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REVISED NOTE

from : General Secretariat
to : delegations

Subject : Implementation of the First Action Programme for the implementation of the
Territorial Agenda of the EU

Delegations will find annexed a revised note from the Presidency on the above subject, which will be dealt with under "Other business" at the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 5 June 2008.

Implementation of the First Action Programme for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU

– **Information from the Presidency on the implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities**

Following the agreement on the **First Action Programme for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU** during the Portuguese Presidency, of which the Council took note at its meeting on 20 December 2007, Slovenia is the first Presidency to initiate implementation. This Action Programme provides a framework for the implementation of priorities and other activities set out in the Territorial Agenda of the EU up to 2011. In it EU Member States committed themselves to implementing the actions defined, reporting to the Ministers responsible for territorial cohesion and spatial planning, and proposing additional measures necessary for implementing those actions and any changes to ways of implementing them. In the context of the implementation of the First Action Programme, the Slovenian Presidency is undertaking three tasks, namely coordinating implementation of the First Action Programme (AP1), fostering dissemination of information and raising awareness of the substance of the Territorial Agenda of the EU and AP1, and implementing activities concerning coordination of spatial and urban development (Action 1.1 in AP1). Member States have also agreed that they will implement the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, which was agreed in Leipzig under the German Presidency at the same time as the Territorial Agenda.

Under the Slovenian Presidency work has also continued on implementing the **Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities** in which the Ministers responsible for urban development committed themselves to implementation at European level too. Discussion on the implementation of the Leipzig Charter, which was initiated during the Portuguese Presidency, has continued during the Slovenian Presidency. Debate has focused on one of the priority challenges in development, climate change, with the emphasis on the role of urban planning and development in adapting to and mitigating climate change. The contribution to the debate on the implementation of the Leipzig Charter, in the light of an integrated approach, also constitutes implementation of the task of coordination between spatial and urban development, which Slovenia is carrying out as part of the implementation of the First Action Programme. The Slovenian Presidency has supported an integrated approach at all levels to the preparation and implementation not only of spatial and urban policies but also of all development policies. The spatial and urban dimensions are important constituents of the policies both at European level and at national level because consideration of spatial diversity and of the specific potential of particular areas and cities is of key importance in the formulation of effective and synergistic policies and in the attainment of sustainable development.

As part of the implementation of the commitments made and in order to ensure the continuity of activities in the area of territorial cohesion and urban development, the Slovenian Presidency organised three working meetings and a meeting of Directors-General on 14 and 15 May 2008, with the participation of representatives of EU 27, partner countries and other invited countries, representatives of the European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions), and stakeholders – representatives of the relevant European organisations working in the area of territorial cohesion and urban development: EIB, EEA, ESPON, URBACT, EUKN, CPMR, CEMR, AEBR, EUROCITIES, ECTP, EUROMONTANA, EFAP and representatives of the Alpine Convention.

The Directors-General responsible for territorial cohesion discussed two reports presented by the Presidency, an interim progress report on the implementation of the First Action Programme, and an interim report on the implementation of action 1.1 concerning the possibilities of improving coordination between spatial and urban development. They also took note of the preparation of a Green Paper on territorial cohesion and exchanged views on territorial cohesion following its inclusion in the new Treaty of Lisbon:

- The Slovenian Presidency has tabled an interim progress report, which gives an overview of **the first steps in the implementation of AP1** and outlines the content and questions which, in this regard, have to be examined in more detail or resolved in the future. The Directors-General took note of the interim progress report on the implementation of the First Action Programme for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU. They supported the proposal that progress reports should be proposed during each Member State's Presidency in order to keep the continuity of the implementation of actions under review. Emphasis was placed on the role of the Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP) as a forum for exchanging questions in the area of territorial cohesion and spatial development. In addition to Member States, stakeholders in the area of territorial cohesion and spatial and urban development also cooperate in the forum. The cooperation of stakeholders and their active role in the implementation of the Territorial Agenda and AP1 was underlined in particular. Incorporating a major part of the actions from the Action Programme was a significant step towards implementation of the Territorial Agenda. For the effective implementation of AP1, individual actions need to be pursued and coordination should be increased. The Directors-General supported the proposal regarding further discussion of the indicators for monitoring and auditing the implementation of the Action Programme. They took note of the approaches, put forward by France and Germany, to the implementation of the actions, on the basis of which Ministers will contribute to the debate on how to integrate the territorial and urban dimension into some key EU dossiers with spatial planning impact. They also emphasised the importance of establishing the web portal, prepared by Portugal, to inform the wider public of the Territorial Agenda of the EU and raise awareness of it, and help implement AP1.

- The question of the concept of territorial cohesion and its implementation arises both in the context of the implementation of AP1 actions, and in relation to discussions on the future of cohesion policy and the preparation of the Green Paper on territorial cohesion. Member States therefore also held an exchange of views at the meeting on the **importance and role of territorial cohesion**. Territorial cohesion is becoming a shared European concept, which touches on the question of the spatial diversification of Europe. With the inclusion of territorial cohesion in the new **Treaty of Lisbon**, the urban dimension is also gaining ground as an important part of territorial cohesion. Although the Treaty has not yet entered into force, it is necessary to resolve the outstanding issue of how to define and implement territorial cohesion in the framework of the future of cohesion policy and how to take account of it in relation to other policies. In previous discussions (e.g. at the Conference on the Future of Cohesion Policy in Maribor, 7 and 8 April 2008), it was stressed that not only did territorial cohesion concern the issue of its incorporation into cohesion policy, but that it could also represent an important integrating framework for the preparation of other sectoral policies. The definition and use of the concept of territorial cohesion at European and Member State level will be dealt with in the **Green Paper on territorial cohesion**, which the European Commission is preparing for adoption in September 2008. At the meeting, the European Commission presented an overview of the replies to questionnaires received from Member States and the process of drafting the Green Paper. The positions put forward in discussions contribute to formulating a definition of the role of territorial cohesion. The European Parliament, which expressed interest in continuing its active engagement in the process of defining the concept of territorial cohesion, stressed that territorial cohesion generally means that regional measures concern the entire Community, bearing in mind the requirements of individual areas.

The Directors-General responsible for urban development examined the report on the implementation of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities and the interim report on the implementation of activities for coordinating territorial and urban development (Action 1.1 of AP1), prepared by the Presidency. In addition, as reflected in the Green Paper on adapting to climate change, the Slovenian Presidency opened discussions on the role and contribution of urban planning and development in the light of climate change and increased energy efficiency:

- The Directors-General discussed various measures for the **implementation of the principles and objectives of the Leipzig Charter** in individual Member States and reported on many cases of good practice in the implementation of the principles of integrated development. Different types of specific examples of the use of the principles of the Leipzig Charter were presented, thereby facilitating the exchange of experiences and information. Germany, which leads the JESSICA working group, outlined the progress made by the working group, which was established to clarify outstanding issues regarding the use of that financial instrument to foster the implementation of integrated urban development plans in Member States. The European Parliament reported on the recently adopted Resolution on "The follow-up to the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter – Towards a European action programme for spatial development and territorial cohesion", which calls for measures at different levels and the implementation of the objectives of both documents. The European Commission reported on its activities in the field of urban development, and on the inclusion of the urban dimension in operating programmes and of urban development issues in the preparation of the Green Paper on territorial cohesion. The Directors-General took note of progress in the implementation of the Leipzig Charter and supported its further implementation, focusing on specific areas such as climate change and energy efficiency. They also welcomed France's intention to continue to implement the Leipzig Charter on the basis of indicators for defining sustainable cities. The role of the Urban Development Group was highlighted as a forum for exchanging views on urban challenges and building a comprehensive overall understanding; it was also stressed that the Group should meet regularly in order to monitor and implement the Leipzig Charter. The Directors-General highlighted the importance of fostering cooperation, partnership and dialogue among the different stakeholders, including representatives at different levels and from different sectors, with a view to the efficient and full implementation of the Leipzig Charter.

- At the meeting, Member States also discussed the **role of spatial planning in relation to climate change**. Urban areas not only represent a major burden for the environment in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, but they are also very vulnerable to climate change. Climate change will have a long-term impact on urban areas, not only as regards water, food, energy and other supplies, but also in terms of the prospects for future development, quality of life in cities, and security. At the same time, with appropriate planning, building of facilities and architecture, we can contribute significantly both to reducing the environmental impact and to mitigating the negative consequences of climate change. **The urban development issues linked to adaptation to climate change** relate to the spatial organisation of urban activities and infrastructure as a result of changing spatial circumstances (e.g. in mountainous or coastal areas) and to a reduction in the vulnerability of urban areas to natural disasters. Certain cities in coastal areas and along rivers will require considerable conversion work owing to the rise in the sea level. For example, special measures will be required to protect cities from frequent flooding from rivers. Temperature changes also require new approaches to urban planning and construction, as well as highlighting the issue of how to improve the energy efficiency achieved through existing structural funds. The use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar energy, leads us to the question of where to develop and build cities in the future in order to make better use of the possibilities available. Measures to mitigate climate change, which are necessary in urban areas, will also have to include consideration of their possible social consequences; the poorer sections of the population will be the most affected by that process. Particular attention will also have to be given to consumption in urban areas, which is often unsustainable. It is therefore necessary to achieve responsible use of energy by changing existing habits and practices as regards transport of people and construction. In their discussions, the Directors-General agreed that an integrated approach to urban development was the best way of dealing with the challenge of climate change. They emphasised that discussions must continue with a view to obtaining a comprehensive overview of the extent of the consequences and threats arising from climate change in urban areas and of the possible (urban) planning measures which needed to be fostered.

The Directors-General responsible for territorial cohesion and urban development examined the **Interim report on the implementation of the action to improve coordination between spatial and urban development policies** which is being led by Slovenia (Action 1.1 of AP1 "Prepare and promote policy options to foster coordination between spatial and urban development in the light of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter, at EU and Member State level"). The report sets out the interim results of that action so that proposals for coordination and future activities can be examined and evaluated. The report sets out the first proposals for improving coordination between spatial and urban development policies both at EU level and at Member State level in the light of the Territorial Agenda of the EU and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities. In addition to the proposals on coordination, the action provides an exchange of experience via the case studies which represent integrated approaches to urban development in order to make urban areas and cities sustainable and competitive. Although the action was initiated in the context of the implementation of the Territorial Agenda, harmonisation between spatial and urban development policies is an important part of the principle of integrated development, as emphasised by the Leipzig Charter. The objectives of sustainable and polycentric development can be achieved more effectively and the challenges arising in the field of development, such as demography, climate change, etc., can be met more effectively if work is harmonised; in accordance with the principle of integrated development, that requires both vertical and horizontal harmonisation between the policies and the various levels of implementation. The final report is scheduled for November 2008 and will be presented under the French Presidency. The Directors-General took note of the Interim Report on Action 1.1 of AP1 and supported the draft proposals for improving coordination between spatial and urban development policies and activities for further work and upgrading. They highlighted the importance of vertical coordination, the role of multi-level territorial governance, the significance of mutual learning and dissemination of information on the basis of exchange of experience in implementing an integrated approach to spatial and urban development, and the role of case studies.

The Slovenian Presidency will prepare the final report on activities in the field of territorial cohesion and urban development which will include the recommendations made by Member States and stakeholders regarding continued implementation of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter, statements on the future role of territorial cohesion, and conclusions and recommendations emerging from the discussions on the contribution of integrated development and planning of cities to adjusting to and mitigating the effects of climate change and to increased energy efficiency. The report will be handed on to France as the next Member State to hold the Presidency.
