

# TERRITORIAL.

the ESPON magazine

green infrastructure

& reuse of spaces

*with contributions from*

*Claude Turmes, Maria Spyraiki, Željko Uhlir*

Demographic challenges  
in the aftermath of COVID-19  
Dubravka Šuica,  
Vice-President  
of the EU Commission



Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

Issue 1 • May 2020 • Cover Dalmatia, Croatia

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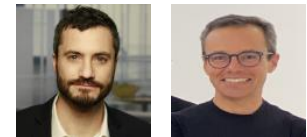


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## Sustainable regeneration of port cities



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Daniele Ronsivalle

**Despite overall growth in the maritime sector, many European port cities are challenged by the migration of port-related activities from inner-city areas to other locations. The relocation of these economic activities results in the emergence of brownfield sites in strategic urban locations. Reusing these sites in a sustainable manner can contribute to preventing new land take and the regeneration of port cities. The city of Brest (France) is a good example of a port city that rejuvenated its inner-city area in a sustainable way.**

There is widespread recognition that to be sustainable the development of the European territory will require more efficient and active land management and the consolidation of existing urban footprints. A key opportunity for European cities in this regard lies in the regeneration of former brownfield sites and, in many cities, these take the form of waterfront sites. Across Europe's largest cities, such as Rotterdam and London, waterfront or dockland regeneration has been going on for close to 40 years. But, given that the majority of Europe's urban areas are small or medium-sized cities, it is also important to understand the potential regeneration capacity of these types of cities.

The opportunities and challenges related to the regeneration of small and medium-sized port cities are broadly similar across Europe. However, significant differences are found between port cities in terms of their governance structures, land ownership, degrees of separation between port and urban functions, and the pace of the phasing out of port and industrial activities along the harbourfront.

The ENSURE (European Regeneration through Port City Regeneration) project's Good Practice Framework for European Sustainable Urbanisation through Port City Regeneration – An Operative Guide proposes a set of solutions based on experiences from small and medium-sized European port cities. Three key policy recommendations serve as a backbone to this good practice framework, which highlights the importance of political commitment and active leadership in supporting regeneration processes.

The first policy recommendation for starting an integrated regeneration process is to gain an understanding of existing port city relationships, using spatial analysis tools and by evaluating plans and policies at national, regional and local levels.

The second policy recommendation argues for the use of suitable planning approaches that address ports and cities as systems with interlinked components. Strategic plans, cross-district master plans and land-use plans for the port and the city hold the key to resolving port–city mismatches, and addressing port city regeneration as part of a wider sustainable urban development strategy.

The third policy recommendation advocates the establishment of suitable governance models and funding arrangements for each of the regeneration projects or plans. Engaging all stakeholders and involving civil society organisations, citizens, landowners and local businesses are essential to ensuring that all relevant perspectives are taken into consideration and that any planned regeneration receives widespread support and benefits all.

Basically, port city regeneration is often part of a boosterish



agenda to retain and enhance global competitiveness and attract foreign direct investment, workplaces and tourists to both the city and the wider region or even country. The successful regeneration of waterfront areas can be a stepping stone to the revitalisation of urban centres in port cities, maintaining or redeveloping economic and leisure activities and increasing housing capacity, while reusing abandoned spaces and preventing net land take.



***Strategic plans, cross-district master plans and land-use plans hold the key to resolving port–city mismatches, and addressing port city regeneration***



**Capucins Workshops in Brest: an example of smart reuse of spaces and buildings in former port locations**

In Brest, regeneration projects have improved the integration of port areas into the city and improved the city’s attractiveness for residents and visitors. In the 1980s and 1990s, the vision for the regeneration of this port city originated mainly from the public sector, which initiated and implemented a lengthy process of revitalisation of the traditional industrial port.

The beacon for the regeneration process was the restoration of the Capucins Workshops, a former navy-owned area along the Penfeld river mouth. In 2005, Brest Métropole awarded a contract to architect and urban planner Bruno Fortier to devise a plan for the regeneration of the Capucins area and the Capucins Workshops. The overall result of the regeneration was a new mixed-use neighbourhood with cultural, economic and residential functions, which responded to the ambition of reconnecting Brest with its maritime and industrial heritage. The regeneration of the Capucins neighbourhood was mainly based on the reuse of sealed soils. This resulted in new urban facilities (covering a surface of 25 000 m2 and attracting 3 million visitors in two years), an eco- and inclusionary

neighbourhood and an innovative sustainable mobility solution, crossing the Penfeld river. The naval/industrial identity of the place was maintained with a permanent exhibition on the history of the Capucins area and the perseveration of remaining machinery. In the future, a new naval industry campus will be hosted in the Capucins Workshops.

These highly successful outcomes are the results of a long-term sustainable governance process. Brest Métropole created a semi-public satellite organisation to redevelop the area. This reduced the risk for the public sector by sharing the risk with the private sector, attracting their investments.

For the Capucins Workshops regeneration project, public involvement took place at the planning stage and in the early stages of the works to create a sense of ownership of the new public space. Today, the Capucins Workshops form the flagship infrastructure of Brest Métropole, which is now deploying a new and ambitious urban strategy called ‘Brest Coeur de Métropole’.



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Issue 1 • May 2020

**Image front cover:**

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**Image back page:**

Ivan Vuksa, Shutterstock

The content pages 8, 10, 14-21, 23, 29, 30, 32-35, 37-39, 42-46, 48, 49, 56, 59-61, 63, 65, 71 include images sourced from Shutterstock.

The ESPON magazine is produced within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The ESPON EGTC is the single beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States, the United Kingdom and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The magazine does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

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