EPOurban





This project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF.

Description

Social and demographic change in European cities exposes residential housing stocks to an extreme pressure to adapt. Trends like the aging society, shrinking population numbers, in- and out-migration, changing household patterns, new lifestyles, growing numbers of poor households and rising awareness towards ecological aspects lead to new needs for housing. This is a real challenge for the owners of residential buildings. Whereas public or private housing companies are usually able to take the adequate measures, single private owners often lack the necessary resources and skills. Their property remains as it is and fails to meet the new needs. As the majority of Central European residential buildings belong to single private owners, this poses a severe threat to social stability, economic growth and ecological effectiveness of Central European cities and regions.

Project intends to deliver instruments for the activation of private owners in order to integrate them into overall housing and urban development strategies. It will develop consulting systems that supply owners with knowledge on housing market trends, adapted use concepts, financing/funding possibilities, renovation procedures, state-of-the-art building equipment, marketing and management aspects. This will enable them to take the appropriate measures towards a building stock that meets the new needs. Only few Central European cities have yet implemented simple consulting instruments for private owners. Information and experience on this field is hard to find and makes the development of such instruments ineffective and risky. Transnational cooperation will bring together the existing beginnings; it offers the chance to unify them towards an upgraded, effective, and consulting system.

EPOurban partners will jointly develop a ready-to-use action plans that allows creating and implementing consulting systems in municipalities of different background and size. Partners will test these instruments by pilot implementing them in their cities. A sustainable transnational network on consulting will provide information via website and other media during and after project lifetime. This will help to address the pan-European problem of integrating private owners into urban restructuring processes.

Methodology

Transnational Triangulation

The primary objective of EPOurban project is already embeded in the title of the project itself. Accordingly, the project aims to build capacities of private owners of residential buildings, to take adaptation measures and to generate private investment into the residential building stock. How to reach that?  What measures and steps will be undertaken? The answer to this question will be given in the following text. However, here we would like to stress that there is also the secondary  and not so visible aim of the project, i.e. to foster social cohesion and thus to remove a critical market-failure in private housing as a key bottle neck for urban-revitalisation.
A key instrument for the realisation of the objectives is the municipal consulting system. The free-of charge consulting services is jointly designed by all project partners (6 cities and 1 regional association form different EU countries) to deliver ready-to-use concepts for private owners providing innovative solutions on a customized basis. At the same time, the consulting system is not restricted to a single problematic issue (each partner city has different problems or obstacles), the project initiates a durable and self-sustainable system of consulting, transferable also to other cities.
In order to build such a system, is hould be done an in-depth analysis about customers‘ needs and identification of necessary competences and skills of future consultants.
The first step of such analysis involved a comparison in three aspects: 1. Economic; 2. Legal; 3. Socio-cultural. This analysis was based on collection of hard data in each city in above mentioned fields and communicated on basis of a unified questionnaire.
The second step of the analysis contains qualitative aspects - for that purpose meetings/interviews should be organized in each city. The interviews has to address existing consultation services providers on one hand and the consultations target groups such as private buildings owners, owners associations, local inhabitants, tenants, local interests groups and on the other. The interviews should bring information how different stakeholders consider and perceive the conditions for mutual beneficiary cooperation, identify strengths and weaknesses in actual system and describe synergies and divergencies. Also the interviews is a tool undertaken in order to evaluate the partner cities existing consulting systems and clarify local needs for additional Instruments, and finally – to define those instruments. The quality of collected information is necessary prerequisite for successful progress of next phases of the project such as consulting conceptualisation, consulting team establishment and consulting implementation.

Kick-off meeting

Kick-off Meeting, 24-25.11.2011

The Kick-off Meeting was organized by the Lead Partner – City of Leipzig for the days of 24-25, November, 2011. The representatives of all project partners take part in this meeting.
The meeting starts with the welcome speeches of the moderator of the meeting Mr Jochen Gauly and the Head of Office for Urban Regeneration and Residential Development Mr. Karsten Gerkens. Mr Karsten Gerkens also talks about the difficult way from project proposal to the actual start of it.
The introductory notes on the EPOurban project in the Central Europe programme is given as well as the overview of the project – its structure, process and tasks.
The important organizational, administration and financial issues of EPOurban project are discussed during the meeting.
Beside this, all EPOurban partners present their cities and describe the problems they have to face there and give their motivation for the participation in the project. Each project partner presents the work package which is on their responsibility.
The discussion on common goals concludes the presentations. The EPOurban partners conclude that there prevail different aspects, conditions and challenges in their respective cities. However, these differences shall be viewed as a chance and not as a problem. The partners agree that the EPOurban should serve as an umbrella under which the different experiences, knowledge and skills are exchanged. That way, proper instruments to reach the different target groups can be found and optimized.
The partners from the A.I. Nova point out that the main benefit from EPOurban will be to learn from the partners, exchange good practice examples and therefore find suitable arguments in the initiated dialogue with the different stake holders. In this context, “consultancy” should mean the facilitation of public involvement and the acknowledgement of the public needs. The EPOurban partners conclude that the first step should be to collect experiences and the knowledge and to find methods and tools in order to successfully contact and involve private
owners as well as investors.
Alongside presentations and discussions the Kick-off meeting brings the participants for a tram ride along the Georg-Schumann-Straße guided by Deputy Mayor for Urban Development and Construction Martin zur Nedden and Head of Section and Team of the Office for Urban Regeneration and Residential Development Stefan Gabi.

Transnational Triangulation Workshop

**Sväty Jur-Bratislava**, 23-24.04.2012

[**Photogallery**](http://www.ainova.sk/sk/fotogaleria/?gallery_action_type=detail&gallery_id=164)

**23.04.2012, Sväty Jur**

The main goal of the triangulation workshop was to define the common goals and next steps in order to complete the joint triangulation report including the four categories - social (demographic), economic, financial and cultural. Therefore the comparison of the available data of all partner cities was presented
Partners of all the cities gave the overview of the local conditions of their towns. The base of these presentations is the questionnaire which structure is based on already mentioned four indicators – demographic, economic, financial and cultural. EPOurban partners also presented their activities in their cities. Each of the city, depending on its specific situation, identifies the problems and potentials in their target area. They tried to get into contact with the private residential owners in their target areas, then to organize meetings with them and to work with them continually and sustainably.  Each of the town has different steps and strategies since the situation of each city is different however the main aim is the same – to enable private owners of residential buildings to integrate into urban restructuring processes.
The first day of the workshop finished with the discussion - open questions were raised and cleared during the debates.

**24.04.2012, Bratislava**

The workshop continued in Bratislava at Petržalka City District. Ing. arch Jozef Nemec introduced Petržalka District to the participants. Also the target area in Petržalka district was introduced by the Bratislava City partners. The meeting continued with the presentation of the Director of the Housing Policy and Urban Development Dpt (Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development) Mrs Elene Szolgayová who talked about EPOurban project within the national policy in Slovakia.

The excursion through the target area followed after presentations which was leaded by Ing. arch. Jozef Nemec.

**ISC Meeting**

The Interregional Steering Committee (ISC) discussed the following items:

- The Corporate Identity manual, which was presented by the Lead partner, City of Leipzig; It was endorsed by the Steering Committee  members;
- The project website, presented by TIS – external expert of City of Bolzano; ISC agrees on the launch of the website designed and programmed by TIS in Bolzano; project website - [www.epourban.eu](http://www.epourban.eu/) - should be launched until 18th of May;
- The project leaflet presentation by the partners from Sopot; ISC endorses the design but asks to amend the leaflet until 6th of June;
- Question of promotion materials; All Partners are asked to provide ideas and designs for EPOurban promotion material;
- Reporting issues;
- Upocoming tasks and next partners meeting. LP presents the time-plan for the upcoming tasks; The next EPOurban partners meeting is planned to take place in 17-18 of October in Sopot.

Relevance

The EPOurban partnership is a joint concerted project of transnational value to work against social and spatial segregation in an urban context.
     The project partner cities (Praha, Leipzig, Sopot, Bolzano, Celje, Bratislava) face severe problems in parts of their urban areas. Economic decline, vacancies and decay lead to social tension and segregation. Consequently these areas of privately owned housing have become unattractive to real estate investors. A downwards spiral of weak financial capacities and spreading decay has lead to market failure in housing, worsened by lacking capacities of private owners to take action (e.g. knowledge on financing possibilities, missing property concepts). In reaction and to break this downward spiral the EPOurban partners aim to sensitize, activate and mobilize private owners by consulting services. While other Central Europe projects focus on public property in urban renewal, private house owners have largely been neglected. EPOurban partners identified private owners as key actors and together elaborated the concept of a consulting system to initiate private investment.
     EPOurban is a contribution to territorial cohesion and a balanced and sustainable territorial development in urban regions with strong demographic and social problems. The transnational cooperation will establish joint solutions on demographic and social matters in an urban context and at the same time respecting particular regional framework conditions.
     EPOurban will develop a consulting service to upgrade existing residential housing stocks, fitting for Central European municipalities of different sizes and economic backgrounds. The universal application and its transferability make EPOurban core outputs an ideal instrument for other cities to implement. It bears the ability to upgrade and adapt living conditions throughout Central Europe.

Partnership

The partnership consists of 6 Municipalities – City of Leipzig (Project partner 1 - PP1), Municipality of Sopot (PP3), Municipality of Bolzano (PP5), Prague 11 Metropolita District (PP7), Municipality of Celje (PP8) and City of Bratislava (PP9), an association of the municipalities Regional Developmen Association Voitsberg (Bärnbach, Köflach, Voitsberg), a project agency Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH (PP2) and a research institute Academia Istropolitana Nova (PP10).

AINova is one of 9 partners of the project EPOurban (Enabling Private Owners of Residential Buildings to Integrate them into Urban Restructuring Processes). In the EPOurban project AINova is in charge of the Work Package 3 – Definition of local and national preconditions and consultation needs. The main responsibilities of AINova lies on contribution to scientific input to the project – to ensure the sound methodological approach; to collect data on housing conditions, assess social and demographic trends and developments, housing market, funding conditions and legal preconditions and make the results easily accessible to others by construction a blended-learning tool. The project can bring a valuable experience in initiating adaptation of residential areas to demographic and social change and facilitate the integrated development of urban residential areas. Involvement of other than governmental stakeholders is among other interests of long-term goal of AINova activities, especially due to the very specific situation in housing stock ownership structure in Slovakia – since the majority of housing units were privatised, the common property of housing associations and public space is neglected. AINova is also interested to benefit from international experience in the field of enhancing private investments in housing stock.

EPOurban Cities will jointly conceptualize and implement the consulting system, disseminate the results and act as policy entrepreneur for urban development. Aufbauwerk (PP2) will design a business concept to facilitate the consulting system as self-sustaining and carry out the EPOacademy.

Overview

**Short form**: EPOurban

**Full name**: Enabling Private Owners of Residential Buildings to Integrate them into Urban Restructuring Processes
 **Priority**: Competitiveness
 **Area of Intervention**: 4.2 Addressing the Territorial Effects of Demographic and Social Change on Urban and Regional Development
 **Duration**: September 2011 – November 2014 (39 months)
 **Total Budget**: € 2.069.349,60 ERDF Contribution: € 1.666.909,70
 **Project Partnership**: City of Leipzig (Germany), Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH (Germany), Municipality of Sopot (Poland), Regional Development Association Voitsberg (Austria), Municipality of Bolzano (Italy), Prague 11 Metropolitan District (Czech Republic), Municipality of Celje (Slovenia), City of Bratislava (Slovakia) Academia Istropolitana Nova (Slovakia).
 **Lead Partner**: City of Leipzig
 **Lead Partner Country**: Germany