PRESS RELEASE

„HerO **-** Heritage as Opportunity"

Kick-Off-Conference in Poitiers

The EU-funded project „HerO - Heritage as Opportunity: Sustainable Management Strategies for Vital Historic Urban Landscapes" entered its second phase: representatives of the ten European partner cities came to Poitiers for the launching conference, which took place in the local conference centre from 4-5 December.

„It is a great pleasure for me to host this important project meeting here in Poitiers" said Poiters' mayor Alain Claeys and warmly welcomed his international guests "We are very happy that the city of Poitiers has been chosen to become a partner to this promising city network and we look forward to a fruitful exchange with other historic towns in Europe."

On 21 November the European Commission's Monitoring Committee took the final decision: Under leadership of the German city of Regensburg, the HerO partners cities (after a six-months development phase from April until October 2008) can

now continue their project work for the upcoming thirty months. The project will be funded by the URBACT Programme, an EU initiative with special focus on integrated urban development. The total amount of funding for the network adds up to approximately 600.000 €.

The Old Town of Poitiers, France

The HerO Kick-Off-Conference aimed to officially launch the second phase of the network and to create a common understanding of the project's objectives and the intended outputs as well as to create a common spirit for the project work.

 "The project HerO is a great success." Regensburg's deputy mayoress and councillor for planning and construction Christine Schimpfermann proudly announced "On the one hand it fosters the exchange of knowledge, mutual learning and the conjoint development of sustainable management strategies on project level. On the other hand it ensures the implementation of these ideas through concrete activities on local level." And she added "We can benefit a lot from other historic cities but we can also pass on our experiences with the management of an historic

urban landscape." Regensburg is the first town in Southern Germany to coordinate an URBACT-funded project.

Facing the various challenges of historic European cities of different size and structure, the HerO Network aims to develop integrated management strategies as well as innovative good practice methods, instruments, policies and action plans to facilitate the right balance between preserving the cultural heritage of historic urban landscapes as element of identity and integral part of European history and enabling a sustainable, future-proof urban development to maintain and to strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of the historic urban landscapes. Thereby emphasis will be placed on managing conflicting usage interests and capitalising the potential of cultural heritage assets for economic, social and cultural activities.

URBACT is an EU initiative, which fosters the Europe-wide networking of cities, the conjoint development of strategies and urban development policies as well as mutual learning and exchange of experiences. At the same time, the programme aims to contribute to an improvement of actions carried out at local and regional level in order to find the most efficient solutions to common problems. Thereby, the preservation of the cultural heritage is a major aspect.

The HerO network consists of ten partner cities: beside Regensburg (Germany) and Poitiers (France), the HerO partners are Graz (Austria), Naples (Italy), Vilnius (Lithuania), Sighisoara (Romania), Liverpool (United Kingdom), Lublin (Poland), Valencia (Spain) and Valletta (Malta).
The project will be carried out in close co-operation with EAHTR - The European Association of Historic Towns and Regions.

For further information on the URBACT programme and the
HerO project please visit our project website at
www.urbact.eu/hero.

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