



THE LEIPZIG CHARTER: THE SUSTAINABLE CITY  
AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE IDEA  
THIRTEEN YEARS LATER

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*Die Stadt muss schön sein...*

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## 1. THE CENTRALITY OF THE CITY AND URBAN LIFE IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY

Before the change of millennium, most of human population came to be predominantly urban, so we are sure that, as we keep advancing from that moment, which was a sign of a new age, the urban dimension will be raised and will become one of the most prevailing and distinctive marks of the times we are in. So much so, and with such a large outreach, that talking about cities and urban spaces (taking into account that it is a very comprehensive matter, open to many claims) will require a renewed conceptual and, of course, semantic reconsideration, as disruptive (or more) as the one that resulted from the emergence of industrialization in the past.

Apart from the concepts, which tend to idealize the referent of the city in contrast to the instrumental indistinction of the space, or rather, of the *urban territory* in an advanced process of functional dematerialization, the genealogy of the conceptual production with doctrinal aspirations, urban plans and territory ordinance, such as manifests, international charters, conventions, agendas, declarations, pacts, programmes, etc. illustrates this continuous journey of referential, orientative and, in short, dedicatedly anticipating commitment of the hope and visions of the future which is inherent to the balance of communal life.

Because after all, besides all this, we cannot forget that it is on the territory that our feet rest, and it is in our present time, legitimated by the memories of what we elaborated, that we exist, and that we are called to foresee the future.

Although this is not the place to examine the nature of the big urban debates, and even if these are embedded in an open perspective (today we would call it holistic), they are the necessary introduction to address the so-called *Leipzig Charter* (LC), from May 2007. The charter is, then, an excellent occasion to discuss the sustained development of our territory and of the several contexts in which it is embedded. Within this perspective, the LC constituted a well-founded framework, rooted in an interactive and unavoidable triangulation: the city, in its widest, most polysemic sense; sustainability, for its operational and indispensable evidence; and Europe, the design of an identity dimension, in permanent and necessary (re)construction. These are the conceptual foundations of the Leipzig charter, which also brings us here to discern the strategic lines of the urban future in the peninsular northwest.



## The city, the urban space, and from the crisis of the public space to the debauchery of the private one

The city, as matrix idea, especially among us as a polis, or a Graeco-Latin *urbs*, as a community of individuals circumscribed to its habitat, with consciousness of themselves and of their cosmos within the walls, agents and receivers of cultural production, mediators of symbolic, religious, political and social archetypes. The city, a place of celebration and memory, but also a stronghold and basis of attack, sedentary lifestyle and flux switching. A space, by nature, of exchange, creativity and contact of ideas, people and goods. Paradoxically, and still today, its root has a center of (agri) culture and domestication. A consumption basis with its origin in the silage, food and energy supply, distribution of work and roles, and simultaneously of alterity, segregation and promiscuity among people and uses. But, invariable, the city is always the most intense point of diversity densification. The city is still the product of an ideal with a long journey, currently subjected to several misconceptions when we mention it, but which preserves this fundamental idea of what the physical territory must inevitably have, the cosmopolitan experience.

Today, the concept of the city faces its canonical end. The definitive remission of an entirely symbolic and ideal meaning, in front of an inexorable process of global urbanisation and metropolisation. Indeed, under the threat of extinction of the public space, the matrix foundation of *polis*, *civitas*, and in any case transversal to every latitude or culture. We would go even further admitting the debauchery of the private space (J. Habermas, 1978), which disintegrates through the intrusion of *datamedia*, rather than just commercializing, expropriating the individuality and extinguishing its own intimacy. Coexistence dimensions are first transferred from the public space to the private, making the former anonymous, a place of passage, of advertising -that is, no-one's place-; and later the private space, for offering itself as a target of the discursive interaction of the *media*, which are immersed in the innermost domestic intimacy, where massification absorbs the individual and threatens freedom. Emptied of all sociability, intimacy becomes a retreat for an individuality in constant loss, through stripping and surveillance. As R. Sennett reminds us (1979), the more intimate the community is, the less sociable it becomes. Hence the sense of city and its key role in the desirable scrutiny of any future scenario.

It could thus be said that the first step towards the rehabilitation of the central role of cities, as a factor of requalification of the urban space and, particularly, of European reconstruction, is precisely to recover the symbolic scope of what cities represent, at least, since the primitive Graeco-Latin

identitary expression, grasped in the continent: the relaunch of the urban public space to the scale of individuals, as a basic element of civic community and territorial cohesion, in what we would call the Aristotelian allegorical place, where the citizen's voice uttered from the agora can take advantage of potential guarantees to reach the city gates and, above all, to be understood up to the multisectoral and undifferentiated ends of the urban environment that is nowadays experienced and inhabited.

The urban being has progressively de-spatialized itself. One can be more urbanite or citizen... One can live in an urban way, what the collective imaginary calls rural, and to live, in the same concept, from expeditious or marginal agricultures on the outskirts of the metropolises. Nowadays we are all urban, even in the desert or in the Amazonia, visiting the Galapagos Islands or Tibet, or departing from the Tierra del Fuego towards Antarctica... Urban space, besides holding most of the world population, is the source that generates the diversity of lifestyles that are established globally.

For its part, the city, in its most refined sense, and I insist, as an ideal of reference, presents itself as an alternative synthesis. This is how we understand the foundation of the centrality of the city, for its recovery in the scope of the urban space, facing two main challenges: that of the *scale* and that of the *network*. That idea about the end of the city that emerged in the industrial revolution, after the end of the eighteenth century, which stated that the city was associated with growth, quantity, and population increases, must evoke precisely the opposite today. Not just the cyclical phenomena against urbanization, the semantic drifts of *rurbanization*, but also, precisely, the incessant search for the central dimension of collective identity, the fair dimension that the ancient Greeks talked about, not just the dimension of quantity, as incomprehensible as it may be, but the dimension of quality, of governance, the sustainability of the reunion, the appeasement of otherness, of distant feelings, of the one who arrives, and the security of the one who leaves, for the capacity of inter-communication that promotes and guarantees to those who are physically distant...

In a sense, the rehabilitation of community reminiscences, interestingly, are neither exclusively urban nor rural... once again the reach of the voice as a measure for humanity... The irreplaceable value of the *direct* and lively rhythm of biocycles, which digitalization threatens to subvert, curse, even extinguish... The cities as laboratories of coexistence or inevitabilities of the time we have reached... The nations and countries contained within them... In fact, this is a new picture of the challenge of urban relationships, I would say, rather than what occurs between regions, which are imperfect states. How many times has this been the case in the European scene, being only feudalization scales, devoid of agility and of the operational basis of exchange and contact that cities offer.



These are places of departure and arrival, of network definition, hierarchy of itineraries and not just a uniformization system. The cities observed as the river, which is movement, compared to the hydrographic basin, which is a slightly deep receptacle, just for support of the river and its ramifications... The river is the one that shapes and draws, while the basin resists, adapts and is adapted...

Therefore, the city appears in this context as the unitary and alternative model of European referencing, articulator and cohesion factor of the territory, for the decisive role that it can play as a hinge, particularly at the level of several scales in which we find ourselves. From the national and international levels, in a certain sense, blurring the risk of the intermediate level, which tends to be more conflicting, and of which the region is an example (the same that, however, enhances the energies of proximity). For their part, cities, outside the national context, are consensually better equipped with a common identity base, with a wider scope. With the ability to mobilize energies and crossings. Finally, at the global level, the city represents an unquestionable base of multilevel exchanges, arrival and departure reference, and from a European strategic point of view, desirably more complementary and in solidarity with each other, rather than island-like and merely competitive, as it has been promoted all these years.

## 2. THE LEIPZIG CHARTER (LC) - THE CITY AS A CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENT OF A EUROPEAN IDENTITY MATRIX

The LC, seen in the context of the EU's territorial cohesion policy, constituted one of the most expectant summary commitments within the work agenda for the next German Presidency (July/December 2020), because, inevitably, Europe's future is increasingly the future of sustainability and of the articulation of its urban network. Resuming the initiative from May 2007, it is now important to evaluate, update and reformulate what is considered the most expressive support of this design, and which has in the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU), also known as the *Pact of Amsterdam* (May 2016), the foundations of the conceptual scheme intended for sustainable development of the European territory. A process whose prospective core is found in the urban space - or in its ideal sense, i.e. the cities - the most consistent perspectives of cohesion in the European territory.

Let us remember that the principle was that of economic growth, social progress and innovation, aware, however, of the need to adopt an integrated policy of development and special attention to socially-disadvantaged urban areas. The LC, however, was also open to the inclusion of priority themes, a request that would gain relevance, almost a decade later, with the endorsement of the Pact of Amsterdam.

Thus, the UAEU appeared based on the preparatory work activities of the previous year, registered in the Riga Declaration (2016), where, besides reiterating the economic urban potential and the social inclusion, new challenges were admitted, considering them to be emergent, such as those that have become protagonists with the crisis of the refugee waves that then aimed for the European continent. The UAEU can therefore be configured as an application tool and, simultaneously, as the portfolio of priorities of the community urban system, meant to act as a hinge between the multisectoral processes of European legislation, the inventive consistency in the access to financing funds, and the sharing of knowledge and experiences among the internal diversity. That is, the definition of the three fundamental pillars for the design and implementation of community policies<sup>2</sup>:

- **Better regulation:** considering local impacts and the urban dimension of community legislation, anticipating difficulties in implementation;
- **Better funding:** improving accessibility, coordination and simplification of the funds available for urban authorities;
- **Better knowledge:** strengthening the knowledge basis about urban policy and cooperation and sharing good practices between cities.

It was made clear the need to rationalize and articulate community policies, not just at the level of European institutions and member states, but also to integrate urban authorities in a better way. Avoiding, however, the creation of new regulations, structures, or the opening of new funds. Above all, it was essential to promote the free initiative and volunteering between the manifold existing community realities, namely, urban authorities and Member States. Twelve priority themes were listed<sup>3</sup>:

1. Housing
2. Employment and competences
3. Urban poverty
4. Integration of migrants and refugees
5. Circular economy
6. Climatic adaptation
7. Energy transition
8. Urban mobility
9. Digital transition
10. Sustainable use of the soil and nature-based solutions
11. Air quality
12. Innovative and responsible public procurement

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2. UAEU

3. They can be considered themes for the constitution of Innovative Urban Actions, in this case, an instrument of the European Commission intended for Urban Authorities, attributed with a financial envelope.





Let us remember that the LC is concomitant with the Territorial Agenda of the European Union, (TAEU), simultaneously adopted in Leipzig under the slogan: Towards a more competitive Europe, based on the diversity of its regions. In fact, although the LC may have its inspiring reference in the Green Book about urban environment (1990) and in the pilot projects funded by structural funds of that decade, highlighting the environmental component that persisted in the design of EU territorial policy (Naylon et al., 2007), the truth is that the design of territorial cohesion had as its main attractor the development envisaged for a regional scale: the region.

It could be said that the growing awareness about sustainable<sup>4</sup> development, at least since the United Nations Conference in Stockholm (1972), has put the environment fragility on the agenda, as one of the main recurrent concerns in international conventions. At a global level, however, it was at the Conference of Rio de Janeiro (Agenda 21, 1992), followed by a series of conventions both at a European and a global level, that the focus on development shifted to the sustainability<sup>5</sup> of the cities. It should be noted that this was a relationship that would contribute in a decisive way to the emergence of the urban scale within world affairs. It was unequivocally recognized that a large part of the impact and visibility of community policies, particularly the environment, had the urban space as its main focus, i.e., the cities. On the other hand, the recentralization of regional development policies based until then on depressed regions, began to affect all kinds of regions.

However, we believe that urban and city policies have the merit of blurring the complexity of articulation at a regional scale, much more susceptible to the idiosyncrasies of internal politics in most Member States. It was then agreed to value the urban dimension as an element to give privilege to, for the transversality and integration at all levels in the performance of several sectoral policies.

Obviously, valuing the relationship: of the public space; the infrastructure networks, striving for energy efficiency; the innovation in the education sector; and the intervention in socially-disadvantaged housing areas; all this, with the framework of the TAUE, which emphasized the recognition of the relationships between cities and regions. In particular, its polycentric texture, its organization of network interdependencies, and also the so-called city-countryside relationship, including several approaches, among which it stands out the climate change matter.

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4. The definition appeared for the first time in the Brundtland report (1987).

5. Of which it is an example the Aalborg Charter (1994), the Charter of European Cities & Towns for Sustainability at the Lisbon Conference (1996); the revision of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997); the Lille Action Program (2000); the joint declaration of "Urban Acquis" in Rotterdam: "Using the best practices of cities for the benefit of cohesion policy" (2004); the Bristol Accord on Sustainable Communities in Europe (2005); as well as others with a greater or lesser focus on the themes considered here.

In a certain sense, it can be admitted a transformation of cohesion policies that were initially based on the CAP<sup>6</sup>/Rural Development, through financial incentives and support to the private sector, and investment in infrastructure; all this in view of the increasing importance of the environmental, energy, and transport policies, with a greater expression in the public sector and greater visibility in urban spaces.

European governance is therefore intended to be more intersectoral, with the direct involvement of the protagonists of regional, local and urban authorities. On the other hand, it is increasingly necessary to improve the evaluation instruments of development plans, projects and supports, not only at the strategic, environmental, territorial, and other related levels, in order to check possible contradictions and deviations from the endorsed political objectives.

### The context of the Leipzig charter

To begin with, it is worth reviewing some references of the temporal context in which the Leipzig Charter was signed in May 2007, in order to better understand the current situation. It should be remembered that, before the end of the year, a huge global financial recession broke out, resulting from the aftershocks generated by the collapse of the US housing market, with already-forecasted effects upon the European economies, particularly those where the scarcity of assets exposed the problem of sovereign debt. In contrast, while Europe was reconstituting itself to the east at the beginning of that year, with the adherences of Bulgaria and Romania, the euphoric federalism celebrated in Lisbon a treaty which, in many aspects, was already lagged in relation to what was being said, trying to force what, in the perspective of European construction, was most unfortunate and yet to come. Ignoring the previous signs, embodied in the result of the European referendums from France (2001) and Holland (2005), the Lisbon Treaty did not immediately have a full discussion, namely, due to the non-ratification of Ireland.

However, what can be considered as a historical fallout since then has not ceased to constitute a reflection factor in relation to the current European model, especially through the argument founded on the criticisms of the distancing between citizens and the European institutions, as well as the weakening of the electorates of nations. On the other hand, there have emerged other converging factors that worsened the confidence of citizens in the European project, accentuated by the intervention of the so-called *Troika*, which revealed the latent division of a southern *sub-Europe*; and, more recently, with the unavoidable *Brexit*, whose real impacts are still difficult to assess.

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6. Common Agricultural Policy.

But these might certainly impose on us a new vision of Europe, with which Europeans can increasingly identify themselves, and which is able to unite us in a volunteering rather than imposing way.

Also in Lisbon, seven years before, when the Strategic Agenda for the European Council (March 2000) was approved, this pan-European idea exclusively based on the economic and technological aspect of development, devaluing the priority of social and environmental approaches (although it mentioned them), proved to be insufficient to fulfill European designs. It was rectified by the European Council in Gothenburg (June 2011) with the reinforcement of *sustainable development*. However, the kindness of the statements and the coherence of the strategies keep having several application difficulties. The triptych “greener, smarter and more inclusive” continues to be difficult to implement, and even in some places, it is merely virtual.

With the signature of the Leipzig Charter (LC), it was reinforced the political awareness about the role of cities in strengthening the European cohesion, from a perspective of sustainable urban development, with economic growth associated with the subsidiary and social responsibility of the State at its most diverse levels. In the next year, the Marseille Declaration (2008) will emphasize the integrated, cohesive and sustainable urban development. The associationism of cities then gains relevance with the celebration of meetings and the creation of networks, which are joined by political representatives, urban authorities, and other agents of local development.

With the establishment of the European Strategy 2020 (March 2010), the cities and the urban space consolidate the privileged role that they are taking on the narrative of European development, especially because they are recognized as the stages par excellence for job creation and for the quality of life for citizens. Strategic goals for inclusive, sustainable and smart growth. This is what is stated in the subsequent Letter of Toledo, in June of the same year, about the emphasis on the Integrated Urban Regeneration, aiming to apply the previous principles, *that is, a more intelligent, sustainable and socially inclusive urban development in Europe*. It is divided into three key parts:

- a) How to deal with current urban challenges and apply the 2020 Europe Strategy;
- b) Unwrapping the framework of European Reference of the European City; and,
- c) Consolidating an European Urban Agenda for the future.

The economic crisis that bursted in Europe, especially in urban Portugal, with unemployment and the real estate crisis which affected local families and finances, put on the table a vision of the city valued in revisiting the existing, instead of the urban expansionism previously experienced.

Five years later, barely contradicted by the reminder of the Polish presidency (2011), there appeared the Riga Declaration (2015), which rescued Europe's priority in having an Urban Agenda, this time with the novelty of starting to contemplate the inclusion of small and medium-sized urban areas. This reinforcement was not unrelated to a convergent and broad international movement affecting the environment, the sustainability and the habitat that, in that period, before and after, experienced reasonable progress and signed referential frameworks. Let us see, as an example, the contribution from last year conference: "*CITIES - Cities of Tomorrow: Investing in Europe*" (Brussels, Feb. 2014); in that same year, the United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing, from the UN Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 2015); the International Guidelines on urban and territorial planning (NY, Sep. 2015), in the context of the UN General Assembly, in order to prepare the Habitat III; and finally, among other conventions with the common denominator of sustainable development, the so-called Paris Agreement on climate change, a decisive manifest in the awareness about the need for a new paradigm (Paris, nov./dec. 2015).

As we have already mentioned, with the Pact of Amsterdam (May. 2016), it was initiated the European Urban Agenda, which the Bucharest Declaration (Jun. 2019) reinforced, providing the bridge with the LC.

The latest developments reveal the trend for the convergence of strategies between the United Nations, the European Union, and some countries more aware of the impact of their international political agenda, with a more or less normative character. That is, the purposes of sustainable development and social equity are looking for the necessary action plans so that policies can become effective. For that purpose, the European Commission, perhaps aware of the main foundation of its own internal crisis, recently proposed for the period (2021-27) the political objective of bringing Europe closer to citizens. For this, already in the current year, some European institutions have already recognised<sup>7</sup> for future generations of urban strategies the possibility of allocating 6% of the total ERDF to sustainable urban development (Cruz Mera, 2020).

Three master ideas emerge in the statements above: the awareness of the global network of cities, in addition to more or less regional, more or less national, contexts; the importance of local governments, of urban and metropolitan authorities, the administrations of small and medium-sized cities; and finally, the sustainability of the future, based on low carbon levels, biodiversity, efficiency, resilience, intelligence and ecology, with progressive margins of self-sufficiency. In short, we might say, a desirably happier urban reality.

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7. European Commission: General Directorate of Regional and Urban Policy; and Joint Research Centre.



### 3. FROM BRAGA AND FOR BRAGA, THROUGH THE LEIPZIG CHARTER

#### An explanation of Braga's reality

Braga, the Portuguese city heir to the two-thousand-year-old Bracara Augusta, was the capital of the Roman province of Callaecia (3rd century). That is, a vast colonial region that generally comprises Galicia (Spain) and the territory to the north of the Douro river (Portugal). It occupies a central position between the course of this river and the Minho river, to the north, which constitutes a section of the border between Portugal and Spain. Certainly, one of the oldest, most peaceful and stable borders in Europe. Currently having a city population of around 120 thousand inhabitants, in the case of Portugal, it occupies an intermediate position and can be admitted as the third Portuguese city, external to the only two metropolitan contexts of Lisbon and Porto. Braga is installed in a densely populated municipality (around 990 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>), with a dispersed population, constituting a potential attraction with a population of over one million.

The city has experienced a remarkable urban growth, as shown in the last inter-census period (+10.5%), whereas a demographic transition that allows to reconcile the growth of an elderly population (aging rate 85.6%, 2013) and the resulting increase in the life expectancy, with a young population (35% less than 25 years old, 2011). This profile enshrined the city in recent years as the Capital of Youth, both at a European level (2012) and at an Ibero-American level (2016).

Currently being an important political and administrative center, it shows, with a great percentage of socioeconomic indicators, qualifiedly-better values than the country average (3rd best city for doing business and 4th best city to live in<sup>8</sup>). The city has two universities and a polytechnic institute, with an Iberian international nanotechnology laboratory. The schooling rate is above the national average (2013-2017). More recently, 2019 was a particularly gratifying year in terms of culture, with the highlight of the classification of Bom Jesus do Monte as a cultural landscape, inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The same entity also recognized it as a Creative City, in the category of Media Arts. All of this in the same year that Braga was catalogued as the 2nd best European tourist destination.

8. Bloom Consulting. Portugal City Brand ranking (2018).

## Braga in the Leipzig Charter

The noticed absence of specific EU competences in the field of urban planning and city policies somehow reflects what the EU is in terms of a political organization and, in a way, also a reflection of the situation of the union itself. In Portugal, urban planning policies have a long historical tradition emanating from the centralist norms that make it largely dependent on the initiatives and the funding of the central government. More recently, the broad guidelines for spatial planning and city policies, such as major public works subsidized by the State like infrastructures, equipments and other incident actions within the public space, since they decisively depend on the effort factors of the European integration process, in terms of implementation they keep depending on the national political processes.

Therefore, in the domain of distributive voluntarism, the strongest expectations fell on the relationship between the local urban power and the country's central administration. That is precisely why the implementation of strategic and regulatory guidelines is difficult, it generates diffidence and it faces many resistances, especially in the levels of social organization that are further from the power centres, and further from the direct aspirations of citizens.

On the opposite level, the path of exchange and mutual knowledge between cities that has been taken in recent years, like the contact with different realities, the exchange of experiences, the establishment of networks, or merely the bilateral relations -such as twinning cities, the participation in European networks, such as URBACT- has generated situations of approximation and enrichment, intense learning, collaboration between participants and continued cooperation. This has been one of the most effective ways of valuing cosmopolitan cultural expressions and European integration, which is nowadays producing good results.

The example of the city of Braga shows a municipality that is entirely urban in its active life, with small stretches of agroforestry rurality, very fragmented and with a scattered, somewhat dendritic, population, which is joined by a smallholding framework marked by a manifest rooted individuality, still entrepreneurial and endowed with great initiative. In our view, this is the framework that determines the design of **territorial cohesion** and the assertion of the **public space** as fundamental factors of local urban development, which is desiredly integrated and increasingly sustained. Hence the **planning and ordering of the territory**, being closely associated with the continuous and daily domain of **urban management**, constitutes, among us, the basic integration level of which we can give testimony, in view of the postulates published in the LC.



The last four decades, which include the establishment of the democratic regime, allowed to overcome the structural evidence of poverty and extended the basic infrastructures to the whole territory of most Portuguese municipalities. Since then, and especially in Braga, the pace of urban growth has not ceased to reveal itself, having benefited from the catalytic, multisectoral, arising factors from the European integration. Like the country, except for large metropolitan areas, Braga started to show a two-level urban development at the same time. On the one hand, seeing itself under the obligation to continue with the objectives of a **modernity** to be fulfilled, especially in response to the classic urban growth process. That is, the answer to the basic desires of an intense demographic growth associated with a process of social integration, such as housing availability, the increase in the productive system, job creation, and the provision of basic infrastructure (sanitation, road infrastructure, school equipment, sports and cultural facilities, university installation, among others), which even today is lacking some segments, such as road infrastructures, with *last mile* impasses, which are yet to be finished.

At the same time, and on the other hand, the municipality is now committed to responding to new plans, many of them resulting from the process of deepening the European integration, the cultural evolution of a better educated population, and the traces of globalization with a local impact. We could say, to perform the **post-modernity** of the post-industrial era, with evident points of tension with the previous ones. That is, those of the *tou court* growth, required by sustainable development, such as the transition to an ecologically-balanced environment, with a citizenship aware of their cultural identity and collective memory, based on the values emerging from the citizens' quality of life.

The current challenge in the need to fulfill this commitment, to provide an immediate response to urgent problems about growth, compatible with the urgent aspirations for sustainability and decarbonisation, is specially apprehended with the persuasive ability to integrate the broadest population sections, and the ambition to promote the broadest and most comprehensive incorporation of what we might call the public space, eradicating once and for all the idea that this is a neutral element, *i.e.* nobody's territory, in order to become the privileged domain of the rehabilitation of the concept of the city, cultivating the spirit of a multi-scaled, enlarged and diverse community.

From local needs, and from the principle of subsidiarity, we must have full awareness of the growing scarcity of public funds -or at least, in the coming years, the fading of its provision- so that the wealth-producing sectors must imperatively be called upon to participate in its civil and social responsibility.

Of course, in a perspective that is increasingly desired to be more transparent, mutually appealing and proportionate. The time of the volunteering patrons seems to have become extinct, so this area deserves to be politically rethought and reflected upon. The financial imbalances that we suffer today, namely, in Braga, such as those that resulted from the disproportionate adventurism events in the recent past, testify before the international community the constraint of the freedom of options for the next generation, and even the sustainability of development in the coming decades.

Although it may be other examples of economic irrationality, particularly from the banking, communications and energy sectors, we give our concrete testimony referring to the local financial debacle caused by the construction of the stadium for the European football championship (2004) and other related sports ventures, which, by expressing the scope that promoted it and the activity that justified it, cannot be alien to the reflection and responsibilities for change that the European Union must start in this chapter, and at the level that concerns it, and that we all know are not exclusive to a city, region or country. And the football sector is a field of European public life that cannot be indifferent to, nor run alongside, Europe. This may even prove to be a good example of a test field for applying the three pillars of the UAEU, concerning the development and implementation of EU policy with Member States and Urban Authorities: better regulation, better financing and better knowledge.

With these perspectives, and from the perspective of the euro regional plan of the peninsular northwest, the **interactive synergies** of the territories represent an auspicious opportunity to obtain critical mass and support for urban sustainable development. The Eixo Atlântico is the first expression of this international and cross-border strategy, poured into the municipal land-use plan of Braga, which is in force. Even more since it is a political organization for regional and European cooperation, based on a voluntary network of cities with strong common identity roots.

It is also true that, in terms of international cooperation, we cannot stop to mention the international networks that the Municipality of Braga has been integrating. First, EUROCITIES - a network of the largest European cities, which brings together around 140 cities. At a Lusophone level, the UCCLA - Union of Portuguese Language Capital Cities- network of cities in the Portuguese-speaking space. Also the Global Parliament of Mayors - a network of cities from the five continents, with a special focus on Europe and the United States; the International Michelin Cities Network - a network of cities that have Michelin facilities, or that have twinning arrangements with their host city, Clermont Ferrand, in France; the ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, which consists of the largest international reference network of local governments united by the commitment to sustainable development; and the Champions Mayors of the OECD - an OECD network with mayors from around the world, designed to promote inclusive economic growth within cities.





In this regard, we can also point out the global network of twinning towns in the city of Braga, especially incidental in the Portuguese diaspora around the world. At the diplomatic level, President Ricardo Rio promoted in the last seven years the visit to Braga of 92 credited ambassadors in Portugal, who could learn about the local reality and establish contacts at the most diverse levels. Also InvestBraga, a municipal company of promotion of economic development, which constituted a structure of 26 corporate “ambassadors”, representatives of the main companies with international projection located in the municipality.

Widening the cooperation system up to the local level, we can highlight other structures that deserve our mention because they contribute to the global vision of the city.

The fact that Braga is half a hundred kilometers far from a metropolitan area, has not coerced its autonomy, demonstrated at a polarity level of polycentric articulation that is, by nature, the urban structuration mark of sustainable development, both at a cross-border, regional and sub-regional scale. In this sense, despite the boundary inconsistencies of different circumscriptions and networks in which these cities are inserted, there has been, at this level, an effort of complementarity and cooperation that should be highlighted.

It is known that the Portuguese continent does not have an administrative scale on a regional basis, with the intermediate gap between the central and local (municipal) administration, so at this level we fundamentally have today the intermunicipal communities (CIM); in the case of Braga, the CIM of Cávado (2008), coinciding with the respective NUTS III. They have a subregional scope, constituting itself as an association of municipalities that establishes a mediating role between them, and develops contracted functions in different sectors, between the municipalities themselves, and between them with the central administration.

Let us note, however, that basically in the same period, a voluntary and polycentric structure of interurban cooperation would be created, based on applications for Community funds from the QREN, the so-called Quadrilátero Urbano (joining the cities of Barcelos, Braga, Guimarães, and V. N. Famalicão). Initially expected to last seven years (2008/15), through the commitment of the participants, from then on it was constituted as an Urban Network Cooperation Pact, ceasing to be exclusively municipal in order to expand itself to the region’s main university, the oldest technological center of industrial innovation and the industrial association of supra-municipal scope. They have as main objectives the development of new technologies, mobility and promotion of the cultural offer.

### 3.1. About territory planning

In terms of programming, planification, and spatial planning, for a mostly-urbanized municipality, it is necessary to pragmatically consider its physical relationship with the daily practice of urbanism, which is incident in the daily life of urban management. That is, with the urbanization processes; and at another level, although inside physical planning, the dimension resulting from the access to the structural framework of available resources, which allows to promote in the current deficit budgetary context through the Urban Axis of the Operational Program 2020, the realization of strategic urban public works.

Starting precisely with the latter type, we have as an unavoidable reference the **Strategic Plan for Sustainable Urban Development** (PEDU). THE PEDU-Braga2020, which is more a programming tool than a plan, supporting the financial contracting of *investment priorities* (IP), between the managing body of European funds and the local urban authority. It is exemplary in the Portuguese case, since Braga is considered a *superior-level urban center*. In fact, PEDU configures a top-down strategy, because it depends on a spectrum of three predetermined axes, which are in turn subject to the aforementioned IP. They deal with the themes of sustainable urban mobility and regeneration. The latter is subdivided in a general approach and in the specific denomination for disadvantaged communities<sup>9</sup>.

However, CMB took care to articulate the eligible axes with the planning tools in progress. That is, both those resulting from the legislation at a national level, e.g., the revision of the Municipal Land-use Plan (PDM 2015), as well as those with their own initiative, an example of which is the Strategic Development Plan Of Braga (2014-26). Both have been simultaneously subject to public discussion and interinstitutional consultation.

The temporal incongruity of the calendar development of the processes is a recurring reality. Planning tools running independently of each other, with strict and very short instruction times, invariably promote a high degree of conceptual formalism and often result in support studies rather than diagnoses, many times expeditious. Let us see most of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (PMUS), an area that Portugal is only now beginning to integrate, and that had to be phased. It was first necessary to develop an instrument to support applications, and then contract a PAMUS, with the requirements that the sector has been complaining about, and which has now finished the public discussion.

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9. Axis 1 – Sustainable urban mobility (PMUS-Braga 2020); Axis 2 – Urban regeneration (PARU-Braga 2020); Axis 3 – Support to disadvantaged communities (PAICD-Braga 2020).

On the other hand, the instruments of planning and physical ordering of the territory, with direct impacts on urban management, have been incorporating intangible dimensions, mainly coming from strategic planning, but also, in our opinion, from two new emerging factors which deserve particular consideration in the scope of sustainable urban development purposes. The direct effects of fading the **welfare state**, and the **judicialization<sup>10</sup> of the territory**.

At the national level, urbanism, planification territory planning, have been unified for more than two decades in a single legal regime, the Legal Regime for Instruments of Territorial Management (RJIGT 1999<sup>11</sup>), which established the general bases of soil policy, spatial planning and urbanism, and was reinforced by the New Basic Law on Spatial Planning (LBOT 2014<sup>12</sup>), which gave rise to the revision RJIGT (2015<sup>13</sup>), defining the present corpus that established the legal framework and the strategy in place.

From the general to the particular, we could say that there are several articulations that are linked to this purpose, from the most comprehensive, as is the National Program of Spatial Planning Policy (PNPOT 2007-13, 2019<sup>14</sup>), to the extreme opposite, the Detailed Plan (PP 1999-2015<sup>15</sup>). Or by the importance of urban planning, especially for historically-different reasons which are older than democracy itself, the resilient legal figure of Urban Allotments (LU 1973...<sup>16</sup>). That is, one of the strongest expressions of the effective urbanization process that lasts in the country until today. This legislative spectrum is dominated by the Planos Diretores Municipais (**Municipal Land-use Plans**) (PDM's 1990-2015<sup>17</sup>), which Braga was curiously one of the pioneer municipalities to approve in Portugal (1994/2001)<sup>18</sup>.

It is the basic institute of spatial planning of municipalities that has been more determinant and more tested. Having been framed in the RJIGT, it occupies today a central, perennial and most invoked role in the daily life of cities and Portuguese urbanism.

10. Ran Hirschl. *Towards Juristocracy: the origins and consequences of the new constitutionalism*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2007. 296, qtd. in Loureiro, Maria Rita (2014).

11. D-L 380/99, Sept. 22nd.

12. D-L 31/2014, May 30th.

13. D-L 80/2015, May 14th.

14. Law 58/2007, Sept. 4th, ratified by the Decl. de Retific. 80-A/2007, Sept. 7th, and 103-A/2007, Nov. 23rd. Giving rise to the first revision through the Law 99/2019 - Diário da República, n. 170/2019, Série I Sept. 5th.

15. D-L 380/99, Sept. 22nd, within D-L 310/2003, Dec. 10th; Desp. 6600/2004, Feb. 23rd, in Secr. Est. do Ord. Ter., DR 78 (II série), Apr. 1. Meanwhile included in the RJGT (2015).

16. D-L 289/73, Jun. 6th. with countless alterations until today.

17. D-L 69/90, Mar. 2.

18. Diário da República, I.ª série-B—N. 117 — May 20th 1994 / Diário da República, I.ª série-B—N. 25 — January 30th 2001

From our local experience, since the 2015 review, the PDM has embraced a strategy which is recognized in the 4 main objectives in force<sup>19</sup>:

- 1) a municipality where we want to live;
- 2) a municipality that we want to visit;
- 3) a territory to invest in; and, the path towards Iberian centrality.

Very succinctly: in the first point, it is highlighted the valuation of the quality of urban life through planning, privileging the municipal ecological structure, landscape, sustainable urban mobility, and the consolidation of the network of public equipment; in the second point, tourism development, mainly based on the valorization and promotion of the cultural heritage; in the third point, the attraction of foreign investment, in particular, of international initiative, with a strong component in innovation and technology, and also supporting local businesses and industrial spaces; finally, in the fourth and last point, the purpose of opening the municipality to the outside, promoting associationism and international relations, starting with the realism of the regional euro-integration in the peninsular northwest.

As the main contribution of the present document for the purposes that we want to discuss, we would emphasize the implementation of the *Estratégia de Paisagem* (Landscape Strategy), within the revision scope of the ongoing PDM (2020). A process that results from the convergence of several initiatives of urban policy, which have their root in the establishment of the Braga Historic Centre; promoting the urban eco park of *Sete Fontes* (a hydraulic system, mainly of baroque expression, that supplied water to the city); and the pioneering spirit of joint creation with the municipality of Guimarães, the intermunicipal program of *Sacro-Montes*, an objective based on the promotion of the common cultural heritage and the forestry system of both counties.

However, with the ongoing procedure of the new revision of the PDM (2015), imposed by the application of the dichotomous rustic/urban soil affectation, which extinguishes the figure of “urbanizable” soil, the *Estratégia de Paisagem* (2017-20) started with the integration in the Territorial Development Strategy of this PDM<sup>20</sup>. Its main objectives aim to respond to the requirements of the new EUA, where landscape, namely at the local urban level, places special emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goal 11 - *Sustainable Cities and Communities*.

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19. Diário da República, 2.ª série — N. 201 — October 15th 2015.

20. *Estratégia de Paisagem* within the scope of Braga PDM, CMB, June 2020.

*“A new urban agenda, where the quality of the landscape is decisive for the quality of life of everyone who lives in or visits it, especially within a framework of climate change and natural and man-made risks that threaten health and well-being”<sup>21</sup>.*

The coherence of the option was also intended to follow up on the adoption of convergent measures and European nature-based guidelines, taking as reference the European Landscape Convention (ELC - 2000), which has been transposed into national legislation (2005)<sup>22</sup>, with all the environmental and ecological inferences emanating from it. In the same year, the present strategy would also incorporate the instruments of the National Architecture and Landscape Policy (PNAP), as well as the aforementioned PNPOT.

Note that this initiative involved active work in a *teamlab* regime, involving a broad and interdisciplinary group of city council technicians, whose main objective was to identify, characterize, and define the fundamental themes that support a landscape strategy for the council. Hence the principles were established for a *green* and *blue* structure as a way to operationalize strategic objectives, tending to define Landscape Units in a mainly urban context. Constituting itself in this way as an innovative initiative, designed to achieve a different perspective of the territory, with its own physiognomy and identity, and the aim of implementing specific regulatory categories within the municipality territory.

It is known that one of the main sources of direct financing for municipalities stems from the urbanization process. The more constructions a municipality has, the more contributory income it receives. Taxes, fees and various operating costs are one of the main sources of municipal financing and, consequently, of animation for daily urban licensing<sup>23</sup>. In a city in constant growth, since five decades ago, this process has exerted a high urban pressure in recent years, with evident consequences in terms of the dismantling of the territory and urban design. Particularly because the urbanization process was based on the subdivision of small parcels (the largest were *quintas*) based on the antecedent rustic land registry, with a smallholding nature.

The domain of urbanism constituted the municipal area where political decisions have a greater passivity.

21. Estratégia de Paisagem within the scope of Braga PDM – Relatório Final. CMB/LOCCIMETRO, Braga, June 2020.

22. Dec. 4/2005, Diário da República, 1.ª série – A — N. 31 — February 14th 2015.

23. Coming directly from the section “Loteamentos e obras”, without exploring indirect data, we have the following situation from the last three years: 2017: 3,167,000 euros (3,4% of the revenue budget collected in 2017); 2018: 4,197,000 (4,2% of the revenue budget collected in 2018); 2019: 4,188,000 euros (3,7% of the revenue budget collected in 2019). Source: DMG/CMB Jul. 2020.

Everything, we should underline, under the design created for the circulation of private cars. In a very brief way we could say that the big bet is the revisitation of the existing territory, in its integrated and sustained rehabilitation. In a territory like the northwest of Portugal it is a future imperative to curb urban dispersion, and it is therefore necessary to exercise tight control of the supply of available soil for construction *ex-novo*, and to find ways to stop land speculation, although there is a lack of effective instruments to carry it out. With a progressively dispersed population and an increasingly aging population, without renewing itself, the equation that is enunciated for the future of the sustainability of territorial infrastructure will begin to raise concerns in the medium term.

In the face of a tendentially restrictive and dependent **public funding**, and the decrease in the State's capacity for intervention in its multiple providential and subsidiary facets, it is necessary to have a society which is also, potentially, more contentious; subject to litigation, disputes, arbitrations and permanent compensatory dimensions.

From the point of view of territory planning and urbanism, what we can witness from the legal framework in which we work, is that this is, in general, unfavorable to the supremacy of the public interest over the private. It is common sense that, since the 19th century, private property is *sacred* within Portuguese law. And especially when the differences in power and influence of operators are imposed through the appeal to complex and intimidating legal strategies. As already mentioned, the specialties of **law**, in the case of urbanism and territory planning, being increasingly more verbose of legislation and jurisprudence, it can be said that it has become a truly sub-disciplinary new area that we have internalized is not within reach of any territory technician, or legal expert.

We even give our personal testimony about everyday life, on the appreciation of architectural and urban projects, recognizing an increase in daily contacts with lawyers, in contrast to the past, when mainly architects and engineers were in charge. In short, it is increasingly the *engineering* of Law, the one that designs the territory of urban municipalities.

Today there is clearly, at the level of local authorities and technicians who scrutinize urban licensing, a defensive predisposition with regard to process analysis. The level of susceptibility is such that they avoid at all costs to formulate information and to make decisions that could generate conflict or subjectivity, since these, in addition to introducing entropy into the processes themselves, can have unpleasant consequences for those who dare to take them on.



In other respects, we need more reversibility actions and correction options for the errors and the dragging of the irregular building that was tolerated in the past. Demolitions are rare. Without ceasing to seek the maximum rehabilitation and reconversion of much of this construction and of the anthropic structures harmful to the territory, every uniform and generalist solution should be avoided, since they only promote injustice by rewarding those who did not originally fulfill its obligations.

An example of this is the exceptional regularization of economic activities (RERAE)<sup>24</sup>, an instrument based only on economic criteria, which establishes procedures for regularization, expansion and alteration of economic activities, which worked over the years successively, in most cases, in illegal conditions, as is the case of farms with a very strong environmental impact, such as livestock, quarries, and management of industrial waste and expansions. The same that, with the exceptional legitimacy granted to them, without any guarantee of changing the attitude that they maintained over the years, on the contrary, subverting the law, continues degrading with impunity the environment and dismantling the territory.

In terms of urban management, there is an increasing need to obtain and deepen the counterparts provided in the law, not as a residual obligation, but rather as a commitment from the private sector towards social and environmental responsibility investments. This is an area where it is necessary to improve the methods and to work hard on the effectiveness of results. Either in terms of concessions of the compensation space provided by law, or in terms of impact mitigation, especially the environmental ones, generated by the productive activity. We should safeguard the uses and complements that support sustainable development. This means reconciling the installation of new companies in a productively-prosperous, socially fair, clean and qualified environment.

### 3.2. Urban rehabilitation

In an urbanized Europe this is perhaps the most challenging expression of the future at the moment. The front where the main moves of sustainable cities are played. We had internalized the idea that urban rehabilitation was exclusive to central areas and historic quarters of our cities, but today this approach embraces as a matter of principle the entire anthropic space. The expansion time gave way to the revisiting time. Braga has today, in the current ongoing PDM, at the level of the classification plant and soil qualification, 12,922 use-affectation polygons, in 183.4 km<sup>2</sup>, for an average density of about 1000 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>.

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24. Decree law n. 165/2014, Nov. 5th.

These numbers show well the complexity and the atomization of the territory, which has been making its way since 1994.

Urban rehabilitation, being more than a physical intervention domain, has been extended to the most comprehensive concept of urban regeneration, which goes from building rehabilitation to the consideration of its uses and functions. From historical and cultural heritage, up to contemporary constructions. Whether by readjusting to the real estate market, socio-economic rehabilitation, or enhancing energy efficiency and environmental factors. The municipality of Braga, in 2013, officially had more than 10,000 vacant lodgings and a group of about three dozens of small industrial parks with significant percentages of vacants, or built but not occupied with productive units.

Urban Rehabilitation is therefore assumed by the municipality as a strategic pillar for territorial development, social cohesion, economic and environmental sustainability, and the patrimonial and touristic valorization of the council. With this aim, **Urban Rehabilitation Areas (URA)** were created within the scope of a specific legal regime<sup>25</sup>, dedicated to the programming of operations of urban rehabilitation, accessible to various supports and stimuli. In Braga, in addition to the primordial Urban Rehabilitation Area of the Historic Center, the intervention perimeter was extended to three surrounding URAs, reinforcing the concept of consolidated city, due to the emphasis given to the admission of a strategic line differentiated in the edification of the years 1970/80. This approach had, however, different sensitivities in the country. From the urban municipalities that were considered practically as a single URA, to the extreme of a municipality in the northern interior, which selected 88.

To this end, today we especially rely on the dynamics of the private sector, which fits in the approved programming instruments, such as the PEDU, or ordering-related, under review, the PDM. URA's are provided with tax incentives, and technical and logistical support to operators. On the public investment side, we are aware of the importance of applications and projects as leverage means for the concertation of the announced and affirmed investments, and the privileged relationship of the municipality with institutions and citizens.

With this purpose an advisory council was created - the **Strategic Council of Heritage and Urban Rehabilitation of Braga (CERPUB)**<sup>26</sup>, promoter of the qualified participation in matters related to urban regeneration, namely representing the main actors and institutions on which social, economic and cultural development depend the most in Braga.

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25. Law n. 95-A/2009, DR, 1.ª série, N.º 170 — September 2nd 2009.

26. Created on Feb. 1st, 2016.





Public initiative interventions, which included external structural financing, had to adapt to the contingencies of the predictable attributions, and not only to the interpretation of the most pressing needs. In this case there was an option to rehabilitate three collective referential equipments: the Forum, former park of exhibitions and events of Braga, which was unequivocally unadapted to the current demands; the Municipal Market (1956) and its surrounding public space, to create a centrality to the north of CH; as well as the intervention of the *Pousada da Juventude* to promote the demand from the youth that has enriched the city. The remaining rehabilitation interventions focused on the theme of sustainable mobility and the rehabilitation of social housing, which we will explain below.

In 2015/2016, in the context of PEDU, it was carried out the mapping, instruction and submission of applications, on a tight schedule, and which represented for Braga a rehabilitation effort of 22,750 million euros. Meanwhile, the Forum is already bearing its fruits, especially if we consider the role that it plays in the scope of action of the municipal company InvestBraga, the main front of the municipality for the economic and business development of the council. In other respects, in partnership with other institutions such as the University of Minho, having a greater financial effort, autonomous of the autarchy, and in a multiannual framework, public wide-reaching investments were continued, for being structuring and qualifying of the attraction of Braga. This is because they value the rehabilitation of cultural and environmental heritage. This is the case of Parque das Sete Fontes, the rehabilitation of the Convent of S. Francisco, or the intervention in Insula das Carvalheiras.

However, we must recognize that, in the context in which we live, urban rehabilitation is mainly entrusted to the private initiative, so it is also important to highlight the importance of creating specific financial instruments, as is the case with the **Financial Instrument for Urban Rehabilitation and Revitalization** (IFRRU 2020), created by the central administration and banking, mainly aimed at the private sector.

It should be noted that, in Portugal, 28% of primary energy consumption refers to the residential and services sectors, when it is known that about a million buildings need intervention works. Although the resort to new construction continues to prevail, it was necessary to create a financial instrument that would encourage the reversal of this situation. IFRRU (2015), with this objective, mobilizes the allowances approved by the Regional Operational Programs (POR) and the Operational Program of Sustainability and Efficiency in the Use of Resources (PO SEUR), from Portugal 2020, which can cover up to 70% of the promoters' investment<sup>27</sup>.

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27. In addition to these allowances are those from the European financial institutions: the European Bank for Investment (EIB) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), <<https://ifrru.ihru.pt/web/guest/ifrru2020>>, accessed on July 18th 2020.

At the end of June there was an investment amount of 490 applications, mainly focused on the municipalities of the metropolitan areas<sup>28</sup>, with Braga standing out in the continental national panorama as the main city outside this context, with a total of 41 registrations entered the municipality, all of them of private origin, and which estimate a potential investment of 1,282 million euros.

Conservation operations in buildings have been increasing, not only with the requirement of the new support framework for energy efficiency, but rather with the intrinsic imperatives to the operation's own nature, especially with regard to the **Historic Quarter** and centres of patrimonial interest. It should be highlighted that it is one of the main endogenous resources to support an economy whose fundamental pillar is the tourist attractions. *We have to prioritize the preservation of pre-existing heritage architectural and urban planning*, namely, in the sense of valuing the architecture of existing interior spaces, and the identity expressions of our *know-how*, the promotion of traditional construction techniques, decorative arts and the recovery of crafts and vernacular materials, such as: stone, tiles, wood, plaster, glass and iron.

In this sense, given the increase in rehabilitation works in the Historic Quarter, and paying attention to the new gentrification phenomena, it was considered an imperative to adapt the specific regulations, such as the one that the municipality is promoting for urban licensing in the Historic Quarter. Only in Braga, urban operations, consisting of conservation works, increased by 53% between 2013 and 2019. Simultaneously, the promotion of urban rehabilitation also involves measures of stimulation and discouragement. In the latter by tax penalty, with the increase of inherent taxes, deactivated property, or what concerns abandonment and the degradation of buildings, especially of heritage reference. Other benefits can also be added to the available ones, such as the creation of urban rehabilitation prizes. Incentives not only for restoration, but also for contemporary building, with rehabilitating functions of the territory, or even to research on the type of knowledge and its application in terms of urban rehabilitation.

From the rehabilitation of traditional urban uses, we give as an example of intervention the project to encourage traditional and historic trade, whose model derives from national legislation and which aimed to protect establishments of heritage value from the effect of the liberalization of tenancy laws<sup>29</sup>, and whose operational continuation has recently been jeopardised.

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28. In the report from June, 490 applications were registered, which correspond to a total investment amount estimated at 1,282 million euros.

29. Law No. 42/2017, which establishes the regime for the acknowledgement and protection of establishments and entities of local historical, cultural or social interest.



In Braga, the implementation took place under the aegis of the “*Lojas com História*” project, from which 44 stores were selected, being in this moment about to proceed to a second phase, whose preliminary survey has already gathered 268 establishments. This is an area of historical and cultural heritage that deserves special attention in the authentication and certification processes, because commercial establishments with these characteristics, apart from being a tourist attraction per se, go beyond the daily relationships and the close ties with the main markers of the city’s identity.

### 3.3. Sustainable urban mobility

Urban rehabilitation processes increasingly imply, in a direct way, the objectives of **sustainable urban mobility** (MUS), with which we are committed. From the experience we can share, we have in the example of PMUS, framed in PORN-Portugal 2020, the pilot intervention projects in four neighbourhoods of Braga<sup>30</sup> with a high population density.

Popularly known as “**zones 30**”, because they emphasize the purpose of valuing non-polluting means of transport, pedestrian safety, or universal accessibility, the effects of which had the greatest impact on the arrangement and regularization of road space. Also, regularization of car parking, restriction of the speed of circulation, in order to favor pedestrian safety, and incorporation of multiple accessibility. Of the natural tension that always happens with changes of informal habits in the degraded and permanently transgressed public space, this time it was carried out exclusively by the municipality, with the requalification of public space, collective equipment, urban furniture and even the rectification of some infrastructure. This process, due to its exemplary character, is intended to be replicated in other places. If the resources allow it.

However, it must be stressed that the present dynamic can catalyze the need to promote an effective PAMUS that, being started, aimed to maintain the coherence of intervention in the MUS plan.

The problem of **car** circulation in Braga, which is not isolated from the generality of the urban country, still represents the main obstacle to the accession of the majority to a new paradigm. Not that this is a problem comparable to that of the large metropolises, but because the growth model based on its expansion is still very internalized in the common view.

30. Neighbourhoods: Torre Europa, Montélios, Quinta da Fonte, and the Makro area.

In Portugal, the individual car corresponds to a weight of around 60% in the modal split. In 2017, there were about 490 light passenger vehicles per thousand inhabitants, compared to 1990, which only registered 185,2<sup>31</sup>. From what we can see this will probably be the generating core, direct and indirect, of the main obstacles to the implementation of the MUS. Not only because most of the traffic is dependent on pollutant fossil energy - even if electric and natural-gas locomotion has been growing in recent years - but mainly because the *ratio* of passengers to vehicles in circulation is really unsatisfactory, with direct consequences on traffic flow and urban parking. In fact, car circulation is, in our opinion, also a European problem, of the same magnitude as fisheries or the PAC, and whose resolution cannot be delegated exclusively downstream, mainly due to its structural dimension, practically handed over to the policy of local urban authorities.

With the motorization tax constantly increasing, without expectations of public investment in the short term at the level of infrastructures, it is still necessary to conclude the last segments that they claim to articulate. For consistency of the installed system, there is no other alternative but to make the agonistic effort to reconcile the mitigation of the problems of transit with tactical interventions, continuing a strong investment in the inversion of mobility paradigm. We therefore believe it is necessary to admit that structural investments will be needed, in the achievement of the so-called traffic, access and crossing *last miles*, the promotion of transport interfaces (rail/road), and the strengthening of public transport. The case of Braga, to respond to the challenges, is doubly interesting, for having an entirely urban transport company, which has been growing in number of passengers; the increase of the electric and natural gas fleet and, simultaneously, last year, for having also started to manage the surface car parking in the city center.



31. Pordata, June 2020.

We are convinced that physical planning, specifically, through urban design, has here a decisive intervention. Specifically, the introduction of new segregated spaces for the use of bicycles, which are provided since the preparation works for the first review of the PDM (2013), a network of cycle paths of several dozen kilometers (vision 2025). The truth is that, despite having a generally favorable topography, there has not been enough resources or the manifest expression of the public opinion, decisive to promote its prioritization, in the face of dominant complaints of greater traffic fluidity. The behavior of drivers and the deterrence measures against overspeed should also be more effective in stimulating and guaranteeing the desirable circulation in coexistence.

Due to the lack of an alternative in the impossibility of eliminating intercity traffic in urban crossings, it is necessary to bet on the system of *intelligentia*, in an integrated way, open to different data crossings with real-time access. In this sense, it appeared the *Braga Urban Innovation Laboratory Demonstrator* project - (BUILD, 2018), an initiative in the field of urban intelligence focused on decarbonization, supported by the Portuguese Government's Environmental Fund, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the intensity of carbon dioxide in the city of Braga.

This project, which developed test interventions in the context of urban space, with a great emphasis on mobility, incorporates the creation of a **Municipal Centre of Traffic Control and Management**. It is intended to monitor and support the decisions related to information coming from various detection devices expected, or already present, in the territories. At the same time, it articulates the information collected with the territorial entity *Quadrilátero Urbano*<sup>32</sup>, through the akin system (CIMOB) that provides information on a subregional scale. It will then be possible to integrate competencies, like monitoring traffic counters, crossing values from speed gauges and managing the traffic light network.

In terms of programmed initiatives, we can highlight some actions that will be interesting to share for its experimental character. Framed in PEDU/PMUS, having been recognized the high number of students who drive to school by car, with scarce use of the public transport, and other alternative means, let us say, with percentually-lower values than the journeys, in general, home-work-home, it was acknowledged the priority of working with the school population. Furthermore, active intervention in these age groups may, in the long run, guarantee the transformation of habits and attitudes. In this sense, progress was made with projects of improvement of the access to the main schools in the city, namely: "Kiss & Go", freeing the second row parking lanes next to the establishments; the "School Bus", a bus with a periphery-center connection, with the same objective: to avoid traffic

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32. Which is currently developing an integrated ticketing project for public transport, at the level of the four cities of the region.

congestion outside schools at rush hour, and the implementation of a network of raised pedestrian crossings, some of which were provided with additional safety lighting devices.

As an example of the civic participation strategy, the voluntary proposal of a group of citizens who applied for the Participatory Budget was adopted, with the idea of eradicating existing barriers and obstacles on public roads, disrupting access for people with reduced mobility. Having identified the candidacy with the slogan “eu não passo aqui” (“I can’t pass through”), the municipality decided to co-opt it, reverting it to the opposite objective, i.e., “eu já passo aqui” (“I now pass through”) (2016). With this purpose, a permanent intervention model was created at the level of municipal works in the public space, having as a rule the removal of all kinds of obstacles, in order to standardize walk spacing and slopes, making them accessible for everyone. Let us remember that right now, half of the city’s population is already experiencing difficulties in elementary locomotion, such as going up and down stairs. A reality that is the daily life of the ageing population of many European cities.

In other respects, in the field of urban management, there are increasingly more frequent requests about mobility impact, related to new urban projects, especially those that have a greater pressure on the territory. For example, in the Historic Center, the intensity of rehabilitation imposes measures of containment and moderation at the level of mobility. In fact, in the short term, there will be no parking availability that can accompany the growth in the number of vehicles. It is already agreed that large peripheral enterprises will need to provide free and public parking spaces within the scope of the mandatory legal concessions. These places must be articulated with urban transport, and thus be able to contribute to the automotive easing in the center of cities.

The success of the transition process of locomotion styles must go through civic participation. Of course, first through citizen participation, by means of public consultation processes which should be proactive and competent, but also through permanent structures for accompaniment and process monitoring, on the part of the public promoter. It has been fundamental within the scope of mutual knowledge and the transversality of the ways of being, the Local Action Group (GAL), which brings together institutional partners, associations and universities with this objective. The GAL was recognized as a key partner by the URBACT Network - *CityMobilNet*, which Braga participated in and worked with. This European network was one of the most successful ones in which we took part, due to the interactions developed, especially, in technical terms and in contact with new experiences, which contributed a lot to the update of our municipal technicians involved.



### 3.4. Social convergence

The focus of social convergence, community solidarity, integration of minorities and the fight against poverty, had in the **Integrated Action Plan for Disadvantaged Communities (PAICD)**, also a domain of Braga's PEDU, the main intervention focus in terms of urban rehabilitation of the social neighbourhoods of the municipality. In view of the availability, two neighborhoods were selected (Santa Tecla and Enguardas), with residents with a high percentage of members from the gypsy community, stigmatized by social exclusion phenomena: poverty resulting from chronic unemployment, households heavily dependent on social benefits, school failure of young people, small crime events, all of this in a disqualified urban environment, living in houses in poor conditions. A rehabilitation operation of 147 dwellings is currently underway in the neighborhood of Santa Tecla, and more than fifty in other places, within the scope of an investment of around 5,5 million euros.

The municipality of Braga has had a municipal company since 1999 for this mission, BragaHabit, which directly supports today about 1300 families, through a diverse range of interventions and projects. The main one is certainly the management of more than half a thousand housing units. But also in the direct support to subletting-type contracts<sup>33</sup>, and the use of other organic devices about social support for housing, such as the rental of shared residences, a pioneering model in Portugal.

But it is also true that, in addition to the rehabilitation and availability of housing, the potential of this municipality's business instrument takes part in other priority areas, such as socio-educational services and socio-territorial interventions. Consider the example of providing school meals, community entertainment services (arts, creativity, communication) and direct family support. Translated into the crescent partnership in projects with local institutions of social solidarity and universities, particularly in encouraging the participation of residents in the decision-making processes related to urban rehabilitation and regeneration, these are unavoidable factors for the implementation of the measures of emancipation and integration of neighborhoods within the urban fabric, or the implementation of actions aimed at building energy efficiency.

For the pursuit of the aforementioned purposes, it is being carried out the development of a **Local Housing Strategy** program, which will allow us to learn more comprehensively about the needs, and to envisage the necessary solutions to face the recent difficulties of speculative rise in housing prices. These are today aggravated for several reasons, such as the increase of tourist demand.

33. RADA - it is a housing support scheme that consists of the granting of a subsidy aimed at co-paying the monthly rent payment within the scope of housing lease contracts for disposable-income housing.

Municipal companies like BragaHabit can and should play a strategic role in urban rehabilitation, in general, in the energy transition imposed by the environmental goals we are committed to. But, above all, in the response to the new poverty and migrant foci that require it.

A well-assumed and well-conceived social housing policy, developed under principles of good governance -encouraging well-managed cooperative management, with social and democratic participation- will make all the difference in achieving the objectives of social cohesion and the recovery of city values within the urban space. This means to have clean, decent and affordable housing.

### 3.5. Heritage, culture and knowledge

Social cohesion, inscribed at the most diverse scales, worthy of a solidary and guiding society, necessarily has as a primordial foundation the revival of the identity heritage. It cannot be developed of course here, in these few lines, how the importance of the topic deserves the priority of the design of sustainable urban development, but we cannot fail to share some testimonial considerations, which we believe are both structural and urgent. This means, starting with its most canonical aspect, that perhaps we could ignore the mention of the concept “**Baukultur**”, inscribed in the LC. That is, the declaration on urbanism and architecture of European expression that calls for the qualification of the built space. The same that can stimulate the common basic cultural identity of Europeans, embodied in their own internal diversity. Without further ado, the consideration of all human activities that dynamize the urban environment and have an increased cultural responsibility, in the obvious perspective that it drives the economy and the social and environmental sustainability (Gonçalves, 2005).

We have already talked about the battlefield installed in the historic quarters of our cities, and in all urban centers, with strong identity characteristics, a true plateau where the contradictions of sustainable development are dramatized. From the economist “façadism”, which only thinks in terms of euros per square meter, to the difficult commitment to strive for reconciliation between this diffuse concept of authenticity of places and the viability of contemporaneity. But the issue of urban heritage is much more than architecture and urbanism. It is, above all, the memorial vision endowed with the energy of affects with prospective success in the future. Rather than rhetoric, it is nowadays the prospect of rehabilitation of public space, or if you want to put it that way, the collective, when it shows trends for cartelizing itself. This may actually be the same mars field where the future of individual freedom, which could lead to the dissipation of private life, is at stake.





Rather than the square, the street, or the garden, or even the collective commercial space, the territory for everyone is the expression of contemporary heritage. In the sense that it does not ignore or threaten the legacy of the past. For urban heritage, it must be found the middle ground between the design of the elites and the accessibility of the masses, between literal restitution and selective regeneration, between static musealization and dynamic integration, between localism and tourism. In sum, between closing and opening. Applying common sense, rather than wisdom, the middle ground will certainly be the right measure.

After the Sacro-Monte de Braga, Bom Jesus, was classified as UNESCO heritage, as a *cultural landscape*, the issue of cultural heritage has acquired a scope that no longer fits entirely, for better or for worse, within the local decision-making sphere. However, it is true that heritage, especially after the establishment of the democratic regime, gained a great relevance within the urban policies of Braga in the last decades. Consider, indeed, one of the most sensitive political expressions in our council, a reflection of the advances and retreats of citizens' civic maturity.

Being Braga a two-thousand year old city, it comprises all tranches of the western urban historiography. However, two periods have come to be considered strategic elements in international promotion, either for the complementarity they offer in contrast to other regional specificities, or because of the physical and intangible assets they enjoy. We are talking about **Roman Braga** and **Baroque Braga**<sup>34</sup>. Furthermore, the dimension of endogenous heritage has also been supported in parallel, as the reflection of traditional knowledges (e.g. Braga's viola, the bells, the cavaquinho, etc.), local festivities (São João, Semana Santa), or cultural ways and itineraries (Roman routes, the way of St. James- the Way of Torres, and the ways of São Bento).

The itinerary dimension of the heritage, within the scope of a decarbonized Europe, exemplified by our **Iter-Romanum** candidacy<sup>35</sup>, a network of European cities that intend to launch the Roman routes as European cultural itineraries of the Council of Europe, which can represent the reunion of these appetites with the human scale that longs for them. Furthermore, the itinerary overturning of the heritage makes it possible to extend the critical mass of endogenous supply, linking sites that, in isolation, would not justify an exclusive visit.

34. Bracara Augusta Foundation; Atlantiaca association (Roman Cities of the Atlantic); Roman Portugal Association; Iter-Romanum – candidate to European cultural itinerary; Festivities, Roman Braga, and Baroque Braga.

35. Braga leads the candidacy, aiming at classifying the Roman roads as European Cultural Itinerary - "Iter-Romanum", composed of a network of European entities: Arlon (Belgium), Archaeological Park of Ljubljana (Slovenia); The Silver Way route (Spain); Alésia Park (France); Aquileia (Italy); and Bracara Augusta.

Finally, within the brief testimony that we can give, with useful motivation, to revisit the Leipzig Charter (LC) and, through direct association, the Urban Agenda of the European Union (UAEU), we emphasize the growing importance of knowledge as an unavoidable factor of sustainable urban development. An intermediate domain, one would say, between the big data of information and the humanistic wisdom of individuals. A design that stopped belonging exclusively to universities, schools and research centers, but that does not do without them, in order to summon all development agents, both local and global.

For this call, which Braga already answers with two universities, a polytechnic centre, a vast vibrant school network of all teaching levels, both public and private; a Foundation (Bracara Augusta); all of these joined by the International Nanotechnology Laboratory, of Iberian management; and there is also a group of companies with global expression, which independently promote knowledge transfer with application in technological innovation. In this call appears also the Braga City Council, which, as an example of a strategic definition, recently created the **Urban Innovation Laboratories**, which include an observatory. An applied research development interface involving municipal technicians and researchers, mainly university students, in a mutual investigation/action process with the laboratory and field of action, the territory of Braga.

MSMB, July 2020.



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