

Making Cities Sustainable: Achievements and Challenges in the EU and Turkey

by Gyula Hegyi

All over the world the people are moving to bigger cities and this leads to an increase in population density and with it, socio-economic disparities and large-scale problems. One of the main challenges of cities is to manage the heavy dependence on ecosystem services; the EU is committed to developing a sustainable and decarbonised energy system, in order to minimise the environmental impact. 94% of European transport relies on oil products, so the **European Strategy for Low Emission Mobility** is stressing the use of public transport and encouraging using electric or environmentally-friendly cars, which have a vast potential to reduce traffic jams and GHG emissions respectively.

Sustainability depends on social, economic, environmental and governance factors. The indicators for sustainable cities in the EU allow to identify the areas in which a city is socio-economic and environmental sustainable, such as EEA Urban Metabolism Framework, the European Green City Tool and the European Green City Index. The EU has established the **New Urban Agenda** of the United Nations Conference, in order to develop a global and harmonized definition of cities and to enhance cooperation between cities.

The global population is increasing in an uncontrollable way, and by 2050, the world's urban population is expected to nearly double. This situation leads to many challenges that we have to overcome in terms of basic services, food security, housing, infrastructure, poverty, inequalities, etc. Recently, cities accommodate over 75 percent of Turkey's population, so it has one of the most significant urbanization experiences in the world, as well as high exposure to disaster risks (earthquakes, landslides, floods) and it has implemented the **"Turkey Urbanization Review"**, which serves as an example of providing guidance to other countries with similar difficulties in order to tackle the issue of overpopulation. Despite the Program for Sustainable Cities that Turkey adopted in 2016, there is still much work to do. All sectors of the economy should contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions, clean air and health water; in other words, we need a circular economy from which to benefit, and for it, measures are needed in different areas as packaging or packaging waste. In the future MFF, the climate objectives should be improved, and for that, we need the cooperation between all national, regional and local governments, as well as initiatives such as Smart Cities and Smart Villages projects.

The World Bank started a project for Turkey in 2016, and the development objective of **Sustainable Cities Project for Turkey** is to improve the planning capacity of and access to targeted municipal services in participating municipalities and utilities. This project has three components.

(1) **Sustainable city planning and management systems** component will support reforms including policies and legislation that improve sustainable urban development planning and enhance urban sustainability. This component will be financed through an EU-IPA 2 Recipient Executed Trust Fund Grant worth 25 million US dollars. It has three subcomponents as follows: technical assistance support to municipalities and utilities; preparation of feasibility studies, environmental assessments, and engineering designs; and support in grant management and in improving capacity in managing sustainable city systems.

(2) **Municipal investments** component will finance demand-driven municipal infrastructure investments.

(3) **Project management** component will finance goods and consultancy services for project management, monitoring and evaluation, outreach and communication, and hiring of local technical consultants for the engineering supervision of Component B.”

Speaking about the sustainable urban development we should line the importance of the **good public transport** network, as air pollution is the main cause of environment-related death and sickness, hundreds of thousand people die yearly only in the EU due to air pollution. But public transport has also social benefits; it provides equal access to job, school, shopping, health service, entertainment, etc. In a modern metropolis the night public transport can serve the younger population and decreases the typical car accidents caused by young driver at the late night hours.

It can be a useful idea to set up a target on a 5% shift in passenger kilometres from cars to sustainable transport (public transport, cycling) in 7 years. It is an achievable goal and will improve the quality of life in the city. A priority should be given to **green public procurement** – sustainability criteria should be decisive when the city starts environment-sensitive projects. (Vehicles, construction, etc.) **Residential areas should remained** in the city centre to keep them lively – without residents in the centre the city slowly dies, crime and decay come, as we could see in the downtown of some American cities.

You can read more on this topic in my report, which was made for and approved by the European Parliament.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2006-0233+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en>

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