

# Cities as the forum for the European debate

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## Proposition for the cities' position in the UE institutional structure

My suggestion is to start with explaining what the proposition is not:

- I. The proposition herein has nothing in common with the idea of Benjamin Barber who suggests that majors ruled the world. **He neither calls for the larger influence of municipal or regional authorities on the functioning of EU** nor a shift in the mode of participation of such authorities in the process of shaping of the EU policies.
- II. **The proposition herein is not an attempt to distinguish communities of residents in large cities at the expense of other groups of citizens** of the European Union. In the concept put forward before, cities are primarily network hubs, a kind of the point of access to public and commercial services, education, public transport, media, public debate.

And now what the proposition is:

- III. Its principal premise is the **use of the asset of the European Union and Europe** discussed here - **a well-developed network of urban centers** as an axis of the functioning of societies. There is not such network in the strongly diversified United States or other OECD countries and, obviously, in the developing countries. The cities making up such network run their own, independent of government, universities, media and social organizations. Thus they can be the forum where a national as well as European policy is discussed.
- IV. The proposition rests in **the exploitation of the European cities' potential in designing and implementing EU policies through debates and consultations as well as the transfer of knowledge in the areas going beyond a narrowly-understood urban policy**. The undertaking will be sensible if the relevant debate is run also in the centers that are not capital cities or regional capitals but may be a forum easily accessible for the residents of their neighborhood areas.
- V. **European Parliament seems to be a natural promoter of such process**. It should frame the questions as a point of departure for discussions and consultations and then conclude opinions and solution designs gathered throughout that process.
- VI. The process is organized by the European Parliament **in cooperation with the councils of selected European cities, within the area of those cities. They will become the new fora of the European debate**. To provide fair conditions of participation in debates and consultations, it is necessary to adopt a principle of building such forum of the European debate in the cities whose impact area impact is inhibited by at least 1 million of residents.

- VII. **The city council** in such center would be obliged to **ensure fair conditions of participation in debates and consultations** for local universities, media, social organizations, and people with wide and valuable professional and public experience. Invitation of the representatives of smaller settlement units located in the impact area of specific centers. Thus it would be sensible to determine a territorial range of such obligation in the contract made between the European Parliament and a council of the city that is a seat of such European forum.
- VIII. The overriding idea of such debate would be the **exploitation of intellectual and political (civil) capital of the centers** whose participation in the current debate is marginal, especially those that do not enjoy a privileged administrative status. Another opportunity would be a look at the implementation and outcomes of the EU policies from different perspectives to get a more comprehensive view. This would extend our knowledge needed for “the integrated development of Europe through the cities and their considerable contribution.”