



SOCIAL POLIS Newsletter: December 2008 - January 2009

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Dear Social Polaris Stakeholders,

We are very pleased to send you the second edition of the SOCIAL POLIS Newsletter which will be now issued on a monthly basis and edited by Davide Cassinari who is joining the coordination team on the 16th of February. This newsletter will report from stakeholder workshops which were held in December and January, inform about upcoming events, and introduce our new stakeholders and Davide, who will be working for SOCIAL POLIS with Frank Moulaert in Leuven.

Best wishes,

Jean Hillier
Konrad Miciukiewicz
Frank Moulaert

SOCIAL POLIS Small grants: CALL for STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS

SOCIAL POLIS (7th Framework Programme) recently announced the CALL for STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS. All non-academic groups and organisations from NGO, community, private and, policy sectors are invited to apply for a small grant (up to 3,000 €) to produce a contribution to research, policymaking, or urban practice in the areas relevant to 'Cities and Social Cohesion'. Successful applicants will be invited to present their contributions at the large scale SOCIAL POLIS Stakeholder Conference in Vienna (11-12 May 2009). Proposals might include research papers and reports, multimedia formats (presentations, films, installations), and exhibitions.

Contributions may be focused on various issues related to cities and Social Cohesion referring to the SOCIAL POLIS Focused Research Agendas, Existential Fields, or other topics which have not yet been included in the activities of the platform. Preference will be given to themes or subthemes which have been insufficiently covered in the Focused Research Agenda, the research surveys on Existential Fields, and the stakeholder workshops. Please find the detailed version this Call for Stakeholder Contributions, as well as more information about the FRA, survey papers, and stakeholder workshops on our website <http://www.socialpolis.eu>.

For more information on this call please contact us directly. If you wish to discuss an idea for your contribution, please contact Frank Moulaert at frank.moulaert@skynet.be. Proposals are due **15th of February 2009** (5pm UK time). They should be submitted electronically to Dr Stuart Cameron at s.j.cameron@newcastle.ac.uk. Unfortunately, no applications can be accepted after this date.

Local stakeholder workshops and meetings organised by SOCIAL POLIS Lead Partners

Local Stakeholder Meeting in Naples (11th of December 2008)

The meeting held on the 11th of December 2008 by the ITER / Federico II team in Naples, involving 6 stakeholders belonging to the practice and policy local community as well as 3 members of the Social Polis research network, has met the following objectives: 1) to inform stakeholders and researchers on SOCIAL POLIS activities, and achievements (particularly the Focused Research Agenda and the website); 2) to collect their inputs to the Focused Research Agenda, through an interaction on themes, methods and research topics (specifically in Existential Field 2: Urban Labour Markets & Economic Development, and transversally on "City and social cohesion"); 3) to inform them about the ways in which they can contribute to SOCIAL POLIS for the future (writing a paper, giving inputs to EF2 Survey Paper, participating to the Vienna conference, etc).

The meeting began with a presentation by the Lead Partner, illustrating the state of the art in the Social Polis project, and the Focused Research Agenda, of which some topics relevant to Existential Field 2 and to the field of practice of the Neapolitan stakeholders were selected and elaborated on. After that, the researchers were asked to propose some topics for the debate, and to stimulate an in-depth discussion in a "round robin" format, in which all stakeholders had the opportunity to react with comments and suggestions to the proposed research themes and topics, also putting forward new ideas at a very concrete level.

Local Stakeholder Workshop in Barcelona (11th of December 2008)

On the 11th of December another SOCIAL POLIS stakeholder workshop was held by the University of Barcelona team in the European Commission and the European Parliament Office in Barcelona. The objectives of the meeting were to explain the developments of the Platform and to debate on the content of the two selected proposals of the Focused Research Agenda. After a short welcome given by the Chair of EC and EP office in Barcelona Manel Camós, all stakeholders attending the workshop, who represented civil society organisations and public institutions dealing with technical issues as well as policies concerning social exclusion dynamics, were encouraged to present specific views on the Focused Research Agenda emerging from their expertise.



Among the consensual issues to be improved or investigated were: the transversal key-importance of public data availability to foster the construction of local indicators on social exclusion; the analysis of current transformation of welfare systems; the ways in which labour markets and housing conditions are defining exclusionary trajectories; the transversal analysis of gender inequalities; the weakness of social networks among sectors of the population and the decline of voluntarism. Participants were particularly critical about the development of participatory methodologies. They pointed out that research should focus on the objectives, means and outcomes of participatory democracy and the pitfalls

involved in considering participation and end in itself forgetting fundamental objectives. The importance of re-evaluating the role of the third sector and civil society organisations in addressing social cohesion was also stressed. Finally, three important challenges for governance and social cohesion to be taken into account in the future research were addressed: 1) social cohesion may be strong at the neighbourhood scale, but not at the city or metropolitan scales; 2) multi-scalar relations in mobility and their relation to the diagnosis of social inequality; (3) the inflation of regulations and programmes which aim at improving social cohesion can reflect the lack of coordination or point out conflicting purposes.

Local Stakeholder Workshop in Leuven (17th of December 2008)

On the 17th of December 2008 the Institute for Social and Economic Geography at the Catholic University of Leuven held a local SOCIAL POLIS stakeholder workshop. The objectives of the workshop were, among others: 1) to present SOCIAL POLIS and the activities of the platform, 2) to get feedback on two proposals for Focused Research Agenda, 3) to discuss other issues and key questions regarding 'Social cohesion and the city as a whole' and other Existential Fields, 4) to strengthen the contacts with local stakeholders and broaden the SOCIAL POLIS Stakeholder Network by involving new Belgian partners, and 5) to present and discuss mechanisms through which stakeholders can contribute to SOCIAL POLIS.

In general, the 2nd proposal for the Focused Research Agenda - which was seen as an agenda for an action type of research offering a greater involvement of stakeholders in the SOCIAL POLIS platform and future research on 'Cities and Social Cohesion' - was preferred over the 1st proposal for FRA. In the view of stakeholders the issues of identity and culture in relation to social cohesion seem to have received too little attention in both proposals for Focused Research Agenda and should be addressed more explicitly. Furthermore, Belgian stakeholders raised other important issues, such as endogenous versus exogenous growth, the privatisation of public space, and the social cohesion of the rich.

Local Stakeholder Workshop in Vienna (13th of January 2009)

The first Austrian local stakeholder workshop was held at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration on the 13th of January 2009. The invited participants came from a wide range of institutions, including academic, non-governmental or governmental. Of the 10 stakeholders participating in the workshop three came from an academic institution, three from a NGO and four were members of the Viennese city administration.

The aim of the workshop was to discuss the concept of social cohesion as well as its operationalisation in public policy and to clarify stakeholder expectations towards the development of the SOCIAL POLIS platform. Topics discussed included the different aspects of social cohesion, policy problems in dealing with social cohesion, causal relations between different aspects of social cohesion and the problematic dialectic of agency and structure in social cohesion policy. At the end of the workshop the date for a second local stakeholder workshop was scheduled for the 17th of February 2009. The second workshop will be dedicated primarily to a thorough discussion of the Focused Research Agenda. The number of participants is likely to increase for the second workshop as the participants suggested some more stakeholders which they would like to have included.

2nd Local Stakeholder Meeting in Lisbon (19th of January 2009)

On the 19th of January the Lisbon team organised the second Portuguese Stakeholder Meeting. As a starting point two non-academic stakeholders were asked to give 30-minute presentations, based on the projects and initiatives they had been developing, where they sought to identify the main lacunae in the "investigation & research – practice & action" nexus. The presentations focused on research and practice methodologies (use of language, commitment to social transformation, etc), as well as on the thematic content of the research and practice agendas. Each presentation was followed by 1,5 hour discussions.

The results of the workshop were very fruitful in terms of the definition of new challenges for research and their relationships with 'field' practice. In comparison with the 1st Local Stakeholder Meeting in Lisbon held on the 17th of October 2008 this one was much more dynamic, perhaps because the methodology has been changed. Whilst the 'triggers' (i.e. hypothetical problems/questions) were used to facilitate the discussion at the 1st Meeting, the stakeholder presentations served as a starting point for the 2nd one. This method has proved to be a better stimulus for discussion.

The detailed reports from all workshops will be systematically published on our website <http://www.socialpolis.eu>

International SOCIAL POLIS Workshops organised by stakeholders

INEES Workshop in Paris: "Think differently: Supporting local socioeconomic initiatives in the city for strengthening social cohesion?"

The SOCIAL POLIS workshop organised by INEES (L'Institut Européen de l'Economie Solidaire) in Paris on the 12th and 13 of January was structured in two stages: 1) a meeting attended by a small group of diverse and committed stakeholders aiming at sharing their reflections and practices on the place and impacts of social and solidarity-based economic initiatives on urban social cohesion; and 2) a public debate which was a part of the popular and citizen university cycle at CNAM (Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers) which attracted about 20 different speakers and 60 participants, mainly practitioners and grassroots actors.

The specific contribution of grassroots initiatives to urban social cohesion was highlighted with the presentation of various urban solidarity-based initiatives, such as "Régies de quartier" in France and "Objectif plein emploi" in Luxemburg. These initiatives not only create employment and provide urban services in deprived neighbourhoods, but also reinforce social links and inhabitants' commitment to the notion of good citizenship. From this perspective, social cohesion is considered by grassroots practitioners as a condition of local development rather than a consequence of economic growth. Then, the delegates from local authorities (Nantes, Lille, Brittany and Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur) presented their actions and programs dedicated to the social and solidarity-based economy at the local level. Most of these actions consider the solidarity-based economy as a specific economic model - a third pillar between the public and for-profit economy, for producing urban public goods. This global perspective is a condition for a cross-cutting integration of local initiatives in the main urban policies (economic development, transport, housing, waste recycling, education, culture, etc.) and not confining them to employment and social welfare 'niches'.

Several participants expressed their concerns about the risk of reduction of social cohesion to a philanthropic and conservative vision where grassroots initiatives are used by public authorities as a tool for the integration of the unemployed, avoiding social conflicts in urban neighbourhoods. Finally, the opportunities and limits of European policies supporting local initiatives were raised. Doubts were expressed over the compatibility of an extension of the EU competition rules to social services of general interest with the bottom-up logics of solidarity-based initiatives which implement innovative strategies to meet local needs. Even if national and local governments are not obliged to adopt market rules and public procurement to support urban services, the European framework does not facilitate a model where grassroots initiatives could be considered as something more than one of producers, as co-producers of urban general interest.

The present financial and economic crisis is leading to the overthrow of so-called intangible market extension and competition rules which have partly failed to preserve urban social cohesion. Creative urban strategies and initiatives of European city dwellers are seen in this context as a chance for developing more sustainable, solidarity-based urban economies in Europe.

Fundació SURT workshop in Barcelona: 'Global and local dynamics in the cities from a gender perspective: the case of Barcelona'

On the 29th and 30th of January *SURT Fundació de dones. Fundació privada*, under SOCIAL POLIS grant support, held a workshop on 'Global and local dynamics in the cities from a gender perspective: the case of Barcelona'. The workshop aimed at discussing and identifying key priorities of research on the effects of economic globalisation and the changes it implies for lives of migrant women, and their labour conditions and opportunities, as well as on the impacts of such changes on social cohesion in urban areas.

There were 21 participants, coming from the academic and institutional fields, as well as members of civil society organisations. Most of the participants represented organisations based in the area of Barcelona, but there was also a group from Italy. The workshop was structured in three roundtables that focused on: 1) the phenomenon of the feminisation of international migration and its impact on urban context, 2) the situation of migrant women regarding domestic/care work, and 3) the situation of migrant women concerning sex work. In each round table, there were two brief presentations of the topic by one contributor from the academic circles and one from non-academic stakeholders followed by discussion and debate involving all participants.

The workshop brought substantial recommendations concerning concrete topics that should be included in the European research agenda. Issues discussed were, for example, the need to study migration as a process and not as something static, taking into account the different stages migrant women go through. All recommendations are to be put together in a report and related to Existential Fields, in order to outline the most significant gaps in research on women's migration, urban labour markets and social cohesion. The document will be entitled 'Future research directions on the issue of global and local dynamics in cities from a gender perspective'.

Upcoming SOCIAL POLIS events**Action for Sustainable Living Stakeholder Conference on 'Nature, social cohesion and the city'**Date: **10th - 11th February 2009**

Location: Room 1.69/1.70, Humanities, Bridgeford Street Building, University of Manchester

This free conference will examine the interconnections between nature, social cohesion and contemporary urbanism, looking at a variety of cross-cutting issues such as urban sustainability, environmental justice, democratic policymaking and the future of urban environmental politics. This conference is being co-organised by the University of Manchester and a Manchester-based environmental NGO, Action for Sustainable Living (www.afsl.org.uk). The conference will bring together policymakers, NGO officials and academics to talk about and discuss these vitally important issues. The conference is open to anybody who wishes to attend. However, as space is limited please email Ian Cook at ian.cook@manchester.ac.uk to book your seat as soon as possible.

SOCIAL POLIS Lead Partner Meeting in Amsterdam (19th and 20th of February 2009)

SOCIAL POLIS Lead Partners are going to meet in Amsterdam to elaborate on survey papers on the Social Polis Existential Fields, discuss stakeholder comments on the Focused Research Agenda, the Vienna conference agenda, contacts with stakeholders, and further development of the platform.

2nd Local Stakeholder Workshop in Vienna (17th of January 2009)

The Vienna team will be organising the 2nd Local Stakeholder Workshop. For more information please contact Barbara Beinstein at barbara.beinstein@wu-wien.ac.at.

Large-scale SOCIAL POLIS Stakeholder Conference in Vienna (11th and 12th of May 2009)

On the 11th and 12th of May 2009 SOCIAL POLIS will be holding a large-scale Stakeholder Conference at the University of Economics in Vienna. The conference programme will include presentations from project Lead Partners and stakeholders, working groups on the research fields of SOCIAL POLIS, discussion roundtables for exchange of ideas and experiences and an exhibition on projects, organisations and cities. Participants will elaborate on the SOCIAL POLIS Focused Research Agenda on 'Cities and Social Cohesion' for future 7th Framework Programme Calls. The conference will also bring together stakeholders from all sectors to discuss research, policy and practice issues related to social cohesion in contemporary urban areas. We are looking forward to fostering the platform and establishing new networks. For further information on the programme application process and possibilities for contribution please see our website <http://www.socialpolis.eu> and contact Sarah Habersack at sarah.habersack@wu-wien.ac.at

Upcoming conferences

Date	Title
4-8 February 09	World Conference of Humanitarian Studies 2009, Groningen, Netherlands
20-21 February 09	'Transnational Collective Bargaining within a European multi-level System of Industrial Relations, Brussels', Belgium
19-20 March 09	The PhD Seminar on Public Space, Delft, Netherlands
1-3 April 09	2009 UK-Ireland Planning Research Conference 'Unequal Places: Planning and Territorial Cohesion', Newcastle, UK
6-8 April 09	Regional Studies Association, Annual Conference 'Understanding and Shaping Regions: Spatial, Social and Economic Futures' Leuven, Belgium

New Stakeholders

Since December, 12 new stakeholders have joined the SOCIAL POLIS network. They include among others 4 prominent stakeholders:

Dr Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza is Chief of the Policy Analysis Branch of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (**UN-HABITAT**). The Branch is responsible for preparing the UN Global Report on Human Settlements, of which Naison is the Chief Editor. The report is published every two years and is the UN's most authoritative global assessment of human settlements conditions and trends. A Zimbabwean national, Naison holds an MA in Geography and a PhD in Land Economy from the University of Cambridge, UK. Before joining UN-HABITAT, he was a professor in the Department of Rural and Urban Planning at the University of Zimbabwe.

Teresa Sierawska is Deputy Manager of Social Policy Department of the **City of Warsaw**. The department focuses on solving social problems at an early stage, in order to prevent the intensification of various social dysfunctions. This objective is being achieved through preventive actions, social assistance, advising, emergency intervention, as well as full-time care provided to people unable to function independently in their own environment. **Joanna Dolińska-Dobek** is a member of the Family Division at the Social Policy Department and will co-organise a Polish stakeholder workshop on 'Integration of migrants in Warsaw' together with the Newcastle team.

Pia Hellberg-Lannerheim is a Policy Officer in the Integration and Employment Division of the **Malmö City Council**. This division initiates, develops and supports initiatives that contribute to reducing segregation and isolation, which includes proposing objectives and allocating resources for the city's departments for initiatives within the field of integration and employment. Pia deals with employment, adult education and integration in Malmö, and has a commitment in the EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum.

For further information and contact details for all of our new stakeholders please refer to the complete list of stakeholders on our website or, alternatively, contact your Lead Partner or a member of the coordination team.

New SOCIAL POLIS Coordination Team member DAVIDE CASSINARI



DAVIDE CASSINARI holds a Masters degree in Local Development Economics from the University of Parma (Italy). As part of his degree, Davide spent half an year at Maastricht University (The Netherlands). Since August 2008, he is involved in the preparation of the annual CECODHAS Observatory colloquium on the future of social housing in the EU, mainly dealing with spatial representation and analysis of social housing indicators at national and city level. In addition, Davide has worked as a tutor in an educational centre for boys and children in Piacenza for 4 years. He speaks Italian, English and has an intermediate knowledge of Spanish.

As from mid-February Davide will be appointed as a Research Associate for SOCIAL POLIS at the Catholic University of Leuven. Davide will act as a communication officer assisting the Coordinator (Prof. Moulaert) and Dr Stuart Cameron with various tasks concerning Social Polis communication and stakeholder involvement. He will be responsible for editing the Social Polis Newsletter and the website, keeping track of the results of stakeholder workshops, and preparing contacts and meetings with new stakeholders. Davide will also work with Frank Moulaert on the methodological paper on the involvement of stakeholders and transdisciplinarity in urban social cohesion research.



SOCIAL POLIS Newsletter

The **SOCIAL POLIS NEWSLETTER** is published by the SOCIAL POLIS coordination Team at Newcastle University and the Catholic University of Leuven

Editors:
Davide Cassinari
Frank Moulaert
Jean Hillier

Please send any contributions or comments to **Davide Cassinari** at ilcassi@gmail.com and davide.cassinari@asro.kuleuven.be (please use both addresses to contact Davide until the end of February and davide.cassinari@asro.kuleuven.be thereafter)