



VITAL CITIES - Project objectives

- Strengthening polycentric urban systems through the promotion of settlement of retail trade in city centres.
- Surveys of consumer behaviour conducted at the local level.
- Presenting and explaining the legal framework for retail settlement in the city centres of the project member states.
- Carrying out of "retail trade forums" on local level, in which the main decision-makers will be represented and where local conditions will be analysed and solutions identified by a transnational team.
- Ascertaining the optimization possibilities for supra-regional retail strategies.
- Pooling and exchange of experiences illustrated by specific case studies in the Lombardy region, in Budapest and Bavaria reflecting different approaches and aspects.

VITAL CITIES - Strengthening City Centers

Green-field retail settlement promotes a rapid urban sprawl and leads to traffic congestion and environmental problems. These processes impair the resources of residence, infrastructure and space available in the towns and thus run counter to sustainable regional development. The settlement of retail enterprises in city centres can strengthen a healthy development structure.

The project aims to strengthen polycentric urban systems and to contribute to regional development in the CADSES area. A transnational project team has been assembled for VITAL CITIES under the Lead Partnership of the InvestitionsBank des Landes Brandenburg, in which the main stakeholders are represented and will jointly work on solutions applicable at the local level. Implementation of the project will be supported by the law firm Nörr Stiefenhofer Lutz, which operates offices in all except two of the member countries of the project.

The project objectives will be met by implementing the following activities:

- Analyses, studies and surveys of consumer behaviour conducted at the lo-

cal level. The results will be integrated in a comparative study at the transnational level.

- Presenting and explaining the legal framework for retail settlement in the city centres of the project member states.
- Carrying out of "retail trade forums" at the local level, in which the main political decision-makers will be represented and where local conditions will be analysed and solutions identified by a transnational team.
- Ascertaining the optimization possibilities for supra-regional retail strategies.
- Pooling and exchange of experiences illustrated by specific case studies in the Lombardy region, in Budapest and Bavaria reflecting different approaches and aspects.

**„...strengthening
polycentric
urban systems...“**

With these measures the project will contribute to the strengthening of the legal framework in the respective countries, the local municipalities will have the necessary information available for a systematic development of retail trade, networks between participants and decision-making bodies will be established at the local level and interested retail companies will be provided with guidelines enabling them to

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ascertain the economic and legal requirements for retail settlement and assess the economic risks involved.

The activities will lead to the development of CURTIS - "Comprehensive urban retail trade improvement strategy" containing recommendations for actions taken for retail settlement in city centres.

Next Events

December 01 & 02, 2004:

Retail Trade Forum Brescia

February 10, 2005:

Retail Trade Forum Vienna

Steering Group Meeting

June 24, 2005:

Retail Trade Forum Gdansk

Please visit our website for more information and coming up events:

www.vital-cities.net

Kick-Off Meeting

On April 22 and on April 23, 2004, the official launch of the project VITAL CITIES took place at InvestitionsBank des Landes Brandenburg (ILB) in the city of Potsdam, Germany.

The primary purpose of this occasion was to meet and get to know one other personally. The retail trade situation in the partner countries was also discussed and the sub-projects within the framework of VITAL CITIES presented.

The chairman of the Lead Partner ILB, Klaus-Dieter Licht, and Dr Welf Selke from BMVBW welcomed the 43 participants from 7 different countries. Dr Selke emphasized,

in particular, the importance of the project with regard to the integration of the new EU-Member States. The manager of Berlin's general

association of retail trade, Nils Busch-Petersen, was invited to be guest speaker. He explained his thesis: „Vital cities need vital trade“ on the basis of the situation of Berlin's and Brandenburg's retail trade. Prior to 1989, west Berlin had pursued a trade policy of protection of the status quo. Consequently, the selling area per resident had



been very small comparatively. Over time this policy underwent changes not only but mostly in regard to the major retail trade companies which started to settle in Berlin's suburban areas. This led to an increase in the pressure on the companies

situated in the city centre. City-centre commerce urgently needs vital cities to be able to function. A retail trade enterprise needs

„... a very interesting approach to transnational Public-Private-Partnership...“

the following three things in order to be successful: the right location, the right location, and, of course, the right location. On the other hand, lively commerce is vital to a thriving city, because of the enormous influence of commerce on the popularity and magnetism of city centres.



Dr. Welf Selke (BMVBW)

Dr Welf Selke is the head of the Department for European Spatial Development and EU Enlargement at the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing (BMVBW). His opening words at the VITAL CITIES Kick-Off Meeting emphasized that the programme INTERREG III B is implemented within the framework of European-wide, transnational structures. The European Union will support transnational co-operation among national, regional, and local participants in European regions of co-operation in order to achieve a stronger spatial integration of the regions. The BMVBW takes the view that INTERREG III B has to be used more frequently in order to implement the main focus on spatial development politics which is relevant for Europe, and especially for the realization of the EU enlargement toward Eastern Europe.

The BMVBW supports German project partners within the scope of its commitment to the ‚Aufbau Ost‘ (development of the East), in connection with procuring the national co-financing for projects within the context of the INTERREG III B. Its involvement is particularly intended to integrate the Central and South-eastern European partners into the projects and, therefore, serves one of the most important aims of the Federal Government:

support for the cooperation of the new German Länder with the new EU-Member States.

The cities of the 8 new EU-Member States in Central and South-eastern Europe did play an important role in the economic and social process of catching up with the elder EU-Member States which has already started. European spatial and development politics see in functioning regional centres and metropolis an important support in order to back up the process of cohesion. In this context, the project VITAL CITIES could help to promote the enhancement of cities. Representatives of public authorities and private enterprises work very close together in this project. This is a new and interesting approach to transnational Public-Private-Partnership (PPP).

VITAL CITIES - Subprojects

The BAG Trade Association - analysis of consumer behaviour

The Federal Association of Medium and Large-scale Retail Enterprises (BAG) is one of the most important parent organizations of retail trade. It has carried out consumer surveys in 150 German cities since 1965.

It is the first time ever that consumer behaviour surveys are focussing on cities in Central and Eastern Europe which are partners in this project. These surveys will provide information about consumer behaviour which will be submitted to the cities after having been analysed by experts.

ECE - Retail Trade Forums

The market leader of shopping centres in city centres, ECE Project Management GmbH & Co. KG, pursues with the retail trade forums the goal of bringing different interest groups together. Political decision-makers have a platform in order to formulate and exchange their aims and guidelines with retail companies and potential investors. It is thus possible to create cooperative structures in order to improve the initial position for investment activities. In addition, the results of the consumer surveys will be presented and explained in those cities. Seven retail trade forums are planned, particularly in the cities of Vienna, Gdansk, Prague, Budapest, Pecs, Poznan and Potsdam.

Studio Metropolitana - Metropolis and Commerce

The city of Budapest is developing a strategy for the local retail trade which addresses the focal question:

what can the administration do in order to achieve a well-balanced development. Activity plans will be created for the pi-

lot districts of Ferencváros (city centre) and Békásmegyer (suburban area). Teams with different experts will be set up, surveys will be carried out about customers' needs, local retail trade forums will be set up and advertisements developed. This sub project will be co-financed by PHARE funds.

The Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology- Fitness programme to strengthen Bavaria's city centres

The programme is designed in order to help preserve the attractiveness, diversity and popularity of city centres to strengthen the traditional retail trade. Within the VITAL CITIES framework, the Fitness programme will be implemented in the town of Bamberg (Bavaria) and will start by taking stock of the current situation. A strategic framework for actions will be developed on that basis and implemented during the second project phase. This process will be accompanied by a coordinator, who will work closely with the mayor and who will also organize the cooperation among the participants.

Region of Lombardy

In addition to the metropolis of Milan, the region of Lombardy is characterized by a lack of basic retail trades in its mountain regions. The sub project of Lombardy aims to improve the supply situation in the mountain regions and revitalize the city centres. In order to obtain an ideal result, first the facts will be collected and a survey of customers' behaviour will be conducted. Ideas for improving the present situation will be discussed with all relevant participants at the regional retail trade forums.

ILB - Investigation of the legal provisions in the Countries involved

The legal provisions are an essential element for strengthening city centres and preventing settlements at "green-field sites". The law firm NÖRR STIEFENHOFER LUTZ is analysing the legal provisions in the countries involved and is thus checking possible ways of optimising how retail trade settlements can be steered at the regional level. The analysis covers national and regional legislation, national and regional spatial planning, building laws, competition law, labour law and other aspects.

Further Contents of the Project

The DSSW analyses the development of retail trade in border areas. In meetings of experts it will be ascertained whether or not international ballots are necessary. The results will be discussed in the retail trade forums.

URBANPROIECT is developing a study with the aim of improving the settlement of retail trade in Romania's city centres, thus contributing to the sustainable development of the cities.

The project of IGIS Frankfurt/Oder will assess disused retail trade areas and implement marketing measures to reduce unused retail capacity in city centres.

Partners in VITAL CITIES

Germany

Lead Partner

InvestitionsBank des Landes Brandenburg (ILB)

Mr Pertti Hermannek
pertti.hermannek@ilb.de
Project Manager:
Ms Jutta Gragert
jutta.gragert@ilb.de

Thematic Project Co-ordination:
NÖRR STIEFENHOFER LUTZ
Mr Holger Schmitz
holger.schmitz@noerr.de

**Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs,
Infrastructure, Transport and Technology**
Mr Burchard Schütze
burchard.schuetze@stmwivt.bayern.de

**Federal Association Medium and
Large-scale Retail Enterprises**
Mr Rolf Pangels
rolfpangels@aol.com

**German Association for Housing, Urban
and Spatial Development**
Dr Hans-Michael Brey
h-m.brey@deutscher-verband.org

Institute for Town Centre Development
Mr Stefan Heerde
info@dssw.de

ECE Projektmanagement GmbH & Co. KG
Ms Dörthe Kellermeier
doerthe.kellermeier@ece.de

**Joint Spatial Planning Departement
Berlin Brandenburg**
Mr Bernd Engel
bernd.engel@gl.brandenburg.de

**Association of Interests City Centre
registered Association Frankfurt/Oder**
Ms Regina Haring
haring.igis@t-online.de

Saxon State Ministry of Interior
Mr Edgar Trawnicek
edgar.trawnicek@smi.sachsen.de

City of Görlitz
Ms Sabine Adam
s.adam@goerlitz.de

City of Potsdam
Ms Jutta Moll
jutta.moll@rathaus.potsdam.de

City of Poznan
Mr Waldemar Pierzchlewski
waldik2001@yahoo.de

University of Zielona Gora
Mr Prof Klaus Wenzel
klswnzl@aol.com

Romania

URBANPROIECT
Ms Teodora Coman
tedico@incdurban.ro

Chamber of Commerce Timisoara
Mr Emil Mateescu
cciat@cciat.ro

Czech Republic

Association of Consumer Research Prague
Mr Michal Severa
severa@gfk.cz

Italy

Lombardy Region
Ms Maria Luisa Dagnino
marialuisa_dagnino@regione.lombardia.it

Hungary

Studio Metropolitana Budapest
Mr Richárd Ongjerth
ongjerth@studiometropolitana.hu

Local Government of Budapest IXth District
Mr Tamás Bánsági
alpolgbt@ferencvaros.hu

Austria

City of Vienna
Mr Walther Stöckl
sto@meu.magwien.gv.at

City of Pécs
Mr Peter Merza
peter.merza@interhouse.hu

Poland

ECE Projektmanagement Polska Sp. zo.

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