

EU Expert Group on the Urban Environment

**Centre Borschette (CCAB), rue Froissart 36, 1040 Brussels
17 May 2005: 10.00 – 17.00**

NB: The meeting will take place in English, without interpretation

Chairs:

Chantal Bruetschy, Head of Unit – Health and Urban Areas, DG Environment
Professor Colin Fudge, Dean, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of West
England, Bristol.

Agenda Item 1

10.00 Brief update of progress with the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment since the last meeting on 24 September 2004

- Council Conclusions of 14 October 2004 on Communication “Towards a Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment” (COM(2004)60)¹
- Outcome of the 3 Expert Working Groups²
- Impact Assessment study for the Thematic Strategy

Adoption of the Thematic Strategy is scheduled for December 2005.

Agenda Item 2

10.15 Presentation by Commission of results of Consultation

The Commission will summarise the results of the varied consultations undertaken on the interim Communication “Towards a Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment” adopted in February 2004. This is to ensure that subsequent discussions take place within the context of the opinions expressed to date.

Agenda Item 3

10.30 Final results from the 3 Expert Working Groups:

- **Sustainable Urban Transport Plans**
- **Urban Environmental Management plans and systems**
- **Urban Environment Research and Training needs**

Following discussions at the September meeting of the EU Expert Group on the interim reports, final comments are invited from members on the working groups’ final reports. The reports will be available on the website shortly² and the Expert Group is invited to review the reports in advance of the meeting.

¹ http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/82253.pdf

² Final reports of all 3 working groups are available at
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/experts_working_groups.htm

Agenda Item 4 – EU Expert Group’s Views on Possible Measures

The EU Expert Group is invited to outline its views on the specific actions that can be taken in the final Thematic Strategy in the following areas to meet the real needs of MS and cities in light of the working group’s reports.

11.00 Urban Transport

11.45 Integrated Environmental Management

12.30-14.00 Lunch

Continuation of Agenda Item 4

14.00 Research

14.15 Training

Agenda Item 5

14.30 Revision to EMAS

The EMAS Regulation³ will be revised during 2006. To maximise the usefulness of EMAS for the management of city-wide environmental issues by local authorities, the EU Expert Group is invited to discuss the questions attached in Annex I. If possible, please provide more detailed comments in writing with justifications for proposals.

Agenda Item 6

15.00 Guidance for MS and Cities on the implementation of EC law

Each member of the EU Expert Group is invited to review the questions in Annex II to this agenda and prepare answers for each point (in writing if possible to allow your comments to be considered in detail after the meeting).

Agenda Item 7

15.30 Extended Impact Assessment

The following draft reports prepared by the external consultant on key data for the Impact Assessment will be discussed (available on the DG Environment website⁴):

- Results of a survey of EU capital cities and other cities above 90,000 inhabitants;
- Report on the existing situation in the Member States as regards environmental management and urban transport management in at the local level;
- Report on the likely costs and benefits of environmental management plans, environmental management systems and sustainable urban transport plans.

³ Regulation 761/2001 – see www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/emas/documents/legislative_en.htm

⁴ http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/impact_assessment.htm

Draft versions of the reports on the survey the situation in each MS have been circulated for comment to the EU Expert Group (12 July and 24 August 2004) and the comments received have been incorporated. This discussion should therefore focus on the report on the estimated costs and benefits and in particular, on whether the EU Expert Group supports the analysis set out in the report.

Agenda Item 8

16.30 Integration of urban environment issues into other policies

Future Cohesion Policy

The timescale for the Cohesion Policy and the opportunities for urban issues will be outlined.

Agenda Item 9

16.45 Any other business

Urban Green Days⁵

Green Week (which features a day dedicated to climate change and cities)⁶

17.00 CLOSE OF MEETING

⁵ <http://www.urbangreendays.org/>

⁶ http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/index_en.htm

ANNEX I (Agenda Item 5)

EMAS REGULATION: Use for Management of City-Wide Environmental Issues

The EMAS Regulation⁷ will be revised during 2006. To inform discussions on possible changes to the Regulation, please could you consider the following questions and provide suggestions or ideas for amendments to the Regulation and their justification. The perspective of this exercise is to maximise the usefulness of EMAS for the management of city-wide environmental issues by local authorities.

DIFFICULTIES

- Which difficulties are encountered in using the current EMAS Regulation for city-wide environmental management?
 - Please specify the nature of the problem (please be as clear as possible).
 - Does the problem come from the Regulation itself (which Article of the Regulation is it that causes this problem)? Is the problem due to other factors, for instance, the way the Regulation has been implemented in a city? Please be as precise as possible.
 - What would be a better approach? Why?
 - How should the relevant provisions in the Regulation be drafted to achieve this? Would this imply amending existing articles or adding specific provisions?
-

ADVANTAGES / OPPORTUNITIES

- What has been working well with the current Regulation and should be kept in the EMAS regulation? What should be expanded or strengthened?
- In your view, should the future EMAS Regulation have specific provisions and procedures for local authorities as opposed to private companies?
- The scope of EMAS' indirect aspects (Annex VI, article 6.3) may need amendment to reflect better the use of EMAS for city-wide environmental management. Which issues should be listed as 'indirect aspects' in this Article in a new EMAS Regulation?
- What incentives can be built into the new Regulation to promote its use as a central element of local authority management for city-wide environmental issues? For instance, should national auditing systems for local authorities use EMAS data where it is used by local authorities instead of requesting a separate and additional audit report?
- Should a distinction be made (for instance by a different label or logo) between local authorities using EMAS for one service only (e.g. the road maintenance Department) and authorities using EMAS for the management of the whole city? How?
- Could peer review mechanisms (for instance developed by the PRESUD project⁸) become part of the EMAS Regulation? Could it replace or be offered as an alternative to the current environmental audit? How could it link to the EMAS certification in an independent and reliable way?

⁷ Regulation 761/2001 – see www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/emas/documents/legislative_en.htm

⁸ <http://www.presud.org/>

ANNEX II

Agenda Item 6 - Guidance

It has often been expressed that cities have problems with the implementation of the existing environmental legislation derived from European directives, especially those requiring plans, and that the Commission should therefore provide some sort of support.

The Air Quality Framework and its four “daughter” directives, the Environmental Noise Directive, the Waste Framework Directive and the Water Framework Directive are the most relevant to urban areas.

In order to help the competent authorities within the Member States implement these directives, detailed guidance has been provided by the European Commission (see attached table). In addition, several research and demonstration projects have been funded by the Commission with the goal of providing recommendations, guidance and best practice examples on how to achieve the targets of these Directives (for examples see attached list).

Bearing in mind the comprehensive amount of guidance that is available, we would like to understand better the exact nature of the problems encountered by the cities. We therefore would like to ask for your views on the following questions:

- 1. Are the guidance documents prepared by the Commission helpful to cities? If not, what are the main problems?*
- 2. What sort of specific help would cities still need to support their part of the implementation of provisions based on EU environmental legislation? If there is a need for additional guidance, which directives or domains should be covered? To whom should it be addressed (cities only)?*
- 3. With regard to the preparation of plans provided for by the existing legislation to improve the environmental situation, what should be done to enhance an exchange of information between different cities, and, in your view, between Member States, so that one could learn from each other? Why?*
- 4. Would specific guidance on sustainable urban transport planning and on integrated environmental management of the city be useful? Would guidance on the integration of transport plans and air pollution reduction plans (and maybe also noise) be important? Why?*
- 5. How easy is it for you to find the information on the legislation, guidance, research and scientific knowledge at EU level and at national level? How could it be improved?*
- 6. Which projects funded by the European Commission are considered to be the most useful to cities in assisting the implementation of environmental legislation, and why? You may specify which specific finalised or running projects are the most relevant and why.*

Please bear in mind that the Member States designate the competent authorities (cities or other), and that it is possible for the Member States to introduce additional environmental requirements when transposing the European directives into national law.

Examples of projects delivering guidance and good practice guides to municipalities and funded by the European Commission (focus on air and noise)

1) INTEGAIRE (Integrated Urban Governance and Air Quality Management in Europe) ("City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage")

- Specifically addressed to the needs of cities
- Elaborated a set of recommendations for future regulatory approaches, for particular research and funding needs as well as a guidance tool for cities with concrete examples in air quality related issues
- Project length 3 years, final presentation 17th/18th February 2005

2) CITEAIR (Common Information to European Air) (INTERREG III C)

- Objective: develop better and more efficient solutions for assessing the impact of traffic on air quality in large urban areas using Information Society Technologies and give guidance on efficient measures to abate adverse environmental situations
- Project concentrates on the joint development of a: Guidebook on environmental management, Guidebook on a common format for public information, Guidebook for transfer and a practical implementation plan for Emilia-Romagna Region and for future transfer to other cities and regions in Europe
- project started in March 2004 and will last for 36 months

3) SMILE (EU-LIFE project)

- SMILE is a Gateway to Sustainable Mobility and aims to help local authorities by presenting good practices and introducing innovative approaches
- It supports local authorities by presenting 170 successful and replicable practices for sustainable urban mobility in its local experiences database
- It analyses local policies and jointly with experienced European cities and towns, drafts recommendations for local authorities to facilitate the replication of these practices
- It identifies innovative activities in reducing noise from urban traffic and elaborates practical guidelines aiming to point out existing potential for noise-abatement measures in a field for which local authorities are responsible and can therefore take action more easily
- Guides and recommendations: "Towards Sustainable Urban Transport Policies: Recommendations for Local Authorities"; "Public Transport: A Pillar for Sustainable Mobility"; "Sustainable Mobility for All!"; "Guidelines on Noise Abatement Planning Principles for Road Traffic at the Local Authority Level"
- Project completed in January 2004

4) HEAVEN (Healthier Environment through the Abatement of Vehicle Emissions and Noise) (RTD project of Information Society Technologies (IST))

- HEAVEN's main goal was to strengthen urban environment and transport management, based on better access to air and noise pollution information. It also improved co-operation among key environment, transport, and health actors, and increased the transparency of city governments through better citizen access to environmental information
- HEAVEN is a European Project which has developed a Decision Support System to provide integrated and near real-time information on air and noise pollution. The HEAVEN system gives a comprehensive overview of the current transport situation and evaluates strategies for Transport Demand Management.

- Goals defined as: HEAVEN will provide cities with the tools to make more environmentally friendly decisions concerning the management of traffic and to better comply with EU Directives and national legislation on air quality and noise.
- The HEAVEN is a RTD project of the Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme and was successfully concluded in May 2003

5) GOOD PRACTICE IN EUROPEAN URBAN AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

(funded by Commission project 96/760/3060/PVE/A3/MM)

- Project has been developed in the background of the passing of the Directive 96/62/EC, the Air Quality Framework Directive
- The “Good practice in European Urban Air Quality Management” project has highlighted areas of good practice so that other member states and in particular local authorities can address the needs of the Directive and national requirements
- 161 page long good practice guide

6) GOAL Project (EU-LIFE project)

- Noise and emission reduction through the promotion of alternative means of transport for the citizens personal well-being
- An extensive action plan relating to the topics of environment, health, mobility and noise was established.
- This good practice example was developed and put into practice by Graz. Project completed in June 2003

7) LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY (good practice guide, funded by European Commission, DG XI for the Environment)

- "Local Sustainability" the European Good Practice Information Service: This guide to sustainable good practice was developed in 1996
- It has been conceived and developed as a [service of many partners](#), disseminating and making accessible the good practice experiences of European cities, towns, counties and their associations, national and regional governments, research and educational institutions, and Directorate Generals of the European Commission
- The entry of new cases was stopped in 1999

Guidance for Directives requiring plans, linked to the urban environment and provided by the European Commission

Overview:

Guidance Directive	Guidance	Focus	Guidance published	Updated	Integration with other legislation
Air quality	Yes, several guidance documents	Focus mainly on Member States and/or competent authorities within Member States	European Commission, DG Environment http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/air/ambient.htm	Yes	Yes
Environmental noise	Yes, several position papers and a lot of research done		European Commission, DG Environment http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/noise/ Community Noise Research Strategy Plan www.calm-network.com CIRCA information platform http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/noisedir/library	Yes, new projects going on right now	Yes
Waste Framework Directive	Yes, guidance for the waste management plan and further good practice examples		European Commission, DG Environment, http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/plans/ Good practices on separate collection http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/publications/compost_success_stories.htm	Guidance for waste plans of May 2003	Yes, explicitly in the guidance
Water Framework Directive	Yes, many guidance documents and one platform for information exchange		European Commission, DG Environment http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/water-framework/guidance_documents.html CIRCA information exchange platform http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/wfd/information	Yes, real life tests accomplished in second half of 2004	Yes