

These objectives will be achieved by realisation of the following activities:

- state of art analyses in the participating countries of the principles of sustainable urban development and planning and benchmarking
- definition of relevant criteria and principles for public space design in smaller urban areas with regard to all aspects of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic)
- development of a joint strategies and tools for sustainable urban spaces involving relevant stakeholders to improve the planning process with respect to accessibility for all
- development and realisation of pilot actions in different central space urban areas – designed and worked out through a participatory process by communities
- ensuring a sound scientific approach and output quality through an international Scientific and Technical Committee



- dissemination of results according to the project Communication Plan throughout the project lifetime at different levels (from local to European) and targeting different actors.

The partnership of the project comprises a variety of multi-sectoral organizations (local and regional authorities, universities, NGOs etc.) ensuring a multi-actors approach. The complexity of the polycentricism and urban spaces issues needs to be solved through transnational cooperation and the exchange of experiences, benchmarking and formulating common strategies. The pilot actions in different central target areas (urban, coastal and cross border) will examine the implementation of the joint strategy for sustainable urban spaces.

The project duration is from November 2008 till October 2011.

Results and outputs

joint strategy and tools and guidelines for sustainable design of urban spaces, 19 pilot actions, 15 renewed urban spaces, exchange platform on knowledge and expertise on urban open space (web page, meetings, conferences), e-learning

Partners

- PP01 REC Slovakia, The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe, Slovakia
- PP02 Ekopolis, Slovakia
- PP03 Nadace Partnerství, Czech Republic
- PP04 Municipality of Brno, Czech Republic
- PP05 Municipality of Sopot, Poland
- PP06 Municipality of Brzeg Dolny, Poland
- PP07 Municipality of Nagykallo, Hungary
- PP08 Vienna University of technology, department of Urban design and Landscape Architecture, Austria
- PP09 Subregional development agency Karst-Brkini, Slovenia
- PP10 Fachhochschule Erfurt - University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- PP11 Legambiente Lombardia onlus, Italy
- PP12 RiSSC - Research Centre on Security and Crime, Italy
- PP13 Local Development Agency, La.Mo.Ro., Italy



THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
for Central and Eastern Europe
REC Slovakia



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

<http://www.urbanspaces.eu>



Urban spaces – enhancing the attractiveness
and quality of the urban environment





Background

Some 75 % of the population of the Central Europe region lives in urban areas, a figure which is likely to continue to grow. Towns and cities are perceived as engines of regional development, offering a broad range of services and economic and cultural opportunities. However, urban concentrations of population bring a number of problems. The spread of urbanisation removes previously clear boundaries between settlement and surrounding landscape, putting great pressure on the natural landscape setting. In many urban areas, the historic core is surrounded by physically separated new suburbs, which are nevertheless functionally linked to the urban centre, leading to growth in road traffic resulting in the loss of biodiversity and fragmentation of the natural environment.

In this context open spaces play a vital role. They have a direct influence on how local people and visitors perceive urban areas, how do they identify their self with them and how well social life is functioning. Urban spaces also influence economic prosperity. Their environmental importance is underlined by their potential to mitigate adverse effects of climate change, which are likely to be especially marked in urban areas. Urban development is not only about planning buildings and activities, but also about creating places having a positive impact on their surroundings. The design of high quality urban spaces, involving inputs from community groups, is also an increasingly important aspect of the planning process. Such places help to define the public life of a village or town by strengthening the „local spirit“.

Much attention has been devoted to such issues in larger towns and cities, however while 75% of the Central Europe Region population is urban, only just more than 22% live in cities of more than 200,000 inhabitants, yet little consideration has been given to this fact in the context of the planning, design and management of urban open space. The principle focus of this project is therefore on the role and management of such spaces in smaller urban and suburban areas. In this way the project will support the sustainable polycentric urban development which is characteristic of the region. It will take into consideration all aspects of urban open space (environmental, social, economic), and its improvement in terms of design quality, accessibility and functionality as a central contribution to the quality and viability of the urban environment while increasing of capacities in the partner countries.



Project Objectives and Activities



The Project will significantly contribute to the achievement of the Central Europe Programme Priority 4: Enhancing Competitiveness and Attractiveness of Cities and Regions.

The focus on approaches is to improve environmental quality of smaller urban centres and suburban areas, will contribute significantly to strengthening territorial cohesion by supporting polycentric structures, which require a mix of larger and smaller urban areas to operate.

Historically and in policy terms the focus of urban open space planning design has been on large towns and cities. It is not safe to assume that the approaches developed here can be simply transferred

to smaller settlements. In smaller towns, for example, the relative closeness of the public to the municipal authorities also means that the role of the public in the design of urban spaces takes on greater significance. The project will therefore take a strategic approach to the promotion of active and informed involvement of a range of stakeholders – local authorities, urban planning experts and local businesses – in the process of reshaping and revitalization of urban open spaces important for public life of communities from an early stage in the process. In this way UrbSpace project will also address the prevention of socio-pathogenic phenomenon and criminality issues in urban open spaces.

