



## EUKN POLICY LAB FOR GERMANY - RESULTS

15 June 2020, 14:00-17:00

Online meeting via Webex

The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community and the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) EGTC invited the **representatives of German partners in the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) Partnerships** to an informal exchange within the framework of a Policy Lab. The Policy Lab consisted of two discussion rounds, one on the status quo of Partnerships with German participation and one on the political and strategic context, i.e. the German Council Presidency of 2020.

In terms of the **status quo of the Partnerships** with regard to implementation of the actions and duration, participants reported a heterogeneous picture. Partnerships' work had either been concluded, was being finalised, or was still being developed further and 'prolonged'. The **Air Quality** Partnership, one of the first four 'pilot Partnerships' launched under Dutch Presidency in 2016, completed its work in 2018. Results were, inter alia, guidelines and good practices for designing and implementing air quality plans and a corresponding communication toolkit. The Partnership on **Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees** plans to continue working until 2022, based on a great commitment of most partners. Four actions will continue during the extended term of the Partnership, namely the actions 'Evidence-Based Integration Policies/Urban Data', 'European Migrant Advisory Board', 'Urban Academy on Integration' and 'Protection of Unaccompanied Minors'. The Partnership's focus is (and will remain) on better funding and better knowledge. Furthermore, new actions on the topics of health, labour market/gender and the narrative of culture & integration are planned.

The **Partnerships of the second and third 'generation'** (i.e., started under Slovakian and Maltese Presidency in 2016/2017), Urban Mobility, Digital Transition, Energy Transition and Sustainable Use of Land & Nature-Based Solutions, are in the middle of the process of finalising and implementing their actions. This phase is partly overshadowed by the COVID-19 situation, as a result of which planned physical (final) meetings are not possible or postponed.

### **Based on their experiences, participants gave some tips on action design & implementation:**

- Pay attention to clear objectives and manageability, and set priorities
- Ensure the feasibility of the actions
- Use the partners' own interests (especially of thematic European networks that are often strategically placed in Brussels)
- Use existing model/pilot projects to initiate and implement actions
- Ensure sufficient (legal) expertise

Most participants reported high satisfaction with the process and support provided by the Technical Secretariat and the Partnership Coordinators. As to the latter, special praise went to the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure (Air Quality) and to the City of Amsterdam and DG HOME (Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees).

### **Regarding the further development of the Partnerships and the UAEU as a whole, the participants made the following recommendations:**

- Allow greatest possible **flexibility** for Partnerships regarding the application process in order to involve other interested parties and new participants along the way.
- Pay attention to increasing the **representativeness** of Partnerships.
- Future (Technical) Secretariat should foster **more content support and more exchange** between Partnerships.



- In addition to Better Knowledge, Better Regulation and Better Funding, one should also strive for **Better Participation**, which allows a much larger group of cities to take part in the UAEU.
- With regard to Better Regulation, a way should be found to **ensure the relevant legal expertise**, e.g. through the involvement of legal experts from municipal associations.
- Delivery modes that go **beyond long-term thematic Partnerships** with clearly defined issues are a very good idea, provided that the multi-level governance approach is not neglected and that actors are prevented from asserting purely their own interests. Better horizontal and vertical integration can be achieved by using more compact (Partnership) formats.
- For the **involvement of European institutions** (Commission, Council, European Parliament), clear rules of the game are required, and this could entail: including EP committees and striving for having EP plenary debates on the implementation of the UAEU; using the Commission's work programme (and ask the Commission to establish these links as well); making a clear link with the Better Regulation Agenda; strengthening territorial impact assessments.
- **Improved communication** is needed to reach the interested public. Results have to be translated into other languages. The involvement of other stakeholders through **consultations** should be significantly improved.
- The UAEU should be placed on a much **more solid financial basis**.
- The topics of **land use and mobility** should actually be combined.
- Real synergy effects are only possible if the actual **implementation of the actions** with regard to their effects at the municipal level is **thought through in advance**.