



Master Thesis

## *FORMING URBAN POLICY*

*The relationship of the European 'Urban' Policy  
and the German National 'Urban' Policy*

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## ABSTRACT

The presented thesis deals with the urban dimension of the European and the German National Policy and their interconnection. After defining urban policy in general, the European and the German national level have been analyzed in terms of their development of an urban dimension, the involved institutions and actors and the subjects as well as the obstacles of an implementation of urban policy. The similarity of the dealt subjects provide the bases for the following study of the pros and cons of urban policy and the relation of European and German National 'Urban' Policy.

The author discovered that against the background of the various urban problems and the opportunities the cities provide, the European as well as the German national level are interested to have a share in the cities' development. Therefore they have made an effort to use urban policy as an instrument to directly exert influence on urban areas since several decades. But so far, neither a European Urban Policy nor a National Urban Policy in Germany has been implemented, since the legalization is a complicated as well as controversial operation. Various actors are involved and the political levels partly hinder each other because they are afraid of losing competences and influence. In addition, it is not even clear if policy is the right instrument to deal with urban areas, since the discussion for and against urban policy is based on individual opinions and not on theories. Regardless of this, if there is the declared intention to further develop urban policy on the European and the German national level, the existing close linkage between them, in terms of their mutual support of development and similar goals, will be needed in future as well.



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## I. URBAN POLICY – MORE THAN PART OF THE “POLICY-ABC”

*‘A’ like agriculture or audiovisual,*

*‘B’ like budget,*

*‘C’ like competition, consumers, culture, and customers,*

*‘D’ like development,*

*‘E’ like economic affairs, education, energy, enlargement, and environment,*

...

*‘U’ like urban?*

Within the European Union policy areas for almost every letter in the alphabet exist. ‘U’ like urban doesn’t belong to it so far. The same applies for the German national level. What conclusions can be drawn with regard to this?

The first implication is that there is no need for urban policy according to the involved people and institutions. Otherwise they would have implemented one. Second possibility: The actors and institutions see a need for urban policy, but have not put it into effect for several reasons. In the author’s opinion the latter is true, since she found out that there is an ongoing debate about this topic on both political levels since several decades. Therefore she claims:

***“The legalization of urban policy both on the European and on the national level of Germany is a complicated as well as controversial operation.”***

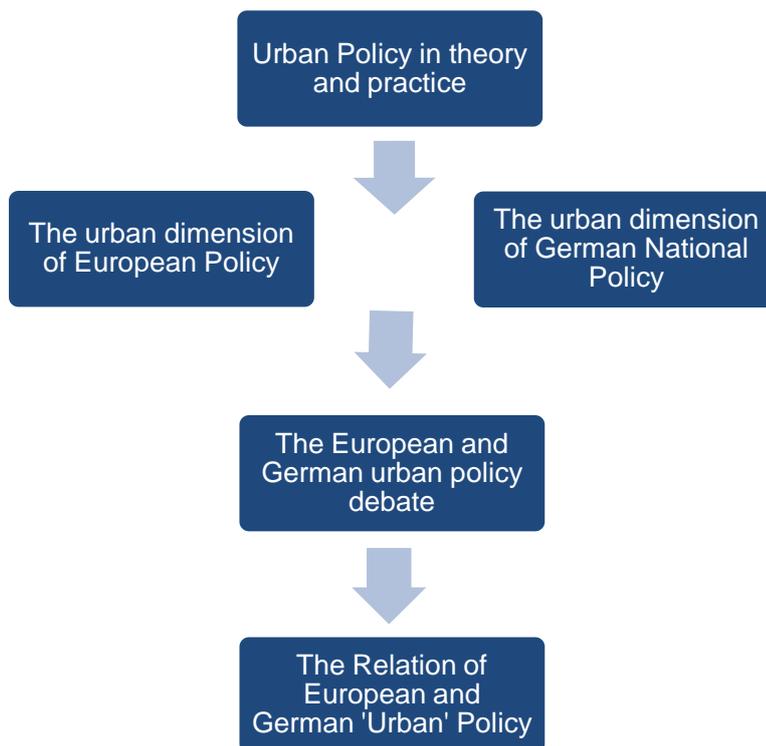
To the author’s mind that is the reason why urban policy doesn’t exist on the European and the German national level so far. However, it stays open, if urban policy on a spatial and political level above the city level is even the right instrument to solve the existing problems and to meet the challenges urban areas are confronted with. A closer look has to be taken on this debate. Besides, the author holds that:

***“The European and German National ‘Urban’ Policy are closely linked to each other.”***

To prove these two thesis statements a comprehensive literature research has been done. Official European respectively German documents and reports, scientific literature as well as academic articles have been analyzed.

As figure 1 shows, the topic **“Forming urban policy – The relationship of the European ‘Urban’ Policy and the German National ‘Urban’ Policy”** is explicated subdivided into five thematic chapters.

**Figure 1: Structure of the thesis**



The second chapter deals with the meaning of urban policy in general. The definition is needed as foundation for the analysis of the two study cases European and German National ‘Urban’ Policy.

In chapter three and four the urban dimension of the European Policy and the German National Policy is examined. Both policies are analyzed related to similar questions to enable a comparison. Regarded are the particular definitions of urban policy, their development, the involved institutions and actors, the subjects as well as the obstacles of an implementation.

The debate of arguments for and against a legalization of urban policy on the particular level is very similar in the European Union and in Germany. Consequently it is described in a common chapter; chapter five.

Since the argumentation for and against urban policy both on European and national level bears resemblance and the development of urban policy shows parallels as well, the former, mainly separated described urban dimensions of urban policy on the European and the German national level, are brought together by looking at their relationship and objectives. In addition, their interaction is examined more closely. The aim is to identify how they are linked and how big the influence is they exert on one another. In the end, the author considers, on the background of all findings, how the further development of urban policy both in Europe and in Germany could look like.



## II. URBAN POLICY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The main objective of this chapter is to give a general definition of urban policy. It is needed both for the following analysis of the urban dimension of European Policy and the urban dimension of German National Policy. But first of all, two basic terms have to be defined: 'urban' and 'policy'.

### 1. The problem with the undetermined term 'urban'

There is no uniform definition of the term 'urban' respectively 'urban area' that is used all over the world or at least in Europe. The content strongly depends on the territorial background of the beholder. Since the urban structures are very heterogeneous in the EU Member States, various definitions exist. The most important indicator is the population density. But in dependence on the population structure in one particular Member State, the understanding of the degree of population density varies. Besides, opinions differ if just the core city is included or if an urban area contains the functional region around the core of the urban centre as well (Aldskogius, n.d.).

Since this thesis deals with urban policy on the European and on the German national level the author refers to the definitions of the EU and Germany. The 'Eurostat regional yearbook 2009', which is geared to the 'Urban Audit' (see chapter III. 2.), differentiates between two levels of urban units; the 'core city' and the 'larger urban zone'. The core city is demarcated by administrative political boundaries, whereas "the larger urban zone is an approximation of the functional urban area extending beyond the core city" (European Communities, 2009: 28). The latter shows how broad even the European Union's definition is. In contrast, the German distinction is more concrete. The country distinguishes between two different urban units; 'densely populated areas'<sup>1</sup> and 'medium-strength populated areas'<sup>2</sup>. The former includes areas with a population density of 500 inhabitants per square kilometer, and the latter areas with a population density in the range of 100 to 500 inhabitants per square kilometer (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> städtische oder dicht besiedelte Gebiete

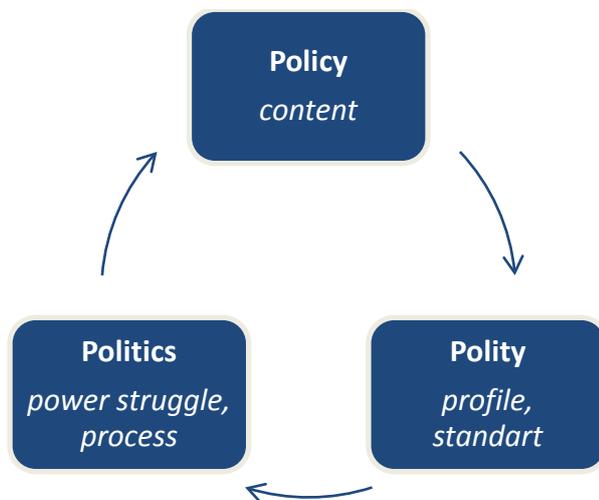
<sup>2</sup> halbstädtische oder mittelstark besiedelte Gebiete

Surprisingly for the author, it remains unclear if the existing definitions of ‘urban’ are the particular reference level for the European and the German National ‘Urban’ Policy or rather to which of the respective two urban units the policies are directed. In consequence, nothing else remains to be done than to rest upon a broad understanding of ‘urban’ respectively ‘urban area’, as a territory with comparatively high population density and excess of meaning towards the urban hinterland.

## 2. Policy versus politics and polity

The German term ‘*Politik*’ that is part of the word ‘*Stadtpolitik*’ (urban policy) has three equivalents in the English language; policy, politics and polity. To hinder misunderstandings, at least for German native speakers, short definitions are given below.

**Figure 2: The interrelation of policy, politics and polity**



**Source:** Own design, in dependence on: Leimgruber, n.d.

The term ‘policy’ is the centre of consideration. It describes the content of decision; the task and objectives the involved people want to fulfill. Thus, it aims to solve problems and to organize social conditions (Leimgruber, n.d.). It is usually represented by policy fields for different topics, like economy, ecology, transport, and sometimes also urban areas, which are the subject of this thesis (Schubert & Klein, 2006).

As figure 2 shows, policy has an impact on 'polity', which stands for the frame of action. It refers to institutional aspects and includes the political systems as well as organizations (Rohe, 1994). Consequently, it can be described as the ideology behind the policy (Schubert & Bandelow, 2003).

Finally, the term 'politics' describes the process of policy-making, like elections, voting or lobbying, which bases on the polity; the political system (Leimgruber, n.d.). Political processes often come along with conflicts, because of the different and sometimes even oppositional interests and purposes (Schubert & Bandelow, 2003). That is the reason why 'power struggle' is added in the figure.

To sum up, basing on 'polity', 'policy' needs the help of 'politics' to be implemented (Rohe, 1994).

### **3. Definition of urban policy**

'Urban policy', the combination of the described terms above, not surprisingly, is also a broad term that is not well-defined. Only its ambition is obvious. Independent from its unlike frameworks, it intends to exert direct influence both on the current urban structure and its development. In detail it aims to meet the demands and give answers to the existing problems inside a city, so that the city itself is able to take an advantage out of the influence. In the last years a shift from a problem-orientated to a more opportunity-orientated urban policy could be recognized (van den Berg/ et al, 2004). In detail, the primarily reactive handling of urban related issues – the aim was to solve the existing problems of the cities, changed to a more proactive approach, with the aim to accentuate the opportunities the cities provide. One reason for the shift is that lots of the current problems, like high unemployment rates or segregation, cannot be solved easily (Häußermann, 2005). Thus, from the political perspective it is more beneficial, to talk about the opportunities of the cities, like economical benefits. Moreover, an existing planning perspective can be merchandise in a better way, since it shows the cities capacity to act. Besides, urban policy is an instrument to strengthen the public awareness of the

demands and needs of the cities and can help to represent the interests of the cities in this way (Hatzfeld & Jakubowski, 2008).

There are mainly two different ways to define urban policy. It can either represent all policies within a city, which directly or indirectly influence its urban development ('implicit urban policy') or it can stand for an independent political area that is explicitly directed to cities ('explicit urban policy') (van den Berg/ et al., 1998).

Policies with a relation to cities in the way that they have an impact on their development, but originally contain different main aims are for example housing policy, spatial planning policy, environmental policy and transportation policy. Even if these policies are not specifically designed for cities, they could still have a major impact on them, which can even be stronger than the impact of an explicit urban policy, since the latter is rare. But for all that, the advantage of an independent political area related to urban issues is that it can deal with the specific problems of cities in a better way. It represents their needs and problems adverse to the interests of other types of policies and thus is more able to control the urban development (van den Berg/ et al., 1998; van den Berg/ et al., 2007).

In this thesis the second definition for urban policy is used. **Hence, urban policy is defined as political areas on different spatial and political levels – European, national, regional or local – that are explicit directed to cities and integrated in a statutory framework.** The main interest of the thesis is directed towards the European and the national level, whereas the regional and local level will be marginally considered.

One could ask why so many different levels are involved in urban policy, since every city should be best aware of its needs and problems on its own. But is that true?

Today's cities in Europe are influenced by a lot of external factors, like the globalization of markets or the current financial and economic crisis. They are in constant challenge with other cities on inhabitants, employees and companies, within and even outside of their country. Many cities have problems ac-

ording to social inequality, growing unemployment, and the lack of affordable and suitable housing as well as environmental problems. They are accountable for providing “[...] ‘equal and decent living conditions’ and [have to] supply their inhabitants with work and perspectives” (Frank, 2006: 42). But the majority of cities have only limited means to finance countermeasures. At the same time their importance is increasing. Cities “[...] are centers of knowledge and sources of growth and innovation [and] possess unique cultural and architectural qualities” (BMVBS, 2007e: 1). In summary, today’s European cities pose a challenge in two ways – sometimes called “urban paradox” (Gurria, 2007), as they “[...] are the best of places and the worst of places [...]” (Parkinson, 2006: 1) in terms of the social and economic conditions.

Regarding the described challenging basic conditions, it becomes difficult for the cities to handle the multitude of present and future demands and problems on their own. One opportunity to solve this problem could be the implementation of an explicit policy, which coordinates and supports the urban development on a higher level. Such higher levels that can deal with urban policy are the European, the national as well as the regional level. Which governmental level(s) practice urban policy in the particular country depends on different factors, like the national pattern of spatial and economic development or the administrative and financial framework. They will be described more detailed in chapter IV.



### III. THE URBAN DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN POLICY

After defining urban policy in general without direct reference to a political level, it should be paid more attention to a special level and its exposure to urban policy; the European level.

In this context the following questions should be answered:

- What is the urban dimension of European Policy?
- Since when does an interest in European Urban Policy exist and what kinds of events have formed the development?
- Which European institutions and actors are mainly involved in urban matters?
- What is the current European 'urban *Leitbild*' (approach) and its sub goals and by which document is it expressed?
- What are the obstacles of an implementation of European Urban Policy?

#### 1. Definition of European 'Urban' Policy

Urban policy, in the way it is defined in the previous chapter, does not exist on the European level so far. Contrary to regional policy, which is legitimated and practiced on the European level for a long time (Parkinson, 2005), "[...] there is no supranational responsibility for urban policy within the European Union [...]" (Frank, 2006: 39).

As explained above this does not mean that there is no interest and influence in the urban development on the European level, but it is an implicit urban policy, since it is practiced by other political areas, which originally contain different main aims (Zimmermann, 2008). Especially a close linkage to the regional policy is visible. Altogether an increasing urban *dimension* of European Policy can be identified, although it is marked by setbacks (Parkinson, 2005). In the following this development of an urban dimension of European Policy will be described.

## 2. The development of an urban dimension of European Policy

According to FRANK (2006) the development of an urban dimension of European Policy can be simplistically divided into three phases: In the 1980s urban related activities were mainly done in the field of environmental policy. The 'Green Paper on the Urban Environment' is often interpreted as starting point (Göddecke-Stellmann, 2009a). In the 1990s urban problems became part of the cohesion policy and since the end of the 1990s urban topics are closely connected to economic and competition policy, because of the increasing rivalry between the EU and the USA (Frank, 2006). Against this background the 'Lisbon Strategy' was created in March 2000 (Dräger, 2006) obligating the cities because of their big influence in economy issues. FRANK senses this development "[...] as a gradual narrowing of perspectives and a loss of the complex idea or 'vision' of the European city" (2006: 53).

This short description of the development should be completed by a more detailed one. Since European 'Urban' Policy "[...] developed through a number of instruments within the existing framework of regional policy" (Tofarides, 2003: 252), an analyses related to the programming periods of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as the main supporting instrument of regional policy, seems to be reasonable. In dependence on the Community programming periods, the development of European 'Urban' Policy thus can be split up in five stages. The milestones, that implies the most important initiatives, reports, support programs and conferences as well as involved actors, will be described related to these stages:

**Table 1: Five stages on the way to an increasing urban dimension of European Policy**

Stages	Occasion
Stage 1 (1975 – 1988)	First position of points
Stage 2 (1989 – 1993)	The initial step; first focus on cities inside the regional policy
Stage 3 (1994 – 1999)	Urban issues are put on the agenda
Stage 4 (2000 – 2006)	Official positioning of the cities inside the regional policy
Stage 5 (2007 – 2013)	Mutual engagement of European Commission and EU Member States

**Source:** Own design

Stage 1 (1975 – 1988): The ERDF was set up in 1975 and is seen as the starting point of European Regional Policy. The aim in the first programming period was to close the existing gap between the poorest and the richest regions inside the EU (van den Berg/ et al., 2007), which was enlarged by the joining of the economically underdeveloped countries Greece (1981) and Spain and Portugal (1986) (European Commission, 2004). The try to bridge this gap was essential “[...] to achieve political integration through economic integration” (Antalovsky/ et al., 2005: 27). In the beginning of the programming period less than 5% of the European Community budget was spent on regional policy. Strengthened by the Single European Act (SEA)<sup>3</sup>, which came into force in 1987, it increased to almost 20% of the EU budget. But even though the focus on the differences between the regions slowly shifted to a closer look at the differences *within* the regions, there was “[...] no evidence of an urban dimension of the EU policy” (van den Berg/ et al., 2007: 40). According to the author there are three possible explanations: In the first place the regional gap, in comparison with the urban difficulties, was the more pestering problem during that time; second and even more important, the support of a larger area is always more popular and easier to achieve, since it includes a bigger population which can benefit from the help; and third the aid of regions helps to avoid a competitive situation between urban and rural areas, since both are integrated.

Stage 2 (1989 – 1993): In spite of its briefness, the second programming period was very eventful. It was characterized by the again strong boosting of EU budget towards regional policy and by its significant, but unsteady actions relating to the development of an urban dimension of European Policy. For the first time the EU realized the close linkage of the condition of cities to the condition of regions, since the cities “were the places where most of the problems and of the opportunities of regional development were concentrated” (van den Berg/ et al., 2007: 40). The conclusion of the ‘Cheshire Report’ (1988), that many cities were in a period of decline (van den Berg/ et al., 2007), was one of the main causes of the growing attention to the cities, even

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<sup>3</sup> The Single European Act (SEA) was “[...] an essential stage in the completion of the single market” (CVCE, 2010). The single market was finally declared complete on the first of January in 1993 (European Commission, 2004).

though their support was more a means to an end to strengthen the regions. Thus, no special Community Initiative (CI) directed at cities and urban problems was launched (Tofarides, 2003), but some cities, which were part of a region with Objective 1 or 2 status, at least received ERDF support. The European Commission suggested modifying the Treaty in order to gain a formal competence in urban policy in 1991. But both the European Council and the European Member States rejected the Commission's proposals (Tofarides, 2003). The latter were against the modifying, because they were afraid of declining competences (van den Berg/ et al., 2007) respectively of an annulment of the subsidiarity principle (Göddecke-Stellmann, 2009a). That is why the Urban Pilot Projects (UPP's) were the first visible attempt of the EU to focus upon cities (Antalovsky/ et al., 2005). Set up under Article 10 of the ERDF in 1990, they "[...] enabled the Commission to co-finance innovative demonstration projects to tackle urban problems" (European Commission, 1998) and to promote exchange of experience (Aldskogius, n.d.). Another important research study beside the 'Cheshire Report' was the 'Parkinson Report', published in 1992. It pointed out that the increasing competition between the cities led to growing social disparities. To counteract this danger, it saw a need for an urban dimension on the European level (Parkinson/ et al., 1992). Altogether the increased focus upon cities was temporary set within the existing framework of regional policy.

Stage 3 (1994 – 1999): In this period some more progresses related to the strengthening of the urban dimension inside the European Policy were made. The period started with a renewed reform of the structural funds which led to an almost doubling of the EU budget – one-third of the budget were spend to the regional policy from that time, whereof the cities could indirectly profit as well (van den Berg/ et al., 2007). According to ALDSKOGIUS (n.d.) one of the most concrete activities in the European Union's structural policy in urban regions during this period was the creation of the 'Community Initiative URBAN' in 1994, committed to issues of urban regeneration and deprived neighborhoods.

Three years later, in 1997, even four important events took place. In May 1997 the discussion paper 'Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Un-

ion' was presented. It studied the existing urban problems and examined "[...] possibilities for improving urban development and for increasing the effectiveness of existing Community intervention in urban areas" (European Commission, 1997: 3). The second important event was an Informal Meeting of EU Ministers for Spatial Planning during the Dutch EU Presidency taking place in Noordwijk one month later, since it focused on urban issues for the first time (van den Berg/ et al., 2007). Additionally it symbolizes the first attempt of the Member States towards the development of European Urban Policy. The 'Urban Exchange Initiative', enacted during the conference, can be seen as the third important contribution in the process to a European Urban Policy in this period. It aimed to strengthen the exchange of experiences related to urban issues and to give best practices (Göddecke-Stellmann, 2009a). Finally, the second phase of 'Urban Pilot Projects' (UPP) was launched in July 1997, in which a wide range of urban problems was addressed. They should be tackled with the help of highly integrated approaches (European Commission, 1998).

These four described events indeed clarify the increasing interest in urban development, but not until the document 'Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: a framework for action' was published in 1998, "[...] the main pillars for an urban policy were set" (van den Berg/ et al., 2007: 42). This document was a good basis for the 'URBAN Forum' held in Vienna in November 1998. Here one more step forward was done, since both the Commission and the European Member States agreed on a continuing focus on a common urban policy for the first time (@Europaforum Wien, n.d.). Besides, a project to collect data from European urban agglomerations, called the 'Urban Audit Pilot Project', was successfully initialized in 1998 (European Commission, 2007).

In addition, the 'European Spatial Development Perspective' (ESDP) was implemented in 1999. It was the first document in which both the EU and its Member States voluntarily agree on common *Leitbilder* (approaches) and perspectives for the spatial development inside the European Union. Moreover, it is a political framework, albeit it is non-binding, for an improved coop-

eration between the departmental policies of the EU and the Member States, their regions and cities (Weiland & Wohlleber-Feller, 2007).

The third stage ended in the way how it has started; with the decision for a renewed transformation of the structural funds. They should be simplified by the reduction from six to three objectives in the following period; objective 1 and especially objective 2 were most important for cities now (Schoof, 2002). In addition the cohesion funds were adjusted (Antalovsky/ et al., 2005).

Stage 4 (2000 – 2006): The start of the fourth period was the beginning of the second round of the 'Community Initiative URBAN' at the same time. 'URBAN II' aimed to develop innovative models for the economic and social regeneration of problematic urban areas (@European Commission, 2008a). To achieve this goal it used a special program named 'European Network for Exchange of Experience' (URBACT), which is part of the cohesion policy of the EU since 2002 (@EU, 2010). With its ambition to exchange and dissemination of knowledge as well as capitalization and information, it is another symbol of the rising European engagement in urban related issues (@European Commission, 2008b).

Besides, the pilot project 'Urban Audit' was further developed. As a result, the 'State of European Cities Report' was produced in 2007 providing "[...] in-depth analysis of gathered demographic, economic and social statistics" (@European Commission, 2009a). In addition, some, for the growing European influence on urban development, important documents were published at the fourth stage as well. One of it was the 'Lille Action Programme' adopted in November 2000. Its main aim was "[...] to help Member States, the Commission and cities to give more tangible form to the policy objectives defined at European level to the challenges facing cities" (CSD, 2000: 55). This program, which was very similar to the action framework 'Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union' from 1998, established the connection between the policy of the European Commission and the policy of the Member States (Eltges & Nickel, 2007). Out of the Dutch EU Presidency it was followed by the 'Urban Acquis' in 2004. The Member States' Ministers responsible for Urban Development valued it "[...] as a basis for a more co-

herent approach to urban policy” (Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Netherlands, 2005: 2). One year later the ‘Bristol Accord’, as a part of the political conclusions of the British EU Presidency, was adopted. Two main conclusions out of it were that the skills of the actors in urban policy have to be regarded in particular and great importance has to be placed on interdisciplinary co-operation (@BBSR, 2010). Summing up, cities got “their official positioning inside the Regional Policy” (van den Berg/ et al., 2004: 47) at this fourth stage.

Stage 5 (2007 – 2013): The last stage of the development of an urban dimension of European policy is still ongoing. Currently it seems like both the European Commission and the for a long time skeptical EU Member States feel more committed to a common urban policy on the European level (van den Berg/ et al., 2007). Right at the beginning of the programming period in May 2007, an Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion was held in Leipzig under the German EU Presidency. The key policy issue was ‘Strengthening European cities and their regions – promoting competitiveness, social and territorial cohesion in Europe and in its cities and regions’ (@German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, 2010a). Two non-binding, but nonetheless significant political documents were adopted at the conference; the ‘Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities’ and the ‘Territorial Agenda of the EU’. With the former the Member States’ Ministers responsible for Urban Development agreed upon common principles and strategies for the first time (Göddecke-Stellmann, 2009a). They voluntarily committed “making greater use of integrated urban development policy approaches [and paying special attention] to deprived neighbourhoods within the context of the city as a whole” (German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, 2007: 2ff). The ‘Territorial Agenda’ “[...] and its recommendations for an integrated spatial development policy [aimed] at mobilising the potentials of European regions and cities for sustainable economic growth and more jobs” (@German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, 2010b). Therefore this political document can be seen as one demonstration of the initiating shift from problem-orientated to more opportunity-orientated urban approaches, in

the way of a gaining interest and marketing of the advantages cities provide (see chapter II. 3.).

After the German EU Presidency, the next EU presidents, Portugal and Slovenia, “[...] indicated their intention of keeping urban policy high on the agenda and making concrete proposals for implementing the recommendations in the Leipzig Charter” (@European Urban Knowledge Network, 2007) before they took office. In the case of Portugal it is questionable if they adhered to their statement. Both, the ‘Leipzig Charter’ and the ‘Territorial Agenda’ indeed were already enhanced by a follow-up paper during the Portuguese EU Presidency (@European Parliament, 2007), but surprisingly urban policy is neither mentioned in the Portuguese EU Presidency program nor in a document listing their priorities (@Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2007a; @Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2007b). On the contrary the Slovenian Presidency, in office from January till June 2008, explicit said in its presidency program that it “[...] will build on the work of previous Presidencies in the area of territorial cohesion and urban policy [...]” (Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2008a: 13). Since Germany, Portugal and Slovenia belong to a ‘Trio Presidency’<sup>4</sup> it seems like Germany has done the main work in this ‘Troika’ to strengthen the urban dimension in European Policy.

During the following eighteen-month presidency from July 2008 to December 2009, consisting of France, the Czech Republic and Sweden, the first impression was that the development of a common European Urban Policy came to a rest, since the presidency trio didn’t mentioned urban related issues in their common presidency program at all (@Council of the European Union, 2008). But at least the French, as one of the main advocates of European Urban Policy, formulated their will to further the implementation of the commitments of the ‘Leipzig Charter’ in the so called ‘Marseille Statement’ (French EU Presidency, 2008). In contrast the Spanish EU Presidency, which

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<sup>4</sup> Trio Presidency: As suggested in the ‘Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe’ from 2004, the EU Member States voluntarily agreed to replace the individual six-month presidencies by joint eighteen-month presidencies by three member states. “The main goal [...] was to strengthen cooperation between three consecutive presiding countries with the view to creating a more coordinated development of the EU's strategic policies” (Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2008b).

has just started in January 2010, again seems not to be a driving force. If Spain sticks to the presidency program urban policy is not its agenda (@Secretaría de Estado para la Unión Europea, 2010).

The described development clarifies the high influence of the changing presidencies on the urban agenda. Depended on the attitude towards urban policy of the particular EU Member State being in power, a higher or lower engagement is noticeable. Thus, the higher engagement of the first presidency trio related to urban issues in comparison to the second one is abundantly clear.

Besides, also the European Commission tried to strengthen the urban dimension of European policies in this structural funds period. It implemented a further simplification of the cohesion policy, which is relevant for the urban dimension of European Policy (van den Berg/ et al., 2007). One main focus is the support of urban development. Starting from now “[...] all European cities can use the structural funds for integrated urban development projects for the first time” (Nickel, 2009: IV). Moreover there is the opportunity to set up an Urban Development Fund and the cities get a bigger chance to participate (Europäische Kommission, 2006).

*Résumé:* Without any doubt the development of an urban dimension of European Policy has increased in retrospect, even though it was affected by slight ups and down. *First*, there are already a multitude of regulations that “directly affect important urban policy areas” (Antalovsky/ et al., 2005: 151), *second*, several studies dealing both with problems and opportunities in cities were ordered, which helped to an increased awareness, *third*, more and more money has been spent in urban related issues by indirect or even special funding programs financed by the structural funds and *fourth*, voluntarily incurred debts to co-operate as well as *fifth*, an optional agreement upon common principles and strategies was made. Nevertheless, the end of the development – an independent political area on the European level that is explicitly directed to cities and integrated in the EU Treaty – is not reached for a long time yet. The main reason that there is no European Urban Policy so far is the lack of a common consensus both inside the European institu-

tions and between them and the Member States. No one grant the other a gain in power. But as the development shows, more and more involved actors realize which advantages an enlargement of the urban dimension of European Policy would have and their negative attitude is declining. Especially the cities themselves welcome an increasing involvement of the EU for several reasons. Against the background of the low funding of the national level, the European engagement provides both an alternative source of revenue and an alternative route to power for the cities (Antalovsky/ et al., 2005).

### 3. Involved institutions and actors

There are both institutions and actors that represent the European interest related to urban issues and the interests of the Member States. The chapter starts with the former:

“Because it has the so-called ‘right of initiative’ the Commission holds a key position when it comes to developing EU politics” (Waterhout, 2008: 40). This is the also the case for the development of urban policy; the **European Commission** is the most engaged actor (Eltges, 2005). Since its influence in terms of promoted programs and other actions was in detail described in conjunction with the made steps in part III. 2., it will not be explained further at this part. This applies accordingly for one of the diverse Directorates General, the **DG Regional Policy**, which is the most important DG related to urban issues. Overall the further development of the European Treaties, from the Single European Act in 1987 to the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, increased the influence of the Directorates General (Weiland & Wohlleber-Feller, 2007). Not mentioned yet is the **DG for Employment and Social Affairs**. It exerts influence on “the socio-economic performance of European cities” (Parkinson, 2005: 16) with its programs, as most of them are engaged with problems in particular cities are confronted with, like a high unemployment rate and social exclusion. In addition the **DG Transport** is involved in urban issues. The ‘Trans-European Networks’ (TEN), which attracts most of the attention, has a strong impact on the cities development, since lots of the TENs aim to connect urban regions with one another (van den Berg/ et al., 2004). Besides the

'CIVITAS initiative' which was created in 2000 "[...] helps cities to achieve a more sustainable, clean and energy efficient urban transport system by implementing and evaluating an ambitious, integrated set of technology and policy based measures" (European Commission, 2009b). One more Directorate General that is increasingly involved in urban issues is the **DG Environment**. It mainly exerts influence on the urban development through directives, concerning quality of air and emissions for instance (van den Berg/ et al., 2004). Since the implementation of directives takes a long time, the DG Environment also uses pilot projects and initiatives, like the 'European Common Indicators Initiative', which "[...] is focused on monitoring environmental sustainability at the local level" (@European Commission, 2008c) and appointed teams of experts, to describe the situation of the cities for instance (Günther, 2007).

Besides the European Commission and the Directorates General the **European Parliament** says in its self-description that it "[...] has always defended the existence of urban policy at European level" (European Parliament, 2005: 8). Indeed it has become increasingly active during the last years, in particular through its Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism (van den Berg/ et al., 2004). To give examples, it mainly inspired the creation of the 'URBAN initiative' and formed the 'European Parliamentary Urban Policy Working Group', that "[...] provide[s] Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) with information and intelligence on urban development and quality of life in cities" (Parkinson, 2005: 23). But up to now the European Parliament has never been directly involved in the process (Waterhout, 2008). The **Committee of the Regions** has a share in the further development of an urban dimension of European Policy in its role as an advisory body. It is consulted by the Commission and the Council, among other things in terms of employment and social policy, Trans-European Networks, environment and transport. All these areas are closely connected with urban issues. Besides, an important EU institution is **EUROSTAT**, which is called the 'key of European statistics'. It supplies the European Institutions, like the General Directives and the Commission, with statistics that are essential for the Community policies (van den Berg/ et al., 2004). Since 1999, the starting point of the 'Ur-

ban Audit', one special working party deals with 'Urban Statistics' (European Communities, 2009).

One involved institution that represents the Member States' interest is the **Council of Ministers**. It consists of national ministers of transport, environment, finance and agriculture and is chaired by the Member State which holds the EU six-month presidency. Since there are countries in favor as well as against European Urban Policy, the Council is a comparable less stable constellation. As described in chapter II. 2., the **Member States' Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Development** support the development of European Urban Policy with their several informal meetings and resulting documents (Faludi & Waterhout, 2005). Finally, a network of 118 local governments in 31 European Countries, named '**Eurocities**', should be mentioned. This network, which exists since 1986, is mainly engaged with networking, lobbying and campaigning in the field of urban affairs (Günther, 2007), to place them "[...] high on the European Union's policy agenda [...]" (van den Berg/ et al., 2007: 51). The specific engagement of Germany and its National 'Urban' Policy is specified in the final chapter.

#### 4. Urban *Leitbild* and sub goals

Urban policy is a heterogeneous and cross-sectional field of study (Zimmermann, 2008). As detailed described above various actors and institutions from different political areas are involved or have an indirect impact on the urban development. Besides, the financing is guaranteed by different aid programs, particularly the structural funds. According to GÖDDECKE-STELLMANN (2009b), working at Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, the integration of the diverse policies is more than the main idea of the Urban Policy that is practiced on the European level. It has rather developed to a constitutive element of the political program inside this sphere of activity. PARKINSON argues that policies for cities "[...] must be integrated to achieve maximum efficiency and impact. [Thus] the EU could justify a greater concern with urban issues by linking that to its formal responsibility for increasing regional prosperity and reducing re-

gional inequalities” (2005: 10). As a result the current ‘urban *Leitbild*’ of the European Union is to support the development of integrated concepts for urban development in the sense of the overarching ‘EU Sustainable Development Strategy’ (Eltges, 2005). The ‘Leipzig Charter’ out of the German EU Presidency in 2007, defines this aspired integrated urban development policy as “[...] simultaneous and fair consideration of the concerns and interests which are relevant to urban development” (BMVBS, 2007e: 2). According to it, integrated urban development policy “[...] is a process in which the spatial, sectoral and temporal aspects of key areas of urban policy are co-ordinated” (BMVBS, 2007e: 2) and a harmonized allocation of resources takes place. Against the background of further involved political levels besides the European level, the coordination of aid programs, laws and processes is often complicated. According to GÖDDECKE-STELLMANN (2009b) it is even questionable if the aim of an integrated urban policy can be fulfilled.

The sub goals out of this ‘urban *Leitbild*’ the ‘Leipzig Charter’ contains are mentioned below:

- to help local authorities in developing “[...] the necessary skills and efficiency to implement integrated urban development policies” (BMVBS, 2007e: 7)
- to support the intensification of coordinated actions on the different political levels,
- to pool knowledge and financial resources in order to increase the effectiveness of the limited public funds and to provide more planning and investment certainty, and
- to support the exchange of experience and knowledge (@German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, 2010a).

In a whole the EU aims to protect and further develop European cities, to strengthen their competitiveness against the background of the ‘Lisbon Strategy’ as well as to reduce disparities within and among neighborhoods

(@German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, 2010a).

## **5. Obstacles on an implementation of European Urban Policy**

As demonstrated in various modalities, European Urban Policy, in the way of an independent political area on the European level that is explicitly directed to cities and integrated in a statutory framework, doesn't exist so far. If there will be one in the future remains unclear. According to FRANK urban policy on the European level "was, is, and will be a combated, heterogeneous, and unstable field of politics" (2006: 53). The lack of implementation traces back to several obstacles that will be described in the following.

The main obstacle was already mentioned in chapter III. 2.: the missing common consensus both inside the European Institutions and between them and the Member States. No one grant the other a gain in power respectively the lower political levels fear declining competences. Thus, the first and so far sole proposal of the European Commission to modify the Treaty in order to gain a formal competence in urban policy was opposed in 1991 (Tofarides, 2003). Since then the atmosphere indeed has changed. As the described development shows, both the European Institutions and an increasing number of the European Member States are interested in an extension of urban issues on the European level and a common perception has emerged. According to GÖDDECKE-STELLMANN (2009a) they admitted the importance of cities as spatial hubs for the economic and social cohesion in Europe on the one hand and on the other hand they came to the conclusion how central integrated urban policy approaches are. Because of the latter, all 27 Member States' Ministers responsible for Urban Development voluntarily agreed in the aim of the 'Leipzig Charter' "making greater use of integrated urban policy approaches" (German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, 2007: 2). As a consequence of this arising common opinion, a growing urban dimension of European policy is visible.

However, not all Member States are equally interested. Especially the new Member States, which usually don't have a legalized urban policy on the national level, see the need to a lesser extent. The diverse views of the European Member States become obvious in terms of the changing EU presidencies. In spite of the replacement of the individual six-month presidencies by joint eighteen-month presidencies aiming a more coordinated development of the EU's strategic policies (@Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2008b) the urban agenda is anything but constant. The fact that there are not enough EU Member States in favor of European Urban Policy, and in particular the big number of new Member States is quite resistant, can be called the second main obstacle (Waterhout, 2008). To go further one can claim the advocates of European Urban Policy have a lack of assertiveness, because of missing competences in this field. This clarifies the dilemma of moving in a circle course; the supporter want to regulate urban policy on the European level by law, but are on their own not lawful to do so.

In summary, an increasing urban dimension of European policy is noticeable, but in fact there is no European Urban Policy so far. The reasons for it are mentioned above. It remains to be seen how it will further develop in future. A matter of particular interest is the share the German National 'Urban' Policy has in European 'Urban' Policy. This is examined later on in chapter VI.



#### IV. THE URBAN DIMENSION OF GERMAN NATIONAL POLICY

After dealing with urban policy on the European level, a further look should be taken to its handling on the national level, in order to enable a comparison between the two. Therefore it should be clarified first:

- What is National Urban Policy in general and how has it developed? What are the reasons for the diverse conditions and organizations inside the European Member States?

Because of the big differences inside the European Member States, the urban dimension of the National Policy in Germany is chosen as a special case. To simplify the planned comparison with the European level similar questions are asked in this chapter:

- What is the urban dimension of National Policy in Germany, in particular with respect to the competences on the national level respectively on the *Länder* (federal states) and the local levels?
- Since when does an interest in National Urban Policy exist and what kinds of events have formed the development?
- Which institutions and actors are mainly involved in creating a National Urban Policy?
- Does a National 'urban *Leitbild*' exist? What are the general principles and goals?
- What are the obstacles of an implementation of National Urban Policy in Germany?

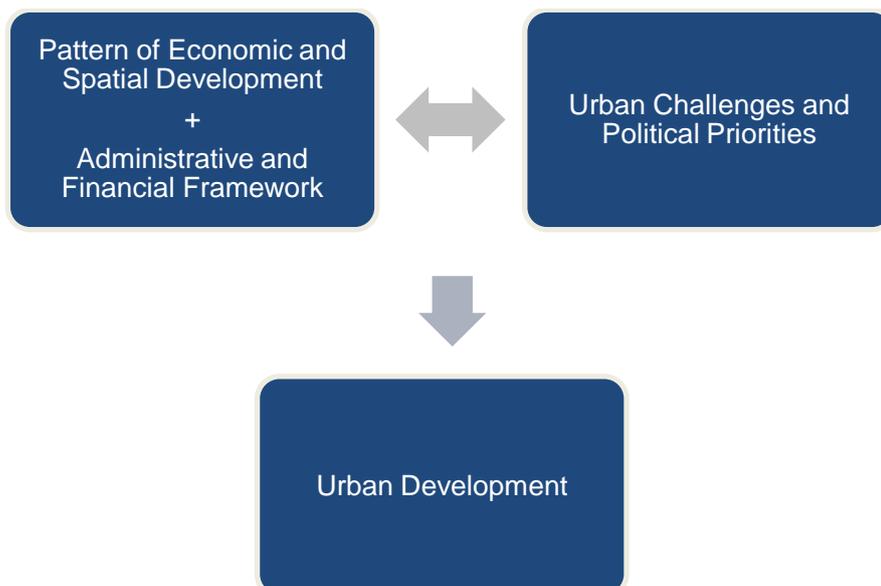
##### 1. Development and organization inside the EU Member States

National Urban Policy is a special case of urban policy. In this thesis it is defined as an individual political area on the national political level that is explicitly directed to cities and integrated in a statutory framework.

National Urban Policy itself did not exist for a long time. The first country that saw the need for urban policy was the USA. They adopted urban policy “[...] as a reaction to metropolitan stagnation and urban decline [...] in the early and mid-1960s” (Robsen, 1987: 26). Therewith urban policy coincided with the transforming patterns of living, and especially with the incidence of the process of decentralization. By virtue of the unlike habit in Europe, which was affected by a slower process of decentralization, the design of an urban policy in the European countries started later. The UK was the first European state that implemented an independent political area of urban policy by the late 1960s respectively early 1970s. France, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, and Italy followed this lead between 1975 and the early 1980s by introducing policies designed to combat the urban decline (Robsen, 1987). These days the majority of European Member States practice urban policy, but the minority on the national level. In the following it should be answered which these countries are and what kind of urban policy they have.

VAN DEN BERG et al. (1998; 2007) define three main factors that are jointly responsible for the current varied statues of urban policy in the countries. They are mentioned in the following figure by presenting their interaction:

**Figure 3: A framework for National Urban Policy**



**Source:** Own design, retrieved from: van den Berg/ et al., 1998: 8

*The national pattern of spatial and economic development:* The spatial and economic development pattern inside the European Member States is heterogeneous, although more than 80% of the European population lives in urban areas today (Europäisches Parlament, 2009). There are differences related to the availability and utilization of space and in the degree of urbanization (van den Berg/ et al., 1998). The latter is difficult to define, since almost all countries have their own definition of 'urbanized' in turn derived from the spatial pattern within their borders (see chapter II. 1.). The stage of urbanization, which among other things traces back to the historical development inside the country, is crucial in terms of the kinds of problems the cities are confronted with. Declining cities have to take other measures than fast-growing cities, for instance. Besides, there is a distinction regarding the urban systems. Some countries, like Germany, have a rather balanced system with all hierarchical types of cities; others, like Denmark, are dominated by a prime city and in addition several small sized cities. Altogether the heterogeneous pattern in the European Member States leads to a different handling of urban policy.

*The administrative and financial framework in which the cities operate:* The cities' administrative and financial framework is an important factor as well. It has an impact on the design of the urban policy in the way that it sets boundaries. The responsible level for urban policy, which traces back to the form of government, as well as the level of decentralization, draw a distinction in freedom of scope. Moreover the local autonomy is largely tied up with the financial strength and organization, which differs a lot. The cities in the EU Member States practice a variety of ways to acquire revenue. The most common ones are local taxation, grants and subsidies as well as the use of charges for services and profits. Since they are used in different proportions their share in the municipal income varies (van den Berg/ et al., 1998; van den Berg/ et al., 2007).

*The (national) political debate and political priorities:* The last mentioned influencing factor is urban challenges and political priorities. Depending on the number and character of urban challenges, the national government sees the need for acting, and corresponding to it sets priorities. Thus, there is the pos-

sibility that urban issues attach great or no importance (van den Berg/ et al., 1998). The most frequently urban issues and challenges in national perspectives currently are diversity, multi-locality<sup>5</sup>, individualization (Göddecke-Stellmann, 2009a), fundamental social problems, a balance in national urban systems, infrastructure, national housing, sustainable development, and culture heritage (van den Berg/ et al., 2007).

Depending on these three main factors, the European Member States practice urban policy to greater or lesser extent. Besides, the formal organization of urban policy, that is the responsibility of the level(s), relates to the mentioned influencing factors. The following table gives a survey of the current National Policy handling of urban issues and challenges in European Member States.

**Table 2: National Policy handling of urban issues in the EU-25**

National urban policy responses		
Explicit urban policies	Increasing policy attention to cities	No explicit urban policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Kingdom</li> <li>• France</li> <li>• Netherlands</li> <li>• Belgium</li> <li>• Slovenia*</li> <li>• Malta*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Germany</li> <li>• Finland</li> <li>• Sweden</li> <li>• Denmark</li> <li>• Italy</li> <li>• Portugal</li> <li>• Czech Republic**</li> <li>• Hungary**</li> <li>• Poland**</li> <li>• Slovak Republic**</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ireland</li> <li>• Spain</li> <li>• Greece</li> <li>• Austria</li> <li>• Luxembourg</li> <li>• Estonia*</li> <li>• Latvia*</li> <li>• Lithuania*</li> <li>• Cyprus*</li> </ul>

**Source:** Own design, retrieved from: van den Berg/ et al., 2004: 96; European Parliament, 2005: 11; Harding, 2007: 23ff

**\*Source:** European Parliament, 2005; **\*\*Source:** Harding, 2007

Against the background of the influencing factors, the author tries to find some common characteristics for the differences in the tradition of National

<sup>5</sup> Multilokalität

Urban Policy. The given period in the table for the EU-15 is the development from 1997 to 2004; thus the year 2004 is the status quo. Additionally all new Member States, with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania, are added on the basis of references out of the year 2005 respectively 2007.

As described above, the differences in the tradition of National Urban Policy trace back to several factors. That is the reason why it is so difficult to find common characteristics that apply to all EU Member States in one group. With regard to table 2 some examples are given:

It is quite evident that the **national pattern of spatial and economic development** and the **political debate and political priorities**, have an impact on the National Urban Policy. With the exception of Slovenia, all countries with urban policy on the national level have a high degree of urbanization. It seems that the responsible people attach great importance to cities in this case and consequently implemented urban policy on the national level. In contrast, the Nordic countries, which understood the word 'urban' as a 'necessary evil' for a long time (Jørgensen & Ærø, 2008), don't have urban policy available on the national level until yet, because of the small number of big cities. Their first policy focus is on the regional level. But even in these countries with a comparable low degree of urbanization the functioning of cities becomes increasingly important, since they are seen as stimulators of regional development (van den Berg/ et al., 1998; van den Berg/ et al., 2007).

An example for the influence of the **administrative framework** is the chosen case study object Germany. Unlike the UK, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Slovenia and Malta, Germany doesn't have a National Urban Policy so far. In particular with regard to the first four mentioned Member States, this is surprising, since Germany is a neighboring country, highly urbanized and one of the original six states of the EU as well. Therefore one could assume similar attitudes. But there is one main difference. With the exception of Belgium, all countries that practice urban policy on the national level don't have a federal system (van den Berg/ et al., 2004). Conversely, against the historical background, Germany is a federal state. This means that it is characterized of a share of responsibilities of the different levels. In general, the most suita-

ble level should be responsible for a particular task, like urban policy for instance. As stipulated this is not the national level, but the intermediary level of government; the 16 *Länder* are mainly engaged (see chapter II. 2.).

## 2. Organization of the National ‘Urban’ Policy in Germany

Since it is not possible to describe the exposure to urban policy of all 27 European Member States in detail, Germany will be exemplified. As mentioned above, similar to the EU, the national level in Germany has no explicit competences in urban issues. But as table 2 shows, an increasing policy attention to cities is ascertainable in the last years. Thus, an urban dimension of National Policy is developing as well.

The main reason for the lack of National Urban Policy in Germany is the federal system. According to the ‘subsidiarity principle’ the tasks related to urban issues are divided over the three administration levels, the national level, the *Länder* and the local level. Thereby the national level respectively the *Bund* (Federal Government) has the least formal competences in this field (OECD, 1999a). In charge are the *Länder* and municipalities. The latter have “the right to regulate all local affairs on their own responsibility [as well as] the right of self-government” (Article 28 (2) Basic Law<sup>6</sup>) and the former are allowed, according to law, to make ordinances and to assign jobs to the municipalities. On the contrary the *Bund* can legitimize actions to influence the urban development with one normative request of the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany) only. It makes demands on “[...] the establishment of equivalent living conditions [...]” (Article 72 (2) Basic Law). The *Raumordnungsgesetz (ROG)* (Spatial Planning Act) concretizes this request with the amendment “in all of its subspaces” (Article 1 (2; 6) *ROG, translated by author*).

With the federalism reform passed in 2006, the *Bund* even lost competences because it had to deliver responsibilities to the levels below (Lachmuth/ et al., 2006). According to the *Grundgesetz* the *Bund* is not allowed to assign jobs directly to the municipalities anymore (Article 84 (1) Basic Law). Moreover it

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<sup>6</sup> Grundgesetz

lost its *Rahmenkompetenz* (competence to issue framework legislation) in the field of regional planning<sup>7</sup> and the *Länder* got the responsibility for the financial support for social housing. Besides, BOGUMIL et al. (2008) refer to the not existing independent competences in some central fields of action of National Urban Policy which are particular important with regard to the aim of an integrated urban policy approach. These fields of action are the “Proactive education and training policies on children and young people in deprived urban areas” (European Parliament, 2007: 1), for which the *Länder* are responsible, and the aid of the economic structure respectively the local economy, that is a common task of *Bund* and *Länder*<sup>8</sup> (Article 91a (1) Basic Law), and in consequence often causes problems of coordination.

As a result, the sole opportunity to exert influence on the urban development the national level in Germany has, is with urban development promotion programs and pilot projects. The most important programs initiated by the *Bund*, are the ‘Program of urbanistic monument protection’<sup>9</sup> implemented in 1991, ‘*Stadtumbau Ost*’ and ‘*Stadtumbau West*’, two subsidy programs that are dealing with urban restructuring in the eastern respectively the western parts of Germany and finally the ‘Federal-Länder Programme Socially Integrative City’<sup>10</sup> implemented in 1999 (Bogumil/ et al., 2008). Besides, the *Bund* uses so called *Modellprojekte* (pilot projects), financed by the research program ‘Experimental Housing and Urban Development’ (ExWoSt), to “[...] support innovative planning and measures regarding important civic and housing political topics” (@BBR, n.d.). Overall the mentioned measures of the national level last in the sectoral initiatives of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development<sup>11</sup> and only a few examples of an intersectoral co-ordination with other departments exist” (Bogumil/ et al., 2008).

The description of the present organization of urban policy in the federal state of Germany shows how difficult an implementation of National Urban Policy is. Further obstacles are mentioned later on in chapter IV. 6.

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<sup>7</sup> Raumordnung

<sup>8</sup> Bund-Länder-Gemeinschaftsaufgabe

<sup>9</sup> Programm zum städtebaulichen Denkmalschutz

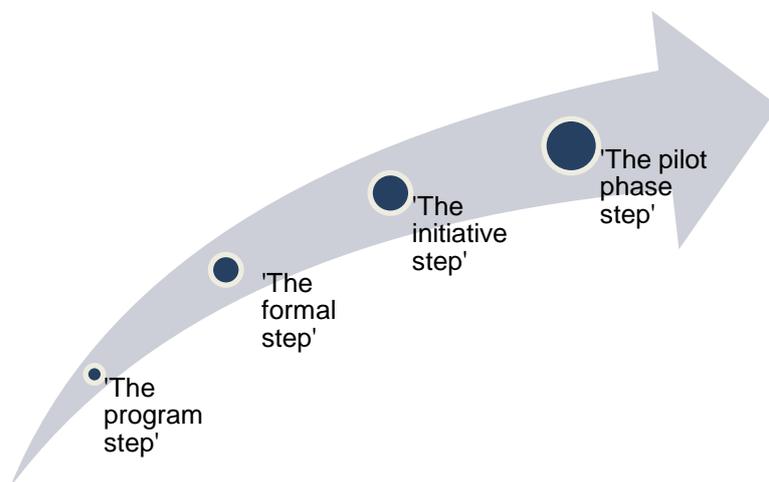
<sup>10</sup> Bund-Länder Programm Soziale Stadt

<sup>11</sup> Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung (BMVBS)

### 3. The development of an urban dimension of German National Policy

Unlike the development of an urban dimension of European policy, the story of engagement for National Urban Policy in Germany is comparable short. It has started, nearly unnoticed, as recently as the accession to power of the Red-Green coalition<sup>12</sup> in 1998. Since then an increasing engagement is determinable (Bogumil/ et al., 2008). With regards to the content respectively the key moments, the development can be described in four steps which overlap to some extent.

**Figure 4: Four steps on the way to an increasing urban dimension of National Policy in Germany**



**Source: Own design**

The program step: One of the most noticed actions was the creation of the 'Federal-Länder Program Socially Integrative City' in 1999, which is still in operation. "Its goal [is] to counteract the widening socio-spatial rifts in the cities. The program fosters participation and cooperation and represents a new integrative political approach to urban district development" (@Difu, 2007), since it is organized as a financial and conceptual co-operation network of *Bund*, *Länder* and municipalities (Alisch, 2002). In addition, the *Bund* initiated two more 'Federal-Länder Programs', '*Stadtumbau Ost*' and '*Stadtumbau West*', to support cities dealing with a high vacancy rate caused by

<sup>12</sup> Coalition of the two German political parties *SPD* (the Social Democratic Party) and *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* ('the Greens')

structural changes (Goderbauer, 2009) respectively to cope with urban development without growth (Liebmann & Karsten, 2009). The main aims of ‘*Stadtumbau Ost*’, introduced in 2002 with a contest, are to strengthen the inner cities, to reduce the supply surplus of flats and to increase the value of the cities in the eastern parts of Germany (@IRS, 2008). According to BOGUMIL et al. (2008) this primarily means the demolition and removal of buildings and even whole streets of houses for which the program was criticized a lot as ‘*Abrissprogramm Ost*’ (‘Demolition Program East’). In the western parts of Germany the funding program ‘*Stadtumbau West*’ was created belated in 2004. The evaluation of the program, published this year, concludes “the interim results show that the broadly based funding approach of “Stadtumbau West” meets the diverse urban restructuring needs of the west German municipalities [...]” (BBSR, 2010: 5).

*The formal step:* Besides this programmatic engagement of the *Bund* that is still ongoing, the aim to make Urban Policy a national task was visualized with the change of the name of the responsible ministry for urban development. Since the accession to power of the Grand coalition<sup>13</sup> in 2005 it was renamed from ‘Federal Ministry for Transport, Building and *Housing*’ in ‘Federal Ministry for Transport, Building and *Urban Development*’ (Bogumil/ et al., 2008).

*The initiative step:* Thereafter the biggest step forward was taken during the German EU Presidency in the first half-year of 2007 and more precisely with the ‘Leipzig Charter’ (@BBSR, 2010). Besides the ‘Territorial Agenda’, it can be seen as the most important document out of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion hold in Leipzig in May 2007. One main aim of the German EU Presidency was to reformulate the idea of the European City as a foundation for a new urban policy in Europe (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008). This objective could be nearly achieved, since all 27 European Member States voluntarily agreed “upon common principles and strategies for urban development policy” (European Parliament, 2007: 1) for the first time. To specify they committed to “pursue a strategy of inte-

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<sup>13</sup> Grand coalition is the name of the coalition of the two main German political parties *CDU* (the Christian Democrats) and the *SPD* (the Social Democratic Party).

grated urban development and to take action to counter social exclusion in deprived neighbourhoods” (BMVBS, 2007d: 2). Against the background of the development of National Urban Policy in Germany, most important was the recommendation that “Urban development policy should be laid down on national level” (European Parliament, 2007: 7). This recommendation and the already accepted transnational understanding on the European level about urban development helped to create a national urban strategy approach for Germany (Hatzfeld, in: BMVBS, 2009a). Consequently the Federal Ministry for Transport, Building and Urban Development charged an interdisciplinary group of experts with the evaluation of the chances and fields of operation of such an approach (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008). The outcome of the work in 2006 and 2007 was a Memorandum<sup>14</sup> of the formation of a National Urban (Development) Policy<sup>15</sup> for Germany presented in December 2007. By “defining a national policy approach to urban development [this statement of different experts sought] to provide answers on current development questions” (BMVBS, 2007b: 9). They were related, for instance, to obstacles that need to be overcome, or the further development of the concept of the European city. The Memorandum proposed two levels for a National Urban Policy: ‘Good Practice’ and a temporary campaign ‘For city and urbanity’. ‘Good Practice’ contained “urban policy must adapt quickly to changes in cities [and] must be regularly reviewed” (BMVBS, 2007b: 7). The aim of the campaign ‘For city and urbanity’ was to concretize this new policy approach with the help of projects, initiatives, conferences and publications to strengthen the relation to its implementation (Hatzfeld, in: BMVBS, 2009a). Against the background of the federal structure of Germany, the Memorandum emphasized to develop a national position to urban issues in collaboration with the *Länder* and the municipalities. The already existing urban policy on the local as well as the *Länder* level should be completed, not replaced (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008). Conforming to these demands, the former Federal Minister Tiefensee presented the ‘National Urban Development Policy’ on the fed-

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Memorandum – Towards a National Urban Policy’

<sup>15</sup> In Germany National Urban *Development* Policy are both a synonym for National Urban Policy and the first initiative related to urban issues. To prevent confusion in the course of this thesis, the term ‘National Urban Policy’ will be used for the independent policy field explicit directed to cities and ‘National Urban Development Policy’ for the initiative.

eral congress 'Towards a National Urban Policy', as a common initiative of *Bund, Länder*, municipalities and various actors out of civil society, administration, economy and science (Hatzfeld & Jakubowski, 2008). This federal congress, which took place right after the Germany EU Presidency in the beginning of July 2007, represents the starting point of the pilot phase of the 'National Urban Development Policy' initiative (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008).

The pilot phase step: Since then, the initiative's approach (see chapter IV. 5.) was presented in the relevant bodies of the *Länder* and the local level. The Federal State Ministers and Senators responsible for Urban Design, Building and Housing gave the first positive answer with the 'Papenburg Declaration on National Urban Development Policy'<sup>16</sup> in September 2007. In it they consented to clearly strengthen urban policy on the European as well as the national level with activities and support programs (Bauministerkonferenz, 2007). On the basis of this declaration, the former discussion during the federal congress in July and several think-tank roundtable of experts, the thematic focus of the National Urban Development Policy was defined (Hatzfeld, in: BMVBS, 2009a). It can be summarized in six fields of action:

- "Civil society: activating citizens for their town or city
- Social city: creating chances and preserving cohesion
- Innovative city: motors of economic development
- Climate protection and global responsibility: building the city of tomorrow
- Building culture: shaping cities in a better way
- Regionalisation: the region is the city's future" (@European Urban Knowledge Network, n.d.).

Since the second federal congress in Munich in April 2008, the strategy of 'National Urban Development Policy' had become more concrete. The mentioned six fields of action were accepted. To enable an effectiveness of these decided contents, an organizational structure was created in terms of a board

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<sup>16</sup> Papenburger Erklärung

of trustees, consisting of representatives from relevant professional fields, a project group for an inter-ministerial coordination, a working group for the operative work and a project committee to decide on projects. Furthermore a cabinet decision was made in the same year which led to a discussion in the *Bundestag* (Lower House of German Parliament), as well as the *Bundesrat* (Upper House of the German Parliament). Both houses of the German Parliament and the *Bundeskabinett* (Federal Cabinet) ensured their support of the initiative 'National Urban Development Policy' (Hatzfeld, in: BMVBS, 2009a). The last visible step was the third federal congress in Essen in June 2009. It dealt with the tendencies out of the fields of action of the strategy 'National Urban Development Policy' and the consequences of current global processes (BMVBS, 2009b).

Résumé: Overall the last years were very eventfully. Especially since the German EU Presidency further steps to a National Urban Policy have been taken. But it remains unclear if the last step, the formal legalization, is really volitional and realizable, or if urban policy on the national level will always persist as an event offering a platform for publicity and exchange of experience. Curiously everybody is talking about a National Urban *Development* Policy in Germany, whereas the 'normal' urban policy, consisting of a support of the local level in terms of supranational and national political decisions with relevance to cities, is excluded (Bogumil/ et al., 2008). Thus, it seems to be an arduous way until it is no longer essential to talk about an *urban dimension* of National Policy, but about National Urban Policy, as an independent political area explicit directed to cities.

#### 4. Involved institutions and actors

The development of an urban dimension of National Policy does not simply trace back to the engagement of the national level. The *Bund* indeed was the one which took the initiative, but at the same time it asked for a broad alliance of *Länder*, municipalities, economy and civil society (Hatzfeld & Jakubowski, 2008). Some impulses even hearkened back to the **European level** (see chapter VI.). The alignment of the cohesion policy in the current pro-

programming period set an incentive for instance (Nickel, 2009). It becomes apparent the *Bund* doesn't understand itself as the only involved actor in urban policy on the national level. The reason for this behavior is the federal system. Urban development used to be handled as a common task in the past and should be handled as one in the future as well (Hatzfeld & Jakubowski, 2008). This was also the outcome of the Memorandum: "Urban development is not a task for the federal government, the federal states or municipalities alone – it concerns all" (BMVBS, 2007b: 18).

Contrary to the European level, where besides the DG Regional Policy also other Directorates General are involved, on the national level only one Ministry, the **Federal Ministry for Transport, Building and Urban Development**<sup>17</sup> and its former **Federal Minister Tiefensee** were the main engaged actors. Moreover, the **corresponding federal states ministries** and particularly the **representatives of the cities and urban regions** are the essential partners (BMVBS, 2007b). Adjacent to the players of the political levels, **representatives of the civil society** are involved as well. As decided at the second federal congress in Munich, four different groups were established for the further development of a National Urban Policy. One of them is the **Board of Trustees** consisting of representatives from various relevant professional fields, like science, real estate industry, players of the health care industry, different consortia and even representatives of the churches (Hatzfeld, in: BMVBS, 2009a).

### 5. Urban *Leitbild*, general principles and goals

Currently the urban dimension of the German National Policy represented by the initiative 'National Urban Development Policy' doesn't have a closed 'urban *Leitbild*'. The reason for this is that it is very difficult to find a common one for the whole federal state of Germany (Hatzfeld, in: BMVBS, 2009). Depending on their background, the involved experts strive for different approaches. Some professionals, like VESPER (in: BMVBS, 2009) and ZLO-NICKY (in: BMVBS, 2009), want to highlight the quality of cities, whereas

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<sup>17</sup> BMVBS

others, like UDE (in: BMVBS, 2009) favor the *Leitbild* of the 'structural compact and social integrating mixed city'<sup>18</sup>.

In HATZFELD's opinion it is sufficient to have just general principles like 'the European City' or 'Sustainable integrated urban development' so far (see chapter VI. 3.). Out of these principals the following common criteria for the structuring of the political area were developed: Social equity, economic success, environmental orientation, democratic participation, cultural intrinsic value and beauty (in: BMVBS, 2009).

In the view of these criteria and the 'Leipzig Charter' the 'National Urban Development Policy' aims:

- to strengthen the position of the *Bund* in urban issues,
- to increase the adaptation of the existing programs and instruments, like the urban development promotion program<sup>19</sup>, to new challenges,
- to increase the sensitization of the public for the problems and chances of the cities,
- to find new partners for urban development
- and to strengthen the German position on the European level (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008).

The overall ambition and the guaranty for the success of the initiative 'National Urban Development Policy' is the *Bund* act together with *Länder* and municipalities (Hatzfeld & Jakubowski, 2008).

## 6. Obstacles of an implementation of German National Urban Policy

Currently the term 'National Urban Development Policy' resounded throughout the land. But the appearances are deceiving. The *Bund* still doesn't have formal competences related to urban issues. It is just an initiative engaged

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<sup>18</sup> Leitbild der baulich kompakten und sozial integrierenden gemischten Stadt  
<sup>19</sup> Städtebauförderung

with the legalization of urban policy on the German national level that bears this name.

The main reason for the lack of legalization is the federal structure of Germany leading to vertical coordination problems. Decentralization, self-government of the local level and services for the public<sup>20</sup> are the most profiling characteristics of the German system of cities (Hatzfeld & Jakubowski, 2008). Thus, National Urban Policy has several opponents. First and foremost the cities themselves were the biggest enemies for a long time. They are entitled to form the development within the administrative boundaries of the city in the first place. Consequently, they are afraid of losing their right of self-government. But against the background of their financial crisis, in the meantime important representatives of the cities, like the '*Deutsche Städte-tag*' (German Association of Cities and Towns) and the '*Deutsche Städte- und Gemeindebund*' (German Association of Towns and Municipalities), are in favor of federal furtherance, especially in terms of financial aid. In general also the *Länder* appreciate financial aid of the *Bund* (Bogumil/ et al., 2008). But for the same reason, the fear of losing competences, the majority of the *Länder*, in particular the donor countries in the 'financial equalization scheme between the Federal Government and the *Länder*'<sup>21</sup>, are against an independent political area for urban issues on the national level (Häußermann, 2005). Solely the EU, more precisely the representatives of the Member States at the European Union, is an advocate for National Urban Policy. It increased the public perception of the topic in Germany with its discourse of urban policy on the European level (Bogumil/ et al., 2008). But this support is not enough to implement National Urban Policy in Germany. As long as there is neither a central principal on the national level who has a competence for integrated urban policy, nor a central agent on the local level responsible for the implementation (Bogumil/ et al., 2008), the legalization of National Urban Policy seems to be hardly realizable.

In summary, the implementation of urban policy on the national level of Germany appears to be even more complicated than on the European level,

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<sup>20</sup> Daseinsvorsorge  
<sup>21</sup> Länderfinanzausgleich

since the former cannot trust in a comparable good support of the involved actors.

## V. THE EUROPEAN AND GERMAN URBAN POLICY DEBATE

There is an ongoing debate of the pros and cons of both European Urban Policy and National Urban Policy in Germany. The second chapter already gave the main general arguments for an urban policy on a higher administrative level than the local level (see Chapter II.), which were summarized in the term “urban paradox” (Gurria, 2007).

Further reasons for and also against a bigger engagement of the EU respectively the national level in urban issues are mentioned below. According to the author the arguments for both political levels, given by professionals and involved actors, are quite similar. For a better understanding of the current discrepancies, they should be discussed in a common chapter, which will be presented structured into seven categories of arguments:

*Statistical arguments:* The EU as well as Germany are very strongly urbanized; about 80% of the population currently lives in cities (Mäding, 2006) and 80% of the workplaces are in urban areas (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008), therefore the cities are the “[...] centers of knowledge and sources of growth and innovation” (BMVBS, 2007e: 1). As a consequence cities play a decisive role both for the whole federal state of Germany and the European level. But do high percentages of population and workplaces on an area alone excuse the need of urban policy? Or aren’t there other reference levels, besides the territorial level, rather the main determinants for an explicit policy? According to KRAUTZBERGER (2006) the statistical facts legitimate an increasing national focus on cities. But he is a representative for the legalization on the national level and therefore logically needs arguments to support the favored National Urban Policy. ALDSKOGIUS (n.d.) agreed to Krautzberger’s position for the European level. Related to him “it has been evident that many of the common policies of the European Union – the internal market, employment, social, environment, transport policies etc. – has to consider the effects on urban areas” (Aldskogius, n.d.: 14). In dependence on WATERHOOD (2008) they sometimes even induce unintended spatial impacts. Thus, an explicit urban policy could lead to less negative impacts. In the authors opinion this argument is more reasonable, since it goes one step further.

Alkdskogius and Waterhood not simply argue with numbers and percentages, but with the indirect effects caused by the existing political areas.

On the contrary to the mentioned supporters of urban policy, BOGUMIL et al. (2008) presented a statistical argument against the engagement of the German federal government. They argue that the *Bund* has a lack of instruments for a uniform documentation of the local development. Such documentation would be the first necessary step before a National Urban Policy should be implemented. Otherwise there would be no basis for common strategies. According to the author this argument is less relevant for the European level, since it has the 'Urban Audit Pilot Project' to collect data from European urban agglomerations and with it is able to document the ongoing urban development in Europe. Besides there are several exchange initiatives, like UR-BACT, the 'Urban Pilot Projects', and the 'Urban Exchange Initiative' (UEI) that help to get a better impression of the needs and problems of the urban areas in the EU and of suitable instruments which can be used.

*Problem arguments:* Two common arguments for a legalization of urban policy on the European and the national level are the various problems and challenges urban areas are confronted with, which according to the OECD (1999b) become increasingly similar in the developed countries, as well as the resultant excessive demand of the cities. In HÄUßERMANN's (2005) mind they are too serious for the cities to solve them on their own any longer. Likewise the former German Federal Minister of Transport, Building and Urban Development TIEFENSEE argues that in "a climate where visions and prognoses on urban development are becoming increasingly risky to make, [the] commitment to cities and communities must grow. This applies [...] at [...] national level" (in: BMVBS, 2007b: 3). In particular two common urban developments seem to require a national engagement to further guarantee equivalent living conditions throughout the federal territory:

- the trend of an increasing polarization of urban areas (Gatzweiler & Milbert, 2003) in terms of
  - increasing social disparities and social segregation inside both strong and weak cities, and

- tendencies of demographic, religious as well as cultural segregation (Friedrichs, 1995), and
- the negative demographic trend and its consequences which can be found in a rising number of cities (Bogumil/ et al., 2008).

For the European level GÜNTHER added that “[...] the problems cities have are closely connected with three EU-wide structural overthrows: with the European Integration, with spatial restructuring of industries and with a decline in the employment in manufacturing industry” (Günther, 2007: 58, *translated by author*). Since these problems are taken care of in other policy areas only to some extent, an explicit political area related to urban issues is important. ELTGES confirmed this ‘problem argument’ because he was convinced that “the so far traditional proceeding related to specific sectors and the division of power and responsibilities that comes along with the former, have hindered the bettering of urban problems” (2005: 136, *translated by author*).

But on the contrary there are also professionals that argue in the observe way. According to EBNET (in: BMVBS, 2007c) the difference between the existing urban problems and challenges in the urban areas is too wide to meet it with a common strategy, fixed on the national level. In addition SIEBEL held that there is “no equal model of urban development [inside of Europe], but both shrinking and stagnating cities and further prosper cities” (2004: 179, *translated by author*). Therewith he indirectly challenged, similar to some of the European Member States, that cities in the EU and their problems have a European dimension. Consequently urban policy on the European level, containing a common strategy, wouldn’t be wise.

The mentioned professionals and involved actors argue in two completely opposite ways, some say that the problems in urban areas are very similar and therefore are in favor of a common urban policy on the European and the national level, others are in the opinion that they differ to a large extent. It is not the author’s task to decide who is right and who is wrong. But she wants to add one unrealized consideration. Is urban policy, as a broad instrument, suitable to deal with a multiplicity of diverse urban problems of cities? Maybe one should better think about how to include instruments and methods to

solve specific problems, like segregation, that can furthermore be found outside of urban areas as well, in existing policy fields. Moreover, this would have the advantage that the settlement of the actors would be simplified, since they don't have to agree on several instruments.

Opportunity arguments: As already mentioned, cities are not only troubled, but besides provide several opportunities. The main opportunities are that “cities drive regional economies [, are] engines of competitiveness” (Parkinson, 2009: 13) and “have a big influence on the development of surrounding rural areas” (Aldskogius, n.d.: 14). In view of the fact that the European Union aims in the ‘Lisbon Strategy’ “[...] to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world [...]” (@European Parliament, 2000), which is supported by the *Bund* in several documents, both levels have to exert influence on the cities.

But again, is urban policy the most suitable instrument to use these opportunities? Or can the chances of cities, in particular in terms of economic benefits, not be used better with the existing European and national economic policies in the way that they are more geared towards cities?

Competence arguments: Several arguments are given for increasing competences of the European level and the *Bund* related to urban issues. But can they be proved? The EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (2005) assumed imbalances, if urban policy is only managed at national level alone and therefore is in favor of the management of urban issues on the European level. PARKINSON agreed with it. According to him the Commission “has a wider understanding of the challenges and responses experienced in European cities than either national, regional or urban governments or even interest groups representing cities [...] because of its engagement with a wide range of policies, programmes, processes, places and people” (Parkinson, 2005: 11). In the author's opinion both arguments can be criticized, since they seem not to base on substantive evidence, but rather on claims.

The argumentation for increasing competences of the German national level covers a similar content. Currently the *Bund* can only exert influence with programs and pilot projects. Both are disadvantageous because they are li-

mitted in time and financial resources. Thus it is questionable how the big present urban challenges should be answered. At the same time a so called 'coalition of the weak'<sup>22</sup> becomes apparent. While the strong functional departments, like the departments for economy, finances and employment, rather hold off, "[...] especially the lower-ranking ministries are engaged with urban policy to distinguish themselves with the help of the communes" (Bogumil/ et al., 2008: 125, *translated by author*). Besides, BOGUMIL et al. (2008) hold that the 'narrow-minded position'<sup>23</sup> of some municipalities was the obstacle for an efficient and effective allocation of the narrow means. Consequently, they favor a legalization of urban policy on the national level.

The problem with these arguments is that it remains unclear which type of competence the authors are talking about. But this is a necessary fact to know, since it makes a difference if someone, like the EU or the German national level, is more competent in terms of its managerial (soft) or its functional (hard) competency, which are the two main types of competence. The former relates to the ability to manage and develop an interaction with other persons. Examples are problem solving, leadership and communication, whereas the latter mainly deals with the technical aspects of the job, like statistical research and analysis (@Antariksa, n.d.). The particular shape of competence leads to a special behavior respectively a specific job performance. And even when the type of competence of an institution, an actor or a political level is known, it is still difficult to decide who is more competent, since all types of competence are not easy to measure. Thus, the quoted arguments above need more content to gain in importance.

By contrast to the quoted pro arguments, HATZFELD & JAKUBOWSKI question if "centralized action isn't destructive, but at least redundant in the environment of the policy field of urban development which is affected by local planning authority and services for the public" (2008: 131, *translated by author*). Besides some professionals believe it is not possible to reach a locally innovative ability with responsible persons that are far away on a higher level (Wollmann, 2007).

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<sup>22</sup> Koalition der Schwachen  
<sup>23</sup> Kirchturmmentalität

Legitimizing arguments: Overlapping the aim of exerting influence on the urban development in the European Member States, a legitimating pro argument for an increasing engagement of the European level TOFARIDES (2003) gave, is the intention to reach a bigger proximity to citizens and therewith to get a gaining acceptance of the European Institutions. Likewise the *GERMAN BUNDESTAG* (federal parliament) is convinced “National Urban Policy could help to sensitize the public to the problems and chances of the cities, to find new partners for urban development and to strengthen the German position in the EU” (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008: 5, *translated by author*). In his speech, taken at the first congress for National Urban Development Policy in July 2007, LÜDGE DALDRUP agrees that “urban development can only be successful if citizens are motivated with actions, events and information to participate [...]” (in: BMVBS, 2007c: 22). In the authors opinion urban policy indeed could help to increase the inhabitants’ acceptance for the European Union, but as a single pro argument it doesn’t justify the legalization of urban policy on the European and the national level.

Two further reasons for European and National Urban Policy that are given are a stronger vertical control (Wollmann, 2006) as well as a better efficiency out of the grouping and co-ordination of strategic concepts and aid programs (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008). The latter in particular is needed in the case of urban issues that transcend national borders, like infrastructure and urban networks (Waterhood, 2008). Admittedly there is the risk that the European and the national level profit at the expense of the municipalities, in terms of transparency and provision for interests of the local level.

In the author’s opinion the strongest counter argument given is the ‘subsidiarity principle’ which is statutory both in the European<sup>24</sup> and in the German law<sup>25</sup>. According to it, the cities, among other things, have “the right to regulate all local affairs on their own responsibility [as well as] the right of self-government” (Article 28 (2) Basic Law). Against the background of this prin-

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<sup>24</sup> The ‘subsidiarity principle’ respectively the ‘principle of subsidiarity’ is defined in Article 5 of the Treaty establishing the European Community. [...] It is closely bound up with the principles of proportionality and necessity, which require that any action by the Union should not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaty” (European Commission, n.d.).

<sup>25</sup> Article 23 Basic Law

ciple and the federal structure in Germany BOGUMIL et al. (2008) pointed out that the national level doesn't have the same democratic control locally as well as the same ability to harmonize competing tasks and problems. In contrast the high skill in problem solving of municipalities is documented in various urban studies (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2004). In addition, SINZ was convinced that "it is not enough if problems come across European-wide. Beyond that they must have a transnational character and thus cannot be solved adequately by single regions and Member States" (2004: 346, *translated by author*). Otherwise the fear of the Member States of an annulment of the subsidiarity principle would become true.

A further counter argument against European Urban Policy WATERHOOD (2008) gave, which is very relevant according to the author and for the Member States purposes, is that not all of them hold urban policy on their national government and thus have only limited power to take influence in European Urban Policy. The other way round this certainly is an advantage for the European level. Besides, SINZ (2004) is convinced the taken actions and strategies related to urban issues in the EU Member States have already assimilated in reality in spite of a legal basis. In consequence, an EU-wide legal regulation of common strategies isn't necessary according to him.

Group interest arguments: Several professionals argue that the cities have a lack of representation of their concerns. In spite of the fact that the majority of the European and German citizens lives in urban areas, which have the highest added values, agriculture – located in the rural areas – is the most important European field of action in terms of the outlay and the potential for conflict (Sinz, 2004). Consequently it is to the cities interest to re-establish a European Urban Policy as a counterbalance to the good lobbied Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Eltges, 2005). But one has to keep the reasons for the high importance of agriculture in mind. On the contrary to cities, agriculture has the advantage of organized interests, since farmers have very similar approaches, whereas the urban dweller consists of a very different group of people with usual unlike interests. This explains the difficulty of an increased lobbying for the cities. Likewise to Sinz and Eltges, HATZFELD & JAKUBOWSKI (2008), heads of two urban related departments at the Ger-

man Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, considered that National Urban Policy is needed for a better representation of the cities interests. They pointed out, although the *Bund* doesn't have a formal competence in National Urban Policy, the national politics framework, developed in the financial, economical, environmental as well as social politics, has a wide influence on the urban development in Germany with the problem of insufficient co-ordination.

But there are also group interest arguments against urban policy on the European and the national level. SINZ (2004) wondered on the grounds that the subsidies have increased, if the beginning of European Urban Policy is only a balancing strategy, in order to cope with the outcome of the common market, in the same way the Common Agricultural as well as the Structural Policy are. If Sinz is right, that would mean the EU is not able to take actions of prevention related to urban issues at an early stage, but tries to compensate belated. This could be criticized since there is a risk that the adjustment assistances become permanent institutions. Besides, MERK, the planning director of Munich, asked an interesting question for the national level: "How should we implement European Urban Policy, if we are even not able to debate it on the national level?" (in: BMVBS, 2009: 64, *translated by author*). In her opinion a common consensus about the strategic aims and demands on the national level is needed, if the *Bund* has an interest in producing own ideas on the European level. This consensus could be found with the implementation of National Urban Policy as a '*Nationales Sprachrohr*' ('National mouthpiece') respectively a 'contact person' (Merk, in: BMVBS, 2009).

*Financial arguments:* In particular the German national level has an interest in an own Urban Policy related to financial reasons. According to ELTGES (2005), the favor of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development to legalize National Urban Policy, traces back to the evolving EU initiatives for the benefit of fostering sustainable urban development. The ministry hopes for a financial support. Against the background of the financial crisis of the majority of German cities, this argument seems to be significant.

Résumé: The presented arguments for or against urban policy are quite similar for the European level and the German national level. They trace back either to fears or expected benefits, mainly related to power and influence as well as public perception of cities and their development. The problem is that the vast majority of the arguments, given by people involved in the debate, have a lack of foundation in common. They are no more than individual opinions, which are not based on a theory. In consequence of the missing theories, it is difficult to estimate if Urban Policy on the European and the National level would cause more advantages or more disadvantages. But this even might fit with the political interest and acting, since one could insinuate that in the majority of cases not the most proper argument, but rather the most convincing one is used to legitimate a political aim like urban policy. Thus, in the end simply the implementation could show if the pros outweigh the cons or the other way round. But currently it is obvious that the arguments haven't been strong enough to justify an inclusion of urban policy in the Treaty respectively the German law.



## VI. THE RELATION OF EUROPEAN AND GERMAN 'URBAN' POLICY

As described in chapter III. and IV., the urban dimension in both the European and the German National Policy has increased during the last years. According to the author the interaction of the European and the German national level has a considerable share in this development. Concluding, this chapter intends to show:

- what kind of relationship the European and the German national level have in general,
- what position they have towards each other and how they are linked in terms of the urban policy approach,
- what goals they have in common and for what different goals they strive for, and
- how urban policy will further develop in future against the background of the relationship.

### 1. Relationship in general

Before the relation between the European Union and Germany in terms of urban policy will be described, there should be taken a look at the general relationship of both political levels first.

On the basis of the secondary law; more precise Article 249 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, the EU uses regulations, directives, decisions, opinions and recommendations to exert influence on special topics and developments it is interested in respectively to implement the decisions it made together with the particular representatives of the Member States (@European Commission, 2006). Whereas the regulations are immediately effective for all Member States, the directives have to be transposed into national law within a particular time frame (@Euro-Informationen, 2010a). Besides, EU Strategies, like the Lisbon or the Gothenburg Strategy, exerts high influence on the urban development of the Member States (Weiland & Wohlleber-Feller, 2007).

In the last years the influence of the European Union on its Member States has steadily increased (Weiland & Wohlleber-Feller, 2007). This is often criticized by German politicians that fear a lack of influence on their own territory. One of them is Koch-Mehrin, member of the FDP<sup>26</sup> executive committee. Even though she is also a member of the European Parliament, she doesn't want to accept the 'predemocratic circumstances' (@Welt Online, 2009). *Bund* and *Länder* extensively agree about the European Union shouldn't get further competences. From their point of view the already existing competences should be clearly separated in common tasks, tasks of the Member States as well as regional and local tasks (Sinz, 2004). Even if the influence of the European Union has increased; it is not as powerful as the general public believes. According to the current opinion 80% of all German laws are predetermined of the European Union. KÖNIG & MÄDER (2008), working at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research<sup>27</sup>, disproved this claim in a study. They found out that on average only 24% of the German laws trace back to the influence of the European Union.

Germany has also several opportunities to exert influence on the orientation of the European policies and the final decisions, since Article 23 of the Basic Law raises the right to participate in the process of a united European Union. Thus, Germany can use the Committee on European Union Affairs, the periods of EU presidencies or its Permanent Representation at the EU to achieve its own interests (@Euro-Informationen, 2010b).

Being one of the six original Member States, Germany has always been a strong advocate of the European Union, even against the will of its own inhabitants. But the problem is that it often uses its potentials too less (Feldenkirchen/ et. al., 2010). There are two main causes, whereof one depends on the other. First, the federal structure with 58 departments which are concerned with European issues and questions hinders a common German position represented at the European level, since every ministry wants to implement its own interests. In consequence of these conflicts of interest, second, the co-operation between the federal government and the German ambassador

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<sup>26</sup> Free Democratic Party

<sup>27</sup> Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung (MZES)

in Brussels doesn't function well (Schiltz & Crolley, 2007). According to SCHILTZ & CROLLY (2007) the German ambassador cannot represent the German interests in 50% of the cases in the absence of any advice. Meanwhile the German federal government is aware of this problem and tries to solve it. With the current rigorous position of Angela Merkel, the Federal Chancellor, towards financial help for Greece, a paradigm shift seems to announce. Almost for the first time not the interest of the European Union, but the own interest is given top priority (Feldenkirchen/ et. al., 2010).

In summary, the European Union and Germany have a stable and respectful relationship. Germany has always been one of the main supporters of the EU and the EU therefore holds the country in high regard. But even though the German laws are less predetermined of the European Union than in the current opinion, it is obvious that the relationship is not balanced at all, since Germany is only one of 27 European Member States. But nevertheless, unlike other Member States, the country often uses its potentials insufficiently. If Germany wants to increase its influence on the organization of European policies in general and urban policy in particular, it has to change the currently repressing federal structure, to facilitate co-operation and in consequence enable a common approach. If Germany spoke with one voice, this would strengthen its position towards the European Union.

## **2. Interdependency of European and German National 'Urban' Policy**

In the authors opinion the second thesis statement can be approved; the European and German National 'Urban' Policy *are* closely linked to each other. As the described developments show (see chapter III. 2. & IV. 3.), with the gaining interest of the EU in urban policy, its influence on the Member States increased in the last years, most notably in a public discussion of the topic which also activates a discussion on the German national level. In the contrary Germany and its urban dimension of national policy has developed to one of the principal supporters of urban policy on the European level. Before

these claims will be proved below, a description about the mutual positions of both political levels is given.

*European position towards German National Urban Policy:* It is not easy to describe the European Union's position towards National Urban Policy, since it does not only consists of institutions and actors that represent the European interest related to urban issues, but also of institutions and actors that represent the Member State's interests (see Chapter III. 3.). In the 'Leipzig Charter' the Member States' Ministers responsible for Urban Development, as the representatives of the latter, agreed that urban policy should be laid down at the particular national level of all Member States (BMVBS, 2007e). This is a distinct indication of a very positive position of the EU towards (German) National Urban Policy. But is this opinion of the EU Member States' representatives also concordant with the opinion of the European Union's representatives? The new structural funds period from 2007 to 2013, for which, amongst others, the European Commission is responsible for and in which the urban dimension has further increased, is an indirect sign of this claim. For the first time the Member States have the opportunity to use the structural funds for integrated urban development projects (Nickel, 2009). Though, it seems to be particularly favorable for the EU to have contact persons on the national levels of the Member States to relieve a uniform implementation of the projects. For it, a responsibility for urban policy on the national level is needed. But the author can also imagine that the European Union sometimes takes an advantage of the weak German national level, since it can disregard its aims and directly exert influence on the local level with the help of funds. It could even be that the EU influences the local level with the intention to weaken the national level.

In summary, the representatives of the Member States at the European Union are highly in favor of urban policy on the national level. Whereas no evidences were found, that the other European institutions and actors, which stand for the common idea of the union, are neither the main advocates of National Urban Policy, nor are against it.

German position towards European Urban Policy: Still in 2004, Germany was one of the Member States which thump the hardest at the 'principle of subsidiarity' and self-reliance, when it came to proposals of the European Commission for strategic approaches related to spatial and urban development, against the background of cohesion policy and its orientation to balance and solidarity (Sinz, 2004). This position is comprehensible, since it traces back to the federal structure, which is characterized by shared responsibilities (von Eckart & Jenkis, 2001). In consequence of the federalism, the German national level is only limited responsible for urban policy. Thus, one could assume that it is in Germany's interest that this is valid in particular for the European level. But in view of the financial problems of the cities, contrary to expectations, Germany doesn't stick to this position, because it cannot consistently pass on laying claims to the structural funds. The country even tries to expand the terms for funding to be able to support urban projects for which the EU currently doesn't see the need for (Sinz, 2004). In addition, the agreement of responsible persons to European Urban Policy has distinctly increased, since the German EU Presidency in 2007. The 'Leipzig Charter', created on the initiative of the German EU Presidency, "makes urban development an issue with a European dimension" (BMVBS, 2007d: 1). In summary, the German position to urban policy on the European level turns out to be very inconsistent.

After regarding the mutual positions of the European and the national level, the occurred interaction of both levels will be described. One conclusion should be given at the very beginning. The prerequisite for an interaction between both levels is given; the mutual positions are basically positive. Wouldn't that be the case the influences on each other would be different; most likely in a destructive way.

European Union's influence on the German National 'Urban' Policy: As presented in the background part of chapter IV., the urban dimension in the German policy doesn't exist for a long time yet. The author claims that it even would be less developed as it currently is, if first, the European Union's engagement in urban issues wouldn't have been there and second, the political

structure inside the European Union in general wouldn't provide the Member States' EU presidencies.

First, the steadily increasing intervention of the EU in getting more competences in urban affairs had an effect on the German National 'Urban' Policy, since the already accepted transnational understanding on the European level about urban development has also activated a discussion on the German national level (Hatzfeld, in: BMVBS, 2009a), against the background of the federal system. As described in chapter IV. 2., the national level respectively the *Bund* has the least formal competences in urban related issues (OECD, 1999a). Therefore the exposure to urban policy differs a lot in the *Länder*. In consequence of the European discussion of urban policy, the German politicians became aware that they need a more common approach to play a part in the European 'Urban' Policy and created the initiative 'National Urban Development Policy' subsequent to its EU Presidency. This initiative is the most important step on the way to an increasing urban dimension of National Policy in Germany. Moreover, the alignment of the cohesion policy in the current programming period 2007 to 2013 set an incentive (Nickel, 2009). To be able to simplify the use of structural funds of the European Union for integrated urban development projects, an integrated urban development approach on the national level namely is one precondition. Consequently this approach was verbalized in the initiative of 'National Urban Development Policy'.

The system of changing EU presidencies is the second important factor of influence in the author's opinion, since the German EU Presidency was the most concrete reason for the 'National Urban Development Policy' initiative according to HATZFELD (in: BMVBS, 2009a). Holding the presidency, the German national level was able to strengthen its position by calling for increasing competences of all national levels in the EU in urban policy (BMVBS, 2007e).

Overall the European 'Urban' Policy has been of high relevance for the German National 'Urban' Policy, since its impulses have speeded up the increasing urban dimension of the National Policy. Besides, the opposite direction of

influence exists as well; Germany has a share in the European 'Urban' Policy.

*Germany's influence on the European 'Urban' Policy.* As described in chapter III. 2., the majority of the European Member States has been very skeptical towards European Urban Policy in the past. Even today only a small group of countries supports the intervention of the EU in getting more competences in urban affairs, which is one of the main obstacles of an implementation of urban policy on the European level. At the beginning Germany didn't belong to this group of supporters. In charge mainly were France, the Netherlands and Belgium, which already practiced urban policy on the national level for a while (Eltges & Nickel, 2007). In response to the activities of the Commission, the Netherlands set the starting point of the Member States engagement in Noordwijk during their presidency in 1997. There, urban policy was put on the agenda of an Informal Meeting of EU Ministers for Spatial Planning for the first time (van den Berg/ et al., 2007). The meeting was followed by further informal meetings on initiative of the mentioned advocating Member States (see chapter III. 2.). In contrast, Germany belonged to the group of Member States which consistently referred to the missing legitimizing foundation of the EU, to hinder urban policy on the European level (Eltges & Nickel, 2007). In the meanwhile Germany changed its position, jointed the group of supporters and is called one of the main driving forces of European Urban Policy today as well. But what was the cause of the shift in the mental attitude and which share do Germany and its National 'Urban' Policy have on the European 'Urban' Policy?

The first part of this question cannot be answered easily. In all valid documents and articles the author found, nothing is said about the reasons for the German change of mind, which after all ended in the German EU Presidency in the first half of 2007 that put urban areas high on the agenda. Thus the author can only assume the cause(s).

In all likelihood the above mentioned financial problems of the German cities are the main reason for the change of mind. The German politicians realized that they will get urban funding to a greater extent, as more as the EU is in-

terested and engaged with urban affairs. In consequence they supported the intervention of the EU in this field. Moreover one has to bear in mind, that problem solving with the instrument of planning has not only a long tradition in France and the Netherlands, but also in Germany. Urban policy, as a legal basis for urban planning, therefore is a very familiar instrument for the Germans. As long as the European action related to urban issues doesn't affect the German federal structure and its own urban policy on the different levels, Germany is in favor of an urban dimension of European policy. Overall, it seems that not a special event suddenly caused a shift in the mental attitude, but rather a steadily developing change, in terms of the becoming awareness of the benefits and in terms of decreasing fears, has taken place.

In contrast, the second part of the asked question can be answered more easily. According to the author, Germany has a big share in the current status of urban policy on the European level. The country used its EU Presidency in the first half of 2007 to set the following key policy issue: 'Strengthening European cities and their regions – promoting competitiveness, social and territorial cohesion in Europe and in its cities and regions' (@German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, 2010a). As already described in the background part of the third chapter, two important documents were the outcome of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion in Leipzig, the 'Leipzig Charter' and the 'Territorial Agenda'. In the Ad-hoc note of the European Parliament from December 2007 it is said that both "(...) documents are part of a continuing track record of designing spatial and urban policy on EU level" (European Parliament, 2007: iii).

The 'Leipzig Charter', which is primary directed to the Member States' Ministers responsible for Urban Development, but also invites the European Commission to participate, aims to create a foundation for a new urban policy in Europe and wants to reformulate the idea of the European City. New about the 'Leipzig Charter' is that it formulates aspirations and provides strategies. This is reflected by the first agreement of the Ministers on common guidelines for an integrated urban development policy (BMVBS, 2007e). Moreover, the document "provides the member states an opportunity to make a valua-

ble contribution to the work of the European Commission, in particular to the Commission's report on the following-up process of cohesion policy due by 2010" (Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities, n.d.: 2). Thus, the focus on integrated urban development strategies on the European level is, among other things, an outcome of the German influence. The problem of the 'Leipzig Charter' is that it is a non-binding document, the Member States' Ministers only voluntarily agreed on common guidelines. In the end only the future development can show how much of the commitments will be implemented. The 'Marseille Statement', which was created subsequent to the French EU Presidency in November 2008, can be seen as an important step in this direction. There the responsible Ministers pointed out, that they "went on with their considerations in order to give an effect to the commitments of the Leipzig Charter" (French EU Presidency, 2008: 3).

The 'Territorial Agenda', which bases on 'The Territorial State and Perspective of the European Union' and leans on the 'Lisbon Agenda' as well as the 'ESDP', is the second important document out of the German EU Presidency, for the aim of urban policy on the European level, even though it is has not the same weight like the 'Leipzig Charter'. It not only deals with cities, but with all different types of regions and their interrelation. Thus, it is of more general concern and a comprehensive document whereas the 'Leipzig Charter' addresses a specific case with the single focus on urban areas (European Parliament, 2007). Nevertheless, the Ministers set the goal to solve problems, like unemployment, that are particular found in cities. Besides, the 'Territorial Agenda' is oriented towards regional and local potentials and promoted a polycentric territorial development in Europe (BMVBS, 2007f). The latter, which was already one of three policy guidelines of the ESDP, is a typical indicator for the German influence, since Germany is one of the most polycentric Member States in the EU (@European Urban Knowledge Network, n.d.). The 'Territorial Agenda' also refers to the EU Cohesion Policy becoming increasingly important for an urban policy approach. It points to the gaining importance of the diverse characteristics of the European regions, cities and villages through a policy of European Cohesion and in turn appeals the European Cohesion Policy for a more effective response to the "territorial

needs and characteristics, specific geographical challenges and opportunities of the regions and cities” (BMVBS, 2007f: 2). Altogether, one can criticize the document remains on a rather general level. According to the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT the “[...] most important action foreseen is to elaborate an action plan in the course of the coming presidencies” (2007: vii). Nevertheless, for the whole process of promoting urban policy, it is important that the ‘Territorial Agenda’ campaigns for a closely co-operation of national, regional and local concerns with EU policies.

The author is not completely certain of the main reason for setting urban policy on the agenda of the German EU Presidency. On the one hand the German national level certainly was aware of the high relevance of the topic, in general and particular for itself, and therefore used the EU Presidency to attract the European Unions and Member States attention. But this was not the single aim. The agenda-setting also was a mean to achieve another goal. According to the BBSR (n.d.), the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, and as said inside the ‘Territorial Agenda’ (BMVBS, 2007f), the German EU Presidency aimed to familiarize the citizens with the European decisions. This goal could ideally be reached with the focus on urban development, since the citizens experienced the consequences of European decisions in their concrete surrounding at first. Thus, it could be that urban policy as a topic itself hadn’t been given top priority in the first instance.

This chapter confirms the author’s initial assumption of a close linkage of both policy levels in terms of urban issues. The European level has influenced the current status of the German National ‘Urban’ Policy as well as the German national level has influenced the current status of the European ‘Urban’ Policy. In particular the German EU Presidency with its high importance for both political levels has shown, that the linkage is even too close to figure out which political level has had a bigger share in the development of the other’s urban policy.

### 3. Common and opposed goals of both levels

For a long time the linkage between the policy of the European Commission and the policy of the Member States related to urban affairs was rather unapparent. But this has changed today. One reason is the European level was interested and engaged in urban policy much earlier than its Member States. Not until the Informal Meeting of EU Ministers for Spatial Planning in Noordwijk in 1997 the starting point of the Member States' engagement was set (see chapter VI. 2.). Finally, the 'Lille Action Programme', adopted in November 2000, marks the beginning of a connection of both policies (Eltges & Nickel, 2007). Its main aim was "[...] to help Member States, the Commission and cities to give more tangible form to the policy objectives defined at European level to the challenges facing cities" (CSD, 2000: 55). In dependence on this aim, the EU Member States decided by the majority to create a corresponding subcommittee in the end of May 2001 (@BBSR, n.d.). In consequence, the author assumes assimilating goals since this time.

As explicated below, this expectation can be confirmed, since the majority of the goals are in agreement to each other, even if they not always trace back to direct mutual influence of both levels. But before the goals will be described in detail, one big difference between the European and the German National 'Urban' Policy should be mentioned. In contrast to the European level the national level in Germany doesn't have an 'urban *Leitbild*' so far. According to HATZFELD (in: BMVBS, 2009) it is very difficult to find a common one for the whole federal state of Germany. Thus, he is in the opinion that it is enough to have general principles. The described difference is also a topic of the following common goals:

Common goals: As already mentioned in chapter III. 4., an integrated approach in urban policy is the current 'urban *Leitbild*' of the European level. The EU strives for supporting the development of integrated concepts for urban development in the sense of the overarching 'EU Sustainable Development Strategy' (Eltges, 2005). Even though Germany doesn't have an 'urban *Leitbild*' on the national level, the integrated approach is on its agenda as well, since 'sustainable integrated urban development' is one of its general

principles (Hatzfeld, in: BMVBS, 2009). Thus, it is unanimously agreed of both levels that an integrated policy approach is of prime importance, but the statutory basis of this goal and with it its means of implementation differs.

Another common goal, for which the integrated policy approach is the prerequisite, is the aim of a sustainable development of urban areas (Weiland & Wohlleber-Feller, 2007). Already in 1999, the European Commission's Inter-Service Group on Urban Development had worked out the Action Plan 'Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action'. This Action Plan was updated with the 'Urban Guide'<sup>28</sup> of 2010 recently (European Commission, 2010). It was designed to identify initiatives "(...) which, under various EU policies, have both direct and indirect implications for the sustainable development of urban areas" (European Commission, 2010: 3). The aim of sustainable development of urban areas in Germany can be mainly verified with three documents. In 2002 'The German National Strategy for Sustainable Development' was published in preparation for the 'Johannesburg Summit 2002'<sup>29</sup>. Since the latter was organized by the 'tenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development' (CSD10) (Altmann, n.d.), the strategy was created without direct influence of the EU. It was updated and further developed with a progress report in 2004 and 2008 (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2008) and supplemented by adding the '*Indikatorenbericht 2008*'<sup>30</sup> (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2008). That the European as well as the German national level strive for a sustainable development of urban areas also becomes apparent with the 'Leipzig Charter on *Sustainable European Cities*' which is relevant for both levels. Moreover, it includes the common aim to increase the sensitization of the public for the problems and chances of cities.

Finally, one more common goal should be mentioned. Both the European and the German national level are referring to the 'European City'. The reason for the popularity of this concept is its indetermination. With its conflicting demands for compactness, density, diversity and sustainability, actors with

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<sup>28</sup> 'The urban dimension in European Union policies 2010', part 1 and 2

<sup>29</sup> 'Johannesburg Summit 2002 – the World Summit on Sustainable Development'

<sup>30</sup> 'Report of Indicators 2008'

different backgrounds, like sociology, economics, ecology, and politics, can accept it (Jessen, 2004).

Opposed goals: Besides these goals that the European and German national level have in common, there are also approaches that are in opposition to each other. They mainly trace back to reasons of power. First, the German national level respectively the *Bund* aims to strengthen its position in urban issues (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008). But as already mentioned above, it is to the European Unions' interest to have weak national levels to simplify its own influence (see chapter VI. 2). Second, Germany intends to strengthen its position on the European level (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008), which logically is also against the interest of the EU. The other way round, all aims of the European Union to gain more influence on urban policy on the national levels, are disliked by the German national level (Sinz, 2004).

Overall, the objectives of the European and the German national level show a close linkage of both levels. Consequently the author's second thesis statement is approved one more time.

#### **4. Future prospects – From urban policy to territorial cohesion?**

As described in detail and claimed at the beginning of the thesis, the legalization of urban policy both on the European and on the German national level is *in fact* a complicated and controversial operation. Indeed, the urban dimension of European as well as German National Policy has increased steadily so far, but rather slowly. It seems to be extremely difficult to have an explicit urban policy on the European and the German national level. Consequently, the author wonders why urban policy is still on the political agenda of both levels, or asked the other way round, wonders what the actors and institutions expect of their support and commitment for the future.

The currently highly debated new key EU objective 'territorial cohesion' (Eser, 2009) could maybe provide an opportunity to further develop urban policy on the European level, since it is a rather undefined concept (Weiland & Wohlleber-Feller, 2007). Therefore the author confines herself to define

territorial cohesion broadly as a new concept that combines territorial policy and cohesion policy (Schön, 2009). As long as there is no distinct definition of territorial cohesion, the term allows for coverage of a wide range of concerns. Therefore it seems to be possible that European Urban Policy could assert itself under the smoke-screen of territorial cohesion. Then, legalization would be of little importance, of course.

An implementation of urban policy on the German national level seems to be even more complex, since the federal structure would have to be changed in the terms of strengthening the national level. Such an effort would meet strong resistance from the *Länder* and the municipalities. But how should the *Bund* itself be able to strengthen its own position without having the right to do it? The national level has found a very skilful way to deal with this problem; it highlights the importance of co-operation of the different levels (see chapter IV. 4.). By doing so, the *Bund* reduces the fears of *Länder* and municipalities of losing competences. Besides, especially the close relation with the European Union is very adjuvant for the German national level. The *Bund* was able to use its EU Presidency in the first half of 2007 to strengthen its position by calling for increasing competences of *all* national levels in the EU in urban policy (see chapter VI. 2.). Furthermore, the national level has the opportunity to convince the lower political levels of its role as a protector towards the EU by referring to the importance of representing the German interests on the European level. To speak with one voice, urban policy on the national level is needed (see chapter V.). In consequence, the author arrives at the conclusion that the current close linkage of the European and the national level, in terms of urban issues, is the only opportunity of a further development of National 'Urban' Policy in Germany.

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