

1 Partnership “Air Quality”

1.1 Key information on the Partnership “Air Quality”

During the Dutch Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2016 the Pact of Amsterdam was adopted by EU ministers of the Interior. It states that European cities will be more involved with the creation of EU legislation, EU funding and knowledge sharing. The relevance of this involvement is highlighted by the statistics that cities and urban areas now house more than 70% of all Europeans.

The Urban Agenda is composed of 12 priority themes essential to the development of urban areas. Each theme has a dedicated Partnership. These partnerships bring together cities, Member States and European institutions. Together, they aim to implement the Urban Agenda by finding workable ideas focused on the topics of EU legislation funding and knowledge sharing. One of the partnerships is the **Partnership on Air Quality**.

Members of the Partnership

- Member States: *The Netherlands (coordinator)*, Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland;
- Cities: Helsinki/HSY (FI), London (UK), Utrecht (NL), Milan (IT), Constanta (RO), and Duisburg (DE - Representing the Consortium Clean Air Ruhr Area);
- Stakeholders: EUROCITIES, HEAL (Health and Environment Alliance);
- European Commission: DG Regional and Urban policy (*coordinator*), DG Environment, DG Research & Innovation, DG Agriculture, DG Growth, the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

The URBACT programme supports the work of the Partnership as an observer.

Focus areas and activities

The main objective of the Partnership on Air Quality is to improve air quality in cities and to bring the ‘healthy city’ higher on the local, national and EU agendas as part of the Urban Agenda. This is being done through improving regulation and the implementation of regulation, funding mechanisms and knowledge at all levels, as well as the coordination between them.

Currently there are many cities which have difficulty complying with the air quality standards as set by the EU, rendering their environment unhealthy for EU citizens. The Air Quality Partnership, therefore, tries to explore the gaps, overlaps and contradictions in existing regulations and map out the resources and available funding put in place to assist cities improve air quality. In addition, through the Air Quality Partnership cities have the chance to exchange knowledge and share the best practices currently being implemented in cities around Europe, their surrounding regions and



across Member States. Following the scoping exercise of existing regulation, committed resources and knowledge, advice can be given on improving the EU policy and funding landscape. The Partnership works on proposals for better regulation (and implementation), funding and knowledge in this area.

To frame its work, the Partnership has so far focused on four topics:

- Topic 1: Modelling city-specific situations
- Topic 2: Mapping of regulation and funding.
- Topic 3: Assessment of air quality good practices and identification of barriers.
- Topic 4: Guidelines for cities air quality action plans.

1.2 Working method

The overall duration of the Partnership will be three years (2016-2018) and during this period actions and recommendations will be elaborated/implemented with the aim to establish a set of practical and efficient pathways and guidance to improve air quality in urban areas based on a comprehensive inventory of current practices, experiences, new research and smart combinations of opportunities and innovations as well as the identification of bottlenecks in legislation and gaps in funding.

The first step consisted of the identification of the relevant issues regarding urban air quality, which was based on the input of the different partners during several meetings between December 2015 and June 2016. The analysis was then refined until the first half of 2017 through in-depth research, surveys and scoping papers.

Three Partnership meetings helped to establish a bridge between the four topics and the Partnership's Action Plan to identify and define concrete solutions and initiatives which would contribute to address the identified problems. The Partnership is successfully implementing its (first) action plan, and all the planned objectives are being reached within time and scope constraints. In parallel, the Partnership has been working on the preparation of the new Action Plan.

In June 2017 an international Workshop was organized in London to gather inputs from stakeholders on the key findings of the Partnership. In addition, an informal stakeholder consultation was launched during summer to gather further feedback on the Partnership's findings. A report on the analysis of the answers was prepared by the Secretariat and then shared with the Partnership.

Actions and recommendations in the areas of better regulation, better funding and better knowledge are being developed in parallel - with support from an external air quality expert mobilized by the Secretariat - and will be finalised in light of the feedback and suggestions received from Partners and relevant stakeholders, including through a second round of informal consultation focused on the new action plan.

1.3 State of play

Since December 2015, the Partnership on Air Quality has worked towards implementing its first action plan and defining actions for the new one, which aim to contribute to and influence European legislation, funding and knowledge sharing.

The partnership is currently implementing its first action plan since February 2016. The new action plan is being designed since the beginning of 2017, as a further development of the first one. In its further implementation-activities the partnership will take due account of the results of the implementation of the first action plan, of the outcome of two informal stakeholder consultations and of the expected feedback from the DGUM.

The new action plan has been approved by the DGUM last October.

It includes six actions covering better regulation and implementation, better funding and better knowledge, as indicated below:

BETTER REGULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- ACTION N°1 – IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS IN REGULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION ON AIR POLLUTANT EMISSION SOURCES
- ACTION N°2 – BETTER AIR QUALITY PLANNING (GOVERNANCE)

BETTER FUNDING

- ACTION N°3 – BETTER TARGETED FUNDING FOR AIR QUALITY

BETTER KNOWLEDGE

- ACTION N°4 – BETTER FOCUS ON THE PROTECTION AND ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF CITIZENS' HEALTH
- ACTION N°5 – AWARENESS RAISING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING
- ACTION N°6 – OUTREACH.