

European Urban seminar

Should I stay or should I go: urban sprawl, density, and a new planning agenda for Europe

29-30/05/2024

Brussels

organised by perspective.brussels under the auspices of the Belgian presidency of the EU

Call for contributions for planning practices

From January to June 2024, Belgium will be presiding the Council of Ministers of the EU. During this presidency, perspective.brussels, the Brussels Planning Agency, organises a seminar on 29 and 30 May 2024, bringing together public agencies and municipal departments in charge of spatial planning in different European cities and metropolises.

We see the Belgian presidency as an opportunity to foster the dynamic collaboration between our cities across Europe and deliver bold messages to the European institutions when it comes to urban planning and governance.

This seminar could be your opportunity to present an innovative practice from your city!

What are we looking for?

With this call, we are looking for practices that are innovative, inspiring for other cities and metropolitan areas, and that have a real impact on the ground. Practices can be policies, projects, processes, events or organisational structures developed by local, metropolitan and regional authorities. They can be implemented by the authorities themselves or by other local stakeholders.

What is the topic?

The main topic will be **avoiding urban sprawl and developing qualitative density** so that a new planning agenda for Europe with good practices can be set. The seminar will be an occasion to discuss this topic through three dimensions:

- New ways of urban living and urban dwelling
- Green, blue and grey: combining a built environment with nature
- Planning tools for a sound governance of the city

What will happen?

A jury of experts will operate a selection of about 12 good practices to be presented in a publication, published at the occasion of the Belgian presidency of the EU. Maximum 6 of these selected practices (2 per dimensions) will be developed during one of the parallel workshops taking place during the seminar.

The jury will make a selection based on 2 steps. Step 1 will be based on the Quality criteria of the project, these will be criteria linked to the content of the project. Step 2 will be based on the representativity criteria, whose main purpose are to safeguard a balance and diversity between the different practices.

Who should answer this call?

This call is open to public agencies and municipal departments in charge of spatial planning and territorial development in different European cities and metropolises (from the 27 EU member states as well as Norway, Iceland, United Kingdom and Switzerland). You can send more than one practice but please make sure to send them in separate questionnaires.

Why submit a practice?

- An occasion to participate in the seminar in May 2024 and contribute to the discussion, finding answers to common challenges
- Be featured in our publication published at the occasion of the Belgian presidency of the EU and disseminated to our EU partners
- An opportunity to present your practice during one of the parallel workshops at the seminar in May 2024 and gather input and inspiration from other participants
- Be part of a large community of practice and join fellow urban experts, practitioners and decision makers in sharing knowledge and experience

How to submit a practice?

- Answer this questionnaire by **15 October 2023**
- Send your completed questionnaire by email to europe@perspective.brussels or fill in the digital form [here](#).
- For any questions please contact europe@perspective.brussels

Clarification on the 3 dimensions

We are looking for practices that help to avoid urban sprawl and to develop qualitative density, and are linked to at least 1 of the 3 dimensions described below:

New ways of urban living and urban dwelling

Main question: How can we move from a quantitative density to a qualitative density, which would take into account natural resources?

This topic is linked to the evolution of cities and the ongoing trends in the way we live in them, especially in the aftermath of a pandemic. For instance, the way housing models have changed to accommodate denser ways of living, how monofunctional buildings and spaces are rapidly retrofitted to provide shared functions or how public spaces are rediscovered as intermediaries. On top of looking at land use and housing models, this topic also concerns the materials we use, how we improve energy efficiency and how we deal with existing infrastructure.

Green, blue and grey: combining a built environment with nature

Main question: How can we build a more polycentric city, with several activity centres and allowing urban flows to be better spread out instead of a monocentric city?

The built environment and nature are often thought of as separate, incompatible or irreconcilable entities, but we want to explore how to combine them to create new urban environments fit for future changes, especially in relation to climate adaptation and resilience of cities. There are possibilities to create nature-inclusive urban spaces by looking at urban agriculture, nature-based solutions, water management and resilient open space. Let's not forget about restoring the natural value of our urban areas as well, depollute our soils, restore biodiversity and reduce the negative impacts of industrial activities. This topic creates links with ongoing discussions at EU level on nature restoration, land-take, soil health etc.

Planning tools for a sound governance of the city

Main question: What spatial strategies can help promote a more sustainable use of land and move towards a more balanced territorial development, maintaining green and open spaces in urban areas?

The third theme deals with governance and planning. We will discuss topics like other financing mechanisms, zoning regulations, urban planning and land ownership. Today, with rising maintenance costs, pressure on the housing market and the complexity of financing land, it is definitely a topic that requires attention. Should we look for new ways of governance and planning, or should we improve on the usual forms? Are the tools we use outdated; do we need new ones more adapted to new paradigms?

Questionnaire

Your contribution can only be applied through this questionnaire. After it has been filled in, you can email it to europa@perspective.brussels.

In order for the questionnaire to be valid and eligible, all obligatory questions must be answered and at least the contact details of one person must be provided. Unless specifically mentioned “optional”, the question is obligatory. Keep in mind that the **deadline is October 15th 2023**.

In case of questions, inquiries or remarks, please don't hesitate to contact us via the following email address: europa@perspective.brussels.

The questionnaire is also available in a digital format (Microsoft Office Forms) that is accessible by following the link below. Please note that the data will only be used for internal purposes and will not be spread beyond the use of this call for contributions. No further email has to be sent should you choose to fill in the online questionnaire.

[Link to the digital questionnaire.](#)

Please write in a clear and concise manner, keeping in mind that the reader is not familiar with your local context. We will contact you directly should we need further information.

*Please **provide photos** related to the practice you are submitting that can be used in the future publication (300 dpi, JPEG or PNG format, make sure to mention credits). Photos should be sent together with your contribution or via a filesharing link such as wetransfer to: europa@perspective.brussels*

CONTACT DETAILS

Person in charge of the presented practice :

Name (title - first name(s) - last name):

Position:

Organisation:

Email:

Telephone (incl. country code):

Person to contact for more information about the practice (if different)

Name (title - first name(s) - last name):

Position:

Organisation:

Email:

Telephone (incl. country code):

Website:

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE AND COVERED TOPICS

Name of the project

Explain the project in 1 sentence (objective(s), challenge to tackle...)?

Main topic(s) covered by the presented case: **select at least one subtheme for every main topic**

New ways of urban living and urban dwelling

Sub themes: **select at least one**

- Densification versus de-densification, acceptability of density
- Retrofit and sustainable building design
- New types of housing, cooperative/collaborative housing, social mix
- Planning and building new sustainable neighbourhoods
- New uses or reconversion of buildings, offices, heritage
- Materials: circular, local, bio-sourced
- Living in a productive city (logistics, production in the city, interactions with harbour ...)
- Polycentric cities, mixed functions

Green, blue and grey: combining a built environment with nature

Sub themes: **select at least one**

- Water in all its dimensions: preservation, management, water scarcity, floods
- Recovering, recycling and reusing water
- Depolluting and transforming wastelands in open green spaces
- Soil health, artificialization and land take, renaturation of soils
- Nature based solutions, restoring key ecological functions (at different scales)
- Cooling the city, heat island effect reduction (including soil de-sealing and other measures to mitigate it)
- Protection and enhancement of (urban) biodiversity
- From farm to fork: urban agriculture, urban farming – what place for agricultural lands in urban environments?
- Urban-rural linkages, bio-regions
- Enhancement of nature & biodiversity while serving collective/public urban purposes

Planning tools for a sound governance of the city

Sub themes: **select at least one**

- Tools for sound urban development
- Integrated approach to planning
- Collection and management of data
- Urban commons (i.e. collaborative funding, urban commons regulations, etc.)
- Indicators: qualitative, quantitative
- Ownership of lands vs. compensation mechanisms
- Land capture value
- Land use regulations
- Tackling the metropolitan dimension of planning and the role of planning agencies

Stage of practice:

- Implementation
- Project finished (5 years max)

Date of implementation:

Description of the case study: Max. 200 words

Be sure you refer to

- The practical implementation
- the strategy adopted
- the methods and tools used

2. THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Name of the city/metropolitan area/region:

Country:

Administrative structure:

- city
- metropolitan area
- region
- other- please specify:

Number of inhabitants under the administrative structure

Can you give more information regarding the local context related to the project within the administrative structure? What are the priorities, challenges faced, main strategic policy documents regarding urban and territorial developments related to the project in the local situation? Max. 200 words

3. MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Governance structure: Who oversaw the implementation of the practice inside the local administration (departments, services, public agency), or in other organisations?

Were partners/stakeholders involved? If yes, which ones?

Budget:

Total budget of the initiative in € (optional):

Source of funding:

- Municipality
- Region
- National administration
- EU (Indicate which EU fund/programme)

Private investor/sponsor

Other (please specify type)

4. EVALUATION

How does your project participate in the **prevention of urban sprawl** and/or how does it support the **development of qualitative density**? Max. 200 words

How does the practice fit into a **strategic vision and integrated approach**? Is it part of a larger framework and does it directly respond to the identified challenges? Max. 200 words

Does the practice **innovate** on existing methods, tools or approaches? What made the practice go beyond ordinary routines? Max. 200 words

What were the **main impacts** of the practice? Please provide any indicators/data you may have, quantitative (figures) and/or qualitative (such as personal stories or testimonials)? Max. 200 words

What level of **transferability**? Why do you think this initiative could be considered as a good source of inspiration for other European cities/metropolitan areas? Max. 200 words

5. LESSONS LEARNED

If you had 3 recommendations for a colleague from another city/metropolitan area willing to develop a similar initiative, what would these be?

1.	
2.	
3.	

What did NOT work? Did you face difficulties/challenges before, during and after the implementation and how did you overcome them? Max. 200 words

OTHER

Please add the link(s) to the official website of the project, if applicable.

Please add links to websites, reports, social media, video etc.

DISCLAIMER

Would you be interested in being featured in a booklet of practices published by the Brussels Capital Region at the end of the Belgium presidency?

? what we offer: we will support with the redaction of the text for the publication and take care of design and layout, editing and dissemination.

Would you be interested in presenting this initiative in one of the parallel workshops during the seminar organised by the Brussels Capital Region in May 2024?

? what does it mean: we will moderate the parallel workshop (co-learning format) and accompany you to prepare your presentation, to animate the discussion and to report on the outcomes of the discussion with participants.

Thank you for your participation in our call for contributions! We will be in touch with you soon.