



SOCIAL POLIS Newsletter: February 2009

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Local stakeholder workshops and meetings organised by SOCIAL POLIS Lead Partners

2nd Local Stakeholder Meeting in Vienna (17th of February 2009)

The second Austrian local stakeholder workshop took place on February 17, 2009 at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. Ten stakeholders participated in this workshop, seven of them had participated in the first workshop as well and we were happy to welcome three new stakeholders. Three participants came from the Vienna city government, three from NGOs and the other four from different academic institutions. The idea of this second workshop was on the one hand to focus the general discussion on cities and social cohesion during the first workshop by connecting it to the Focused Research Agenda. On the other hand this second workshop offered the opportunity to improve the relationship to the local stakeholders and invited new stakeholders and, in this way, to increase the diversity of perspectives. In this meeting, it became quite clear that most of the stakeholders couldn't really relate to the structure, language and emphasis of the FRA. They rather concentrated on two major methodological points, which seemed crucial to them for research on cities and social cohesion. First they underlined the importance of a transdisciplinary approach, which should include new ways of organization and funding of research. Secondly there was a common consensus on the significance of including ambivalences and contradictions in research and working realities on different scales into the collective knowledge production on cities and social cohesion. We decided together to hold one more workshop this autumn to come together once more and discuss the results and future perspective of Social Polis and our local collaborations.

International SOCIAL POLIS Workshops organised by stakeholders

Action for Sustainable Living Stakeholder Conference on 'Nature, social cohesion and the city' (Manchester, 10th - 11th February 2009)

Erik Swyngedouw and Ian Cook (lead partners of EF5) together with Josh Steiner (Action for Sustainable Living) organised a one-day workshop entitled 'Nature, Social Cohesion and the City' at the University of Manchester on 11th February 2009. Its mandate was to bring together policymakers, NGO representatives, academics and the public to discuss the nexus between nature, social cohesion and contemporary urbanism. As part of this, a number of important issues were considered such as environmental justice, urban sustainability, democratic policymaking and the future of urban environmental politics. Presenters illustrated these discussions with a number of case studies such as Manchester's Congestion Charge referendum and the Black Environment Network's approach to promoting environmental justice. Over 50 people from a variety of backgrounds attended. A mini-site on the Social Polis website will be set up which will feature the presentations from the workshop and a workshop report.

Lead partners meeting in Amsterdam

A Social Polis Lead Partner meeting was held in Amsterdam on 19th and 20th of February 2009, and different issues were discussed. First of all a briefing about the life of the focussed research agenda was made, and the idea to export part of the agenda to funding programmes different from FP7 emerged. The aim is to try to carry out all the research proposals present in the FRA, also the ones which will not be selected for FP7 SSH programme. The first day the discussion was focussed on the 12 EF survey papers drafts, which are going to be improved in the light of suggestions and proposals formulated by Lead Partner members and discussants. The stakeholder workshops held in the previous months were also presented by the partners. Another important topic of the meeting was the Vienna Conference. The programme and practical matters were presented, and then the discussion focussed on tools to promote an active role of stakeholders in the conference. 'World Cafè', informal moments of debate among small groups of stakeholders on a specific topic, have been pointed out as a key instruments of stakeholders involvement during the event. Last but not least, eight out of forty applications for the Social Polis small grant competition were shortlisted, and they are in the process of being screened by the stakeholders inner circle which will select four proposals.

Upcoming SOCIAL POLIS events

30th April – 2nd May 2009 – Brussels: "Micronomics"

The purpose of this festival, organized by City Mined, is to promote and support micro initiatives. The program include: a workshop gathering researchers, politicians and social workers; five artistic projects; theatre and cinema. For more info look on <http://www.micronomics.citymined.org/>

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 hold 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 further focus the SOCIAL POLIS Focused Research Agenda on 'Cities and Social Cohesion'. 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. Significant time will be devoted to discuss the future and possible institutionalization of Social Polis as a permanent social platform and network.

To support stakeholders participation at the conference, **the project will cover the housing and travel expenses for 100 participants.**

Applications must be submitted on-line to (<http://www.sre.wu-wien.ac.at/socialpolis/application.htm>)

NEW DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION IS MARCH 6, 2009

If you are not selected or you don't need your expenses covered, you can register for the conference on Social Polis homepage from March 9, 2009 onwards

For further informations 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 6-9 April 09	Regional Studies Association, Annual Conference 'Understanding and Shaping Regions: Spatial, Social and Economic Futures' Leuven, Belgium

New Stakeholders

Mart Grisel is head of the international department of Nicis Institute, the Dutch urban centre of excellence hosting the secretariat of the **European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)**. Nicis Institute offers practical solutions to complex urban problems through research, knowledge sharing, training and expert advice. EUKN shares knowledge and experience on tackling urban issues, mainly with a wide e-library. Sixteen EU Member States, EURO CITIES, the URBACT Programme and the European Commission participate in this European initiative.

On the 18th of February in Amsterdam a meeting between Mart Grisel and some Social Polis members was held, a summary of the meeting is reported below.

First of all, Mart Grisel presented EUKN and the Social Polis members presented Social Polis. EUKN is a body which shares knowledge and experience on addressing urban issues. Sixteen EU Member States, EURO CITIES, the URBACT Programme and the European Commission participate in this European initiative. Its scientific core is the NICIS institute in De Haag, and the organizational consists of sixteen national focal points. It is a strong dissemination network but it also carries out studies. EUKN has a more policy oriented approach than Social Polis, a potential for meaningful cooperation. Some proposals of collaboration were discussed. First of all, EUKN has been invited to and accepted to become a stakeholder of Social Polis. Mart Grisel will be added to the Inner Circle mailing list. Mart Grisel has also been invited to the Vienna conference, with the opportunity to be discussant in a round table. Furthermore all participants agreed to use the respective dissemination networks for advertising events and disseminating documents; in the case of Social Polis dissemination tools are mainly the website, the mailing list and the personal contacts within the stakeholders

networks, in the case of EUKN mainly the national focal points and the newsletter. EUKN invited Social Polis researchers to their next event in Den Haag, and proposed to draft a memorandum of understanding. Another possible collaboration will be the participation of some Social Polis researchers as lecturers in the International Master on urban policies in which Mart Grisel is involved.

We wish to remind to all of you that you can discuss and exchange opinions and experiences on the Social Polis Forum, which is part of the Social Polis website (http://www.socialpolis.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=95&Itemid=169).

SOCIAL POLIS Newsletter

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

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