



## **Declaration of the CEMR on the urban-rural partnership**

*Brussels on 25 June 2013*

1. Urban-rural partnerships do not constitute a goal in themselves but rather an effective means of achieving policy objectives and addressing territorial challenges.
2. Local autonomy, a bottom-up approach, inclusive dialogue and participation of all relevant actors are key elements for success in setting-up and running urban-rural partnerships.
3. Urban-rural partnerships are a “plus” and do not replace policy interventions from the regional level. They can complement top-down interventions with a voluntary bottom-up approach aiming to create synergies, improve and optimise funding interventions and efficiencies.
4. Inclusive urban-rural partnerships are proof of maturity in urban-rural relations. Therefore partners should fully involve the private sector as well as the voluntary sector/civil society.
5. Urban sprawl and the unbalanced character of urban-rural relations have to be addressed by a form of cooperation, in order to achieve territorial cohesion. Mobility and good connectivity as well as the proliferation of ICT services help the revitalisation process in particular for rural areas.
6. Sustainable urban-rural partnerships require long-term political commitments. Defining a common vision for development provides not only mutual benefits for partners in economic terms but also has a positive social impact for people and businesses in urban and rural areas.
7. Partnerships have been developed continuously and in various forms over the last decade, irrespective of administrative or legislative barriers. Thus, CEMR welcomes that the EU proposes interventions aiming to support building institutional capacity and implementing a place based approach. The financial support from European structural and investment funds (ESIF) and other European funds must be provided as well, to accompany these measures.
8. We believe that promoting and learning from good examples, new and innovative forms of urban-rural partnerships, their governance and leadership should be a priority theme for the new cities network that the European Commission proposes and the new UR-BACT priorities for the 2014-2020 period.
9. Furthermore, process innovation and new ways to govern partnerships and experimentation should be supported by EU funds: both ESIF, and research and development funds.

- 10.** EU funding is very important to build sustainable partnerships and the relevant financial instruments should be used in an integrated manner (e.g. regional, social, environmental, agricultural funds).
- 11.** In this context, CEMR recalls that it is crucial to align the provisions of the different instruments, such as common eligibility rules, joint financial support, coordination of funding priorities, delegation of management powers for grant operations etc.
- 12.** Supporting integrated actions, allowing different operations to be funded through a programme-based approach, at the level of functional areas comprising urban and rural partners should be promoted. As a pilot phase, these integrated operations could be ranked as a competitive advantage in receiving EU funding.
- 13.** CEMR will monitor the implementation and application of the cohesion policy instruments available to build institutional capacity and support the place based programming for urban-rural partnerships and governance.. As a stakeholder organisation participating in the structured dialogue, we will also share our experience with the European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy, and with the representatives from the Member States.