

UCLG POLICY PAPER ON URBAN STRATEGIC PLANNING INPUTS FROM THE CITIES

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This section aims at presenting the different information provided by three European cities: Bilbao (Spain), Lille (France) and Cologne (Germany). Common challenges but very different action tools make the urban strategies of these 3 cities very interesting in the perspective of practices comparison.

1. Context and pressing issues

1.1. Legal context and administrative competences

Local self-government has been recognised as a governing principle by the European Union and it is true that the decentralization processes are well advanced in the region.

However, many reforms and a strong historical legacy have contributed to shape peculiar administrative landscapes for each country.

Starting with Germany and the specific case of Cologne, we observe that cities benefit from a strong autonomy and have sometimes the status of "Kreisfreie Städte" and concomitant powers and responsibilities.

In Spain, after the fall of the dictatorship, an important decentralization process took place and there was a big push towards the creation autonomous states. The Basque country, where Bilbao is located, did not except the rule and is benefiting from a strong autonomy, including powers of fiscal determination.

In France, the decentralization reforms have been engaged in 1983, with new competences progressively conferred to local authorities (economy, planning, housing, culture) and promotion of regional pole centres, balancing the weigh of Paris in the French urban landscape.

1.2. Role of the local government concerning planning

Planning is a core competence of the municipalities in these three countries but still we have to make the difference between spatial and economic planning.

In Germany, there are two ways of planning: the economic strategic planning process and the urban strategic planning embodied by 2 different Commissions in the City Councils. The city of Cologne is thus developing a Master plan in order to combine the two approaches and projects concerning infrastructure. The relations with the other tiers of governments are however effective and, for example to tackle the financial crisis, cities are receiving support by the national level and the *Länder* level ("*Städtebauförderung*"), as well as by the European level.

In France, a set of specific laws concerns the "*communautés urbaines*" such as Lille: Solidarity and Urban Renewal Law (2000), Obligation of an Urban Transportation Plan, Economy Modernization Law. Lille Métropole has produced in 1990 its first Master plan, trying to reach a large consensus among local leaders, socio-economic actors and experts... This document is now in the process of updating. The collaboration with the other levels is also on the agenda, in particular with the Region Nord Pas de Calais on climate issues.

In Spain, the competences of planning are mainly local and the national or autonomous governments are in charge of identifying the economic priorities.

1.3. Complying with the global economy

All three case studies proposed here have undergone strong economic changes, especially the conversion from heavy industry to the service sector.

In Bilbao, the heavy industry entered a deep crisis in the 70s and the 80s with a high level of unemployment, environmental deterioration, social marginalizing, and negative migration rates. In order to tackle these issues, Bilbao decided to accept the structural feature of the industry crisis and agreed to move towards a post-

industrial perspective, valuing the enterprising spirit and the cultural potential of the city (Bilbao Metr poli 30).

Cologne is as well trying to respond to many concerns, including the rise of unemployment, the increasing influence of the migrants, the need to tackle racism, the restructuring of the economy and the accelerating demographic changes. The Master plan gave the city the opportunity to include strategic guidelines to deal with economic restructuring, such as IT or Scientific activities.

As for Lille, situated in the historic French mining coal basin, the redeployment of the economy was coupled with a strong leadership, renewed during the last 2008 municipal elections, and aiming at taking into account the difficult context of globalization and the numerous social, environmental and economic challenges big metropolises are deemed to face.

2. Strategies adopted

2.1. Leadership and enforcement of a city vision

The vision of a city is due to integrate community values, strengths and assets, according to a sustainable baseline. In the case of our three European cities, the visions have been relayed through a strong political leadership but shaped by different actors.

For example, in Cologne, the 2020 vision for the city was initiated by the Chamber of Commerce and many firms were involved in proposing new items through the Master Plan. A public launch was then organized and gave the opportunity to set participatory roundtables with politicians, citizens, experts, on various topics (mobility, sustainable development). Even if the mayor of Cologne is deeply involved in each strategy, it is hard to identify him as the only representative of the strategy. Furthermore, there is a plan for the Regionale 2010 which defines city development projects and the best and more advanced ones will qualify for additional funding by the Land Nordrhein-Westfalen.

In the case of Lille, there is a strong political will to pull the city up to the rank of big international metropolises. From that, a vision was created to decide which infrastructures and which equipments to realize and how they could meet the citizens' needs and respond to global and sustainable development. The last 2008 municipal elections saw the renewal of the Lille M tropole council and Martine Aubry was elected President. She declined a new strategy for the "*communaut  urbaine*" based on globalization, social and economic challenges as well as environment.

Concerning Bilbao, the strategic vision consisted in accepting the non-sustainability of the industrial economic model. The vision was elaborated by "Bilbao Metr poli 30" - a public-private association dedicated to city development and focused on new priorities for the city, such as the creation of a cultural pole centre (Guggenheim museum, Bilbao Exhibition Centre) and the improving of the quality of life. Not only was the public sector involved in the shaping of the process but also the universities, the economic sector, the citizens... making the enforcement of the vision a real participatory experience.

2.2. Identifying axes and priorities

Naturally, the step of visioning was in each case helpful to identify the main priorities to handle with.

Starting with its will to shape a 21st century regenerated metropolis, Bilbao identified the following main priorities: investment in human resources; services providing in a modern and industrial region; mobility and accessibility; environmental regeneration: urban regeneration; cultural equipments, coordinated management of public administration and the private sector; social articulation. The first results were seen with a rapid urban transformation and the development of a new branding for the city around knowledge society and creativity.

The city of Cologne is trying to prioritize on citizen's needs and advanced a strategy based on participation. Sustainability, mobility and competitiveness are three key elements of the vision developed by Cologne. This also means being closer to people's demands (for example the necessity to integrate people with handicaps, the apathy of citizens regarding local politics).

In Lille, it appears relevant to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of Lille Métropole, capital city of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, before going to the action plan. The priorities were thus turning around sustainable development; through housing policy (social mix is a core issue), employment creation, and a renewed mobility culture, control of urban sprawl and preservation of rural spaces (very important in the territory of Lille Métropole).

2.3. Involvement of the citizens

In Cologne, participatory processes have been prioritized very early. Citizens were directly involved and became interested in the strategic planning initiatives. Roundtables in neighbourhoods to discuss strategic projects but also to debate solutions to main necessities, such as playgrounds, green spaces, and street cleaning were well attended. It is agreed in Cologne that this new form of democracy allows the citizens to keep an eye on what is occurring.

In Lille, there are 10 "District councils" aimed at promoting the citizens' voice and initiatives in the municipality's decisions. These councils were created in 1978, long before the 2002 law on "Democracy and proximity" which made compulsory their establishment for the cities of more than 80 000 inhabitants.

Concerning Bilbao, the strategic plan was not developed thanks to a direct participation of the residents but through an organised entity constituted as a member of the association "Bilbao Metròpoli 30". Six categories were created inside this association: services firms, industrial firms, public entities, administration institutions, associations/foundations, and communication Medias. These actors were mainly involved in the situation analysis process and during the setting up of the goals, objectives and the development of the strategy. But at this phase of the process, Bilbao did not put in place what is commonly referred as urban participation. The processes of public participation are however foreseen during the development of the plan.

3. Instruments employed

3.1. Master plan and other plans

In the three cases, the elaboration of the Master plan has been very useful to identify strengths and weaknesses, to channel the demands and to help building a new vision for the metropolis. Still, the juridical arsenal is very different between these three countries and the strategies very much linked to the apprehension of the Master plan.

In the case of Lille, the Master plan has been issued in 1990 and is in the process of updating. This overarching document constitutes the spin of a set of other documents, such as the Local Urban Plan (which gives more precise insights on territories), the Urban Sustainability Development Plan (aimed at implementing the legal framework of the Kyoto Protocol). Other thematic plans are implemented to support the planning strategies: the Commercial Urban Planning Development Scheme, the Urban Transportation Plan, and the Local Housing Programme. The President of Lille Métropole, Martine Aubry, has delegated the implementation of the Master Plan to the Vice President in charge of Urban Planning-City Renewal. This political leadership is supported at the technical level by the Planning and Urban Renewal Direction inside Lille Métropole. The updating of the Master plan will also take into account the cross-border Eurometropolis (France and Belgium), Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, created in January 2008.

Concerning Cologne, the Master plan is there to combine the approaches and projects concerning infrastructure and is a very powerful instrument regarding urban development. The department of urban development is responsible for the Master plan which is serving as guideline (but is not legally binding). The economic strategy has been designed by the department of economic development and the private sector. Some of the strategy outcomes were inserted in the Master plan (city of Science).

To be completed.