



**The Charter of European Planning  
BARCELONA 2013**

The Vision for Cities and Regions – Territoires of Europe in the 21st Century

**ECTP-CEU**

(The European Council of Spatial Planners – Le Conseil Européen des Urbanistes)



## THE CALL TO ACTION

1. Europe needs cities and regions (territoires) to be economically strong and good to live in. However the scale and pace of change is putting unacceptable pressures on our land, air and water resources. The future development of Europe therefore must be:
  - Driven by values based on equity and justice;
  - Inclusive of all its citizens, taking account of their local needs and aspirations;
  - Sustainable in its impacts on its natural and human ecosystems; and
  - Integrated across borders and between sectorial interests.
2. There is however a real danger that these challenges will not be met if public policy is short term and fragmented. If Europe is to have a sustainable economy and just and fair societies we need effective planning. This Charter of European Planning therefore sets out the core **Vision** for the planning of Europe and the **Commitments** made by all planners to delivering this Vision.
3. The **Vision** for the future of European cities and regions (territoires) is based on a network of cities and regions (territoires) which will:
  - contribute to the well-being and quality of life of all;
  - be increasingly competitive through complementary action and co-operation;
  - retain the cultural richness and diversity, inherited from long histories;
  - become more closely connected socially and culturally; and
  - integrate development with natural ecosystems, preserving biodiversity, and tackling climate change.

4. Planners are distinguished by their primary **Commitment** to the benefit of the public and the longer-term interests of society. The diversity of Europe is reflected in this Charter which does not advocate a single particular system. The Charter emphasises the potential values of planning as a tool for creative endeavour in whatever administrative framework it operates.
5. Spatial Planners are amongst the guardians of the future of Europe. To fulfil this role it is essential that planners seek to be leaders of change in society, which moves towards a more sustainable and secure future for Europe. They therefore have the a threefold agenda to support Europe in meeting the challenges it faces:
  - Advocacy on the actions to secure the future of Europe's communities;
  - Alliances with those with common purpose in planning the future of Europe; and
  - Action through the work of its members in delivering the **Vision** for local communities, cities, regions (territoires) and Europe as a whole.
6. This **Charter of European Planning** is a Call for Action at all levels of civil society including government, business, educationalists, NGOs, community interest groups and especially individual citizens. Effective Spatial Planning is essential to the future of Europe which has balanced economic development, increased social justice and vital ecosystems. Spatial Planning considerations must be embedded in policies at all levels of government.



## **ROLE OF PLANNING**

### **ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

1. Economic well-being is influenced by two main forces: globalisation and local or regional specialisation. This means that our cities and regions are both responsive and vulnerable to changing local and external conditions that arise from the volatility of the global economy. Our vision is of a Europe that promotes strong and sustainable economic competitiveness.
2. Therefore balance is needed between the local and external factors that are currently causing these changes. The creation of pleasant, healthy and safe living and working environments will add considerably to their attractiveness for future economic activities. Significant competitive advantage is achieved by plans which capitalise on the cultural and natural qualities of cities, and promote their uniqueness and diversity, which helps to counter the homogenising impact of global corporate activities.
3. Commuting distances and housing market areas are becoming more extensive. The scope of the markets that cities serve is becoming larger and now 60% of Europe's population live in metropolitan areas. Europe's mega-regions are becoming its economic powerhouses. Cities can therefore no longer be planned in isolation. Cities and Regions (Territoires) must therefore cooperate in order to maintain and increase their competitive advantages, dependent on local circumstance. This can for example, take the form of:
  - an association of similarly specialised cities, which reach the visibility, the size and productivity needed to be globally competitive through functional and organisational co-operation;
  - a linking of cities with different specialisations in order to supply each other, with specialisation guiding the allocation of public projects among those cities;
  - a network of cities connected to each other in a flexible system of exchange of goods and services, or sharing common economic and/or cultural interests, which strengthens their profile and thus their competitive advantage; or
  - complementary action to promote an integrated approach to the future of Europe's rural communities.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

4. Planning has the potential to sustain the quality of life in European cities and regions (territoires) whether in the greater metropolitan regions (e.g. London and Paris) or the remoter rural and island communities (e.g. in Norway and Malta). It mitigates and adapts to the threats of rapid urbanisation, the growing social inequalities and the loss of our vital ecosystems, especially from climate change. It offsets the challenges compounded by globalisation, that of increased cultural homogenisation and of an ageing European population.
5. This Charter for European Planning promotes a vision of Europe based on ***Integrated and Connected Cities and regions (territoires)***, which:
  - provide efficient and effective connections between individual urban activities, infrastructure networks, and information and communication technologies;
  - retain their distinctiveness and reduce the tendency for them to become homogenised and their urban form fragmented, by respecting cultural and social diversity;
  - locate human activities within the urban core and reverse the tendency to sprawl into the hinterland, consuming rural and natural areas;
  - create new transportation and infrastructure that do not encourage dispersed patterns of activities, militate against sustainable modes of transport, and create greater choice in the mode of transport; and
  - provide more housing, in addition to educational, commercial, cultural and recreational facilities and services that are affordable for citizens and complemented by a strong sense of community identity, ownership and security.
6. Central to this is the need for greater Community Involvement & Empowerment. Systems of urban governance must not be limited by the views and votes of permanent or more affluent residents or by powerful business interests. The needs of marginalised and excluded groups must be recognised. New systems of representation and participation are needed to create the 'urban alliance' needed to reinvent the existing towns and cities by:
  - providing new forms of access to information;
  - promoting the greater involvement of 'active citizens' networks; and
  - supporting local democracy and empowering communities.

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

7. Environmental quality is critical in guaranteeing social and cultural cohesion, and it contributes to economic competitiveness maintaining ecosystems is also a prerequisite for our survival. Biodiversity must be protected and safeguarded. An integrated approach to landscape (including natural and cultural heritage resources) in planning policies is essential to ensure its cultural, environmental, social and economic value. Active public involvement in the development of landscapes, participatory democracy is a key factor in ensuring that landscape development policies have public support.

8. Sustainable development requires the maintenance, enhancement and creation of natural resources that are within our towns and cities or that provide services for them. This involves:
  - the wise use of resources, especially minimising the consumption of non-renewable natural resources of land, air and water, and uses related to real needs and not simply to consumer demand;
  - greater protection of cities from pollution and degradation and the risk of natural catastrophic disasters, so that they can maintain their environmental quality;
  - unprecedented levels of efficiency in energy production and use, with an increasing use of renewable energy sources being a priority; and
  - a self-sufficient approach in the treatment and re-use of waste products, eliminating the export of waste to other communities at home or abroad.
  
9. Ecosystem thinking must be developed through the theory and practice of planning, with research and planning education that recognise the economic value of natural resources, biodiversity, energies, water, waste management, and limit and mitigate the effects of climate change, which are already evident.



## **THE COMMITMENT OF PLANNERS**

The Planners of Europe make the following commitments to delivering the Principles, set out in this Charter, whatever their role. In all these undertakings they are committed to abide by the ***Code of Professional Conduct for European Planners***.

### **The Planner is committed to leading change by:**

- Refreshing the spirit of the European Spatial Development Perspective to create a shared spatial Vision for the sustainable development of the European continent and the interpretation of European directives, policies and programmes;
- Preparing up-to-date strategic planning frameworks and local plans for all communities in Europe, in order to combat the effects of rapid urbanisation, climate change, poverty and growing inequality; and
- Promoting European programmes for Urban and Rural Regeneration and greater Self-Sufficiency in all communities that will give new prosperity and economic growth and help ensure water, energy and food security.

### **The Planner is committed to informed decision-making through:**

- Analysis, regular monitoring and update of existing conditions, trends and scenarios in relation to the longer-term needs, the management of demands and the wider geographic context;
- Providing access to available data and share the results of experience and research through wide engagement and constructive criticism which enables the synthesis of formal and informal information, including community and cultural based sources of knowledge; and
- Contributing to training and education, supporting and evaluating the development of the planning profession throughout Europe.

**The Planner is committed to developing spatial visions, which:**

- Are set within the context of the network of European metropolitan and city regions and the wider global trends, whilst elaborating alternative locally-based solutions which integrate the urban and rural agenda;
- Expand choice and opportunity for all, particularly the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons; and
- Protect and enhance the integrity of the natural environment and its related ecosystems, and promote excellence in urban design in order to create great places that conserve the heritage of the natural and built environment for future generations.

**The Planner is committed to the resolution of conflict and collaborative action by:**

- Supporting civic authorities and participatory democracy to achieve and facilitate meaningful dialogue between conflicted parties;
- Co-ordinating different territorial levels and sectors to ensure partnerships, involvement and support of all administrative bodies, which take account of the economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects of sustainability; and
- Adopting approaches which are not artificially constrained by prevailing administrative requirements and which are efficient and effective, including the access to European and other sources of funding.



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