

I European Green Forum Meeting in “La Pedrera”, Barcelona

The European Green Forum initiative could be launched at the end of 2005

The I European Green Forum Meeting was held within the frame of the 1st European Congress Ciutat Verda. Green Forums are organisations that promote and encourage green in cities. The event gathered representatives from the UK, Germany, Holland, Italy, France, Republic of Ireland, and Catalonia.

The agenda of the meeting, open to the public, was marked by three questions. The first and the second ones posed what organisations work to provide more value to green in cities and what activities are carried out to achieve the commitment of politicians, economic actors, professional sectors, education and society in the creation of greener cities.

In the case of the United Kingdom, Germany, Holland, France, and the Republic of Ireland activities are being organised with relation to Green City, contests of cities full of flowers, initiatives that gather production and trade of flowers and ornamental plants. In these countries, the green sector has been able to invite the economic actors, government, and society to render more value to green and to put green in the cities.

As to Italy, Stefano Mengoli, of the University of Pisa, said: “public investment in green is ridiculous and private investment does not comitt itself to green in cities”. The situation is that small town councils find resources. In Torino an initiative has been funded with the Urban 2 resources of the EU. Among professionals there is the idea and will to organise an observatory of the urban green.

In Catalonia the *Associació Amics dels Jardins* organises since 1987 the Catalunya en Flor prices, as well as courses and conferences. In 2005 the “X+Verd” trademark organises the 1st Ciutat Verda Congress in collaboration with the Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan government) and the Fundació Territori i Paisatge with the aim to launch several initiatives to provide value to green in Catalonia.

Finally, the third question referred to the cooperation of all these organisations and activities on a European level, therefore the Declaration of Barcelona was presented.

Declaration of Barcelona

The Green Forum representatives – who promote and encourage green areas in cities in Germany, Catalonia, France, Republic of Ireland, Italy, and the UK, gathered in Barcelona within the frame of the 1st European Congress Ciutat Verda. In view of the concurrence of urban and environmental problems faced in cities of these countries, an agreement has been reached to create the

necessary structures for knowledge interchange and, at the same time, to develop ideas that allow to establish a common strategy and to promote solutions within the framework of a systematic and rational development, scientifically founded, for all kinds of urban green areas.

Good communication is a necessary tool to promote mutual learning and to achieve these aims. A European Green Forum will be the atmosphere where the information flow will be established, the initiatives that will allow participants to move forward with regard to their priorities will be discussed and coordinated, but within the framework of the associated organisations. This supra-national structure acts as a promoter and coordinates the existing initiatives at a national level, and regional and local initiatives are channelled through a national interlocutor.

The representatives agree to forward this proposal to their respective organisations to be taken into consideration, and to meet again in June 2005 in Munich, Germany, with the aim to approve this "Declaration of Barcelona" and to definitively shape the Green Forum Europe initiative, which is planned to be launched at the end of 2005.

La Pedrera, 13th of April 2005
Event coordinated by X+Verd