REFORM

Interreg Europe

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PRESS RELEASE

REFORM Policy Conference
4th December 2018

European regions support Sustainable Mobility Planning

On Tuesday 4th December 2018, in Brussels, the political representatives of four European regions signed with high-level representatives of the European Commission a common declaration on the role of regions in Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning. The conference took place in the heart of the European quarter of Brussels, at the House of Dutch Provinces.

This event gathered a panel of high level speakers coming from European regions. **Mr. John Blundell**, Councillor of Rochdale Borough Council, **Ms. Nadia Bessa**, from the Directorate of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support of the Region of Central Macedonia, **Mr. Volmar Delheij**, Programme Manager at the region of Parkstad Limburg and **Mr. Alessandro Meggiato**, Manager of the Public Transport and Sustainable Mobility department of the Emilia-Romagna Region represented respectively the regions of Greater Manchester (United Kingdom), Central Macedonia (Greece), Parkstad Limburg (the Netherlands), and Emilia-Romagna (Italy). They exchanged their views with two high-level representatives of the European Commission, **Mr. Matthew Baldwin**, deputy Director General at DG MOVE – the entity in charge of mobility and transport – and **Mr. Peter Berkowitz**, Head of Unit at DG REGIO – the entity in charge of the regional and urban policy.

The result of strong European interregional cooperation

The four above-mentioned European regions have been cooperating for two years, in the framework of an INTERREG Europe project called REFORM. Within the context of this project, the four regions exchanged on their respective sustainable mobility planning approaches and experiences. As a result of this process, they identified areas in which the regional authorities can play a key role in the development and deployment of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) in Europe, such as funding, regulation or knowledge exchange.

These findings were presented to the representatives of the European Commission, who acknowledged the importance of regions in the implementation and adoption of SUMPs. **Mr. Baldwin** said "*The European SUMP guidelines are currently under revision. In the new version, a stronger focus will be put on the role of regions*". The importance of interregional cooperation was also highlighted by **Mr. Berkowitz** who stated "*There is a big potential to scale innovation in the area of urban mobility, across Europe*".

Towards a more sustainable mobility planning approach in regions

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans are recognised by regions as strategic planning tools to foster low carbon mobility. **Mr. Meggiato** wants to further develop the adoption of SUMPs in his region. "*In Emilia-Romagna, three cities have already adopted a SUMP. The region is providing guidelines and financial incentives to stimulate the other municipalities of the region to adopt a SUMP*". **Mr. Delheij** added that "*A common vision and a common behaviour among municipalities of a single region are necessary to implement effectively SUMPs. In Parkstad-Limburg, representatives of all municipalities are meeting every week to share their progresses and experiences*."

For **Mr. Blundell**, sustainable urban mobility planning is a necessary tool to foster the integration of several urban policy areas. "*The SUMP in Greater Manchester started new conversations between different departments. For instance, our transport, environment, health & safety departments are fully cooperating to achieve the goals of the SUMP*."

Given their successful cooperation, the four European regions will continue their interregional cooperation in the upcoming years. **Ms. Bessa** said "*Our cooperation with the regions of Emilia-Romagna, Pakrstad Limburg and Greater Manchester has been much beneficial for the Region of Central Macedonia. In particular, Greater Manchester provided inspiration for our SUMP*".

From January 2019, the four European regions will start to implement their respective action plans, drafted in the framework of the REFORM project. **Ms. Maria Morfoulaki**, representing CERTH/HIT and coordinator of REFORM is confident that "*the four regions will provide support to local authorities in the areas of coordination, capacities, guidance and monitoring*."

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More information

Download the pictures of the conference here

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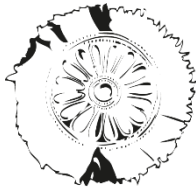TMourey@polisnetwork.eu

Note to editors
Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) is a rather new concept with high potentialities of improving low carbon economy policies. Until now, despite the existence of many studies, the availability of several reference documents and a series of European projects and initiatives, only a limited number of cities across Europe have adopted a SUMP. This is due to competence, knowledge, technical and normative limits.

The goal of the REFORM project is to improve, through a mutual learning process, the policies of Regional Operational Programs supporting the funding and diffusion of SUMPs as the main planning instrument for shifting mobility towards a low carbon intensive mobility pattern. REFORM new approach is based on the key role of Regions which can trigger SUMP development process, amplifying the adoption rate by the cities, setting a suitable strategic framework, able to overcome the existing limits. A strong exchange of experience takes place since January 2017 between four European regions with the goal of producing a European added value. Four policy instruments are addressed and consequently four Actions Plans are currently prepared.

REFORM is an INTERREG Europe project and has received funding from the European Regional Development Fund More information about REFORM: www.interregeurope.eu/REFORM

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