

**OECD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: “WHAT POLICIES FOR GLOBALISING CITIES?
RETHINKING THE URBAN POLICY AGENDA”
29-30 March 2007- Madrid, Spain**

SUMMARY RECORD

The context

As mentioned in the POW 2007-2008 (*Item 2.4.1*, Globalisation and City Competitiveness: New Trends in Urban Development Policies), the OECD International conference “*What policies for globalising cities? Rethinking the Urban Policy Agenda*” held in Madrid on 29-30 March 2007, intended to provide inputs to the current discussion within the WPURB and TDPC on key issues related to urban policy. In this respect, it should be considered as part of a broader strategy, which aims at promoting policy dialogue, while identifying and sharing agreed recommendations for an urban development policy agenda.

The Conference was organised in co-operation with the Madrid City Council and the Club of Madrid, and with the support of the Spanish Ministry of Public Administration.

The format

The agenda of the conference included an opening ceremony, six content sessions, a special session on "Cities and Climate Change" and two parallel roundtables, gathering city mayors and ministers. Each content session began by a presentation by a key-note speaker, followed by interventions from members of a panel made of national and local government representatives, mayors and professionals, and a closing address made by an “eminent personality” member of the Club de Madrid. The two parallel roundtables were co-animated by OECD Delegates/Secretariat and international journalists and consisted of a policy dialogue between mayors and ministers. The conference ended with a closing ceremony with reporting from ministers’ group and from the mayors’ group followed by the declarations of the Mayor of Madrid, the President of the Club of Madrid and the OECD Secretary-General.

The City of Madrid organised, in parallel, a very interesting meeting among the participating mayors. They were invited to discuss key issues that should be included in an agenda for globalisation. Among the different ideas brought up during the debate, the Mayors showed particular interest in: competitiveness, local autonomy and local finance, climate change and disasters, migration, transport and mobility.

The participation

Speakers in the conference included eight Ministers and Secretaries of States, fifteen Mayors, six former Head of States from the Club of Madrid as well as a wide range of bureaucrats, practitioners and international experts. Participants also included representatives from international organisations (UN Habitat, European Union, SEGIB, IADB) as well as from the private sector (Vodafone, and the

Business Association of European Capital Cities). Ira Magaziner, Chairman of the Clinton Foundation, also spoke at the conference. Three other OECD Directorates (ENV, STD PAC) as well the Ambassadors of Spain and Japan to the OECD intervened in the conference.

The *audience* included around 900 participants including mayors, ministers, former head of states, academics and a wide range of practitioners from more than 30 different cities administration, international organisations (World Bank), and cities associations (United Cities and Local Governments, Eurocities, Metrex, etc.).

Press coverage included 57 media, national (El Pais, ABC, El Mundo) and international (Agence France Press, Financial News, El Universal).

The theme

At a time of increasing globalisation processes, the search for competitiveness in urban regions has become a major political target for both local and central governments. The importance of the cities and their metropolitan areas in the national economy and their major role as global nodes in the international market is increasing the attention which they are receiving. There is a general feeling, shared by both national and local governmental representatives that the current approach to urban policies is not the correct one to face the new challenges which large cities, in a context of increasing global competitiveness, have to deal with today. In short, in OECD member countries, there is an increasing acknowledgment of the importance of policies that address specific urban issues. It is not only a matter of corrective measures, directed towards the solving of traditional urban problems, such as urban uncontrolled expansion, degradation of punctual districts, due to the concentration of environmental and social problems, but also the need to tackle proactive actions to encourage competitiveness and attractiveness. The goal of the conference was to engage a wide number of those interested, including city leaders and representatives of both regional and central governments, to widen the approach with which they envisage urban policies. More specifically, the conference was organised along the following two lines:

- (i) How can the presence of the cities be made stronger in the context of ‘implicit urban policies’ (not specifically urban), which strongly affect the standards of urban development, but which rarely take into consideration its necessary space implications?
- (ii) If one agrees that a strong and effective urban policy, able to allow the cities to successfully face the globalisation processes, cannot be the exclusive competence of national or regional governments, which new and more flexible intergovernmental joint actions are needed?

In this context, the content sessions were designed to address the following questions (see Annex 2):

- Examining how spatial planning is responding to new patterns of metropolitan development
- Assessing how key, implicit urban policies might be ‘urbanised’ in order to address the challenges of metropolitan competitiveness and cohesion more effectively
- Providing an opportunity for city mayors and representatives of key national government departments to put forward their ideas about future urban policy, and
- Assessing the implications for governance and policy, both at the metropolitan scale and in terms of integration between levels of government.

Main outcomes

This conference has helped to set the basis of a new international policy dialogue among city mayors and national government representatives at the OECD, who had the opportunity to examine and elaborate on the future of urban policy in the context of globalisation and the growing challenges for cities and discuss the guidelines for a forthcoming agenda for urban development. Participants found the round table to be an effective answer to the problem of lack of interaction between local and national governments and among different government tiers at the international level for issues related to urban development.

Mayors and ministers agreed to replicate this experience over the years, and in a more systematic way, through the creation of a permanent joint *Roundtable for Urban Strategy*, involving mayors, ministers and key players. They called the OECD Secretariat to take the leadership of this initiative by (i) producing evidence and policy analysis to feed the dialogue between policy actors in urban areas (ii) managing the Secretariat of the Roundtable and (iii) organising events and meetings to animate the Roundtable.

In his final statement, the OECD Secretary General, Mr Gurria, said that “as the hub of globalisation, the OECD would be pleased to take on this task and work (...) to improve the governance of cities. (...) convinced that together, we will elaborate a new and innovative urban agenda and make it happen” (see Annex 3).

Mayor of Milan, Mrs Letizia Moratti, announced that the City of Milan would like to host the next meeting in February 2008.

The conclusions of the conference will be compiled in a PDF *proceedings publication* that should be available by September 2007 (see Annex 4).