

LEIPZIG CHARTER

A document of the European Union Member States on sustainable European cities signed in Leipzig in 2007, setting out common principles and strategies for urban development policy.

The Leipzig Charter makes a number of recommendations and guidelines necessary to implement sustainable development based on the traditional European polycentric model of the city, taking into account economic prosperity, social balance and a healthy environment. In the spirit of the slogan, *Europe needs cities and regions which are strong and good to live in*, the Leipzig Charter calls for the implementation of strategies and actions to maintain social balance within and between cities, cultural diversity and high quality standards in design, architecture and the environment. The main concern is the social, cultural and urban development of cities in two dimensions: a narrower one, referring to the city itself, and a wider one, referring to the region, in which the city retains the role of an integrating and development-stimulating factor.

The Leipzig Charter establishes three basic strategies:

1. Creation and provision of high quality public spaces, which – as "soft location factors" – contribute to the development of tourism and industrialisation. The role of public spaces as man-made urban landscapes for the living conditions of residents was emphasised. The document introduces the concept of "building culture" understood as the sum of all cultural, economic, technological, social and ecological aspects influencing the planning and construction process. Concern for the preservation of the architectural heritage was expressed.
2. Modernisation of the infrastructure networks and improvement of energy efficiency. This element of the strategy relates to urban transport, technical infrastructure of cities and municipal services with regard to the improvement of thermal insulation of housing. The document also raises the issue of climate change and the reduction of CO₂ emissions in order to protect the environment and the quality of life.
3. Active innovation and education policy. As part of this strategy, the city is perceived as a centre for the creation and transfer of knowledge (*know-how*), which depends on the level and development of education at each level (from kindergarten to university) and cooperation between industry and the scientific community. This strategy promotes social and intercultural dialogue.

The Leipzig Charter pays special attention to the poorest districts, proposing solutions to improve the quality of life and equal opportunities for their inhabitants. The Charter calls for a social inclusion policy that aims to ensure safety in cities by reducing inequalities and preventing social exclusion. The strategies adopted aim to improve the situation of the poorest neighbourhoods, taking into account local social, economic, educational and cultural needs. The tools for making the necessary changes are education of children and young people, efficient public transport and social housing policy.

The provisions of the Leipzig Charter refer to pan-European values, but place the emphasis on the development of urban policy at national and regional level. [B. F.]

Literature:

„Karta Lipska na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju miast europejskich”, access 2 February 2018. http://www.sarp.org.pl/pliki/karta_lipska_pl.pdf.

