

Minutes of the informational event of Urb.Energy on May 25th 2011 in Brussels

Abstract

On May 25th 2011, the informational event of Urb.Energy on „Sustainable energy solutions in the urban and regional context - reflection on EU support“ was organized in the Representation of the Land Brandenburg to the EU in Brussels, Belgium.

More than 35 participants took part in the event, which was opened by the hosts of the event Ms. Dr. Gundula Herwig of the Representation of the Land Brandenburg to the EU and Mr. Christian Huttenloher, the secretary general of the German Association for Housing, Urban and Spatial Development.

Afterwards, Mr. Huttenloher introduced the event with a view on sustainable energy solutions in the urban context. As key note speaker Mr. Lars Porsche from the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) stressed in his presentation the potentials and fields of activities of energy related urban renewal.

In the second part of the event practical experiences from the transnational cooperation projects INTERREG IVB were presented. Mr. Huttenloher presented the experiences of the project Urb.Energy and Mr. René Daszenies spoke about experiences of promotion of renewable energy sources within the project PEA.

The following panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Hans-Jörg Duvigneau from the Competence Center for Major Housing Estates. The focus of the discussion among Ms. Michaela Holl (DG Regional Policy of the European Commission), Ms. Maud Skäringer (DG Energy of the European Commission), Mr. Andrzej Rajkewicz (Polish Energy Agency) and Mr. Peter Busch (Urb.Energy) was the question about lessons that could be drawn from the findings of the presented projects for the EU support policy.

General introduction

On May 25th 2011, the informational event of Urb.Energy on „Sustainable energy solutions in the urban and regional context - reflection on EU support“ was organized in the Representation of the Land Brandenburg to the EU in Brussels, Belgium. This event was planned as a joined event of Urb.Energy in cooperation with the Representation of the Land Brandenburg in Brussels and the Interreg IVB projects Public Energy Alternatives and Longlife.

TOP 1 - Welcome and Introduction

More than 35 participants from Germany, Belgium, Italy and the Czech Republic took part in the event, which was opened by the hosts of the event Ms. Dr. Gundula Herwig of the Representation of the Land Brandenburg to the EU and Mr. Christian Huttenloher, the secretary general of the German Association for Housing, Urban and Spatial Development.



Pic. 1: Warm welcome in the Representation of the Land Brandenburg to the EU by Ms. Herwig

Afterwards, Mr. Huttenloher introduced the event with a reflection on sustainable energy solutions in the urban context and the relations of the later presented projects to the European framework of EU Energy Strategy and EU Energy Efficiency Plan. He pointed out that the issue of energy efficiency in the urban context, and in particular in the built environment, is on the top of the European agenda and that it is crucial that there is targeted and coordinated action on a local level for reaching the energy goals. Here cities and their buildings are defined as essential field for action in the policy. Mr. Huttenloher highlighted the very useful function of the EU programmes like the INTERREG programme and mentioned the cluster initiative on energy within the Baltic Sea Region Programme which the today presented projects have initiated together with three more projects and work together on energy issues.

Concerning the energy-related adaptation of urban structures, Mr. Huttenloher stressed the fact that the conditions of buildings and urban structures are very diverse (e.g.

different types of buildings, technical features etc.). Therefore, it can be assumed that refurbishment measures in most cases must be adapted to these very diverse conditions in the different member states, regions and urban areas. He stated that it needs more than concentrating on the individual building and individual actions level only. An adapted regulatory and funding framework of the EU can contribute to these findings and it is needed to link the various individual measures together. Occurring interactions must be taken into account as well as the specific local conditions which require a specific adaptation of the instruments to the particular region, city or district.



Pic. 2: Mr. Huttenloher introduced the event in Brussels

Integrated energy-related modernisation concepts and processes for urban areas are needed because they take the overall urban context (e.g. energy balance of a neighbourhood, the socio-economic situation, financial capacities of residents etc.) into account. From the view of Mr. Huttenloher the EU Structural Fund can be an important lever and it is a central task to design them to be highly usable in every local situation.

As key note speaker Mr. Lars Porsche from the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) spoke in his presentation "Renewable energy resources and energy efficiency in urban development" about the potentials and fields of activities of energy related urban renewal in Germany.

From a German perspective there are many challenges for a resource efficient urban renewal as there are the climate change, the energy change, a demographic change, an economical (structural) change and the land consumption issue. Mr. Porsche presented the potentials and field of activities on research examples in several cities of the Land Brandenburg and the Land Saxony Anhalt. The results showed that energetic urban renewal can only be successful, if

- the topics: energy saving, increase of efficiency and the use of renewable energies are integrated,
- it is involved in an interdisciplinary urban development,
- includes a comprehensive view on the whole city/ municipality,
- technical infrastructures are included and
- it is understood as a communal task.

It also became clear that energetic urban renewal requires a conceptual approach as it includes the strategic development and coordination of energy saving measures, energy efficiency measures and the use of renewable energies. Finally the energetic urban renewal is understood as an interdisciplinary task which involves relevant stakeholders and interrelates technical infrastructures on different levels (building, neighbourhood/ residential area and complete city).



Pic. 3: Keynote speaker Mr. Porsche presented experiences with energetic urban development

On the potentials of urban areas to produce energy Mr. Porsche explained a research example which used undeveloped urban areas and superficies surfaces for renewable energies. The idea here was to set the task for the production of renewable energy not only for the rural areas. All free spaces of a city were seen as energetically usable and therefore calculations of productivity were conducted on the example city Gelsenkirchen including different retrofitting and the two energy parties household and business.

In his conclusions Mr. Porsche stressed that cities and communities play a vital role in climate protection. The use of integrated energy and climate concepts should be increased and become an integral part of the urban planning process. An integrated action can help to solve the complexity of urban development, energy efficiency, renewable energies and the protections of resources. It is important to analyse and deal with the whole city/ municipality with its different types of urban areas and spatial levels and small actions have to be avoided.

Therefore energy concepts offer a possibility to integrate current as well as future challenges, to integrate the issues of energy saving, energy efficiency and energy production and to integrate the real estate market into urban planning and development in a sustainable and resource efficient way.

Mr. Porsche ended his presentation recommending support of cities and municipalities with the assistance and fostering of integrated energy and climate concepts. Furthermore the analysis of the spatial structure should be an obligatory element of funding and allowances.

TOP 2 - Practical experiences from transnational cooperation projects

In the second part of the event practical experiences from the transnational cooperation projects INTERREG IVB were presented. Due to the ash cloud of the recently active Grimsvotn volcano in Iceland Ms. Britta Schmigotzki from the Urb.Energy project and Mr. Prof. Klaus Rückert from the project Long Life could not attend the event.

The presentation for the Urb.Energy project was held by Mr. Huttenloher as stand-in. He presented the experiences of the project regarding integrated approaches for the energy efficient upgrading of residential areas.



Pic. 4: Mr. Huttenloher presents the findings of the project Urb.Energy

The lessons learned are rich of information and stress different issues:

- the affordability of energy efficient refurbishment (EER) of multi-family buildings remains to be the core question for homeowners;
- awareness raising, information campaigns and technical support (e.g. by a local agency) are very important to inform residents on the benefits of integrated and energy efficient measures;
- it is important that homeowners' associations are supported and the legal status as well as property rights are clarified and
- there is a need for a combined approach of loan programmes and additional grants for long-term financial support.

So the results of the project show that the project partner countries need support in setting up and running revolving funding schemes for energy efficient refurbishment.

Concerning integrated approaches the project found out that Integrated Urban Development Concepts (IUDC) are suitable instruments to activate energy efficiency potentials in urban areas but IUDCs also need approval, active support and commitment of the local council, administrations and energy suppliers.

Therefore the project Urb.Energy recommends using ERDF funding to develop IUDCs for the energy related modernisation of urban neighbourhoods and to install local energy efficiency agencies (or comparable support structures) for the residents' support.

The following questions and answers concentrated on financing issues. Ms. Skäringer from the DG Region Policy asked if project partners of the Urb.Energy Project did use ERDF funding for revolving funds. Mr. Huttenloher referred to experiences of the project partners KredEx (Estonia) and HUDA (Lithuania) which used ERDF funding to set up a revolving fund for energy efficient modernisation of the existing building stock. Mr. Busch from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Agriculture of the Land Brandenburg answered that in the Land Brandenburg three municipalities asked for funding by the revolving fund of the Land Brandenburg, which is not focusing on energy efficient refurbishment of buildings but on urban regeneration issues.

In a second Question Ms. Skäringer wanted to know how much energy savings have been achieved so far. Here Mr. Huttenloher pointed out that the project works on a concept level and the identified specific energy saving measures will be implemented in the near future by the project partners. However, in many cases the project partners are facing the challenge that the investments costs in the energy efficient refurbishment are still very high and the cost savings through energy savings does not equal the investment costs. Only in a long term view the investment pays back.

Ms. Petra Nothdorf from the Office of the Land Berlin to the EU asked about the holistic approach of the IUDCs what Mr. Huttenloher answered with the high importance of the interrelation of undertaken measures but also said that for example mobility concepts have not been in the focus of the project.

Ms. Laura Vanhué from CRU asked for the conditions of the German KfW-Funding and if an IUDC is a prerequisite for the funding. Mr. Huttenloher replied that the IUDCs are no condition for the funding but there will be a special funding programme using IUDCs probably initiated this year. Mr. Busch highlighted the bottom-up approach of the Urb.Energy project and mentioned that the new funding system in the Land Brandenburg follows this bottom-up approach. Mr. Porsche from the BBSR mentioned here another way of financing climate related projects in Germany which is called the Climate Initiative of the German Federal Government. With its help many municipal based instruments can be financed for example the proposal of climate concepts. Some findings of this initiative are new occurring problems concerning the lack of experts and a need to train municipal staff.

Afterwards Mr. René Daszenies, project manager of the INTERREG IVB project Public Energy Alternatives (PEA), spoke about experiences of promotion of renewable energy sources as driving force for the development of rural regions. This project is part-financed by the ERDF with 3 Million Euro and interacts between 21 partners from 6 different countries in the Baltic Sea Region.

One aim of the project is to strengthen the regional development by reduction of costs for electricity, heat and transport via renewable and regenerative energy. Another aim is to raise awareness for the topic of renewable energy sources and knowledge transfer by new developed training modules, sustainable energy concepts for the implementation on the local basis and the dissemination of the approach in public. The project locates several

challenges for the rural regions like the decreasing economy, the migration to metropolitan areas or the aging population.

The future tasks for the project are seen in the economic growth via the wider use of renewable, alternative and local energy sources which has the potential for a minor dependency on fuel imports combined with a revival of local agriculture. Another future task is the implementation of new technologies which should create high qualification jobs. Also the environment and risk prevention is a future task of the project and should further improve the image and attraction of regions for tourists and investors. The location of companies which are specialized in the production of alternative energy will enhance economic competitiveness and the quality of life of the citizens.



Pic. 5: Mr. Daszenies presenting the project Public Energy Alternatives (PEA)

Mr. Daszenies later presented some examples of the PEA project. In the Ylivieska Subregion (Finland) it is planned to replace the fossil oil-heating with a sustainable heating based on wood chips which produces very low local emissions and is a cheap local fuel. The local district heating plant is involved by working on a new service concept.

In the Dzierzgon Municipality (Poland) the solar thermal water heating covers 60 % needs for hot water in the households of 1.400 people. There are also preparations for hybrid street lights using solar and wind energy. The enhanced savings are reinvested in sustainable solutions and the attractiveness of the region has increased.

In the Ignalina District (Lithuania) the local boiler house was equipped with solar collectors for the heating of water and will produce 13 % of the needed energy.

In the Visaginas Region (Lithuania) the central heating system and the insulation of public and multifamily buildings will be renovated to save 30-40% of the warm water preparation costs per year.

TOP 3 - Panel Discussion

The panel discussion about the European support of local and regional authorities to promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy solutions was moderated by Mr. Hans-Jörg Duvigneau from the Competence Center for Major Housing Estates. Two representatives of the EU Commission took part in the panel discussion. Ms. Michaela Holl from the Directorate-General for Energy, unit C.3 Energy efficiency and Intelligent energy, works on the energy efficiency plan as well as on calculation methods for economic efficiency of energy-related measures on buildings. Ms. Maud Skäringer from the Directorate-General for Regional Policy, unit D.2 Thematic Coordination, Innovation, is responsible for thematic issues of the EU cohesion policy including the energy measures within the ERDF. They discussed together with Mr. Andrzej Rajkewicz, the vice president of the National Polish Energy Saving Agency, and Mr. Peter Busch of the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Land Brandenburg about the EU support policy and on what can be learned from the findings of the today presented projects.



Pic. 6: The panellists (left to right): Mr. Busch; Mr. Duvigneau; Ms. Skäringer; Ms. Holl and Mr. Rajkewicz

After the introduction of the panellists Mr. Duvigneau asked Ms. Skäringer for the possibilities to really support the energy efficiency. Also he asked if there is any feedback about the financial volume used for energy-related refurbishment, about the measures that are financed and about the used financial instruments.

Ms. Skäringer explained the reasons why ERDF is now open for energy efficient refurbishment of residential buildings. Here the positive effects are named like the producing of local jobs and the improvement of social aspects by reducing the energy costs for tenants. About half of the EU member states used about 314 Mio. Euro of ERDF in very different ways like the revolving funds in Estonia and Lithuania or the social housing in France. The local situation must be taken into account and the measures should be integrated.

Mr. Duvigneau asked if the Commission will promote in the future the application of IUDCs as a necessary basis for investments in urban development including energy efficiency.

Ms. Skäringer answered that the project Urb.Energy comes up with concrete findings which need to be spread and can be used for further development. She also highlighted the interesting bottom-up approach of the project.

The next question regarded the financial future of declining public money (also for structural funds) and the experiences in old member states with long-term revolving funds. They showed that the revolving funds in public responsibility seem to be necessary to encourage and maintain public support for private investment in energy-related rehabilitation by subsidised loans. Mr. Duvigneau asked if it is possible to use the ERDF for revolving funding system. And Ms. Skäringer said that the DG will encourage the use of revolving funds of which Estonia and Lithuania shows first examples.

On the question about the current position of the DG Energy regarding the application of territory approaches (for example neighbourhood) to improve the energy efficiency in the building sector, Ms. Holl highlighted that the scope of the DG Energy is based on single buildings. But the use of renewables opens up the view to a territorial perspective. The DG also talks to the local level via the Coventry of Majors, where the cities agree on the climate 20-20-20 goals and in exchange they get financial help with integrated approaches via ELENA with loans and grants.

A question from the audience asked in detail about this loan model and if the loans will be at market price. Ms. Holl denied the question and explained that the loans will take the local situation for levelling into account.

Putting more attention to the project findings Mr. Duvigneau asked if there is awareness for the two facts that the loans are not really suitable and they should be partly given with grants or on lower interest rates. Ms Holl, working since the two last years on that problem, said that the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) is concentrating on that problem. It is a prerequisite that no one will be forced to undertake the energy efficient refurbishment. By June 2011 the EU member states will hand in reports also about financing methods and after an analysis conclusions will be used for new proposals of the development of the EPBD. Mr. Duvigneau stressed possible obligations and asked if there will be any requirements which force the energy efficient refurbishment where Ms. Holl denied this question because there will be no stricter rules. The new idea is to look in a different ways on the different sectors public, private and commercial. Also the focus needs to be adjusted from a quantitative view (refurbishment rate) to a qualitative view. The public sector plays a key role and should work as a pioneer realising high energy efficient buildings.

Asked from Mr. Duvigneau for upcoming plans in the DG Regional Policy and for the future support of energy saving investments into the housing stock within EU-Programmes Ms. Skäringer answered that the plan is to raise the productiveness of existing programmes.

Asked for concrete experiences Mr. Rajkewicz said that from his perspective systems like ELENA need to be opened for smaller municipalities. The ELENA funding supports amounts

between one and five million Euro for which the co-financing is out of reach for small municipalities. Ms. Holl replied that there is no way to use EFRE for energy concepts if the state has signed an agreement for the 20-20-20 goals like Poland because then the state has to bring its municipalities into action for the 20-20-20 goals.

Mr. Busch brought the discussion to the urban dimensions of the refurbishment process. He said that many people are sitting on their boxes and don't see beyond. A combination of these boxes in an integrated way is important. One should start in the building and go up to neighbourhood and also to the municipality level. In Germany, and especially in the eastern part, good experiences have been made with the programme 'Stadtumbau' (urban restructuring programme for cities funded by the Federation and the federal states) which countered disperse urban development.

Mr. Rajkewicz stated that there is a huge potential for ESCO (Energy Service Companies) and contracting in the new member states. After 1990 many of the former public housing estate was privatised and there are many single owners and condominiums which don't have money to invest. In Poland are as well as other preconditions regarding the use of contracting e.g. only more than 50 % of the tenants have to agree on actions to be taken.



Pic. 7: Motivated talks of the event participants

After the fruitful and lively discussion in-between the panellists and also with the audience the event in Brussels ended with ongoing talks about the future of energy policy and supports of the member states by the EU Programmes.