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## Sustainable urban development

### Position paper

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#### Summary

Our cities and municipalities – the places where people live and work – are the lynchpin of sustainable development. Efforts towards sustainable development must be better managed and cooperation improved. Sustainable land-use planning must lead to more sparing and efficient use of land. Urban development funding has to focus even more determinedly on sustainable development issues. Sustainable construction and redevelopment, as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will have a fundamental impact on the quality of life in our towns and cities.

The Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development calls on the Federal Government to

- place a stronger focus on municipalities as the leading players in sustainable development and help them make a new start with regard to sustainable development;
- assess the measures implemented so far in order to identify where German municipalities stand in relation to the Federal Government’s sustainability strategy as it progresses;
- elaborate proposals on how to
  - provide support for municipalities in their efforts towards sustainable development;
  - inspire more cities and municipalities to join in sustainability efforts;
  - establish structures that facilitate cooperation between different levels of government, taking due account of the complexity of the issue while enabling common aims to be achieved, particularly the SDGs currently in negotiation;
  - promote a “green economy” in the context of a sustainable urban development strategy;
- actively encourage
  - the development of resilient, resource-efficient infrastructures that are suitable for people of all generations and take account of demographic developments;
  - increased cooperation at regional level, between municipalities, and with the various sectors of society (industry, civil society, science);
  - the further development of local democracy by creating an intelligent mix of representative, direct and informal means of participation.



To promote more sustainable land-use planning, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development is calling for further progress to be made in

- developing the spatial planning and zoning law according to the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities to optimise sustainable land use; rural areas should also be given consideration;
- promoting a strategic land management system at municipal level (*Allianz für die Fläche*/Alliance for resource-saving land use);
- promoting projects that reduce the rate of new land consumption at municipal level;
- fine-tuning existing economic instruments and testing new methods (structural support, taxes, charges, new municipal finance management systems, tradable land planning permits) to achieve more efficient use of land;
- informing and supporting municipalities on the sustainable development of underground space.

To promote sustainable urban development funding, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development is calling for further progress to be made in

- aligning urban development funding with criteria that take equal account of ecological, economic and social considerations; and taking the first-ever “Tag der Städtebauförderung” (“Day of Urban Development”) on 9 May 2015 as an opportunity to focus more strongly on sustainability issues;
- reviewing funding programmes in accordance with sustainability criteria;
- cooperation between the various ministries to facilitate the harmonisation of funding programmes;
- putting a greater focus on sustainability issues in negotiations between the federal and *Länder* governments on administrative agreements for the implementation of urban development funding programmes.

To promote sustainable construction and redevelopment in cities and municipalities, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development is calling for further progress to be made in

- promoting the cradle-to-cradle principle at municipal level;
- restricting sustainability certification to buildings equipped with an integrated recycling concept for the entire building;
- initiating more neighbourhood-based urban development schemes that involve local residents in order to promote social cohesion in a way that takes account of energy efficiency, climate change, social criteria and affordability.