N.U.R.E.C. - an example of a network on urban research in the European Union

By Robert Tonks

Abstract

N.U.R.E.C.'s activities are based on the principles of networking, project management and method mix. Together these have led to the innovative products: the EUROPOLIS Database, the Atlas of Agglomerations in the European Union, and the ongoing projects: LCSP and the Structural Change of their European City System.

Trends like global urbanization, the globalization of the economy and the emergence of a network of global cities and of a European city system indicate the necessity for cities world-wide to enter new strategic alliances and forms of cooperation and their need for comparative information is urgent. It is up to urban data providers to produce the tools to satisfy this demand.

Reflecting this need and as a result of the working relations with EUROSTAT, ISI, IULA, UNSD and Habitat, N.U.R.E.C. has conducted numerous projects and produced a variety of data products relevant to the problems facing cities since its establishment in 1989. Compromise on the methods used to produce a base from which to compare data has, due to the differences resulting from the various national traditions involved, been crucial.

In future, by setting their point of departure as the problems of cities world-wide and concentrating on sustainability indicators, data providers can endeavour by networking to find the appropriate blend of methods and project framework to make available data geared to cities' needs. In an open dialogue comprising relevant institutions and networks the LCSP data can represent an important base on which to build.