

## APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES WITHIN THE SMALL URBAN AREAS

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**Abstract:** *Small urban areas have a very important role in ensuring a balanced territorial development across all Member States of the European Union. Within these urban areas we encounter a very large diversity in terms of structure, roles and development trends, diversity which is a challenge for policy makers due to the need to adapt the strategies to the needs existing at the level of each small urban area. The paper analyzes five policy approaches aimed at contributing to the sustainable development of these areas, which are often considered smaller copies of large cities, without taking into account that they have their own characteristics that distinguish them from other types of settlements.*

Europe has a peculiar urban structure compared to other parts of the world, as it is characterised by a large number of small cities. In particular, there are around 14 000 small urban areas (SUAs) across the EU that host 43 % of the EU's population. Small urban areas are not only significant in quantity, but they also hold strategic importance as they form the backbone of the polycentric urban structure of the European Union and play a crucial role in fostering harmonious development across its territory.

Re-activating places for people and community.

Re-discovering uniqueness.

Re-connecting with nature for a sustainable future.

Re-inventing smart public services.

Re-imagining governance and partnerships.