



## 49<sup>TH</sup> UCEU GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE

### “Inclusive & Sustainable Capital Cities”

#### Basic concept paper

#### 1. Introduction

The basic idea for this questionnaire is to address three key areas, each one of which corresponds to the three parts of the questionnaire and the round table discussions that will take place at the UCEU Conference in Nicosia in October 2009<sup>1</sup>. In the process of planning for sustainable integrated urban development and urban regeneration, the following three key questions need to be addressed:

- a. **Do capital cities give adequate priority and consideration to the needs of groups excluded or threatened by exclusion risk? What are the social impacts of policies and their implementation for these groups?**
- b. **Do capital cities give adequate priority to sustainable urban space and built environment considerations?**
- c. **Do capital cities give adequate priority and consideration to developing as open, accessible and inclusive knowledge cities?**

Even though the concept of *sustainability* already contains the notion of participation / inclusiveness, the Conference emphasis is on how crucial the notion of *inclusiveness* is in the urban development, services and policies; hence the decision to specifically refer to it in the conference title. Any notion of ‘sustainability’ in local authority policy-making requires that an integrated approach be taken so that the social, economic and cultural benefits of development are shared by all, particularly deprived, excluded and vulnerable groups. This requires that we define the term ‘social exclusion’, which is central to Social Sustainability, Inclusiveness & Policy. The EU Commission, White Paper on social policy (COM(94) 333), July 1994) defines **Social exclusion** as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The concept paper and the questionnaire were prepared by Prof. Stavros A. Zenios, President of the UNICA Network and Rector of the University of Cyprus, with the support of the Research and International Relations Service of the University of Cyprus, Nicos Trimikliniotis, Assistant Professor of Law and Sociology at the University of Nicosia and Director of the Center for Migration, Interethnic and Labour Relations, Nadia Charalambous, Architect/Lecturer at the University of Cyprus and Maria Mavrou, Head of the Office of European Affairs of Nicosia Municipality.

Social exclusion refers to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society. Poverty is one of the most obvious factors, but social exclusion also refers to inadequate rights in housing, education, health and access to services. It affects individuals and groups, particularly in urban and rural areas, who are in some way subject to discrimination or segregation; and it emphasises the weaknesses in the social infrastructure and the risk of allowing a two-tier society to become established by default. The Commission believes that a fatalistic acceptance of social exclusion must be rejected, and that all Community citizens have a right to the respect of human dignity.

An incisive working paper<sup>2</sup> provides a good discussion in defining the term, which “has been extended by some to include exclusion from livelihood; secure, permanent employment; earnings; property, credit, or land; housing; minimal or prevailing consumption levels; education, skills, and cultural capital; the welfare state; citizenship and legal equality; democratic participation; public goods; the nation or the dominant race; family and sociability; humanity, respect, fulfillment and understanding”. However, the same author suggests there is also “a need for caution in not using the term too indiscriminately as to lose meaning, support and applicability”.<sup>3</sup> We must therefore attempt to view social exclusion beyond the usual reference points, which “straddles traditional notions like poverty, capacity deprivation, and underclass. Both have led to lack of clarity as the real meaning of social exclusion”. The author clarifies the meaning of social inclusion:

“Social exclusion as multi-dimensional poverty - it stresses the logic of ‘cumulative disadvantage’ that affects the most deprived segments of the population - the idea of distance to the core of society and capability deprivation and lack of functionings. From the above we can construct a comprehensive definition of social exclusion. One scholar<sup>4</sup> lists the following distinguishing features of social exclusion:

1. It stresses the multidimensionality of deprivation
2. It stresses the personal relationship dimension of deprivation
3. The concept has brought to the fore causal linkages between different forms of deprivation.

This allows us to arrive at a definition. Social exclusion is the ‘inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life, alienation and distance from the mainstream society’<sup>5</sup> or ‘the dynamic process of being shut out ... from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society’.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dirk-Jan Omtzigt “Survey on Social inclusion: Theory and Policy” (Report Working Paper of Oxford University, Oxford Institute for Global Economic Development, January 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Sen A., (2000), “Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny”, Social Development Paper, Asian Development Bank.

<sup>4</sup> De Haan A., “Social Exclusion: Towards a Holistic Understanding of Deprivation”, Villa Borsig Workshop Series 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Duffy, K. (1995), Social Exclusion and Human Dignity in Europe, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

<sup>6</sup> Walker, A. and Walker, C. (eds.) (1997), Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s, London: Child Poverty Action Group, p.8

**2. Models for good practice:** throughout the questionnaire there will be references to 'Good Practices'. In an effort to assist in selection of Good Practices, the following principles are provided for guidance:

- **Anti-exclusion, anti discrimination:** Does the initiative target social exclusion and discrimination, either by attempting to change the attitudes or practices of those at risk of discriminating, or by empowering minorities to resist exclusion and discrimination?
- **Sustainability:** Is the initiative more than just a 'one off' activity? Does it have the potential for continuing in the future, or being established in an organisation's routines? Is it integrated in the wider policies and plans?
- **Effectiveness and Impact:** Is there any evidence that the initiative has either a short term measurable output or a longer term impact?
- **Transferability:** Does the initiative have the potential to be one that others can copy, and that can be transferred to other settings and/or Member States?
- **Review and assessment:** Does the initiative have review and assessment built into it?
- **Participation of beneficiaries:** Are beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the design, planning, evaluation, review, assessment and implementation?

#### **a. Social Sustainability, Inclusiveness & Policy**

The notion of social sustainability in social policy in terms of planning, design and policy-making when it comes to integration and regeneration policies via the effective participation of all the affected groups of the population in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the Capital, includes:

- access to resources, public services and facilities, employment, shelter etc.
- participation of vulnerable/excluded groups in policy-making and action plans for inner city regeneration programs
- the establishment of related infrastructural environment, facilities and tools responsive to the needs and expectations of vulnerable/deprived/excluded groups.

#### **b. Urban Sustainability and the Built Environment**

Addressing sustainability issues in relation to spatial planning<sup>7</sup> and policy making is the aim of this part of the questionnaire<sup>8</sup>. The notion of urban sustainability includes:

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<sup>7</sup> "...spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function..." (ODPM, 2004)

<sup>8</sup> "...place is important and should be taken into account in the EU's decision making. The impact of new legislation is often more heavily felt in urban areas. It is at the urban level where environmental degradation has its most acute impact on the citizen, social problems are most pronounced and where

- Sustainable growth (new workspaces including business services and growing economies such as information technology, culture and media industries, new homes to accommodate the increased population and to deal with sub-standard housing)
- Linking growth to public transport capacity ( growth focused on areas where there is existing or potential capacity on the public transport network, relationship between new development and public transport capacity)
- Securing a better environment (protection and improvement of the historic environment, the public realm, open and green spaces, safety in residential and public areas)
- Ensuring social and economic inclusion (policies targeted at different communities and minorities, affordable housing, training of citizens to enable competitiveness for new jobs, policies to accommodate people in different life stages and ensure accessibility)

Sustainability interventions are many times retrofitted to existing urban development projects rather than being incorporated into the decision-making process at the outset. We are therefore also interested in mapping the urban decision making process in your cities, indicating through the questions (e.g. question 14) who needs to be involved at what stages, how far do local communities and local authorities participate, how can the desired level of participation be achieved, co-ordinated and monitored and what tools and resources each stakeholder may need to enable the design of more sustainable urban environments.

### **c. Capital Cities as Knowledge Cities**

In today's world of knowledge, innovation, more than ever before, is directly related to economic development. Economy does not depend on capital, natural and human resources, but on knowledge and innovation. Innovation matters because ideas have an economic power.

The triple Helix of Universities-Government-Industry is the so called interaction between academia and the private and public sectors and is widely recognized for its significance as a dynamic institutional basis for wealth creation and sustainable development through the generation of knowledge and its effective application.

This is the Triple Helix of Universities-Government-Industry:

- **ACADEMIA:** knowledge and innovation
- **INDUSTRY:** capital, natural resources and Labor
- **GOVERNMENT:** favorable local and political conditions, with special emphasis on the regional and local level of governance.

The Triple Helix of Knowledge at local level is what we call a *Knowledge City*. Leif Edvinsson defines 'Knowledge City' as "a city that is purposefully designed to encourage the nurturing of

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the greatest opportunity for sustained and sustainable economic growth lies..." Cities for Cohesion: Response to the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion: Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength.

knowledge". 'Knowledge City' is not just a city. It is a growing space of exchange and optimism in which each and everyone can devote himself to personal and collective projects and aspirations in a climate of dynamism, harmony, and creativity.

Knowledge has a critical mass in the production of a true city of knowledge or a knowledge region. Some of the factors of success for knowledge cities or regions are the following:

- Innovative sectors of economic activity
- Strong forces of innovation in all organizations
- Appreciation of a culture of knowledge
- Free flow of information
- Significant support for creative activities
- Strong ties between the arts and culture, with scientific and technological knowledge
- Significant percentage of the work force engaged in innovative activities
- Active participation of citizens in shaping the urban environment and its special character
- Abundance of places and activities appreciated by knowledge workers

The main reason for which the factors above create a critical mass of knowledge is because they invest in the **social and the human capital of a region**.

The term *social capital* refers to those common values which members of the organizations share in a region, i.e. the culture of the region. In some cases these values can have a constructive and in others a destructive result! They can be constructive if for example the shared culture is embedded by professionalism, trust and reciprocity. On the other hand it can be destructive if it is based on nepotism, arrogance and lack of trust. Education has a key role to play in the preservation and creation of a constructive social capital.

The term *human capital* refers to the critical mass of knowledge workers, the super core of the creative class.

**Geography** is also part of recipe. "Intellectual rights should cross streets and corridors more easily than highways or oceans". Enhanced mobility of information, people and capitals is another key factor that influences the creation of a critical mass of knowledge in a region.

*Can you visualize a knowledge city deriving from your own city? Can you identify opportunities, obstacles and ways to overcome them?*