



EUKN Annual Report 2016



Picture: Working Conference on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, Amsterdam, 10-11 November 2016. Photo credit: Jitske Schols, Jitske Schols Photography (<http://jitskeschols.com>).

European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) EGTC

Office location Stichthage, Julianaplein 10, 2593 CE The Hague, The Netherlands

Postal address P.O. Box 30833, 2500 GV The Hague, The Netherlands

Web www.eukn.eu



About the EUKN

The EUKN, European Urban Knowledge Network, is the only independent Member State driven network in the field of urban policy, research and practice. As a network of national governments, EU Member States and knowledge institutes, the EUKN is deeply involved in EU policy-making. With more than 10 years of experience in urban knowledge, the EUKN is more than just a knowledge network. The EUKN is a top-level influencer, and a connector between a multitude of urban actors. As a strategic knowledge partner our specialist urban knowledge benefits our members in the form of tailor-made services, expert analysis, research assistance and specific knowledge support through Policy Labs and Seminars. Easy access to a rich e-library containing selected documents on shared standards, EU policies, good practices and up-to-date research is available to all urban leaders, practitioners and policymakers.

The EUKN comprises one third of the European Union: Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Since the establishment of the network at the end of 2004 under the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU, the EUKN has led the way in the investigation and dissemination of topical knowledge and the advancement of today's European urban policy and practice.

Having passed its 10-year milestone, the EUKN holds a proven reputation on the European and world stages, building on involvement in projects like Habitat III's New Urban Agenda and the Urban Agenda for the EU. Our close association with EU, national and regional governmental authorities offers a valuable and unique advantage to our Members. The EUKN also continuously supports the Presidencies of the European Union. By responding to the knowledge demands of our Members, we connect urban stakeholders to good policy, practice and research. Together as a network we are working towards the Europe 2020 initiative by the continuous mediation and promotion of smart, sustainable and inclusive European cities.



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The EUKN in 2016

The EUKN prides itself on its continued ability to respond to the urban challenges of Europe's Member States, cities and citizens. In 2016, the EUKN was strongly involved in the New Urban Agenda and the Urban Agenda for the EU. The EUKN organised Policy Labs for almost all its Members and one Policy Lab will be remembered for a long time. 2016 has also showed its darker edge with regards to the rise of terrorist threats in Europe. The EUKN Policy Lab on radicalisation in Brussels had to be postponed due to the terrorist attacks. It was rescheduled in September 2016. We are convinced that it provided new insights and approaches for the participating countries, just as the other Policy Labs, Seminars, and Working Conferences organised in 2016.

2016 has already been a remarkable urban year, with the Dutch EU Presidency and the following major urban achievement that is the Pact of Amsterdam, which was signed on 30 May 2016. The signed declaration marked the launch of the Urban Agenda for the EU, in the making of which the EUKN played an important role. EUKN-related events have concentrated more to the second half of 2016, due to the contributions and efforts done related to the Dutch Presidency. In late 2016, the EUKN received the confirmation that it would, together with the consortium partners Ecorys and Eurocities, form the Technical Secretariat for the Urban Agenda for the EU. The many-faceted activities surrounding this important new task will constitute a key opportunity to foster the EUKN's profile and expertise by supporting the Urban Agenda Partnerships in the most comprehensive and results-oriented fashion.

Since the EUKN is a network, our Members are the primary target in the modification and improvement of our services. However, the EUKN also seeks improvement on its own identity and position within the professional urban knowledge field. In the years to come, the EUKN will focus on the key priorities of offering continuously high-quality services to Members and of becoming more engaged in external projects, thus also strengthening the corporate identity.

Financially, the EUKN has made a strong recovery following the difficult years of 2014 and 2015. As the EUKN has started to recuperate the losses and cut overhead costs, we are looking to the future with optimism. We are determined to keep the EUKN on track and keep our position as an established urban knowledge network. The EUKN Secretariat staff will, albeit a bit smaller than the year before, continue their efforts to maintain the EUKN as an influential knowledge institute for our Members and the EU. Talks have commenced with Poland to join the EUKN by the start of 2017, which would be a great achievement in expanding the network. These efforts will remain on our agenda in 2017.



EUKN Secretariat

After 2015 saw several big changes to the EUKN Secretariat, 2016 has been a more stable year. While the core of the Secretariat remained the same, several new interns joined in February 2016. Aleksey Martynyuk (February to April), Martijn van Duijvenbode (February to October) and Katja Majcen (February to August) assisted in communication and research activities.

Martijn van Duijvenbode spent most of his internship period on his thesis, researching the EUKN social media and communication strategy, an EUKN first. Martijn's internship was extended from May to October to assist with the implementation of his thesis and to aid the Secretariat in organising the upcoming seminars and Policy Labs. Two new interns, Lea Scheurer and Wendy Flikweert, started in September 2016 to assist in communication and research. They have provided excellent support to the many events the EUKN organised in the second half of the year and to the ongoing research activities. They are set to stay until end-February 2017.

Secretariat Review

The EUKN prides itself on its continued ability to respond to the urban challenges of Europe's Member States, cities and citizens. 2016 marked an important year for the EUKN as we set out to further develop support activities for our Members as well as to expand on our strategic and advisory presence among European governing bodies. In this supporting role, the EUKN managed to turn 2016 into a productive year, and several goals have been achieved. As a network, our Members were the primary target in the modification and improvement of our services, however, the EUKN also sought improvement on its own identity within the urban field.

Assembly members

In this important urban year, the EUKN Secretariat worked closely together with the Assembly members on a wide variety of urban topics, often related to the Urban Agenda for the EU. For our Members, they provide the opportunity for group discussions and to present updates on domestic urban issues and developments. Unfortunately, no Assembly meeting was organised in 2016, but in 2017, a minimum of two Assembly meetings will make up for this. At the end of 2016, preparations have started for an Assembly meeting on 10 January 2017. This will once again be an exciting meeting where EUKN Members are offered the opportunity to monitor the EUKN's strategic positioning, and advancements. The Secretariat is currently working on ideas that will open up new opportunities for the EUKN in 2017, and that will be discussed by the Assembly.



EUKN Members in 2016

Belgium

Cyprus

Czech Republic

France

Germany

Hungary

Luxembourg

Netherlands

Strategic European presence

The EUKN is regularly solicited to participate in European conferences. Strategically, the EUKN chooses to participate in meetings that bring value to the entire network. In this paragraph, we outline the activities of the Secretariat in 2016 and the networking events where EUKN was present.

Publications

- Imagination: Handbook of Urban Governance of Free Movement in the EU. Facts, implications and policies, 2016
- Metropolitan regions in the European and global urban agendas, S+RO, 2016/3, pp. 16-20

Research realised with internal and external staff (ongoing)

- Forthcoming (2017) 10 Years Leipzig Charter, a study into urban policy since the adoption of the Leipzig Charter, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (study on urban policy in 40 countries).

EUKN Publications linked to the EUKN's Conferences and Seminars

- Report: EUKN Working Conference Integration of Migrants and Refugees (11/11/2016)
- Report: EUKN Seminar on Urban Poverty, Athens (27/9/2016)



- Report: EUKN Policy Lab on the Prevention of Radicalisation (20/9/2016)

Invited speaker at recent European meetings and workshops other than EUKN meetings (EUKN Director)

- Panellist at side-event on Revitalisation by Reconciliation, European Week of Cities and Regions, Brussels, Belgium, 13/10/2016
- Chair of high-level political panel on the Urban Agenda for the EU, European Week of Cities and Regions, Brussels, Belgium, 12/10/2016
- Panellist at the conference “Strengthening the urban dimension – a European and national perspective”, Warsaw, Poland, 13/7/2016
- Conference chair, Final Conference IMAGINATION (migration), Rotterdam, Netherlands, 23/5/2016

Invited speaker at international meetings (EUKN Director)

- Panellist at Indo-Europe Dialogue: Energy and Urban Transformation – Economy of Tomorrow, New Delhi, India, 29-30/11/2016*
- Panellist at LANDac Conference Panel on Climate Resilience on Urban Infrastructure in the Global South, Utrecht, Netherlands, 24/11/2016
- Chair and organiser of three side events at the HABITAT III Conference, “Building Bridges between the EU and the Global Urban Agendas: an Interregional Dialogue”, Quito, Ecuador, 17/10/2016, and two other events
- Panellist at Seminar EU-India Cooperation on Sustainable Urbanisation, Pune, India, 15-16/9/2016*
- Panellist at LANDac Conference “Land governance in the context of urbanisation and climate change”, Utrecht, 30/6/2016
- Speaker at METREX 20 Year Conference “Challenging the Future: How Metropolitan areas must act to create jobs and a meaningful life in the next era”, The Hague/Rotterdam, Netherlands, 19-20/5/2016
- Panellist during the Open Consultations at the UN on the New Urban Agenda, New York, USA, 25-29/4/2016*
- Panellist at the European Habitat Regional Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Prague, Czech Republic, 17-18/3/2016

** Events outside EUKN programme/budget (direct sponsoring)*

Professional activities as an international expert (EUKN Director)

- Member of the Advisory Board for the UN HABITAT/EC publication “The State of European Cities 2016: Cities leading the way to a better future” (published in October 2016)
- Expert at UN Policy Unit 4: “Urban Governance, Capacity and Institutional Development” to prepare the UN New Urban Agenda; leading working group on Multilevel Governance and Policy Challenges.



EUKN – all events in 2016

17-18 March	- European Habitat Regional Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development @ Prague
7 April	- UDG meeting @ Amsterdam
25-29 April	- Open Consultations New Urban Agenda @ New York**
19-20 May	- Metrex 20 Years Conference MRDH @ The Hague*
23 May	- Imagination Conference @ Rotterdam*
23-24 May	- Small Giant Meeting @ Eindhoven
25 May	- Advisory Board State of European Cities @ Brussels
1-2 June	- Habitat Conference @ Berlin
16-17 June	- ESPON Seminar @ Amsterdam
30 June	- LandAc Conference @ Utrecht*
7 July	- UDG meeting @ Bratislava
13 July	- Conference "Strengthening the urban dimension - a European and national perspective" @ Warsaw
24-25 August	- URBACT Summer University @ Rotterdam
14-15 Sept.	- 10. Bundeskongress Nationale Stadtentwicklungspolitik @ Hanover
15-16 Sept.	- Seminar on EU-India Cooperation on Sustainable Urbanisation @ Pune*
20 Sept.	- Policy Lab Radicalisation @ Brussels
21 Sept	- EURO CITIES Skilling up for jobs in cities: making the most of the Urban Agenda for the EU @ Rotterdam
27 Sept	- Seminar Urban Poverty @ Athens
3-5 October	- DG meeting @ Bratislava
10-14 October	- European Week of Regions and Cities @ Brussels
17-21 October	- Habitat III Conference @ Quito*
10-11 Nov.	- Seminar Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees @ Amsterdam
23 November	- UDN Urban Mobility @ Brussels
24 November	- LandAc Conference @ Utrecht
29-30 Nov.	- India Seed Community @ New Delhi**
14 December	- Policy Lab Urban Mobility @ Prague

*Events that were externally funded

**Events externally funded and taking place during holidays of EUKN staff



Intergovernmental activities

The strong alignment that the EUKN has developed with the key stakeholders of the European Urban Agenda was continuously exemplified in 2016. The EUKN's close involvement at DG and UDG meetings helped to create strong foundations that have led to significant strategic support to the needs of European Council Presidencies as well as EUKN Members.

In 2015, the EUKN was asked to provide support to the establishment for the Urban Agenda for the EU. In response the EUKN produced a series of discussion documents that were given the floor at various working group meetings with Member States, European institutions and governing bodies at DG and UDG level. As a knowledge exchange platform, the EUKN has positioned itself to disseminate shared principles that will help bring about a concrete European Urban Agenda. In 2016, the EUKN continued its involvement in the Urban Agenda for the EU by hosting the website www.urbanagendaforthe.eu and the Twitter account @EUUrbanAgenda. Additionally, the EUKN offered its services to two of the pilot partnerships. Two concrete events emerging from this engagement were the Seminar for the Urban Poverty Partnership in Athens and the Working Conference for the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees Partnership in Amsterdam.

UDG & DG meetings

The EUKN maintained a strong presence at the regular meetings of the Urban Development Group (UDG) and the meetings of the Directors General Responsible for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion. Our active participation enabled us to support our Members in communicating and developing their urban development goals and gave us the opportunity to present updates on our research reports for the Council Presidencies. The meetings in 2016 mainly focused on the development and implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU. The EUKN also participated in the informal ministerial meeting on the 30th of May where the Pact of Amsterdam was adopted.

EU Presidencies 2016

2016 was an exciting year marking the highly anticipated Dutch EU Presidency, which ran from January to June 2016. The adoption of the Riga Declaration on June 10 paved the way for the EU Urban Agenda adoption by the Dutch Presidency in 2016. The EUKN has been a strong supporter of the EU Urban Agenda, and played a supporting role in anticipation of the Dutch EU Presidency.

The Slovakian Presidency commenced in July 2016, taking over from the Dutch. First and foremost, this Presidency dealt with the aftermath of the Brexit referendum as well as the continuously pressing matter of the migration and refugee crisis. Slovakia has set up four main priorities for its Presidency term:



- Economically strong Europe
- Modern single market
- Sustainable migration and asylum policies
- Globally engaged Europe

The four priorities are driven by three interconnected principles: Achieving tangible results, overcoming fragmentation, and focusing on the citizen. With the last principle, the Slovak Presidency aims to restore citizens' confidence in the common European project. With the start of the Slovak Presidency, the EUKN continued its support for the Presidency itself as well as for the pilot partnerships and the Urban Agenda for the EU.

Urban Agenda for the EU

On 30 May 2016, the EU ministers responsible for urban matters have adopted the Pact of Amsterdam with the support from cities, the European Commission, and other European organisations. The Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) represents a unique governance framework for better addressing urban issues in EU policy-making, and it is the key EU delivery instrument of the New Urban Agenda. The close relation between the two agendas is the topic of an interactive debate with key actors involved in the making of the two agendas. The Pact of Amsterdam was the result of a deliberative process involving all key urban stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, including civil society, private sector and knowledge institutions. The UAEU fits well within the wider framework of the global New Urban Agenda. In particular, the governance approach, based on partnerships between the key actors jointly addressing major societal challenges, embodies the mindset of governance arrangements as described in various Policy Papers for the New Urban Agenda. Given today's global challenges, many of the UAEU priority themes coincide to a large extent with the key topics to be addressed by the New Urban Agenda. Related to the adoption of the UAEU, the EUKN has been involved in several key activities. The following paragraphs highlight these activities.

EUKN engagement in the Urban Agenda for the EU: Website and Technical Secretariat

In support of the work of the Ministry of the Interior of the Netherlands, the EUKN managed the official website of the Urban Agenda for the EU (www.urbanagendaforthe.eu). On this website, news and events of the partnerships are shared among its readers. The EUKN used its network and involvement to stay up-to-date with the developments regarding the Urban Agenda for the EU. The Ministry of the Interior provided additional information so that the website would provide a first source of information for those wanting to learn more about the Urban Agenda for the EU until the launch of the one-stop-shop from the European Commission.



In late 2016, the EUKN received the confirmation that the European Commission had selected the proposal submitted by the consortium partners Ecorys, Eurocities, and the EUKN, and that this consortium would form the Technical Secretariat for the Urban Agenda for the EU. The many-faceted activities surrounding this important new task together with two key actors in the urban policy and knowledge field will constitute a great opportunity to foster the EUKN's profile and expertise. Particularly, supporting the twelve thematic Urban Agenda Partnerships in the most comprehensive, transparent, and results-oriented fashion will provide the unique chance to actively foster the successful implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU.

Seminar on Urban Poverty

On 27 September 2016, the Urban Agenda Partnership on Urban Poverty assembled in Athens for a seminar, organised by the EUKN and the Partnership. The Urban Poverty Partnership, coordinated by France and Belgium, came together with stakeholders from European city administrations, national ministries, practitioners in the social realm, and researchers working on urban poverty. The goal of the seminar was to identify the bottlenecks and potentials of the issues at stake and to generate input for the next phase of the Partnership: the definition of the objectives and deliverables, which constitute the core of the Action Plan. The discussions took place within four interactive thematic workshops on Identification of Urban Poverty, on Urban Poverty, Welfare and the Labour Market, on Urban Poverty and Public Services, and on Child Poverty. The workshop results will inform the Partnership's further work towards an Action Plan. The Action Plan will define and propose ways to achieve better regulation, better funding, and better knowledge exchange on the topic of urban poverty.

Working Conference on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees

On 10 and 11 November 2016, the EUKN in cooperation with the City of Amsterdam organised a working conference on the housing and reception of migrants and refugees in European cities. The conference took part in Amsterdam and brought together various stakeholders of the Urban Agenda Partnership on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees. This partnership aims to involve European cities in EU regulations, give them better access to funding and facilitate knowledge sharing. This is especially important because 70% of the refugees in Europe find shelter in urban areas, and local governments are on the frontline when it comes to reception, housing, and integration.

Some of the key outcomes of the conference were that cities should get more direct access to European funds and that funding should be more flexible both for cities and NGOs. Moreover, it was mentioned that certain legal regulations require improved clarity and adaption in order to provide a more comprehensive set of rules enabling social cohesion and integration. Another solution related to knowledge exchange was setting up online platforms to link cities with the same characteristics and challenges, but also to make better use of existing platforms and networks, such as URBACT or Eurocities' Solidarity Cities.



Policy Lab on Urban Mobility

On 14 December 2016, the EUKN together with the Czech Republic organised a Policy Lab on Urban Mobility. Urban Mobility is one of the 12 priority themes set by the Urban Agenda for the EU. This theme will be addressed by the Partnership on Urban Mobility, which will be coordinated by the Czech Republic and the city of Karlsruhe (DE).

The Policy Lab, moderated by the EUKN's Director Mr Mart Grisel, functioned as a catalyst to speed up the identification of priorities and obstacles regarding the topic at hand, with a specific focus on the partnership proceedings. Academic experts provided input presentations on the topic's various dimensions and policy implications. This enabled the Policy Lab participants to deliberate about the ideal outcome of the partnership and to brainstorm about ways to achieve better funding, better regulation, and better knowledge exchange.

Policy Labs

The introduction of the 'Policy Lab' in 2013 became a standard service to assure the individual knowledge needs of EUKN Member States and their National Focal points (NFPs). This tailor-made approach specifically aligns the EUKN more closely to the policy priorities of EUKN Members. Considerable preparatory and organisational work is undertaken by the Secretariat including scoping papers, factsheets and the coordination of experts.

The topic of each individual Policy Lab is chosen by the Member State and its NFP. The costs of the Policy Labs are covered by the overall EUKN budget. Each Member is entitled to organise one Policy Lab per year. Per Policy Lab, a budget of €5,000 is available to cover external expertise and other (directly) related costs. A Policy Lab can have various formats such as an expert meeting, a training day, a master class, or a round table discussion with national experts, among others.

The decision which approach to take is solely that of each individual EUKN Member. It is the objective that each Policy Lab leads (as much as possible) to tangible solutions or building blocks to be incorporated in policy approaches. The main findings and background studies produced for each Policy Lab are published on the EUKN's website (www.eukn.eu) and shared among the EUKN partners.



Policy Lab on Radicalisation

On 20 September 2016, the EUKN organised a Policy Lab in Brussels on the prevention of radicalisation, together with several partners from France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The Policy Lab was first scheduled on 23 of March, but due to the terrorist attacks in Brussel the day before, we had no option but postponing it. The main goal of the event was to get insights in developing approaches, methods, and policies for preventing radicalisation in today's society. Over 100 participants from a diverse range of governmental and non-governmental organisations from all three countries attended. They took part in a variety of workshops, ranging from analysing and defining radicalisation to the training of local actors and civil servants. The event provided various possibilities for exchanging knowledge. The input gathered will support the creation of new options in developing strong and resilient approaches to the prevention of radicalisation, with cooperation of all levels of society as a key factor.

Other projects

Leipzig Charter Evaluation

Since December 2015, the EUKN EGTC has been engaged in a project commissioned by the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR). The study evaluates the implementation of the Leipzig Charter, ten years after its adoption under the German Council Presidency of 2007. In performing the study, the EUKN works closely together with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), and with the Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik (Difu). The research team, consisting of external researcher and project manager Sjoerdje van Heerden, EUKN Director Mart Grisel, and the two research assistants Lea Scheurer and Wendy Flikweert, has assessed 40 – mainly European – countries' approaches to integrated urban development as laid out in the Leipzig Charter. This was done mainly based on input by ministerial contact persons in the analysed countries who had received a questionnaire in mid-2016. Desk research served as an auxiliary means of information gathering. These country analyses will form the heart of the study, accompanied by a theoretical framework putting the topic in perspective. The study will be published and presented in June 2017 and will be available in German, English, and French.

S+RO

The EUKN Director was asked to write an article for the special edition of S+RO (Stedenbouw en Ruimtelijke Ordening) magazine. While the magazine is usually published in Dutch, this edition was partly in English to pay tribute to the development of the Urban Agenda for the EU and the New Urban Agenda. It is on this topic that the EUKN Director wrote an article, assessing how the two agendas are related and what possibilities or difficulties this will bring.



Imagination

The EUKN took part in the Imagination project writing the final report and organising the final conference. This was done with support of the EUKN affiliated researcher Alfons Fermin. Intra-EU mobility from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to EU-15 Member States was, is and will remain an important issue for policy makers, both in sending and in receiving regions. This form of mobility will continue at a relatively high level – albeit the flows of mobile EU citizens vary from country to country – and many of those who move to another country will stay there for a longer period of time. A key question in this context is how to manage the urban consequences. Some politicians see intra-EU movements as a serious threat to societies. Others seem to brush aside the negative aspects. The JPI Urban Europe funded research project ‘Urban implications and governance of CEE migration in Europe’ (IMAGINATION) offers a strong empirical basis for a better understanding of the increasing diversification of types of intra-EU mobile citizens, the consequences of intra-EU mobility for receiving urban regions, and governance approaches for addressing these consequences.

Global activities

Habitat III Conference

The Habitat III New Urban Agenda marks a 20-year milestone since the last global Habitat conference. Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development that took place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 – 20 October 2016. The EUKN hosted an official side event at the UN Habitat III Conference, which was among a selected number of proposals chosen for the Conference. The side event “Building Bridges between the EU and the Global Urban Agenda: an Interregional Debate on New Urban Governance” zoomed in on the relation between the New Urban Agenda and the Urban Agenda for the EU.

The EUKN side event featured a debate which formulated lessons to cross-fertilise the two strategic urban agendas. The debate was set up as a dialogue between Europe and other regions in the world. Four European experts presented the European partnership approach, focusing on the (multi-level) governance model. Four experts from Asia-Pacific, Latin-America, Africa and the Middle-East reflected upon this European approach. The main objective of the event is to explore common grounds and mutual learning across regions.

During the Habitat III Conference, the EUKN also co-organised the Fábrika Ciudad event called “Co-creation in practice, an interregional debate” organised by Pakhuis de Zwijger. During this event, discussants explored what meaningful participation in implementing the New Urban Agenda actually implies and how it works in practice. Policy-makers and city-makers exchanged concrete practices in various countries, in different regions in the world. Besides this, the EUKN also participated in an event on the Pact of Amsterdam at the Dutch Pavilion.



Communication

2016 saw a growth of visitors and readers of all media channels of the EUKN. The EUKN mainly shared news and articles around own reports and events. This fits in the strategy that was set out that the media channels should play a more supporting role in the activities of the EUKN instead of creating many knowledge documents. This way the EUKN is known more for the work it can do for potential clients and it creates more business opportunities in the long run. Per media channel a short description is given on the results and statistics.

Newsletter

The EUKN newsletter continued its monthly publication throughout 2016. The newsletter was used as a key source to promote and disseminate urban knowledge, European policy news, and activities. The content featured trending urban issues in the form of interview with experts, research paper summaries, links to policy reports, information about network activities, key EUKN news, and information on up-and-coming urban conferences and meetings. The newsletter in 2016 was sent to approximately 2,200 subscribers worldwide each month.

Website

Early 2015 the new EUKN website was launched. It has now settled as one of the main communication channels, receiving much attention in 2016 thus far. Over the course of the year the website was actively managed and updated where necessary, to get the most out of the redesign. Website activity included weekly up-dates in news and events as well as regular submissions to the E-Library with policy documents or research reports. During the year, several pages were either scrapped, reintroduced or altered, continuously keeping the website up to date

The EUKN website is now used to publish content and background information on our events, activities and reports. The newsletter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter mostly link to the website to provide further information on short statements.

Social Media

Mainly due to the research of intern Martijn, social media played a central role in the communication. His research spanned all social media platforms and targeted the online audience, leading to some concrete suggestions to improve the overall communication setup as well as the usage of social media. This resulted in a revised communication strategy document that will be important for the EUKN going forward. 2016 saw the continued push to promoting the EUKN on social media with regular tweeting and posts on LinkedIn and Facebook.



All social media channels show a health state of action. Whilst Martijn's research opted for more online engagement, all platforms still demonstrate a strong sense of growth. Most of the efforts were invested in increasing the visibility on the now established channels. Twitter now has 620 followers (a 150 people jump from 2015), while the LinkedIn group now has nearly 4,400 members.

Facebook

Facebook used to be a way of reposting interesting articles from other websites. Now, it has become a channel of EUKN content too, synchronising with the website. The EUKN Facebook page continues to grow, attracting an audience typically of students and young professionals. A sharp increase of 453 likes (from 808 to 1261) indicates that the Facebook page still is a powerful tool in the communication toolbox.

LinkedIn

The LinkedIn community grew to 4,316 members. The use of LinkedIn is still limited, but the EUKN will use the community in search for experts in 2017. The research of Martijn van Duijvenbode indicated LinkedIn opportunities are limited for now, but the sheer size of it makes it an interesting platform to share requests or important news.

Twitter

Based on Martijn's extensive research and his recommended communication strategy, the EUKN has used its Twitter account mainly during events. The purpose of live tweets from the EUKN team is to update its followers with first-hand information about events and to show our presence during the year. Moreover, Twitter has been and still is used a channel to retweet or interact with messages that concern the European urban policy playing field.

2017 outlook

Looking forward, the EUKN has a number of key actions for 2017. The 2017 work plan lays them out in detail. In sum, the most important aspects in 2017 will be

- to further develop the EUKN's strategic position against the backdrop of the newly established framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU and the related work of the EUKN as part of the Technical Secretariat;
- to attract new Members to the network, with specific regard to possible synergies with Urban Agenda Partnerships and EU Presidencies;
- to sincerely explore opportunities of engaging in EU-funded projects and further cooperation with European partners;
- to adapt the communication and outreach strategy even more to the network's needs.