

Policy Recommendations

Partners from an INTERREG IVC Project, together with two EU networks focused on periurban areas have, through technical exchange and shared experience, drawn some common conclusions. These are presented together here as policy recommendations to local, regional, national and European authorities.

PERIURBAN Parks – Improving Environmental Conditions in Suburban Areas

FEDENATUR - network of exchanges between periurban site managers on a European scale

PURPLE - a network of regions raising awareness and understanding of Europe's complex and crowded peri-urban areas, their features and assets as well as their potential.

In order to:

- **improve socio-economic conditions in often degraded suburban areas of European cities and contain urban sprawl**
- **Promote societal well-being, especially in an urban context, where environmental conditions tend to correlate directly to public health**
- **Reduce environmental risks, including floods and the impact of the urban heat island effect, being made worse by climate change**
- **Enhance biodiversity, often strongly reduced in urban and peri-urban areas**
- **Offer free recreational alternatives for leisure and new job opportunities in the current difficult economic context**

Considering that:

Natural and rural spaces located in peri-urban areas, **with the right support and management**, can fulfill the above mentioned objectives as they are essential elements of **LANDSCAPE** and **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**.

And that:

they can provide basic services for the city and its residents', such as:

- **regulatory services** (carbon sequestration, mitigating urban heat island effect, cleaner air, storing floodwater and flood risk prevention),
- **health and well-being services** (cleaner air, space for practicing open air sports on a daily basis, quiet spaces for relaxation)
- **nature and biodiversity services** (habitats for fauna and flora, cultivation and breeding of local and traditional species)
- **provision of goods and services** (direct food and fibre production, agriculture, community food production → soil development for necessary urban functions, drinking water protection and provision),
- **cultural services** (cultural heritage protection and promotion, leisure activities, enhanced awareness about local history and nature, tourism...)
- **socio-economic services** (enhancement of identity and sense of belonging, agriculture, local food markets, forestry, sports, restaurants and activities related to ecotourism)
- as well as offering an **attractive recreational place** for city dwellers and contributing to a **positive and vibrant global image** of the settlement context.

It is deemed that the following recommendations should be taken into consideration by local, regional, national and European authorities:

- 1 Preserve** natural and rural periurban areas as **essential elements of the sustainable concept of a city and/or region and/or a metropolitan area**
- 2 Integrate peri-urban spaces into spatial planning**
- 3 Promote the creation** of multifunctional peri-urban parks, capable of achieving ecological, social and economic objectives. **Support and enhance** existing peri-urban parks, and restore degraded ones

- 4 Put in place **management structures**, including constitution of a managing partnership or body and set up financial and legislative tools
- 5 **Connect** Periurban spaces with **surrounding areas** as a key part of a network of **green infrastructure**, to ensure that they are not islands in the metropolitan environment
- 6 **Connect** the Periurban park /space with **urban areas** to ensure **accessibility** for all members of the population
- 7 **Promote** a **European periurban label** that acknowledges the **social, environmental and economic role** of these Periurban parks/spaces in urban and metropolitan contexts.

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<p>Maria Clelia Mele <i>Responsable for Regional Planning</i> Region Tuscany</p>	 <p>Regione Toscana Diritti Valori Innovazione Sostenibilità</p>
<p>Slimane Tir <i>President</i> FEDENATUR</p>	
<p>Barney Crockett <i>Councillor</i> Aberdeen City Council</p>	 <p>ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL</p>
<p>Zuzana Sukova Department of the Chief Architect The City of Košice</p>	

<p>Leonardo Salvemini <i>Assessor Green systems and landscapes</i> Region Lombardy</p>	 <p>Regione Lombardia Sistemi Verdi e Paesaggio</p>
<p>Katalin Bokros <i>Deputy director</i> Danube Ipoly National Park Directorate</p>	
<p>Slimane Tir <i>President</i> Lille Metropolitan Natural Space Office</p>	 <p><i>Espace Naturel</i> Lille Métropole</p>
<p>Josef Kozák <i>Professor</i> Czech University of Life Sciences Prague</p>	 <p>CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE</p>
<p>Esperanza Perea Acosta <i>General director</i></p> <p>Directorate General of Natural Areas and Citizen Participation, Regional Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment – Andalusia</p>	 <p>JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA CONSEJERÍA DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y MEDIO AMBIENTE</p>
<p>Josiane Bernard <i>Vice-President responsible for Urban ecology and Environment</i> Departement of Seine-Saint-Denis</p>	 <p>seine-saint-denis LE DÉPARTEMENT</p>
<p>José Sá Fernandes, <i>Responsible for environment and green spaces</i> City of Lisbon</p>	

<p>Dawid Kostempski <i>President</i> Board of Metropolitan Association of Upper Silesia</p>	
<p>Michalis Zanos <i>Director</i> Larnaca district development agency</p>	
<p>Dobromira Dimova Petrova <i>Vice-director</i> Vitosha Nature Park Directorate</p>	