

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

**JOINT CoR/JASPERS WORKSHOP ON
"IMPLEMENTING THE URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU:
A SMART CITY APPROACH"**

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS
RUE VAN MAERLANT 2, ROOM VMA 1
2 DECEMBER 2016, BRUSSELS**



WELCOME STATEMENT FOR MR CATTANEO

Dear COTER colleagues,

Dear speakers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all of you to this workshop on "How JASPERS can support the implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU from a Smart Cities approach", co-organized with our friends at JASPERS at the European Investment Bank.

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has always attached great importance to the development of an integrated Urban Agenda for the European Union. We were very active throughout the entire discussion on this Agenda, which was adopted in the context of both a very successful Forum and the

COTER Commission meeting organised in Amsterdam on 30 May this year.

The Pact of Amsterdam specifically invites our Committee to provide input for the further development of the Urban Agenda. This provided us with a sound basis to engage in a regular process of reflection on the appropriate tools of implementation.

The European Investment Bank and the Committee have been collaborating on a range of Urban Agenda-related initiatives to share knowledge with local and regional decision-makers in order to improve access to funds. A joint "Toolbox on the EU Urban Agenda" was produced to explain how the EIB can help cities to build sustainable communities.

COTER members have regularly underlined the importance of working in partnership with the European Institutions. In that sense, today's event is the first step towards pursuing this line of work.

I see the technical assistance partnership with JASPERS as combining these essential activities of knowledge-sharing and capacity building with the advisory expertise of the European Investment Bank.

Smart development plays a key role in ensuring the successful implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds and

in supporting the urban agenda. As regional and local representatives, we must develop smart development strategies during this programming period - the support of JASPERS would guarantee a consistent added value for our smart projects.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sustainable smart cities projects can drive Europe forward, boost economic growth, create jobs and improve citizens' quality of life. We are facing now the considerable challenge of consolidating the transformation of an industry-based model to an innovation-driven, service-oriented economy.

It is vital to address some questions which are both practical and fundamental: what is a smart city? what is an open, digital and connected city? How does this relate to the implementation of the urban agenda? And of course, what can JASPERS technical assistance do for our cities when it comes to the utilisation of European Structural and Investment Funds for smart city development?

With the innovative use of technology, tomorrow's cities should be able to make knowledge, people, and operations like traffic and energy flow more efficiently. Likewise, many of the creative activities and occupations that could once only be envisaged in city-centre locations can now find a home in more distant places.

Cities, together with local partners, are key actors in developing smart city solutions, including commercial and funding models to manage urban change in cooperation with their inhabitants. A smart city framework provides a flexible tool that helps to prioritise projects and put together an investment strategy, which is essential in providing access to the European Structural and Investments Funds and other financing opportunities.

And therefore supports the better funding goal, which is one of the three key objectives of the Urban Agenda, together with better regulation and better knowledge. Innovative approaches, including Smart Cities, have also been identified as one of the cross-cutting issues of the Urban Agenda.

As our President Mr Markku Markkula explains in his book, "cities can and must benefit greatly from open innovation ecosystems. Furthermore, cities and regions need to play a strong role in university-industry cooperation, enabling their ecosystem partners to turn the accumulating know-how into successful competitive business models, processes and operations for the benefit of all."

Dear COTER colleagues,

Today's workshop will be followed by a series of local events organised by JASPERS in close cooperation with some of you. Ms Eugenia Kazamaki and our colleagues from JASPERS will have the

opportunity to further explain the content of the call for expression of interest which has been launched.

The final outcome of these events will feed into a joint report on the Implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU which will be presented to COTER members next year.

I would like to conclude by inviting you to discuss this topic in depth.

I wish you a fruitful discussion today.

Thank you very much for your attention.