

**FINAL
PUBLICATION**



IMPRINT

This publication was prepared within the framework of the INTERREG IVC project
URMA - Urban-rural partnerships in metropolitan areas

<http://www.urma-project.eu/>

The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and made possible by the INTERREG IVC Programme.

The content of the publication reflects the author's/partner's views and EU Commission and the Managing Authority is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Lead Partner

HafenCity University Hamburg, Urban Planning and Regional Development
<http://www.hcu-hamburg.de>

URMA Partners

Germany	HafenCity University Hamburg State Ministry of Urban Development and Environment, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg	Italy	Tuscany Region Lombardia Region
Poland	Regional Office for Spatial Planning of Westpomeranian Voivodeship (RBGP WZ), Szczecin Institute of Urban Development, Krakow	Netherlands	Municipality Borne Municipality Enschede
		Bulgaria	Pleven Regional Administration

Project Management

REM · Consult, Hamburg
<http://www.rem-consult.eu>

Design and Layout: frischfang, Rostock, <http://www.frischfang.de>

September 2014

Pictures provided by project partners. All images are copyrighted and property of their respective owners.

CONTENTS

WELCOME	4
URBAN-RURAL PARTNERSHIPS: AN INNOVATION IN TERRITORIAL COHESION	5
PROJECT OVERVIEW	6
URMA APPROACH	8
PARTNER REGIONS	10
CHARACTERIZATION OF PARTNER REGIONS	12
FREE AND HANSEATIC CITY OF HAMBURG	14
WEST POMERANIA REGION	16
TUSCANY REGION	18
LOMBARDY REGION	20
LESSER POLAND REGION	22
PLEVEN REGION	24
TWENTE REGION	26
LESSONS LEARNT	28
RECOMMENDATIONS	33
REFERENCES	35

WELCOME



Jörg Knieling

Over the last three years the URMA project has been a productive platform to exchange and develop ideas on the topic of urban-rural partnerships and territorial cohesion.

The URMA project fits into the wider context of urban-rural partnership research groups and project initiatives. The idea for this project to explore the development and implementation of joint urban-rural initiatives originates from meetings in 2011 of METREX (the Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas). It has also benefited from a thematic connection with the RURBAN action (Partnership for sustainable urban rural-development) and RURBANANCE, a project for rural-urban governance within the Alpine Space Programme.

Within the URMA project, a variety of urban-rural partnerships and related topics have been presented and developed with insight and openness, providing a channel to share ideas and lessons learnt. This learning experience has resulted in a number of outputs, including a glossary and definition of the URMA approach, an inventory of policy frameworks, pilot reports, policy recommendations, concrete regional implementation plans and a collection of good practices. These innovative outputs were produced in fruitful collaboration with our URMA partners and their respective stakeholders in the partner regions, to whom we owe a great deal of gratitude.

In addition to our project partners, we are grateful for the participation of experts and institutions throughout Europe, particularly EUROCITIES, METREX, OECD, PURPLE, without which this project would not have been possible. A special thank you is also due to the participants of the recommendation workshop, for their valuable comments and contributions.

We are also indebted to the INTERREG IV program, the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy the URBAN Intergroup at the European Parliament for providing further opportunities for the development and exchange of ideas. After three years of intense collaboration and productive learning relationships between our partner regions, it is evident that urban-rural partnerships can contribute substantially to territorial cohesion. Of course, the results of this project are not final but rather a stage in the search for further tools and strategies for urban-rural partnerships. Nevertheless we hope that the outcomes of URMA, presented in this brochure and other URMA publications, will be of interest to other regions and institutions providing inspiration for new urban-rural partnerships throughout Europe.

Jörg Knieling

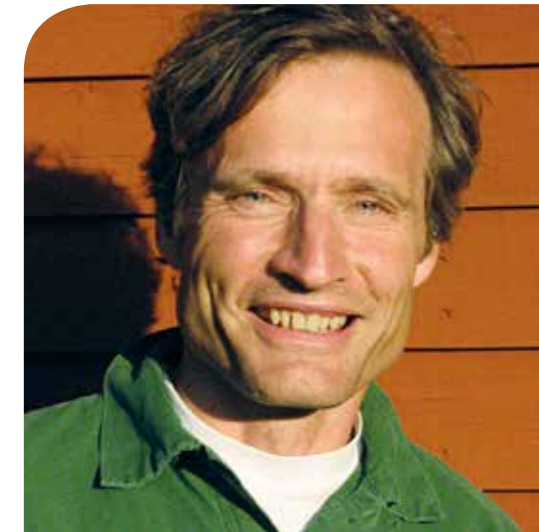
Professor for Urban Planning and Regional Development
HafenCity University Hamburg, UMRA lead partner
on behalf of the URMA project partners

Urban-rural partnerships can help make more efficient use of resources and competences, ensure the long-term viability of rural areas and the sustainable development of metropolitan regions. In essence, urban rural partnerships contribute to territorial cohesion by connecting territories (physically, economically and socially), by better use of finite resources (natural, human, economic and physical) and untapped territorial potential (creation of new markets, development of local economies, valorisation of natural resources, etc.).

There is a growing awareness of the importance urban-rural partnerships. Not least this is reflected in the new Cohesion Policy, which places an emphasis on coherent strategic frameworks for the European Structural and Investments Funds, includes new tools to support integrated territorial approaches and sets priorities throughout the different funds that are particularly suited to supporting urban-rural linkages. The European Parliament has been a driver behind this development, emphasising the importance of urban-rural linkages. As a result, the European Commission has carried out a preparatory action on urban rural partnerships. The objective of the action was to understand the benefits of urban-rural partnerships, how they function and how they can be supported, especially by European policies.

The OECD defines urban-rural partnerships as organs that cover a territory where rural and urban areas co-exist that are connected by one or more functional linkages (e.g. commuting, value chains, demography, natural resources, etc.) and where the partnerships are mechanisms of cooperation that manage these linkages in order to reach common objectives. Urban-rural partnerships go beyond urban-rural linkages. There is a sliding scale ranging from geographic and infrastructural links, through sector partnerships driven by issues to integrated approaches involving governance structures. The Hamburg Pilot is one example of a territory linked by infrastructure that would like to move towards greater integration and seeks new development opportunities.

Land use and related topics such as urban sprawl, soil sealing, flooding and risk prevention, and water supply will likely be among the essential issues for urban-rural partnerships to deal with. They capture the essence of urban-rural partnerships, involving distinct constituencies with different levels of power and influence, competing objectives and strong interdependencies. Land use is a pressing issue across the EU where suburbanisation and changes of land use pose serious threats to finite natural



URBAN-RURAL PARTNERSHIPS: AN INNOVATION IN TERRITORIAL COHESION

Christian Svanfeldt, European Commission,
Directorate General for Regional Policy

resources. It is therefore very encouraging that one topic of the Lombardy Pilot deals with peri-urban governance. Shorter food chains are a feature of a more sustainable society built on local economies. They too are related to land use issues, but further, as the Enschede/Borne Pilot demonstrates, short food chains can also serve as a catalyst to strengthen regional identity and solidarity. The rediscovery and recognition of the local specifics and skills opens new specialisations that are rooted in the local society.

In an era of scarce public resources with pressures from globalisation, rapidly growing urban centres, and shrinking rural areas, urban-rural partnerships become even more important as a lever to reverse the negative trends and ensure a more sustainable rural and urban development. At the European level, we provide support for urban-rural partnerships, not least through Community-Led Local Development that is mainstreamed by the European Structural and Investment Funds and through the Integrated Territorial Investments. We are now at the stage where we go from the programming phase of these funds for the coming 7 years to the implementation phase. Together we must ensure that we get this implementation right. One way of doing so is to stimulate and continue to enrich our knowledge of urban-rural partnerships. We need to build on good examples, and we also need to experiment and stimulate further action. That is why European Territorial Cooperation projects like URMA are so important - they are not about copying what others have done, but about learning by doing together, providing the inspiration for policymakers and partnerships across Europe.

PROJECT OVERVIEW



GENERAL FACTS

- **Project duration:** January 2012 – December 2014
- Funded by the ERDF through the INTERREG IVC programme Regional Initiative Project
- **Priority 1:** Innovation and the knowledge economy
- **Sub-theme:** Innovation, research and technology development
- Nine project partners from five EU member states
- **Total project budget:** €1.7 m

Fig. 1 General Facts

WHAT IS URMA ABOUT? BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES, OUTPUTS

The INTERREG IVC project URMA was launched in 2012 with the aim to promote urban-rural partnerships as a tool to strengthen the potential for generation and transfer of innovative solutions in European metropolitan areas and their wider hinterlands. Over the last three years, nine participating partners from Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland have developed ideas about how lasting urban-rural partnerships can be developed and implemented in selected thematic fields of spatial development (cf. Fig. 1). Improving the effectiveness of regional and local policies towards cross-sector and multi-level urban-rural governance approaches lies at the core of the URMA project. Three objectives comprise the focus of the project:

- What is necessary to establish/stimulate more intensive urban-rural partnerships?
- In which sectors could urban and rural actors benefit from a closer cooperation?
- How could urban-rural co-operation contribute to new forms of shared spatial responsibility, solidarity and territorial cohesion?

The URMA project concept originally emerged from a demonstration project „Supra-Regional Partnership Northern Germany/ Hamburg Metropolitan Region“ that was developed within the scope of the German Federal Government’s programme „Demonstration Projects of Spatial Planning“ (2008-2010). In this project innovative, a means of addressing regional disparities and new governance structures were developed for large-scale urban-rural partnerships. Based on this approach, along with METREX - the Network of Metropolitan Regions and Areas set up an expert group URMA: „Urban/rural relationships in metropolitan areas of influence“ with the aim of exploring an integrated approach to cooperation between the various actors in developing and implementing joint urban-rural initiatives. At the METREX-meetings in 2011, the project objectives, potential fields of urban-rural cooperation and funding options were discussed (cf. METREX 2014). Eventually, in March 2012, a URMA kick-off conference took place in Hamburg.

The URMA project was also thematically connected with the RURBAN action (Partnership for sustainable urban-rural development) managed by the European Commission as well as with RURBANANCE, a project for rural-urban governance within the Alpine Space Programme (2007-2013, ERDF).

As an interregional cooperation project, URMA supported an exchange of experience between the representatives of regional administrations, research institutions, businesses and NGOs. During the course of the project a number of conferences, study visits and thematic workshops took place. Whereas the Components 1 and 2 were dedicated to management and communication activities, the focus of the Component 3 was on activities stimulating an exchange of information between all project partners. The Component 4 was aimed at the development of pilot implementations on urban-rural partnerships in Twente, Hamburg-Jutland and Lombardy (Fig. 2).

In the framework of URMA, a number of outputs were successfully finalised. First, a concise glossary and definition of the URMA-approach were developed, to provide a common understanding of crucial terms related to urban-rural cooperation and the rationale behind it. Second, an inventory of policy frameworks was developed, by collecting data on various national approaches to urban-rural partnerships and the planning systems in partner regions. In parallel, good practices of existing examples across partner regions were collected. Further, as an output of pilot implementations and ongoing monitoring, field reports on Twente, Hamburg-Jutland and Lombardy, as well as an interim and final pilot report were compiled. All these outputs are hoped to inspire and encourage the URMA partners to develop and implement activities laid down in their implementation plans over the long term, leading to the establishment of successful and durable urban-rural partnerships. Last, but not least, and notably the most important output based on the URMA project activities and derived from partners’ expertise, are the final recommendations on how urban-rural cooperation could be better promoted and effectively implemented. All these outputs can be accessed on the URMA website.



Component 1

Management/
Coordination

Component 2

Communication/
Dissemination

Component 3

Exchange of
experiences
(good practice, inventory,
implementation plans,
recommendations)

Component 4

Pilot implementation
on urban-rural
partnerships
(Twente, Hamburg-Jutland,
Lombardy)

Fig. 2 Project Components

URMA APPROACH



HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND URBAN-RURAL PARTNERSHIPS? TOWARDS A JOINT URMA-APPROACH

At the project's outset, understanding of what urban-rural partnerships and their respective features were varied significantly among the partners. The need for a commonly understood definition of the term was acute. To address this need a concept document „URMA-Approach“ was developed in 2013. Accordingly, we understand urban-rural partnerships as project-oriented cooperation initiatives between different actors in metropolitan areas and their more distant rural hinterlands with the aim of establishing stable, but flexible cooperation structures. In particular, urban-rural partnerships can be characterised by the following selected features, which should be seen as having equal importance:

- **Spatial aspect:** Urban-rural partnerships can be created within the formal boundaries of a metropolitan region, but can also extend further than the core areas of influence (beyond classic city-suburban cooperation/city-region cooperation). In other words, they can stretch to a wider geographical distance

than the neighbouring or surrounding areas. Thus, a number of spatial constellations can emerge. For example, from URMA's pilot implementations it was possible to distinguish at least three spatial scales:

- Small and medium-sized towns in networks with their rural hinterlands. This includes predominantly rural areas with a polycentric structure (e.g. Borne municipality and surrounding rural areas)
- Metropolitan region of cooperation between a metropolitan core and its peri-urban area(s) (e.g. Milan metropolitan area)
- Supra-regional urban-rural cooperation between metropolitan region(s) and its wider hinterland, defined on a more international scale (e.g. Jutland Corridor)

In addition, trans-local urban-rural cooperation between urban and rural actors irrespective of physical proximity and based on virtual interaction can be developed (cf. Copus 2013: 12-13) (e.g. Amsterdam Responsible Capital).

- **Partnerships need a level playing field:** An urban-rural cooperation is based on equal footings, with respect and a recognition of mutual interdependence between urban and rural actors. A cooperation will fail in the long run if it is dominated by hierarchical structures and stereotypes.
- **Benefits and resources/cost sharing:** An urban-rural partnership is formed on the basis of mutual benefit with mutual resources and sharing of costs. The cooperation should bring both urban and rural actors win-win situations as much as possible, and both parties have to decide how best to achieve this. Balanced negotiations of interests and the ability to share resources, responsibilities and commitments will enhance cohesion between the urban and rural regions.
- **Actors:** Urban-rural partnerships are developed through the involvement of a wide range of actors, representing various sectors and levels of governance: public administrators and representatives of local/regional governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and businesses.

- **Innovation:** In the URMA context innovation is understood as a transfer of knowledge based on the creation and dissemination of „novelty“, i.e. new knowledge, or the introduction of existing knowledge in a new way (cf. Cooke: 2001: 33, Lamboy 2005: 1142, modified). Innovative solutions are better found when actors from different fields/sectors work together.
- **Variable geometry:** This principle implies that the constellation of actors/regions and geographical area involved in urban-rural partnerships may vary according to the thematic orientation of cooperation. This implies that urban-rural partnerships are more driven by concrete actions and tangible projects and less by regional planning.

Under real-life conditions, such as changing frameworks of national and regional policy, financial and organisational constraints, staff rotation, to name but a few, it is unlikely for all these features to be implemented. However, they should be understood as guiding principles for all stakeholders who believe that urban-rural partnerships can add value to the existing initiatives.

PARTNER REGIONS

HAMBURG



HafenCity University Hamburg, Urban Planning and Regional Development (Lead Partner)

www.hcu-hamburg.de

State Ministry of Urban Development and Environment, Free and Hanseatic City Hamburg

www.hamburg.de/regionalentwicklung

TWENTE REGION



Municipality of Borne

www.borne.nl

Municipality of Enschede

www.enschede.nl

(Component 2-Leader)

TUSCANY REGION



Tuscany Region

www.regione.toscana.it

WEST POMERANIAN REGION



Regional Office for Spatial Planning of Westpomeranian Voivodeship (Component 3-Leader)

www.rbgp.pl

LESSER POLAND REGION



Institute of Urban Development Krakow

<http://irm.krakow.pl/en>

LOMBARDY REGION



Lombardy Region

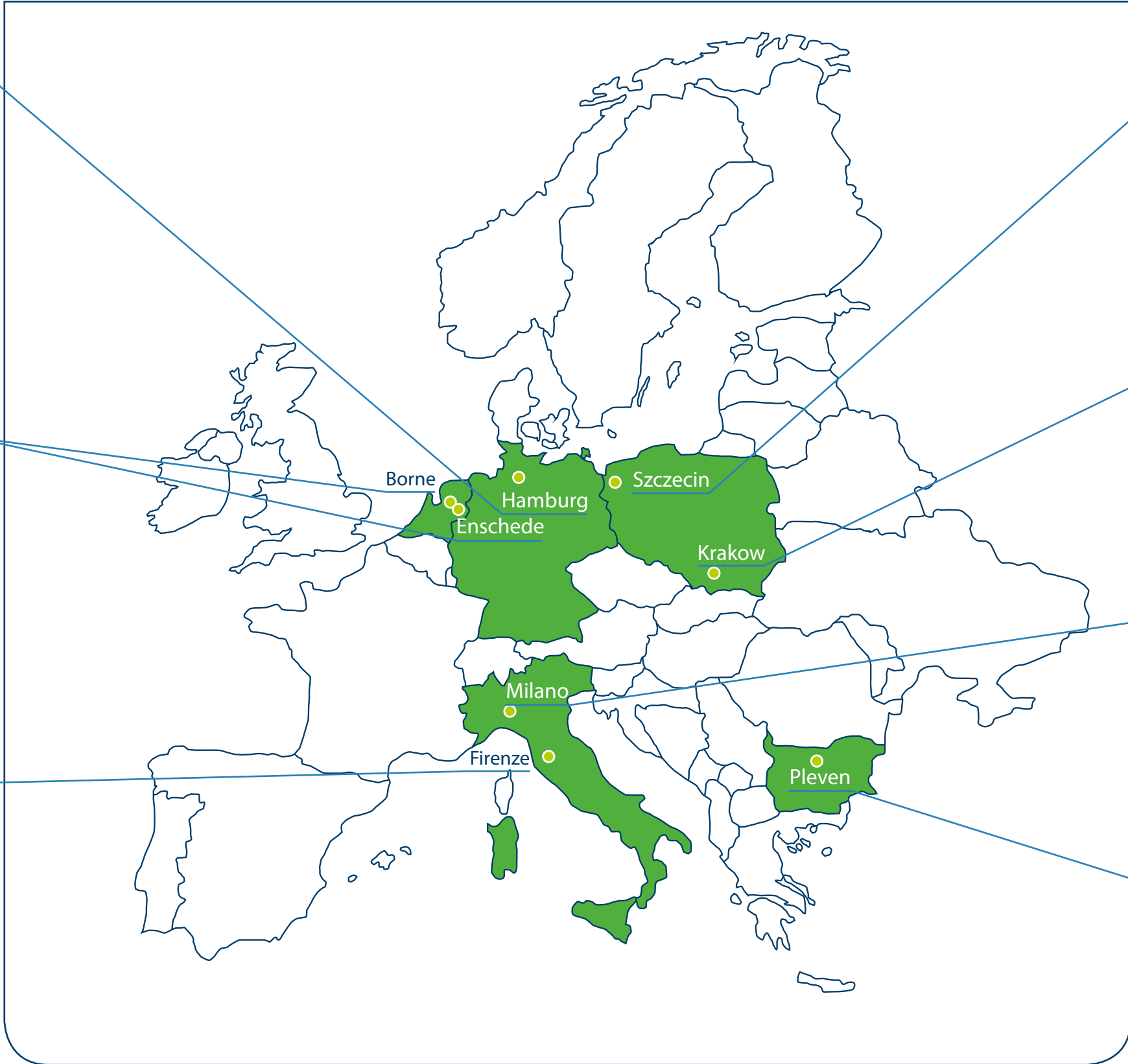
www.regione.lombardia.it

PLEVEN REGION



Pleven Regional Administration

www.pleven-oblast.bg



CHARACTERIZATION OF PARTNER REGIONS



Hamburg, Germany

- The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg is an important economic and logistics hub in Northern Europe
- The urban development and economic interests of Hamburg stretch beyond its borders into the surrounding German federal states. In the late 1990s, the Hamburg Metropolitan Region was founded to steer the urban development and economic potentials of the region.
- Hamburg has a long tradition of territorial cooperation in terms of the Hamburg metropolitan region
- Urban-rural partnerships have been developed since 2007 within the metropolitan region and extending beyond its borders

West Pomerania Region, Poland

- West Pomerania Region is characterised by the urbanized coastal zone with numerous ports and other major centres of maritime economy and the network of resorts and spas of national and international importance. A significant part of the region is filled with the regular settlement network of small and medium towns serving the surrounding rural areas.

- The Region implements cooperation within the urban-rural partnerships to counter the uncontrolled spreading of cities (urban sprawl) and in order to balance the development of the settlement network, including halting the depopulation of rural areas.
- On the regional level West Pomerania cooperates with neighbouring regions: Swedish Scania and German regions Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Tuscany Region, Italy

- Tuscany is characterised by the contrasts of a densely populated and developed city network on the plains and its rural, mountainous and coastal zones
- The Region aims to limit further urban growth with the proposal of a new law for territorial government, which introduces strict rules to limit the consumption of non-urbanized land
- The Region supports urban-rural partnership, strengthening the role of agriculture in peri-urban areas to preserve agricultural areas in proximity to urban centres



Lombardy Region / Italy

- The Milan Metropolitan Area is one of the largest and economically strongest agglomerations in Europe
- The Lombardy region supports agricultural parks and initiatives to keep undeveloped peri-urban areas attractive and preserve them from ongoing urban sprawl
- On a larger scale, Lombardy supports linkages between the rural areas in the Alps and urban areas, for example in the field of tourism

Lesser Poland Region, Poland

- The metropolitan area of Krakow is a strong economic and cultural centre in Poland
- Major challenges for the region are to overcome administrative fragmentation of the metropolitan area, enhance cooperation between the core city and other municipalities and control urban sprawl
- Urban-rural partnerships between Krakow and peripheral rural areas are initiated to support their tourism and agricultural potentials

Twente Region, Netherlands

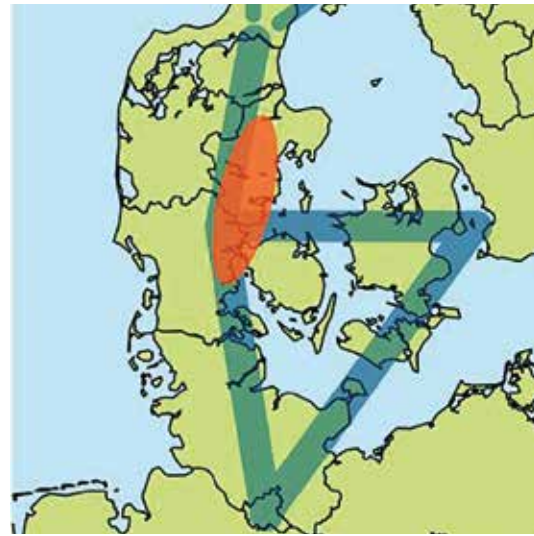
- The Twente Region is characterised by a network of medium-sized cities surrounded by predominantly rural areas
- Demographic change is leading to a shrinking and aging population, so the region aims to involve young people and to strengthen education
- Twente is supporting regional food cycles with the help of the Green Knowledge Portal, a network of various educational, public and private actors

Pleven Region, Bulgaria

- The Pleven Region is suffering an industrial decline and military conversion, leading to a shrinking population
- In order to avoid further out-migration of young people the region is supporting the development of a satellite campus in Pleven, together with universities in Sofia
- The region is developing tourist and cultural offers that link attractions in the city of Pleven and rural areas



FREE AND HANSEATIC CITY OF HAMBURG



The Hamburg Metropolitan Region (5.5 million inhabitants) started putting urban-rural partnership ideas into practice in 2007 with a demonstration project of best practices nationwide. We now have several regional projects: logistics initiatives, cluster managements, new approaches to branding Northern Germany, improvements to public transport in peripheral areas, preparing information and a „cultural/mental bridge“ for the Fehmarn Belt crossing and transnational university cooperation.

Within URMA, Hamburg wants to establish urban-rural partnerships in developments stretching northwards from Hamburg and on both sides of the Danish border, known as the „Jutland corridor“, identifying potential networks and removing hindrances to cross-border cooperation. We hope for an intense debate on integrated regional approaches to bridge the urban and rural in Europe (TAEU 2020).

A joint implementation plan for enduring transnational and cross border cooperation in the „Jutland corridor“ will be presented at the international conference in November 2014 and agreed by the relevant politicians and stakeholders from Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and the Jutland region of Denmark. Along with a Memorandum of Understanding the plan lists a collection of fruitful projects of cooperation for near future years.

Stefan Herms, Senate Chancery,
Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg

„Transnational exchange within URMA enables us to improve the Hamburg Metropolitan Region and neighbouring areas as a strong functional region in Europe. The fixed Fehmarn Belt crossing and enhanced cooperation between Hamburg and Copenhagen is our priority and the „Jutland corridor“ is a promising transnational development area. One major challenge for cooperation within the Jutland corridor is to upgrade transport connections between Hamburg, Århus and Ålborg, especially the massive investment needed.

Initiatives between German and Danish regions stimulate fruitful cross-border collaboration. I'm certain the Jutland corridor has potential for cooperation in many fields. Greater awareness of the region that stretches from the Elbe to the shores of Norway and Gothenburg is needed by the people and by Brussels. The vibrant city regions along A7/E45 are hubs of innovation in the corridor. Hamburg is keen for German-Danish cooperation and URMA will have a lasting impact on European regional policy.“



To intensify transnational cooperation in the „Jutland corridor“ and pinpoint the driving forces behind urban rural development in Schleswig-Holstein and western Denmark, we established a sound organizational structure and gained the academic support of an experienced consultant.

We collected the relevant data and strategic information on the performance of the functional region that stretches between Aalborg in Denmark and Hamburg in northern Germany. The corridor's potentials (and needs) we presented Europe-wide and to the national governments in Copenhagen and Berlin. This resulted in an attractive „fact book“ to convince detractors of the possibilities of functional regions at the capitals of the neighbouring countries.

We built a common understanding within the region and its stakeholders about complementary fields of intensified cooperation and set up a (politically supported) road map for further initiatives and targets. In order to put the political recommendations into practice and convince stakeholders of the added value of a broad transnational approach, we also took a deeper look into European, national, public and private funding.

The idea of „urban-rural partnerships“ helps to permanently redirect the perspective towards the needs and roles of the more remote parts of the „Jutland corridor“ within a balanced growth strategy, lifting the region to a new European level of well-being, based on the region's competences and human resources.

The urban areas of towns strung like pearls along the E45/A7 motorway between Aalborg and Hamburg (Aarhus, Kolding / Friedericia / Vejle, Esbjerg, Odense, Flensburg / Aabenraa / Sonderborg, Neumünster / Kiel) will act as development hubs. They express interest in partnerships in their close vicinities to enhance performance and regional potential. The corridor will encourage development of a functional region, by projects with compact organization and limited funding fed from various sources. Culture, renewable energy, wellness, tourism, logistics and knowledge appear the most fruitful areas of cooperation.

WEST POMERANIA REGION



West Pomerania seeks solutions for more sustainable development in the whole region. The urban sprawl around Szczecin, the region's capital, combined with a lack of proper spatial planning for the suburbs, is a major barrier to sustainable spatial development. What is necessary are intentionally balanced cooperation between the cities and rural areas along with a good quality and coherent spatial management. The concept of urban-rural partnerships appears a good tool and the region would like to implement and promote it among a wide range of stakeholders. URMA project can be used as a good source of solutions to address certain problems in the region by an exchange of knowledge with practitioners and experts from all over Europe.



Next steps to be undertaken after the project will include an integration of the concept and ideas of urban-rural partnerships in the „Spatial Development Plan of West Pomeranian Voivodeship” and the „Spatial Development Plan of Szczecin Metropolitan Area”. Further elaboration of „The Integrated Development Strategy for the Central Functional Zone of West Pomerania” is also planned. This document will indicate directions to integrate capabilities of towns in the Central Zone and will help to create new subregional and polycentric growth centres based on urban-rural partnerships. An important issue will be trying to transfer identified good practices into West Pomeranian municipalities. Based on the model study of suburban village Wołczkowo, a new spatial development study for the municipality will be developed. The region is also willing to continue cooperation with project partners and join new projects derived from URMA results.



In 2012, we organised the first public seminar and study visit in Szczecin. International and local experts, local decision makers and interest holders participated in the event and gave valuable input to the discussion about urban-rural interactions. Later that year, West Pomerania took part in the RURBAN preparatory action, managed by the European Commission (DG REGIO). The Central Functional Zone of West Pomerania was one of 11 cases from around the world that was described in the comprehensive RURBAN report „Rural-Urban Partnerships: An Integrated Approach to Economic Development” carried out by the OECD. As part of the action, the workshop with local stakeholders from the Central Zone and OECD experts was also organized in Polczyn-Zdrój in 2012.

That led to further activities concerning urban-rural interactions in the Central Zone. Several stakeholders' meetings were organised and „Guidelines for the Development Strategy of the Central Zone of West Pomerania” were elaborated. Among other things this details

some basic rules about how to implement tools of urban-rural partnerships in local policies in order to increase the competitiveness of regions, based on a territorial approach, an integrated multi-sector approach and development programs for specific territories. This will form the basis for an integrated Development Strategy of the Central Zone. Integrating the capabilities of the towns will help create new subregional and polycentric growth centres based on urban-rural partnerships.

Further, we carried out a model study of a spatial development plan for a village in a metropolitan area (based on the case of Wołczkowo village in Dobra municipality), including detailed research and diagnosis. This was followed up by a „Vademecum” addressing local administrators, inhabitants, planners and architects. It provides information about spatial development processes in suburban areas and the principles of how to form urban structures in rural areas that are affected by suburbanisation.

Olgierd Geblewicz, Marshal of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship

Our region has to develop on the basis of maritime economy and tourism. In this context, there is a need to define, deepen and test the possibilities of developing urban-rural partnerships and to broaden the territorial dimensions of such cooperation. In the new financial perspective we will focus on integrating actions taken by local government together with the private sector and NGOs. We look forward to this approach producing a qualitative leap towards the development of functional areas, including the development of urban-rural partnerships.

The metropolization process followed by suburbanization and counterurbanization seems to overlook the role of surrounding rural areas. Can we prevent further suburbanisation? It largely depends on a conscious, wide-ranging cooperation in this field. Participation in the URMA project certainly increases our chances of preparing tools, which can help prevent further suburbanisation.



TUSCANY REGION



The Tuscany Region has always taken an interest in analysing and understanding the difficult relationship between the city and the countryside, especially with regard to the metropolitan area of Florence –Prato – Pistoia, which is known as the Florentine plain. For many years, the plain has attracted much attention in the Tuscany Region due to its rural characteristics, which are increasingly threatened by the expansion of the metropolitan cities of Florence and Prato, strong industrial presence and transport infrastructure. The Tuscany Region is also keen to see how similar issues are addressed by European partners.



In the near future, the Council of the Tuscany Region is expected to approve adding the project of Parco della Piana to the regional planning instrument (PIT).



Fausto Ferruzza – Legambiente toscana,
public meeting December 6, 2012,
Polo Scientifico - Sesto Fiorentino

„We have a very proactive idea in this project, because for decades the area has been considered a sort of large trash container where the unwelcome functions were put, instead we now think that this project could lead to a quantum leap in the lives of citizens“



Eriberto Melloni, Representative of
Committee Node Northwest, public
Meeting, December 6, 2012,
Polo Scientifico, Sesto Fiorentino

„We continue to defend a landscape that we love. This idea of an agricultural park for the plain was a glimmer of hope to recover something from what was destroyed by the way the plain has been treated since the 60s“



The Tuscany Region is presently engaged in a process to introduce the agricultural park of the plain project - Parco della Piana - into its spatial planning instrument known as PIT. The procedure was adopted by the Council of the Tuscany Region as resolution No. 74 of 24 July 2013. Following the adoption by the Council, the Tuscany Region analysed the comments submitted by citizens about the project.

LOMBARDY REGION



Urban sprawl is a real problem in Lombardy, so the overall aim of our pilot „Regione Lombardia – Expo 2015” is to analyse existing urban-rural relations and find innovative approaches to combat the loss of agricultural land by the identification and characterisation of peri-urban territories that often represent natural areas of city expansion with limited protection. The main challenge is to stimulate a dialogue between

the various institutions and stakeholders, to activate innovative governance of peri-urban areas and support recognition of the functions and services performed by the territories. The goal is to develop an instrument to manage peri-urban areas able to deal with their complex systems, integrate multidisciplinary aspects towards true cross-sector cooperation and support institutional and bottom-up initiatives.



The characterization of the pilot territorial context (Expo area plus wider territories), ongoing since 2013, has been analyzed the most relevant trends in peri-urban territories, the governance of peri-urban systems and the relation between city and countryside in one of the most significant and under-pressure peri-urban areas in Lombardy region. The pilot search defined criteria and methods for the identification and characterization of peri-urban areas, in order to achieve reductions of land consumption to meet the targets defined at European level. That led to inclusion of „Guidelines for Peri-urban Territories” in the framework of Planning Instruments of Lombardy Region (PTR – Regional Territorial Plan). Analysis of the good practices identified, provided examples of cooperation between the different actors, stakeholders and local institutions helping develop rural-urban partnerships in Lombardy. Identification of drivers and barriers from existing institutional plans and programs was also necessary to complete

the knowledge framework in Lombardy. Equally, the various meetings (workshops/workgroup) on urban-rural relationships included in the current revision of the main Regional Plans (PTR, PSR/POR 2014-2020) as well as the academic/scientific workshops on rural vulnerability and resilience have represented a vehicle for dissemination of knowledge and opportunities that urban-rural partnerships offer to strengthen territorial cohesion policies in Lombardy. To complete the framework of URMA, we developed peri-urban governance instruments as formal tools and defined their contents and criteria of application in order to enhance the knowledge and recognition of the services, functions and economic value provided by peri-urban systems in the Lombardy territory. These instruments were developed in a process of participation between various local stakeholders, policymakers, associations, etc. We regard the peri-urban system as a „bridge” able to link potential and mutual cooperation between urban and rural areas (peri-urban paradigm).



Viviana Beccalossi, Councilor to Land and Planning Department – Lombardy Region

„It is not just a matter of applying tools, rather learning a method and developing a new culture of government.”

Lombardy is a multifaceted territory with many strengths and problems. We are trying to develop policies, instruments and methodologies that could be replicated in other regions with initiatives and partnerships involving citizens, private companies, associations and institutions. Concerning urban-rural partnerships, Lombardy has highly urbanized areas and a lot of agriculture: the peri-urban system acts as a hinge between the city and rural zones, where sustainable management can create value. The Lombardy Region is able to strengthen inter-regional policy by supporting peri-urban areas with specific cross-sector policies; we aim to introduce this theme in local instruments of territorial government and we are working on strategies and actions to develop the policies and guidelines that identify and promote peri-urban areas, targeting their functions and services.



LESSER POLAND REGION



Although examples of cooperation can be found in the region, the concept of urban-rural partnerships is rarely seen. The need for cooperation is becoming increasingly evident, especially in the Krakow Metropolitan Area where functional relations extend beyond administrative boundaries. From the regional administration's point of view, the most important task is to enhance existing forms of cooperation and

set up new initiatives within the metropolitan area. This is especially important for cooperation between urban and rural areas that rarely spontaneously form partnerships. However, the URMA approach encourages going further and thinking simultaneously about building partnerships between core urban areas and the more distant or even peripheral underdeveloped rural areas.



An URMA public seminar in Krakow was held in December 2012. This meeting made it possible to identify the main challenges for urban-rural cooperation in the region, and especially within the Krakow Metropolitan Area. Its aim was twofold: to present URMA project objectives, sharing experiences of urban-rural cooperation from other EU regions, and to initiate and encourage discussion on mutual cooperation between the urban city and the rural municipalities (communes) in the Krakow Metropolitan Area. The seminar also provided an opportunity for other URMA project partners to learn about the realities of formal and informal urban-rural relations in the Malopolska Province.

As awareness of the potential for urban-rural cooperation was initially low among local and regional politicians and decision-makers, we decided to prepare a publication as follow-

up to the seminar that not only identified the existing preconditions, relations, problems and development challenges, but also indicated and emphasised where the potential advantages from establishing urban-rural partnerships would be of special benefit for the partners. That should always be a first step in building a regional system of urban-rural cooperation. As the project progressed, this idea evolved into a more general „handbook” for urban-rural cooperation in Poland.

One further and previously unplanned activity was the cooperation between IRM (Institute of Urban Development) and Gorlice County – the most peripheral, almost entirely rural area in the Malopolska region. The representatives of Gorlice County expressed great interest in the URMA project, especially for regional food supply chains, food cooperatives and organic food production.



We are going to continue our work of promoting the URMA approach in Malopolska and in other Polish regions, to increase general awareness of URMA. The planned publication will be disseminated to politicians and decision makers at all levels and the topic of URMA will be included in a range of events and conferences that is organized by the Institute of Urban Development.

We will also take practical steps, for instance establishing a pilot urban-rural partnership in the form of the food cooperative between local stakeholders from Krakow and Gorlice County. Gorlice County is one of the most attractive and untouched areas of Malopolska and so farm tourism could be added to the activities mentioned. In this case, urban-rural partnerships could be set up between a network of farms offering agro-tourism with tourist organisations and enterprises in Krakow.



Mirosław Wędrychowicz,
Head of Gorlice County

The knowledge derived from URMA offers a real chance to improve the economic situation of farmers in Gorlice County. Mirosław Wędrychowicz, Head of Gorlice County stated „We were asked to join one of the URMA meetings and our participation soon became of special interest to us. There is a need to find the best ways to promote our region and sell regional products. During the meeting we were able to match our interests with those of a local cultural operator in Krakow. His non-formal association organises local events and is fairly interested in using our products for their enterprises. We obtained a chance to provide our farmers new channels of product distribution”. In this example one further aspect of URMA is clearly seen – it provides a platform to exchange information and make contact with new partners. It is a tool that matches those who share common aims for urban-rural development.



PLEVEN REGION



As a predominantly rural region, we need initiatives to facilitate the establishment and development of urban-rural partnerships. 10 of our 11 municipalities are rural, so we strive to exploit all cooperation links with the city of Plevna, especially when it comes to employment, tourism and joint business. We are currently developing the region as a tourist destination and at a stage where we need good ideas and practices to further develop our projects and improve regional development. The URMA project has all the prerequisites to support an exchange of knowledge and experience with partners from other countries, extract the best practices from throughout Europe and apply the ones that can be adapted to the region.



Within the URMA project we have placed emphasis on the visibility of the project and the opportunities for cooperation that the project offers. We used our own two projects - „Regional Information Centre” and „Tourism development in Kailaka regional park” to attract stakeholders from across the region and disseminate information about the benefits of this type of cooperation. Legal experts and consultants looked into our regional development processes and how to improve our regional development strategy; researching and enquiring the 11 municipalities about their strategies, plans and projects. We found a number of crossover points (projects that are derived from one another but serve common regional goals) that we could use to pinpoint improvements to the regional strategy, as it is by its purpose the main document on the priorities of which all national and international funding for the region are coordinated.

We envisage three further steps at this point:

- Based on the analysis of our research, we will organise a conference or meeting between stakeholders and government representatives from the 11 municipalities where we have found points of mutual interest in their individual development projects and initiatives. There we will inform them of the possibility to combine their efforts and projects at a regional level.
- Facilitate a potential consolidation of individual projects of the municipalities in the region into common projects, thus creating urban-rural partnerships.
- Integrate the lessons learnt and practices examined in the URMA project into a proposal for amendment of certain aspects of the plans and strategies for the Plevna region.



Mr. Bojidar Makaveev, local businessman

„The Plevna region has a lot of potential, but investment is needed to transform it to a more attractive destination. I work in tourism and promote sightseeing across the territory. I seek possibilities for partnership, especially a jointly invested business with a partner in Kailaka Park where I find the target group for my business in summer. I am looking forward to partnerships and cooperation with the district administration, in order to offer our products to more tourists”. He concludes that after improvements to the park, more and more people are visiting it. He sees a great opportunity for small businesses in the municipalities to cooperate with larger companies in the same or similar business, thereby optimising transport and delivery costs with a joint venture while redirecting tourists to smaller destinations around the region, not just to those in the city.



TWENTE REGION



Restoring the regional food chain is increasingly becoming more of a political issue in the Netherlands. Dutch farmers have developed themselves by degrees into food producers for the world market. Nowadays, consumers are more critical about the production and transportation of food and there is a growing preference for buying regionally produced food. This new development in attitudes to agriculture could act

as a driver to strengthening urban-rural cooperation and to fostering regional economic growth. It leads to new opportunities for farmers and will stimulate a better relationship between urban and rural societies. Joining URMA could provide us with good ideas and advice from other countries that are also busy with a similar development of urban-rural partnerships.



The first draft of a regional food strategy was developed by a working group of representatives from Innofood (big food cooperative in the East Netherlands), Syntens (innovation network for entrepreneurs and SMEs), Regional Bureau for Tourism and an East Netherlands agricultural vocational institute. This was refined and shared with entrepreneurs by students who made a study about regional food strategy. The strategy will provide orientation for entrepreneurs and have the support of the Regional Bureau of Tourism.

A study undertaken by students of Saxion University confirmed feasibility of a regional distribution centre in Borne. The search for an entrepreneur to lead the centre is underway as well as a search to buy land within the urbanized area of the Twente region where crops using the permaculture technique (integrating economic, social and environmental aspects) can be grown. Once the search succeeds, the distribution centre can begin. Meanwhile, a business plan was completed in September 2013

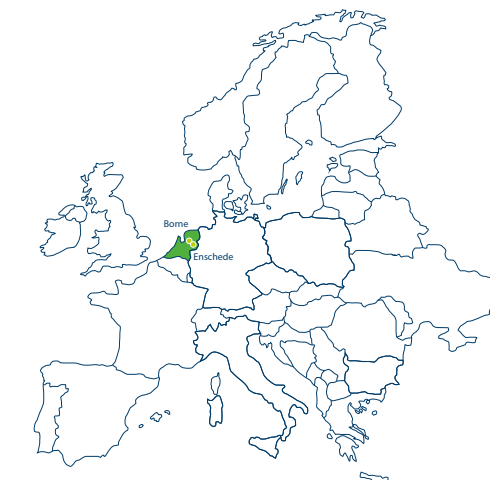
and a study to determine an efficient logistics system and a professional business case currently elaborated by students of Wageningen University and Saxion University of Applied Sciences. A web-based distribution system has been developed and the food entrepreneur cooperative has agreed to share a common logistics system between food producers and local food shops and restaurants.

A vision to convert an industrial site into a local urban food farm in Enschede has been realised. Entrepreneurs and educational institutes were contacted during 2013 to draw their attention to the Enschede urban farm. Since November 2013, several urban farming projects have been launched in the cities of the Twente region. A workshop was organised December 2013 in Enschede with citizens and companies on food and non-used space in the city towards the establishment of an urban farm. Next steps include establishing an area cooperative with stakeholders.



Anna Waanders, Head of the Regional Bureau for Tourism Twente

„A regional strategy for locally grown products is needed to make Twente a tasty destination for tourists. The tourist wants to experience ‘small is beautiful’ and wants to see that ‘the windmill is actually working’. Tourists are often very curious and take time to discover the world ‘from farm to fork’, because that way you know what you get and where it comes from. To attract such tourists the region has to ensure they encounter the unexpected, by arranging surprises for the tourists.” According to Anna, the economic importance of regional products is plain to see and there is a specific target group that is willing to spend more money, especially for a good food experience. She concludes with a remark that regionally produced food is the most natural link between rural areas and the city.



The next steps of the pilot include: signing agreements and the starting up of an urban farm for sheltered jobs in Enschede, completion of a logistics concept for distribution, and the organisation of a regional conference on locally produced food.

LESSONS LEARNT

HOW DID WE LEARN? LEARNING PROCESSES IN THE URMA PROJECT TOOK PLACE ON DIFFERENT LEVELS:

- Learning within the project among all partners (e.g. via pilot implementation and good practices, study visits and thematic workshops);
- Bilateral learning between two partners who face similar challenges;
- Learning within each of the partner regions (see implementation plans of partners and pilot report);
- Learning outside the project with external experts and institutions (see recommendations)



SELECTED EXAMPLES OF LEARNING PROCESSES BETWEEN URMA PARTNERS

PILOT IMPLEMENTATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES

Pilot Implementation for the **Lombardy Region**:

An analysis and characterization of peri-urban areas (PUA) in the metropolitan region of Milan was conducted, using innovative GIS analysis. Based on this analysis, guidelines for improved PUA management and implementation of urban-rural partnerships were developed and will be introduced into the regional law on soil consumption and the territorial plan. The main aim is to preserve the values of PUA and agricultural and non-urbanised areas, and to avoid further urban sprawl. „Ecological urban-rural agreements” were proposed as an instrument to preserve the multi-functional aspects of PUA.

Pilot Implementation initiated by the **City of Hamburg**:

The partnership involves large cities as well as small and medium sized towns and their rural hinterland along the Jutland corridor -comprising Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and the regions in Western Denmark. Possible fields of cooperation are renewable energy, tourism, agriculture/food industries and logistics that were identified during conferences and as a result of a jointly conducted statistical profile study. The results are currently presented in a trilingual fact book. As a next step two project proposals on renewable energy and city-regions will be examined.

Pilot Implementation for the **Twente Region**: Twente is re-establishing regional food chains using the quadruple helix approach. The representatives of the public sector, entrepreneurs, universities, schools and citizens cooperate in the Green Knowledge Portal Twente with the aim to support the production, branding and sustainable distribution of regional products as well as innovative methods of production such as urban care farms and cooperatives. Moreover the revival of regional product chains will help protect the cultural landscapes of Twente from suburbanisation, urban sprawl and other undesirable developments.

The bottom-up local food initiative Buon Mercato in **Lombardy Region** is a cooperative between producers and consumers. It is an important driver for the distribution of regional food.

Examples of combining agriculture with cultural offers, to provide tourist and recreational attractions:
Hamburg - open air museum Kiekeberg, International Garden Exhibition 2013;
Milan, Lombardy - Rice Field Park;
Tuscany - concept for the Park of the Plain.

LESSON LEARNT IN PARTNER REGIONS

West Pomerania Region developed a typology and guide book of different areas/municipalities to support sustainable development and avoid urban sprawl. Lombardy and West Pomerania-regions exchanged experiences on their analysis and development of tools.

In the metropolitan area of **Krakow in the Lesser Poland Region** the experience of Lombardy initiated the discussion on how to tackle the impacts of urban sprawl. **Tuscany Region** is developing a regional park called the Park of the Plain in the peri-urban area of Florence and Prato, making use of the experiences of Lombardy. At the same time, this example can serve as a model for the Lombardy Region.

The example of a large-scale urban-rural cooperation between a metropolis and remote rural areas inspired several partners:

West Pomerania is already cooperating with neighbouring German regions and is interested in enlarging the cooperation towards Northern Germany and Denmark. **Pleven Region** will cooperate more closely with the other regions in the Northwest of Bulgaria within the scope of a new national development concept and is interested in an intensified cross-border exchange with Romania.

In the **Lesser Poland Region** an interest in cooperation between the metropolitan area of Krakow and the remote peripheral rural areas of the Gorlice district on the border to Slovakia has grown.

The example of the Green Knowledge Portal in the Twente Region and the regional food initiatives in Lombardy and Tuscany have inspired urban and rural stakeholders in the **Lesser Poland Region** who participated in a study visit to Twente Region. A new cooperative will connect consumers in the metropolitan area of Krakow with producers in the rural Gorlice district.

The idea of a cooperative between producers and consumers has been adopted in the **Twente Region** and will be integrated into the strategic approach of its Green Knowledge Portal Twente.

Pleven Region is making use of the experience gained during the URMA study visits to Hamburg, Lombardy and Tuscany. Pleven is planning to combine archaeological and historical assets with scenic beauty to become more attractive as a tourist destination and to improve the local recreation offers.

LEARNING AMONG ALL PROJECT PARTNERS

Two of the key questions asked in URMA were „What is necessary to establish/stimulate more intensive urban-rural partnerships?“ and „How could urban-rural cooperation contribute to new forms of shared spatial responsibility, solidarity and territorial cohesion?“ The following lessons learnt sum up the findings with regards to these questions.

Starting point and regional circumstances

Urban-rural partnerships can only be successfully initiated when there is a real need and benefit for all parties involved. Experiences cannot be simply transferred from one region to another. It is necessary to understand the various planning and political cultures as well as the different socio-demographic and economic situation and dynamics on regional and national levels to adequately create and support urban-rural partnerships. There are differences in the types of urbanisation and spatial development between European countries. Former socialist countries and newer EU member states, such as Bulgaria and Poland, are catching up with somewhat negative developments that have already taken place in the western part of Europe some decades earlier e.g. the growth of urban areas and its negative effects like urban sprawl. The historically conditioned different levels of progress of the regions in their economic and infrastructural development lead to distinct needs and interests for urban-rural partnerships.

Multi-level governance

Many urban-rural partnerships not only exist on one government level, but across several government levels (municipal, regional, national, international). In such cases it is crucial to support the creation of an organizational framework for multi-level governance. This organisational tool can facilitate better information exchange between regional and local planning levels (especially between public officials, civil servants, village mayors, etc.) in order to improve the information flow.

The sub-national bodies of government and administration are responsible for implementation of regional planning and development. In this respect,

they represent an adequate level for facilitating and coordinating the implementation of urban-rural partnerships. Especially in urban-rural partnerships that involve several government levels, they can act as a junction between stakeholders by enabling an information exchange, circulation of regional know-how and monitoring of projects. Further, there are a number of institutions on the (supra-) regional level that have experience in regional cooperation and can act as a driving force to enable urban-rural partnerships: metropolitan associations, city networks, public transport associations, regional agencies for economic development, research institutes/universities, etc.

Multi-sectorial cooperation

Many urban-rural partnerships face problems that cross sector boundaries, most prominently between the departments responsible for agriculture and spatial development, but also between other thematic fields. In order to find solutions to urban-rural challenges and to make use of the common potentials of urban-rural partnerships, it is necessary to create cross-links between the entities that are responsible for different thematic areas. Urban-rural partnerships can be helpful in overcoming the traditional boundaries between authorities who are responsible for sector policies.

Functional areas

As the URMA regions and other examples demonstrate, functional interrelations between urban and rural areas cross administrative, regional and national boundaries. Therefore, national governments should recognise that spatial planning and thus urban-rural cooperation needs to reflect the functional relations. If an institutionalisation of the urban-rural cooperation is called for, new spatial entities can be developed according to the different types of partnerships, ranging from small-scaled functional areas, to metropolitan regions to large-scale meta-regions.

Stakeholder involvement

Depending on the type and topic of urban-rural partnerships, a balanced participation of different

stakeholders (e.g. public government, knowledge institutes, enterprises and civil society) needs to be achieved. The triple/quadruple helix model can be used to identify new and relevant topics and to create innovation through urban-rural partnerships; as shown in the example of the Green Knowledge Portal in the Twente Region.

It is crucial to convince local political leaders (mayors, councillors), entrepreneurs and NGOs to become actively involved in urban-rural partnerships, so they can subsequently take over projects and act as their driving force. For this reason, it is necessary to identify local leaders who can take charge of the management of urban-rural projects. The Jutland cooperation shows how mayors of small and medium-sized towns in Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark became involved from an early stage on.

It is necessary to involve partners from the private sector to stimulate a better integrated economic development between urban and rural areas. One example of how is by the implementation of partnerships in the development of clusters, including urban as well as rural enterprises and further stakeholders.

Citizen participation

Many citizens experience urban-rural interactions in their daily lives. They physically cross administrative borders while commuting and consume goods and services that span urban and rural areas. Therefore, it is the citizens in urban and rural areas who should be regarded as experts at identifying the opportunities and challenges of urban-rural partnerships. Public participation should be enabled, by new methods like the Charrette method in Tuscany and involve different groups such as the young people and students in the Twente region, in order to develop, implement and locally embed urban-rural partnerships.

Events as platform

Large events that used to be locally restricted to one city are now often conducted on a regional level, spanning several towns or areas. Furthermore, they



tend to cover a broader range of topics, addressing the general development of a city or region, such as the topic 'sustainable regions'. Events such as EXPO 2015 in Milan and the International Garden Exhibition Hamburg 2013 provide an excellent opportunity for exchanges of information and ideas between the various stakeholders. They also enable urban and rural actors to come together and initiate cooperation projects.

EU and national programmes and instruments

Experiences from previous and current EU and national programmes are useful as a source of knowledge to establish urban-rural partnerships (e.g. INTERREG A for the establishment of cross-border relations, LEADER as a model for inter-municipal cooperation and the German Spatial Demonstration Project MORO on large-scale partnerships). The concepts of urban-rural partnerships should find support in future programmes.

New funding instruments like CLLD (community-led local development) or ITI (integrated territorial investment) are being introduced in some member states. Initial examples from Poland and Bulgaria suggest these help to improve urban-rural cooperation. However it is still necessary to better communicate the potential advantages of ITI and CLLD as well as monitor and critically assess the implementation of these new instruments.



IN WHICH SECTORS COULD URBAN AND RURAL ACTORS BENEFIT FROM A CLOSER COOPERATION?

Infrastructure

The rural areas of metropolitan regions often suffer from poor accessibility to the metropolitan core, and good infrastructure is a precondition for many urban-rural projects. Therefore, introducing better modes of community transportation, park and ride sites, synchronized bus and rail connections, better timing of metropolitan/regional railways and wider broadband internet coverage can make big improvements.

Spatial Planning and Territorial Development

All URMA partners emphasise the necessity of spatial planning instruments and policies that better integrate urban and rural planning and development. West Pomerania and Lombardy are, for example, developing guidelines for the future reduction of urban sprawl that will be integrated into spatial development plans.

Economic Development

Cluster cooperation that includes urban and rural areas can achieve a better use of resources and support spill-over effects from urban to rural areas and vice versa. Cluster cooperation significantly improves the involvement of small and medium-sized enterprises in regional clusters.

Renewable Energies

Regional renewable energy cycles and networks are regarded as an important topic for urban-rural cooperation by most of the URMA partners. Rural areas can contribute to the energy supply of urban areas. Regional energy production by community wind parks or biomass production advances the local economy.

Local and Regional Public Services facing Demographic and Societal Changes

A shrinking and aging population, especially in many rural regions, demands the better integration of public services, particularly in the fields of health care and education. This applies especially to rural areas in Plevn and the Lesser Poland Region.

Tourism

The combination of tourism assets in both urban and rural areas is regarded as an opportunity to become more attractive as a destination for vacations and for local recreation. All URMA partners are working on better integration of tourist attractions, for example by linking cultural offers with agritourism.

Regional Food and Product Cycles

The creation or recreation of regional food cycles is a topic that concerns all URMA regions. It became evident that regional food connects urban and rural areas and that the demand for this is growing. Partnerships are necessary to develop universal tools that promote regional production chains and to match supply and demand (examples of tools are regional funds for micro-credits, consulting services, cooperatives, markets for local food producers).



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF URBAN-RURAL COOPERATION AS A TOOL FOR TERRITORIAL COHESION

One size does not fit all. Urban-rural partnerships have to address specific local/regional needs and potentials. Urban-rural partnerships should be regarded as a strategic approach at all levels of territorial cohesion policy and respectively supported. Within URMA, four basic types of urban-rural partnerships have been identified:

- Large scale partnerships: supra-regional cooperation of a metropolitan region with its wider hinterland

- Metropolitan regional partnerships: cooperation within a metropolitan region between a large city and its surrounding peri-urban and rural areas. This also includes polycentric structures
- Partnerships between small and medium-sized towns: in networks with their rural hinterland
- Trans-local urban-rural cooperation: cooperation between urban and rural actors, irrespective of physical proximity and based on virtual interaction

The existing experience of urban-rural partnerships drawn from historical and current European and national programmes and projects should be used as a source of knowledge and points of contact to build up urban-rural partnerships. The successful and promising initiatives should be continued.

The multi-thematic character of urban-rural partnerships demands holistic and locally appropriate approaches. Multi-level governance and cross-sector organizational models are the appropriate solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

URMA-Partners

HCU

HafenCity University Hamburg,
Urban Planning and
Regional Development



Regional Office for Spatial
Planning of Westpomeranian
Voivodeship (RBGP WZ),
Szczecin



State Ministry of Urban
Development and
Environment, Hamburg



Municipality Enschede



Tuscany Region



Municipality Borne



Lombardia Region



Pleven Regional Administration



Institute of Urban
Development, Krakow

Urban-rural partnerships should be treated as functional and spatial entities that span urban and rural areas and are recognised in strategic and spatial planning at all levels.

The existing institutions and appropriate new functional bodies at a sub-national level should play a strategic role and act as the facilitators and coordinators of urban-rural partnerships.

Urban-rural initiatives involving a wide range of stakeholders following the triple or quadruple helix approach should be encouraged and supported by public bodies, in order to ensure the proper embedding of such projects in various thematic fields.

The European Commission, national, regional, and local governments should adapt their financial instruments to take into account aspects of urban-rural cooperation. New instruments such as ITI and CLLD should be supported and monitored. Financial incentives, starting capital and calls for project ideas will help to initiate urban-rural partnerships. Thus public funding should be used to remove existing barriers, improve communications and allow for matchmaking opportunities. However, urban-rural-partnerships should be based on needs and not be forced. Existing good experiences should be further supported and disseminated.

The EU Parliament and the European Commission should further develop policies and practical instruments that are based on the achievements of the RURBAN initiative for how to integrate urban-rural partnerships into European territorial cohesion policy.

REFERENCES

Cooke, P. (2001): From Technopoles to Regional Innovation Systems: The Evolution of Localised Technology Development Policy. *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, 24 (1): 21-40.

Copus, A. (2013): Urban-rural Relationships in the New Century: Clarifying and Updating the Intervention Logic. Available at: http://www.mir.gov.pl/english/Regional_Development/Regional_Policy/NSRD/doc_str/Documents/Copus_Urban_Rural_Linkages.pdf (retrieved on 29.04.2014).

Lamboy, J. (2005): Innovation and knowledge: Theory and regional policy. *European Planning Studies* 13 (8): 1137-1152.

METREX (2014): URMA- Expert Group. Available at: http://www.eurometrex.org/ENT1/EN/Activities/activities.php?Cat=Expert_Groups&SubCat1=URMA (retrieved on 30.04.2014).

