



Social Polis

Social Platform on Cities and Social Cohesion

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Community Research

Social Polis

The overall objective of Social Polis (Dec 07- Nov09) was to elaborate a research agenda which focuses specifically on the role of cities in social cohesion and on key related policy questions. It created a platform where researchers and other stakeholders could express and discuss potentially effective future research directions for FP7 and national/intz. research organisations.





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The overall objective was implemented on 3 fronts:

- critical analysis of research to date: survey papers.
- construction of a social platform of related networks for information gathering, dialogue and agenda-setting. Workshops, website, newsletters.
- production of thematic strategic texts supporting a coherent research agenda;





Social Polis organizational concept - a process

It is based to a large extent on a dialogue involving:

- the ‘Scientific community’, consisting of the *Scientific Core* (all Social Polis partners) and the broader *Researchers Network*,
...and the *Practice and policy community* involving different types of stakeholders and users:

Started with stakeholders with whom core partners have traditionally worked together through joint research, action oriented research, policy analysis, consulting, QUICK FEEDBACK.

Expanded network with those with a looser relationship with the Scientific Core or/and have been involved through indirect contacts, or with no previous relationship. “Snowball” methods.



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User involvement

Some examples

Several ways to become involved and give feedbacks:

- Use existing networks (from local to EU level. Ex. Eurocities)
- Information sharing and Discussion Forum on website. Post items on website, animate the dialogue.
- Apply for small grant to write a paper (3000€)
- Apply for a local workshop grant (5.000 to 10.000€)
- A launching workshop (Brussels) and a large scale conference (Vienna 12-13 May 09). *World café* format.





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Issues arising from experience

Involvement of stakeholders and visibility:

- 1) How to engage with stakeholders and be attractive?
Why should they be interested in participating? Include some of them in the consortium
- 2) Ensure involvement of European-level organisations and institutions in the debate
- 3) Nominate someone for communication (be proactive: PR, website including discussion forum, newsletter)
- 4) How to simplify research issues so that stakeholders can engage well. Yet research needs theoretical approaches...





Social Polis as a process

- Establishing such a platform for collaboration was not an easy task.
- It took 2 years to construct the platform as a real space for actual dialogue and cooperation. Therefore it can be called a **learning platform**.
- It became clear that a longer maturation process is needed for such a platform to become a self-organising network.
- A hard work also for the project officer of the Commission, but a very dynamic, creative environment and an exciting experience!