

Vienna City Council's Committee for European and International Affairs has taken unanimously note of the following declaration in its session on 10 May 2011:

Vienna Declaration on Europe 2011

1. Preamble

■ Paragraph 1:

For years now, the European Union's importance for economy and society has been increasing. Well over half of the national legislation in the Member States now originates directly or indirectly from the European Union. In all areas of their daily lives, people are frequently affected by decisions made at EU level. Federal and regional legislatures are responsible for transposing European provisions.

■ Paragraph 2:

As a centre of business, science and culture, Vienna has seized the opportunities that have arisen over the past years as a result of the European integration process. The City of Vienna profited from the European common internal market, for instance, and thanks to its geographical location and traditional links to Central and (South) Eastern Europe it has been a beneficiary of the enlargement process. The inflow of European funding has also done its part to help Vienna cope with the structural changes.

■ Paragraph 3:

However, in order to maintain high-quality public services at national and local level the restructuring of the internal market should not result in compulsory opening of sensitive areas of general interest such as education, social services and healthcare or public utilities to market competition.

■ Paragraph 4:

The degree to which European policies permeate the various policy areas is predetermined by the devolvement of powers to the EU provided for in the Treaties of the European Union. Individual areas are thus highly "European Unionised", others less so, and in some areas the European Community has no devolved powers at all. This division of competence between the EU and the Member States and the coordinates of the multi-level system of EU, federal government and provincial government must be taken as the point of departure when framing Vienna's positions on European questions. Especially in times of scarce resources this calls for a more intense focus on Vienna's primary interests and tasks within the framework of the regional spheres of competence laid down in the Treaty of Lisbon.

■ Paragraph 5:

Vienna City Council, subsequent to

- the Vienna Declaration on Europe of 25 February 1994,
- the Vienna Resolution of 27 June 1996 on the occasion of the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference of the EU,
- “Vienna and Europe, Declaration by Vienna Provincial Parliament on Current European Issues” of 21 October 1997 and
- the resolution of Vienna City Council of 1 February 2002, in which the latter makes a clear commitment to EU enlargement, the Declaration on Europe by Vienna Provincial Parliament of 2003, the memoranda from the Governor of the Province of Vienna to Vienna Provincial Parliament of 28 June 2007 and 28 March 2008, having regard to
- the Declaration on the future of the European Union made on 15 December 2001 by the European Council meeting in Laeken, in which it is recognised *“that the democratic legitimacy and transparency of the Union and its institutions must be increased and strengthened in order to bring them closer to the citizens of the Member States”*,
- the European Commission White Paper of July 2001 on European governance, which particularly recommends, among other things, closer cooperation between the European institutions, national governments, regional and local administrations and civil society,
- the European Parliament resolution of 14 January 2003 on the role of regional and local authorities in European integration, which calls for stronger and more appropriate participation of regional and local authorities in the institutional system of the European Union and most notably also for the abandonment *“... of any view of the Union’s institutional system as being necessarily hierarchical and pyramid-shaped”*,
- the Berlin Declaration of the heads of state and government on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome, 25 March 2007,
- the European Parliament report of 17 September 2008 on governance and partnership at national and regional levels and a basis for projects in the sphere of regional policy, in which the Committee of the Regions is called upon *“to step up its efforts to develop the practice of governance, in both quantitative and qualitative terms”*,
- the European Commission Green Paper of 6 October 2008 on Territorial Cohesion,
- the conclusions of the European Summit of Regions and Cities held in Prague on 5/6 March 2009,
- the Committee of the Regions White Paper of 18 June 2009 on multi-level governance,
- the participatory and integrative Strategies for the Baltic Sea and Danube Regions, which are good examples for the implementation of cross-sectoral policies that are taken forward by multiple stakeholders and involve a number of different planning and financing strands at European, national and subnational level, and
- with reference to the Treaty of Lisbon and the work currently in progress at European level such as Europe 2020, etc., takes the following positions with regard to the current challenges of European integration:

2. General objectives

■ Paragraph 6:

European integration was and remains of essential importance for safeguarding peace and enhancing prosperity in Europe. The EU's function as a safeguard of peace is undisputed. The EU's economic and social policy orientation is not: here there is a fundamental choice to be made between neo-liberalism versus ecological and social principles. Against the backdrop of the current financial and economic crisis, the EU today is at a crossroads: either it succeeds in overcoming the systemic causes of the crisis by means of a coordinated economic and monetary policy, bringing the self-interest of the financial markets under control and strengthening the social dimension of European policy, or there will be an increasing polarisation between donor and recipient states and an ensuing destabilisation of the euro. This will also depend on the extent to which additional steps are taken to further reduce the EU's appreciable "democratic deficit" and strengthen the powers of the European Parliament. A Europe that is no longer in competition with the national Member States can only be established on the basis of a participative democracy in which the citizens of Europe can actively assume responsibility. The EU should therefore also champion an enlightened Europe and advocate freedom of information.

■ Paragraph 7:

In terms of economic policy coordination, positive future development requires "more Europe" but also a different kind of Europe. This applies to both the regulatory system for the European financial markets as well as to the EU's strategic economic policy. The EU 2020 Strategy, however, is not very strategic, nor is it reflected in the Member States' current austerity programmes. Europe must develop its own model for sustainable growth. Intelligent growth is desirable because it secures jobs, generates innovation and opens up opportunities for young people.

■ Paragraph 8:

The revised version of the Stability and Growth Pact and the implementation of the proposals on economic governance and economic policy coordination must not pose an obstacle to necessary investments by the Member States in employment, social and environmental projects or jeopardise the Europe 2020 goals (raising the employment rate, reducing school drop-out rates and the number of people in or at risk of poverty, investing in climate protection and R&D).

■ Paragraph 9:

The economic governance structures must not lead to a de-democratisation of economic policy. On the contrary, what is required is strengthening of the Macroeconomic Dialogue between the EU Member States, reform of the Stability and Growth Pact with a view to incorporating macroeconomic factors and steadfast commitment to the creation of a European social union.

■ Paragraph 10:

The social and integrative dimension of the EU must be strengthened. The disparity in the distribution of income and wealth was already increasing before the economic crisis. The crisis has exacerbated the problem, because unemployment and loss of income affect lower income groups more than higher earners. Likewise, European regulations such as those relating to state aid and public procurement are increasingly impacting on or modifying the established social systems and standards. It will be imperative to ensure that fundamental social rights, social standards and social security systems are not eroded, but further developed within the framework of new European, national and regional regulations.

■ Paragraph 11:

Anyone who supports growth must also advocate effective environmental standards. Growth must go hand in hand with lower consumption of energy and raw materials. The relevant targets have not yet been met. In order to secure its future, Europe must become the global market leader in environmental technologies, both to cover its own needs and because this is a sector in which the added value is particularly high. Nowhere in the world does the population accord such high priority to environmental issues as in Europe. The strategy of the moment must therefore be to create a market out of these needs.

■ Paragraph 12:

It is also necessary to make the European idea clearer to the people. The fact that Vienna has so far predominantly derived economic benefit from European enlargement is not reflected in the population's attitude towards the EU. Voter turnout and experience gathered at the last elections to the European Parliament also demonstrate that communicating Europe to the citizens is not just a matter of sending out information; it also entails gauging people's moods and – in some cases – being open to critical feedback.

■ Paragraph 12a:

Vienna will consciously position itself as a mediator between the faiths and actively promote peaceful coexistence throughout the entire European Union.

■ Paragraph 13:

From its very history and geopolitical situation Vienna feels committed to the objectives of safeguarding peace, increasing prosperity and ensuring its fair distribution among the population, maintaining a high standard of social security and high-quality public services, preserving trade union rights, complying with wage agreements and protective provisions when posting staff elsewhere (equal pay for equal work in the same location), efficient use of resources and engaging in dialogue with the people, and will argue the case for the EU to pursue a similar approach via all the available political channels.

3. Thematic foci

■ Paragraph 14:

In order to enhance Vienna's locational competitiveness through active, grassroots co-participation in the EU, the research foci defined in the Vienna Research, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2007 will be increasingly geared towards the EU's efforts to establish a common European Higher Education and Research Area. In order to boost creation of long-term jobs in sustainable sectors of the economy, innovation transfer and cooperation between science and business are to be intensified. European funding programmes offer a good starting point in this regard, e.g. for joint projects by companies and research institutions under the auspices of the European Framework Programme for Research and Development.

■ Paragraph 15:

With a view to further reducing unemployment and supplying the skilled and qualified workforce it needs for the future, Vienna will continue its efforts to foster employment opportunities and

occupational mobility, notably by means of the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund (*Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfonds, waff*). The successful activities under the auspices of the Territorial Employment Pact will be continued, as will the initiatives aimed at better coordination of measures within the future regional cross-border labour market.

■ **Paragraph 16:**

In order to secure high-quality jobs and economic growth for the long term Vienna has to strengthen its core competences, network and communicate them Europe-wide, take up European incentives and effectively channel EU financial support. To this end efforts will focus on taking appropriate measures to attract more companies requiring skilled labour to set up operations in Vienna. The aim must be to enhance Vienna's competitiveness both globally and within Europe. The Life Sciences, ICT, Mobility, Creative Industries and Climate/Energy sectors correspond to strategic priorities of the EU and are particularly suited for this purpose.

■ **Paragraph 17:**

The greatest added value of the EU lies in the achievement of transnational Europe-wide goals that individual Member States and regions cannot accomplish on their own (climate and water protection, transnational infrastructure, etc.). At the same time it is necessary to defend local authorities' power to define services of general interest and their freedom of choice with regard to the form of provision of services of general interest, and to guarantee that the principle of subsidiarity is respected by safeguarding the right to local and regional self-determination in the provision, organisation and financing of public services. Legal recognition of the priority of functioning public services over the principles of the internal market and competition law and flexibilisation of the EU state aid legislation with regard to the financing of services of general economic interest enable the provision of high-quality public services as a pillar of the European social model. There must be no compulsory liberalisation of public services, particularly water supply and wastewater disposal, healthcare and social services.

■ **Paragraph 18:**

Vienna will make an active contribution to achieving the climate protection goals defined by the federal government and by the EU. The use of renewable energies will be consistently expanded for this purpose. Measures to enhance energy efficiency and save energy will be supported through consultancy and subsidy schemes. Vienna will also redouble its efforts in the fight against nuclear power stations near the Austrian border and the renaissance of nuclear power in Europe. By promoting environmental technologies Vienna can both help create "green jobs" as well as enhancing the city's attractiveness as a business location.

■ **Paragraph 19:**

In order to secure its global competitiveness in the face of the constantly growing volume of traffic it is essential for Vienna to have good links to the European transport networks. Cooperation in the planning bodies of European transnational transport networks, upgrading of the transport links within the CENTROPE region, further development of short-distance public transport, (broad-gauge) freight transport and inland shipping and optimising the intermodality of the individual modes of transport are further key prerequisites for the city's positive development as a business location.

■ **Paragraph 20:**

In the fields of urban mobility, energy-optimised urban planning and urban district and neighbourhood development Vienna intends to lead by example with innovative measures to show how European cities can respond to demographic, environmental and climatic change at an early stage

and in a sustainable manner. The Seestadt Aspern development is to be a project of international standing in this respect.

■ **Paragraph 21:**

Educational and youth work on Europe is also of great importance for Vienna. It is very important that young people be encouraged to engage more closely with Europe than they have to date. Greater weight should be given to the opinion of young people on European policy issues. In the field of European youth work there are successful activities that can be built upon, one example being the EdTWIN cross-border education initiative in the CENTROPE region.

■ **Paragraph 22:**

In order to facilitate the (re)integration in the labour market of the low-skilled and long-term unemployed, the range of gender-focussed skill-building and und integration measures offered within the framework of the EU Structural Funds Programmes will continue to be of particular importance in future. Likewise, the activities implemented under the operational programme of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – at regional and international level – provide a good opportunity to present people with a very concrete example of the added value of European cohesion policy.

■ **Paragraph 23:**

In the previous Structural Funds periods Vienna was successfully developed into a competence centre (for Central and South Eastern Europe) for cross-border and transnational European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). This position should be maintained after 2013. At the same time, cooperation within the CENTROPE region also remains a priority. The city's involvement in the establishment of supraregional and transnational coordination structures will be continued.

■ **Paragraph 24:**

Transnationally coordinated macroregional strategies have the potential to generate a significant amount of European added value. In future, it will be a great deal easier for cities like Vienna to develop joint projects extending beyond their administrative boundaries, such as, for instance, in the fields of urban technologies and transport, which are both of special interest to the city, but also with regard to the horizontal issue of social inclusion. This is why Vienna played an active role in the elaboration of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Vienna's priorities within the framework of the Strategy are environmental protection and preservation of the Danube ecosystem. Thanks to Vienna's active lobbying, the urban dimension is firmly anchored in the Action Plan of the Strategy for the Danube Region. Within the framework of the strategy development process Vienna put itself forward as coordinator for the Priority Area "Institutional capacity and cooperation".

■ **Paragraph 25:**

Vienna attaches particular importance to gender mainstreaming as a horizontal issue. The respective status quo and likely impacts on gender equality are to be taken into account in the development and organisation of political decision-making processes and measures in all spheres of activity with the aim of eliminating gender-specific stereotypes, ensuring a balanced representation of women in all decision-making processes, promoting equal economic independence for women and men, improving the quality of women's employment and improving the work-life balance.

■ **Paragraph 26:**

In order to strengthen the European idea and promote active democratic participation of the citizens in the shaping of the Union, Vienna seeks to engage in structured dialogue with the local population on European policy questions, e.g. by means of Europe Days, lectures and talks on Europe and forums

involving civil society initiatives. The city's EU-related information and PR work aims to give the Viennese people as concrete a picture as possible of "European added value". The feasibility of implementing citizens' initiatives in the form currently envisaged is to be evaluated in due course.

4. Demands for strengthening of the urban dimension

■ Paragraph 27:

Urban areas are the critical drivers of growth, acting as "laboratories" for social trends and as centres of creativity and innovation. Urban areas thus offer the greatest opportunities. On the other hand, however, the cities are also the focus of the greatest challenges, from environmental pollution to social exclusion. Successfully overcoming these challenges requires special measures and direct involvement of the relevant tier of government.

■ Paragraph 28:

Sectoral policy decisions taken by the EU have a spatially focussed impact and are becoming increasingly "tangible" in Europe's cities. With the Treaty of Lisbon, territorial cohesion was enshrined as a distinct new aim of the EU alongside economic and social cohesion. In order to achieve these aims, it is imperative that the "urban dimension" be recognised as a fixed element of all EU policies. By taking greater account of the needs of cities with regard to the following issues, EU policies should be "urbanised", given a higher profile and attract stronger support from the local citizens. To this end the following are called for:

- Incorporation of mandatory chapters on the "urban dimension" in relevant EU and national documents, for instance in the implementation reports on the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Community Cohesion Reports, documents relating to the macroregional strategies (cf. Strategy for the Danube Region), etc.
- Consistent inclusion of the cities in the various EU sectoral policies plus standard review of the direct and indirect impacts of EU policies on cities in a mandatory urban impact assessment.
- More frequent and systematic studies on urban issues, e.g. under the auspices of the Framework Programme for Research and Development and/or ESPON¹, in order to improve the Europe-wide data situation and provide the basis for urban strategies.
- Holding of regular "European Cities Forums" on the model of the first EU Cities Forum which took place in Vienna in 1998.

¹ ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observation Network), Europäisches Raumbewachtungsnetzwerk ESPON ist ein Netzwerkprogramm, das sich mit der Raumbewachtung, Datenanalyse und -bereitstellung auf europäischer Ebene beschäftigt.

■ Paragraph 29:

With a view to the further development of EU cohesion policy post-2014, Vienna advocates the following realignments:

- Mandatory involvement of the cities in the planning, endowment and implementation of the national, regional and transnational Structural Funds Operational Programmes.
- Focussing financial assistance from the Structural Funds funding in cities to implement integrated urban development strategies in areas with flexible boundaries. These should include both small-scale inner-city development zones (incl. urban renewal) and the city as a whole as well as functional urban regions.
- Further mainstreaming of the urban dimension in the Structural Funds Programmes, in particular through:
 - Explicit earmarking of a minimum share of 25 per cent of EU Structural Funds co-financing for the period 2014+ for measures in the field of urban development.
 - Enhanced opportunities for dovetailing of the various EU Structural Funds (ERDF + ESF) in programme implementation in order to heighten the impact of integrated urban measures.
- Coordinated development of an “agglomeration development strategy” at national and European level together with the urban and regional stakeholders, focussing, for example, on specific investment and support measures - including measures within the framework of sectoral policies - with the aim of developing high-performance metropolitan regions.
- Incentives and an improved (legal) framework for cooperation between cities and their surrounding areas as well as between all administrative tiers and relevant stakeholders in a functional region, for instance through innovative, tailor-made governance solutions.
- Substantial administrative simplifications, streamlining of processes and reduction of red tape in the implementation of Structural Funds co-financing at the EU, national and regional levels.

■ Paragraph 30:

These general objectives, thematic foci and demands are to be realised, in particular, by means of the following instruments:

5. Instruments

■ Paragraph 31:

To reflect the growing importance of the European Parliament there is to be more intensive monitoring of the relevant Committees and close cooperation with the MEPs on agendas of relevance to Vienna. MEPs’ right to speak on European policy issues in Vienna City Council and Vienna Provincial Parliament should also serve to improve networking and information sharing. Networking with the European Economic and Social Committee should also be stepped up with a view to lobbying on issues of relevance to Vienna.

■ **Paragraph 32:**

Alongside its participation in the committee and plenary sessions, Vienna's membership of the Committee of the Regions should be used to advocate strengthening of the urban dimension in EU policies and continuously improve the contacts necessary for the city's interregional networking activities.

■ **Paragraph 33:**

Vienna will continue to play an active role in cooperating with other regions, particularly within the framework of suitable European networks (Eurocities, UCEU, CEMR, REGLEG, AER, METREX, etc.). The latter provide a forum for exchanging best practice and forging contacts with relevant partner regions and are an essential platform for the elaboration of applications for European project funding.

■ **Paragraph 34:**

In pursuing the European policy aims set forth here, Vienna will make an active contribution to the further evolution of both the CENTROPE region and the "Twin Cities" of Vienna and Bratislava.

6. Guidelines for Vienna's EU policy

■ **Paragraph 35:**

Based on the objectives, strategies, demands and visions of the City of Vienna as detailed above, the City Council hereby adopts the following EU policy guidelines:

- The economic and social policy of the EU should be predicated on the principles of economic sustainability and on ecological and social values, not on neo-liberal dogmas. In order to safeguard the process of European integration, improved coordination and more stringent regulatory measures are required, e.g. measures for effective regulation of the financial sector and introduction of a financial transaction tax at European level. Strengthening of the social orientation of the European Union by according priority to fundamental social rights over fundamental freedoms is a further important step towards social union.
- Based on the existing division of competence, Vienna's actions are guided by the principle of subsidiarity. Measures should always be taken at the closest possible level to the citizen.
- Vienna advocates the further development of democracy within the Union. The introduction of the European Citizens' Initiative was only a first step towards eliminating the EU's "democratic deficit".
- The process of European integration and the necessary structural reforms must not erode established social standards and social systems. The European social model must be further developed.
- Vienna advocates legal recognition of the principle of sustainability and calls for climate protection, resource efficiency and lifecycle cost calculation to be taken into account in all policy areas.

- With its PR activities Vienna aims to make people better informed about European issues and to strengthen the European idea, especially among young people. Vienna seeks to engage in a structured dialogue with its citizens on European policy questions, with the involvement of civil society initiatives.
- The provision of public goods and access to transnational infrastructure are seen as key elements of EU added value. At the same time, local authorities' power to define services of general interest and their freedom of choice with regard to the provision of services of general interest must be preserved and respect for the principle of subsidiarity guaranteed by safeguarding the right to local and regional self-determination in the provision, organisation and financing of public services. Legal recognition of the priority of functioning public services over the principles of the internal market and competition law and flexibilisation of the EU state aid legislation with regard to the financing of services of general economic interest enable the provision of high-quality public services as a pillar of the European social model. There must be no compulsory liberalisation of public services, particularly water supply and wastewater disposal, healthcare and social services.
- Vienna advocates strengthening of the urban dimension of all relevant EU policies and a corresponding involvement of the cities in the planning and implementation of European initiatives and strategies. The aim is to enhance the competitiveness of urban agglomerations such as Vienna-Bratislava.
- The Treaty of Lisbon's new aim of "territorial cohesion" must also be covered in the new Structural Funds Programmes, with a particular focus on the role of the cities and functional regions and on macroregional strategies.
- For the representation of its European policy interests – besides the participatory instruments provided for under the Austrian constitution – Vienna makes particular use of suitable European (Eurocities, UCEU, CEMR, REGLEG, AER, METREX, etc.) and international networks as well as lobbying within the framework of the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.
- Vienna is committed to maintaining an intensive cooperation and exchange with the states of Eastern Europe (e.g. via the Representative Offices), as has been the case to date.
- With its active policy on women's issues (e.g. specifying affirmative action for women as a requirement in local authority tenders, gender budgeting), its large number of advisory facilities for women and its highly developed domestic violence early warning system, the City of Vienna has been a recognised role model both in Austria and internationally for many years now. Vienna's policy on women's issues is also well represented internationally in programmes such as FEMCITIES, and this approach will be continued in the future.

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