administrative capacity building, cooperation between municipalities, inhabitants satisfaction etc., indicators for assessing progress;
- Consider awareness rising campaigns on benefits of integrated strategic and spatial planning on FUA level for encouraging cooperation;
- Consider establishing national knowledge network for implementation of FUA strategies that would enable exchange of knowledge and experience between stakeholders;
- Promote the „big picture“ of overall development within the FUA, and the importance of regional / inter-municipal governance;
- Provide support for smaller local units on important data, good practices and procedures;

First recommendations from the Partnership

FUA cooperation and better land use

- Sustainable urban development strategies 2020+: Include land take and urban sprawl issues within existing priorities, e.g. under transport, environmental protection and other priorities;
- Promote compromise between needed development and protection of natural spaces;
- National legislations should enable coordinated spatial planning and provide appropriate legal and strategic frameworks. Spatial planning should occur on all scales: national, regional (functional), local and should be coordinated. Executive legal mechanisms and/or various incentives (financial, taxation) can ensure that FUA spatial plan will be binding and followed by all stakeholders.
- Include variety of bodies and authorities related to spatial planning into the strategy making process that could work as a tool to deal with, e.g. land use issues – engagement of multiple stakeholders into planning and strategy-making process;



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Thank you

Marta Bystrowska, Urban Agenda partnership on sustainable land use and nature-based solutions

Daniel Baliński, Coordinator of the Urban Agenda partnership on sustainable land use and nature-based solutions

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