



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

27 March 2017

## Press Release

*.../for immediate release*

### SHARING BEST PRACTICE IN SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION

**EU's WORLD CITIES PROJECT PAIRS EKURHULENI, NELSON MANDELA BAY,  
CAPE TOWN AND ETHEKWINI WITH FOUR TOP EUROPEAN CITIES**

***Four South African cities – Ekurhuleni, Nelson Mandela Bay, Cape Town and eThekweni - are being paired with four European cities – Bilbao (Spain), Belfast (UK), Graz (Austria) and Málaga (Spain) – under the new World Cities project. This European Union (EU) initiative – supported by the European Parliament – promotes long-term working relations between cities of the EU and cities in other countries, such as the Republic of South Africa, with whom we share a strategic partnership.***

The overall aim of the project is to promote better urban policy and thereby improve the quality of life in participating cities. In the participating cities this covers, for example, urban innovation (the smart city) and green technologies (energy efficiency, low carbon development). Actions are designed to increase so-called '**triple-helix cooperation**' between governments, research and business. World Cities will also create **opportunities** for business and new **jobs** while pursuing the sustainable development of the cities involved.

The initiative was launched in Ekurhuleni today in the presence of Mr Roland Hunter, Head of the Economic Development Department of the Cities Support Programme (CSP) of the National Treasury, 20 European city delegates and senior officials of the involved South African cities. The EU was represented by Dr Marcus Cornaro, European Union Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa and Dr Ronald Hall, Principal Advisor, EU Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, Brussels.

Amb Cornaro thanked the Government of the South Africa and the involved cities for their support and shared the desire to continue building a genuine partnership on sustainable urban development between South Africa and the EU. Amb Cornaro said: "The EU and



South Africa agree that the development of cities is a key factor in the promotion of sustainable development. The majority of our citizens live and will increasingly live in cities, it follows thus that to improve their lives we need to improve both the urban environment as well as services that impact their lives on a daily basis. I am proud to have been able to announce today this EU programme that will allow South Africa to benefit from city-to-city cooperation and experience, between four major European and four important South African cities. This initiative will encourage the development of capacities and will foster exchanges on urban solutions. It will build on the long and wide ranging partnerships that unite South Africa and the European Union."

This programme will also provide a unique opportunity to the four South African cities to collaborate and learn from the experiences of Australia, South Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam, who are the other country partners for the EU for the World Cities project.

Dr Ronald Hall, Principal Advisor, EU DG for Regional and Urban Policy, underlined, "In both, South Africa and the EU, we realise that **our policies** for economic and social development will be successful only if they are **successful in our cities**. This is why it is important that we share our knowledge and experience on urban policy, urban transport and mobility; energy efficiency, urban-rural relations and good urban governance. EU regional and urban policy invests over 50 billion euros annually in supporting European regions and cities and we, on our side, are keen to share the results of this experience. Our aim is to build a long-term cooperation platform between the EU and the Republic of South Africa in an effort to address more effectively the major urbanisation challenges of the 21st century". Additionally, Dr Hall spoke of the new EU Urban agenda in accordance with the UN Habitat III and its continuous effort to further promote the international outreach of EU's urban agenda, especially with the South African partners.

### **The conference:**

The half-day conference served to further strengthen the ties between the EU and the Republic of South Africa, and helped develop the way forward for cooperation on sustainable urban development.

In the conference, 30-40 representatives from the EU and South African cities focused on concrete cooperation projects regarding Smart City (transportation, ICT, safety), Urban Economy (innovation, clusters, start-ups), Climate Change (low-carbon, green energy, resilience) and urban regeneration (cultural heritage, green spaces, affordable housing).

The conference was attended by representatives from the national and local governments, private sector, non-governmental organisations, universities and other stakeholders.

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION: About the World Cities Project**

The **World Cities Project** is the result of a political initiative in 2014 of the European Parliament and is implemented by the European Commission drawing on external expertise. During the first phase of the project (2015-2016), European cities cooperated with cities in Canada, Japan, China and India. World Cities current stage (2017-2018) promotes cooperation between cities from the European Union and cities from the Republic of Korea, Australia, South Africa, Indonesia and Vietnam. In South Africa, the project is implemented by GIZ International Services and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).

Thematic areas for cooperation under the project are selected based on the needs and priorities of South African and EU cities expertise (e.g. smart city, urban revitalisation, water management, business development). EU and South African sides will exchange information and discuss relevant urban development issues during the period 28-31 March 2017 in the hosting cities of Ekurhuleni, eThekweni, Nelson Mandela Bay and Cape Town. This will be followed by six months of decentralised cooperation on specific topics between the cities after which the EU will organise five day working meetings and site visits of the nominated South African city delegates (four per city) with their EU counterparts in selected EU cities in October/November 2017. The concluding meeting will be held in South Africa, with suggested prospects and take-aways for both South Africa and the EU in March 2018.

For further information, please refer to the World Cities website [www.world-cities.eu](http://www.world-cities.eu)