

EU ministers reach agreement on the Riga Declaration "Towards the EU Urban Agenda"

Source: Latvian Presidency of the EU (Latvian presidency)

On Wednesday 10 June 2015, the informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Cohesion policy, Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters entered its second day, as the Ministers responsible for Territorial and Urban Development met in Riga to discuss the development of the EU Urban Agenda.

At the meeting, the participants agreed on the Riga Declaration "Towards the EU Urban Agenda", prepared by the Latvian Presidency

The Latvian Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development Kaspars Gerhards stressed: "Agreement on the Riga Declaration is a significant step towards the development of the EU Urban Agenda. I am pleased that we have managed to prepare a balanced declaration text, taking into account the interests of the various stakeholders and respecting the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. This agreement is significant for the Latvian Presidency. It emphasises the importance of the role of small and medium-sized urban areas must be taken into account when developing and implementing the EU Urban Agenda."

The Declaration identifies the key elements and principles that should be taken into account in future work on development of the EU Urban Agenda during the upcoming Presidencies.

The main elements of the EU Urban Agenda covered by the Declaration are: recognition of the diversity of urban areas, focus on opportunities offered by urban areas, improvement of the urban dimension of EU policies and cooperation between urban areas.

For the first time the Ministers responsible for Territorial and Urban Development had the opportunity to discuss at political level the EU Urban Agenda with high-level representatives of the EU institutions and partner organisations.

Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu emphasized: "The Riga Declaration acknowledges the crucial role of cities and towns in reaching the objectives set by the EU 2020 Strategy and by the Juncker Commission in terms of growth and jobs. The declaration and the conclusions we have drawn from our public consultation on the EU Urban Agenda give us a strong direction to follow. Now it is up to the EU, the Member States and the cities, in a strong partnership, to deliver!

The Riga Declaration will provide a comprehensive framework for the upcoming Presidencies to develop the content of the EU Urban Agenda identifying specific priorities and actions for its implementation.