

# FIGHTING POVERTY TOGETHER

Inter-Disciplinary and Inter-Sectoral  
Co-operation for the Improvement  
of the Quality of Social Services

*The Budapest International Workshop  
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Edited by

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## Introduction

At the Conference of the International Council for Caring Communities in New York in February 2000, Budapest Mayor Gábor Demszky presented the Budapest Social Charter, in which principles of social policy in Budapest are laid out.

Demszky announced the initiative to create the Budapest International Workshop, to collect, evaluate and share experiences in social policy implementation among local governments in Central and Eastern Europe.

The first seminar of the Budapest International Workshop was held in Budapest Sept. 14 &15, 2001. Organizers were the Social Policy Committee of the Budapest Local Government and the Social Innovation Foundation.

The event was sponsored by:  
*Budapest Local Government*  
*Soros Foundation, Local Government Initiative*  
*Ambassador Fund of the British Know-How Fund*  
*Friedrich Ebert Foundation*

Conference participants were officials of local governments, professionals and leaders of innovative projects in social services from:

*Armenia*  
*Bosnia & Hercegovina*  
*Croatia*

## The Dilemmas of Strategic Planning in Central Europe Cities

### Examples from Vienna and Budapest

#### Introduction

The role of the public sector and public leadership in developing European cities has been changing over the last several decades. Changes in these cities vary according to their geo-political situations.

In Western Europe, cyclical development can be seen. In the decades following World War II, public sector leadership prompted recovery in these countries and cities and established a welfare state.

In the 1970s and 80s, following the gradual withdrawal of public intervention, market processes gained ground which led to many countries restricting the “enabling” role of the public sector. The aim then became ensuring that the best conditions were present for the private sector to function.

This decade, marked by increased globalization and development of the single European market, has seen a comeback in the role of the public sector, in an effort to unite players in a city and surrounding region with the goal of achieving good results in competition of cities.

Meanwhile, the public sector in Eastern Europe during its socialist period was key in decision-making, leaving only a subordinate role for private players. With the collapse of socialism this has been turned around. Market forces gained ground in the 1990s and the public sector fell into residual positions.

The first signs of recovery in the public sector can only be seen now, at the end of the decade.

This paper focuses on the last phase of this cyclical development and analyzes one of form of recovery in public leadership: strategic planning.

The example is of two cities, Vienna and Budapest, which represent two parts of Europe with very different histories in the last half of the century. The analysis will look at the content and methods used in new strategic plans at work in both cities.

Special attention is paid to how social aspects of city development are handled in strategic planning. The paper is made up of three parts:

- Increased city competition and the emergence of strategic planning
- The strategic planning process and role of social policy
- Debates during the preparation of the Budapest Strategic Development Concept and analysis of compromises reached.

In this papers, some ideas mentioned were used during development of the “Stadtwettbewerb und sozialvertragliche Stadtentwicklung” project (City competition and socially-sustainable city development). Project directors were Rudolf Giffinger, Institute für Stadt-und Regionalforschung, TU Wien and Iván Tosics, Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest. The project was sponsored by the Economic Chamber of Vienna.

#### Novelties of the 1990s: Increasing City Competition and the Emergence of Strategic Planning

Factors which led to the emergence of strategic planning are as follows:

- Globalization and development of the European Union
- Establishment of the a single European market – a driving force behind increased competition among European cities.

– The free movement of goods, person and services and the strict regulation of the system of public subsidies (public procurement procedures, competitions regulation) and standardization efforts to open the market as a single arena.

With a breaking down of national borders and a decrease of national regulations, the positions and interests of cities has also changed. New resources for city development, such as economic investments, and resources for international institutions and the need for a highly-trained workforce are staples of the new, unified market.

A city is no longer in competition with its surrounding area, or even with cities in the country, but with cities of the same size from other countries, all competing for international resources.

Cities must now apply new methods and approaches to improving their positions. The suburban area was traditionally known as the “closest competitor” to the city, by taking some of the development potential and moving out of the city. But in today's situation, competition among one another is no longer a factor. The city-suburb must now closely cooperate with other cities and suburbs in other parts of Europe by offering a variety of opportunities for investors, institutions and a mobile workforce.

Competition is now seen more between various regions, where the city, its suburbs, satellite towns and agricultural areas must all provide opportunities for demand.

Another change has come in the form of local development. It was clear earlier that “hard” infrastructure factors determine how well a city can compete, such as its accessibility and the standard of infrastructure offered – the more chances it has to attract international investors. But due to the rapid development of these factors many cities now offer these advantages, with exception to their proximity to airports or how fast their train lines are.

This has now turned the emphasis on “soft” factors that a city can offer, like housing opportunities, education facilities, social and health care services and leisure activities.

Without a doubt the new situation translates into more complex challenges facing cities. It is no longer good enough to improve access roads, public transport and offer quality sites for developers. Additionally, cities must work to improve relations with its neighborhoods and work together in offering “soft” factors.

This brought about strategic planning, aimed at developing a long-term, comprehensive vision for the city and its region, concentrating on not only economic efficiency but quality of life, and environmental and social protection.

It is not a simple plan that every city can implement. Increased competition between regions creates challenges for increased economic efficiency and improvement of conditions for new investments.

The easiest way to react to this challenge is the “defensive structural adjustment” which means the quick development of only leading sectors of the economy. The idea behind this is that rapid development of such sectors will create big revenues for the city, which can later be used to “repair” ecological/environmental and social problems.

The alternative is an emphasis on the need for a balanced, environmentally and socially-sustainable structural adjustment. In this, the city does not forget about the losers of structural change and gives help to those effected social groups and city areas. Ecological and social stability is also given higher priority.

Successful strategic plans are not only prepared by the planners, but include the actors as well. Not only content of the plan is important, but the entire process of preparing it remains key.

## The Case of Central and Eastern Europe

In light of a much different past, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are in a different phase with regards to development and planning. The big cities in this region have recently finished difficult transition periods which saw them moving toward a market-based economy.

At the beginning of the 1990s, medium and long-term planning practices gave way to short-term plans, subordinated to the preparation of yearly budgets. Throughout the decade important institutional and procedural factors characterizing market-based public sector were established. In light of their eventual accessions to the European Union, candidate countries have begun developing new regional structures, a new level between national and local fields.

The majority of Central and Eastern European countries have already completed the transitions to democracy, institutional structures and market economies. The most innovative cities in this region recognize the new challenges and that they must enter a phase of development and adjust activities to the new circumstances. This will not be easy and it will take time.

Local governments, for example, which regained independence only recently do not want to accept the idea of close cooperation with each other, as they believe it jeopardizes this new-found freedom. For this reason, new aspects of strategic planning are not well-developed in Central/Eastern Europe.

Experiments in some cities show serious limitations, marked by a strong local government unwilling to change compared to a weak, yet emerging, regional cooperation. Party politics have strong influences here. So far the big cities in the region have no choice other than to continue to plod away at increasing cooperation and long-term planning and development.

## Strategic Planning: A Comparison of Social Aspect Role in Vienna and Budapest

A comparison between Vienna and Budapest can show us similarities and differences in approaches used toward strategic planning. The cities are in the same geographical area but have very different histories for city development over the last 50 years. An analysis of the social aspects of the cities highlights how each city's plan addresses the "soft" factors of development.

### Vienna: The City and its Strategic Plan

#### *Background*

Austria's capital city, Vienna, boasts some 1.6 million residents while the entire country is home to roughly eight million citizens. In the past few decades Vienna was a main choice of many Eastern Europeans looking for a new home, either for political or economic reasons. The number of foreigners living in Vienna increased from 100,000 people in 1984 to nearly 300,000 in 1999, representing 20 percent of the city's total population. The largest group of foreigners, making up about 60 percent of all migrants, are from Turkey and Yugoslavia.

Vienna has always been a leader in industrial changes, having the fastest transition toward a service economy. Relatively low unemployment figures indicated the majority of foreigners living there are employed – especially since a condition for long-term residency requires the person having a job.

The roughly 100,000 employed foreigners create a special feature of the Viennese job market as a huge mass of low-paid, mostly unskilled workers.

Vienna is an attractive city to live in, with its United Nations City status (since 1979) and European Union membership (1995). The city is also favorably situated in the middle of Europe and has the busiest airport in the region, even though there is no real traffic hub planned by Vienna in the Trans-European Network.

The city is also well-known as a metropolis for culture and boasts a variety of facilities for tourists and conference organization. Further development to host big international events, however, is hindered by a reluctance on the part of the population and a lack of cooperation from neighboring regions in the country.

Social security in Vienna is well-developed and offers good care for all citizens. But immigrants have limited access to this system. For example, they are not eligible for public rental housing.

### *Structure and Main Strategic Aims of the Vienna's Strategic Plan*

In 1994, Vienna adopted a City Development Plan (Stadtentwicklungspan, STEP94) which outlined further territorial development. A new Strategic Plan of Vienna recently implemented, does not address this. Rather, it develops a visionary "Leitbild" for the city and invites others to work together within its defined framework and assigns key actions and projects (Klotz, 2000:7)

The Vienna Strategic Plan integrates all communal sectors and acts as an action plan in its aim to react to new challenges in city development. The plan has five main areas, and within those between two and five sub-goals. The structure of the plan is as follows(only sub-goals with relevance to social policy are listed):

- Area 1: Vienna in Europe and its region
- Area 2: Creation of new opportunities in the economy and employment sectors
- Innovations in the job market

- Area 3: Investing in knowledge, training and culture
- Area 4: Improving quality of the natural and constructed environment
- Area 5: Retaining its role as a city for quality of life and environment
- A city for everyone
- Comprehensive health care

There are 32 projects outlined and detailed in the Strategic Areas. Socially-oriented projects are as follows: integrated health care; gender quality in planning; urban renewal in public/private partnership; inclusion of ageing migrants into the elderly care system; interpreters at multi-cultural community centers.

The plan does not include any direct goal devoted to social policy, although there are fragmented sub-programs included in the main strategic goals.

### *Discussions on the Vienna Strategic Plan*

There were three main phases in preparation of the plan. The first were ideas developed by city administration, a large group of officials from all departments, who worked with a small group of experts. The second phase was the formulation of ideas in a series of debates hosted by city politicians who suggested modifications and expansions.

The final phase were discussions held between city administration, politicians and members of the public, which took place between June and December, 1999. Results of the meeting were posted on info-screens in metro stations, in daily newspapers ran and on the homepage of the Cityforum Vienna.

Between 30 and 40 experts attended the meetings and five consultants were charged with preparing, steering and summarizing discus-

sions. A total of five meetings were held with an average 150 participants at each.

As a result, the five consultants included in their summary paper three new topics to be introduced to the strategy plan: gender mainstreaming, integration and innovative budget politics.

Integration, as a social aspect, means increasing openness and integrative capacity of the city toward migrants, who should be entitled to education, housing and political participation. The City of Vienna should also act as a lobbyist to get human rights of migrants accepted by the central state.

Thus, one of the most important results of these discussions became the social aspect, which was not initially included as part of the Vienna Strategy Plan. This integration issue has received strong support and has been suggested for inclusion into the overall strategy plan (Stadte Dialog, 2000:17)

## **Budapest: the City and its Strategic Plan**

### *Background*

Budapest is one of the cities which began reforms before the change of political systems in 1990. Its transition period was dominated by quick and comprehensive decentralization and privatization (see ie: Tosics, forthcoming, a,b). The result today is a decentralized, two-tier local government system, with problems and opportunities for city-development planning.

The 1990s in Budapest can be regarded as a period of liberal and model city leadership, where public interventions were few and the municipality aimed to achieve a balanced city budget. In the second half of the decade, the first medium-term plans were elaborated upon

and combined with a seven-year financial forecast model which included new developments and their future costs.

The standard of living in Budapest is higher than in other parts of the country and unemployment is lower here. Employed people earn 20 percent to 30 percent more in the capital of Budapest than in other parts of the country. Social conditions of resident of Budapest are relatively good compared to the rest of the country. One important exception is the much higher number of homeless people in Budapest than in the countryside.

Residents of Budapest list social problems among the most serious problems in the city. The reason for this is there are significant differences among city districts with regard to social positions of residents. In some districts, social indicators are extremely bad.

The difference in life expectancy in the “best” and “worst” districts in Budapest is six years. This means residents in District 2 in Buda are on par with Belgium and residents of District 10 in Pest are on the same level as Syria.

There is an average 17 percent of apartments in “good” districts which lack comfort, compared to 40 percent in the “worst” districts. Differences between social positions of Budapest residents is rapidly widening and the social subsidy dependency on districts is increasing – in districts which are in the worst financial shape.

Unfortunately, it is becoming a trend that the chance for people to receive social services depends more on which district they live in.

Additionally, because of Budapest's housing environment and the difference in income levels, some areas are beginning to appear more like ghettos rather than residential districts. This can be seen especially in inner districts of the city and at some new housing estates. Meanwhile, areas around shopping centers, green-belt districts and many suburban settlements are becoming home to well-off and influential citizens.

The social services system in Budapest underwent significant changes in the 1990s. Some elements developed rapidly (care for



homeless), but district-level fragmentation of the system continues to grow.

Opportunities for the municipality to help equalize this playing field are also constrained, both from the national and local districts.

### *Preparing the Strategic Development Concept: Its History*

No politically-accepted document yet exists in Budapest, so the city remains far behind the Vienna process. The methods used are also very different.

Once the need to develop the Strategic Development Concept became apparent, the Budapest Municipality was quick to admit it did not have the capacity or expertise for the task. An open-bidding process was announced in 1997. Eight private companies won the bid and have been working on the concept ever since, with leadership from the Metropolitan Research Institute.

We began in October 1997 with four invited consultants, an architect, political analyst, geographer and historian, who each gave their opinion on long-term problems of Budapest. This was followed with an open debate which included city politicians.

The first phase of work centered on organizing a series of debates where experts in various sectors of the economy in Budapest were invited. The outcomes of these were published in a booklet in August 1998 and circulated to organizations with an interest in town development. It was also run on the Budapest Municipality's homepage. Contributions were submitted including from debates organized by NGOs.

In September, work focused on key issues of city development, like economic policy, industrial restructuring, retail, real estate development, logistics, transport, spatial structure, urban renewal, housing,

environment, social policy, culture and tourism. A summary of this work was published in November 1999.

These results were also discussed at the Budapest City Development Conference, at the end of November. The conference, which was attended by 400 people, was an important step in debating preparation of the Strategic Development Concept.

In March 2000, there were another six, half-day discussions with the districts of Budapest. Based on these meetings a "third draft" of the development concept was prepared in August 2000, using the two previous booklets and other commentary. The third draft was only briefly discussed on a political level at the Budapest Municipality and was sent for further clarification by experts and representatives of the Cabinet Office of the Mayor.

Compromises were then reached on a time frame for the concept and methods used in it. This was all accepted by the Cabinet Office in June 2001.

Now, a fourth draft has been started and will be discussed in October 2001. If the Cabinet Office adopts it, it will be sent to Budapest districts, various ministries, city development officials and other offices through the region.

We expect a new version of the Strategic Development Concept to be prepared and submitted to the Municipal Assembly for final deliberation in the first half of 2002.

### *Key Aims of the Budapest Strategic Development Concept*

The concept will cover a period of between 30 and 40 years with the objective of setting forth a framework for development of the city. There are no concrete conclusions in the concept, yet it outlines main trends and guidelines for important sectors of development.

This means that unless there are decisive arguments, the concept will be used for all future development and no sectoral plan should be passed which contradicts the Budapest concept. The concept focuses on development from the point of view of the public and analyzes the role to be played by the Budapest Municipality (and occasionally by districts). It also will serve as a point of reference to other players in development, like private investors.

The concept suggests as a starting point three main strategic aims: economic efficiency, quality of life and social sustainability.

In increasing efficiency, the city must:

- Develop macro-regional aspects of the city and promote efficiency of the economy. Examples include developing basic train lines, motorways, high-tech information centers, strengthening logistic functions, tourism and industrial restructuring.

- Improve inner-city traffic conditions by developing public transport, extending the ring-road system, parking policies and environmentally-friendly modes of transport.

- Develop regional connections to the city such as integrating the city more closely to its surrounding areas and devising spatial planning and cooperation.

Improving the quality of life means:

- Speeding up urban renewal, in inner-city residential and transitory industrial areas; improving housing conditions which ensure favorable terms for new construction; developing public space and green areas and making sure the environment remains sound and healthy despite infrastructure development.

- Promoting the cultural life of the city and increasing the variety of sports and leisure activities offered.

To ensure social sustainability, the following aspects are necessary in city development:

- Improving the situation of those living in poverty and the areas where they live. This include revamping the social services system; introducing a unified housing allowance system; reduce inequalities among districts; cleaning up ghettos and improving health care.

The concept also define three areas for future public development policy, such as developing a new circle road around the inner city mainly on the Pest side of the city which includes building two new bridges. This will breath life into the area which is now dominated by out-of-use industrial land. It will also improve the banks of the Danube River and make it a main attraction of the city, complete with waterfront housing and renovated physical structures.

Urban renewal continues with efforts at the reduction of traffic; new parking policies; reducing density and improving the use of public space. The improvement of public transport, a new ring-road and suggested inter-modality centers will also promote integration of the outskirts of the city.

### *Approach and Methods of the Budapest Strategic Development Concept*

The basic approach of the concept is very different from previous development ideas in Budapest and totally different from plans under the socialist regime, when city development and planning was dominated by the public sphere and market forces were suppressed.

This concept recognizes the leading role of the market economy and the big role that private and market players act in city development. It also differs from more laissez faire ideology of the 1990s, when the role of the public sphere was minimized. The concept aims for an active, innovative public policy in developing Budapest. The

concepts suggests applying the following three ways for public involvement:

- Regulating the market by supporting the most innovative sectors of the economy and offering financial help in preparing new multi-family housing and urban renewal.

- Requiring the market to carry out basic improvements and investments in infrastructure. This could mean restructuring the distressed transitional belt of the city, initiating new private investments to help with financing of the new ring-road.

- Giving public support to distressed areas of the city and lobbying for improvements which may not effect the market players but are important for the city overall.

This overview promotes a pro-active city policy even in some sectors which do not fall under the scope of the Budapest Municipality, such as housing and social support. New roles for the Municipality are an essential part of the concept, as it can help regulate and initiate tasks in the market.

### **Debates, Compromises in the Course of Preparing the Budapest Strategic Development Concept Conflicting Views on the Role of the Municipality**

A short debate which took place during the third draft of the concept focused on difference in opinion between experts and city politicians. Politicians were not in favor of broadening the tasks of the Municipality. Rather, they wanted more financial analysis on suggested programs and a more precise definition of the role the Municipality will play in city development.

In the course of several months of debate that followed compromises were reached. The concept puts forth three different planning periods:

- It adopts the existing medium-term (7 years) financial forecast and development plan

- It calculates competencies and financial conditions of the Municipality in a long-term (15 years) program

- The planning procedure is a bit more complicated. It starts with the 30-to-40-year vision and deducts from that the 15-year program. The 15-year program now becomes a realistic framework for the on going seven-year financial development program.

By making this distinction, the 30-to-40-year-long vision can now be viewed as “how the city should look” in that time period, in which the role of the Municipality and of other players does not have to be separated. However, the 15-year program must highlight duties of the Municipality and how they should be carried out by other players at the national level, district-wide and within the private sphere.

There must also be a rough financial background to prove that development ideas do not overestimate realistic financial capabilities of the Municipality. Following this debate, city politicians agreed to include social and health care aspects into the concept.

### **Specific Problems of Strategic Plans and Solutions Chosen**

#### **The Role of In-house vs Outside Planners. Role of Experts and Politicians in Preparing the Plan**

There are two basic ways to develop the concept, either to create an in-house local authority, ad-hoc group or steering committee (EC,2000:7) or to contract the work out.

Budapest opted for the second way and city politicians gave the green light and hired an expert group. But besides the positive of this solutions, there are also real dangers. It an happen that when the expert group concludes its work, heavy debates will be launched by politicians.

Communication and discussion is a must during the planning process. Involvement can grow throughout the process to include consultation, participation, dialogue, partnership and shared decision-making. (EC, 2000:8) Dialogue used in the Vienna process appears to be a useful method, but it is required to first have some level of acceptance on basic ideas. Budapest has not yet reached this phase.

Another uncertainty is how the concept should be enforced once adopted. The basic problems is that there will be difficulties to enforce the concept if specific interests from politicians and departments interfere. The answer may lie with building up partnerships between central/local, local public/public, public/private levels. Budapest is at the beginning of this process.

## Methods, Institutions, Monitoring

Without proper methods in place and institutions designated to help execute the Budapest concept goals may never be realized. Detailed discussion of this, however, could threaten its acceptance.

How can the Budapest concept be visionary and ground-breaking if it is hindered by financial problems with the everyday functioning of the city?

Political clashes and a lack of state support might cause problems but they can be considered temporary with regard to the long-term character of the plan and if proper cooperation is already in place among the parties involved.

The role of major projects can also help integrate the parties involved. For example, many cities embark upon "flagship" projects with the goal in mind of changing the city image, promoting urban development of rundown areas or creating land for new development. These projects often involve the private sector. Major projects have included planning the Olympics or World/European Sport Championships.

One danger of these events is that they increase the exclusion of low-income residents and have no policy effect on run-down areas. In this way, discrepancies within a city may increase.

The Budapest concept did not look at launching a major project, but it does suggest eight-to-10 key development areas in the city where public and private investments should be concentrated.

## Conclusion

Under increasing the increasing challenge of globalization and the single market with the European Union, cities must set up long-term strategies. In doing so, they must decide whether to use one of two main types: the "flagship" version, which gives extraordinary support to one or several goals, or the "mixed version" which aims to achieve balance in most city development areas.

Vienna and Budapest belong to the second group, striving for balanced development with a bit more emphasis on "hard" development factors. One difference between two cities' plans is that Vienna does define explicit goals for developing social policy. This can be explained by the fact that in the normal functioning of Vienna, equalizing policies are much stronger than in Budapest. Budapest is therefore forced to set new goals to replace existing ones.

It is still very positive that in the Budapest concept, social policy is one of its six main strategic goals. This has also been accepted by city

politicians, but only after heavy debate. We hope it will not be excluded during the final course of debate.

Political acceptance in Budapest, however, really only means for now that city officials are willing to listen to ideas suggested by experts who drafted the concept. The next important step should be encouraging funding from the city to meet environmental and social goals.

The Budapest Municipality, unfortunately, is unable to ensure all social aspects of city development. There is a strong need for the central government to take on some responsibilities as well as district governments. Only through cooperation can the Municipality implement the concept.

In many Central and Eastern European cities, conditions of strategic planning are not very good, mainly because they have a weaker economic base, more unstable local circumstances, strong migration tendencies, deteriorating inner cities, housing estates and informal settlement in and around the city. They also have weak policies in place for yearly budget planning instead of medium or long-term thinking and planning.

Strategic planning is not only vital for the final product. The process of developing it is just as important as internal discussions are necessary within municipalities and create important links.

With such a plan in place they can improve the everyday functioning of the city and begin the process of modernizing the city administration.

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