



“TURaS”

Transitioning towards Urban Resilience and Sustainability

PRESS RELEASE

“TURaS: 16 European cities meet in Dublin to launch Irish-led EU initiative on urban resilience and sustainability”

Dublin, 11th November 2011: Representatives of 16 European cities came together in Dublin this week to launch the TURaS (Transitioning towards Urban Resilience and Sustainability) project which aims to enable European cities and their surrounding rural areas to build resilience in the face of significant sustainability challenges.

For the first time in history more than 50 % of the world's population now live in urban areas. By 2050, about 70 % of people are likely to be city dwellers, compared with less than 30 % in 1950 (UN Population Division, 2010). Coupled with the impact of climate change, this period of unprecedented urban growth is creating enormous environmental challenges for European cities from the loss of urban biodiversity leading to increased flood risk to ever expanding urban consumption “footprints” on the rural areas surrounding cities.

In response to these challenges, researchers, local authorities and business partners from 16 cities in 11 different European countries will work together over the next five years to create new transition strategies to enable European cities to build resilience and sustainability and reduce their urban ecological footprint.

Each city will focus on a particular strand of research before coming together at the end of the five years with an integrated approach to urban resilience and sustainability. In Rotterdam, Stuttgart and London, for example, to mitigate against higher flood risks researchers will look at new ways of using up rain water such as green walls and roofs. In Brussels, Rome and Seville, business leaders will look at ways to support sustainable local businesses while in Dublin and Nottingham, the feasibility of using derelict sites to increase urban biodiversity and improve urban community life will be investigated.

An important element of the project is engaging with local citizens to get their input on sustainability issues. Speaking at the event, Dick Gleeson from Dublin City Council said: “We are very excited about the potential of this project to enable citizens to co-produce the city of the future”.

The TURaS project is coordinated by University College Dublin and receives €6.7 million in funding from the Seventh Framework Programme of the EU.

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