

Speech by Mr. Deputy Mayor of Agen

on the occasion of the reception given in honour of the European delegations in the framework of the URBACT programme

Wednesday 2 October at 12.30

**in the courtyard of the Fine Arts Museum of Agen
in the presence of the 7 delegations: Germany, France, Portugal, Italy,
Estonia, Romania and the Czech Republic**

Representatives of the partner delegations,
Mr Christophe Gouache, (Expert)
Ladies and Gentlemen Councillors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Welcome to Agen!

I am very pleased to welcome you to this Museum of Fine Arts of Agen, which contains so much historical and cultural wealth.

First of all, I would like to greet all the partner cities that made the trip to Agen: Bistrita from Romania, Cento from Italy, Dinslaken from Germany, Hradec Kralové from the Czech Republic, Saint Quentin from France, Santa Maria da Feira from Portugal and Tartu from Estonia

Thank you all for joining us today for the launch of the Active Citizen network as part of the European Urbact program.

This program, to which the city of Agen has been selected, is along with 23 other European cities.

Urbact enables exchanges and learning between cities, to develop solutions and deal with major urban issues. By networking European cities, strengthening skills and capitalizing on good practice.

The Urbact program supports public decision-makers and the actors on the ground that we are, to bring about the emergence of sustainable solutions

integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of urban development.

Following the Urbact I and II programs, Urbact III continues to promote integrated and sustainable urban development and contributes to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. With a view to strengthening urban policy in 2014-2020, the European Commission has increased the FEDER allocated to the program by about 40% compared to the previous period, or more than €74 million. The total budget of Urbact III is 96 million euros!

Among the 23 leaders, the city of Agen, which applied for the first time, was selected on the theme: Active Citizen in order to create a network of partner cities of which you are a part.

Our network aims at rethinking the place of citizens in local governance in small and medium-sized cities, by finding a balance between representative democracy and participatory democracy.

It is made up of small and medium-sized cities, with similar expectations and challenges.

It will take into account new technological tools while paying particular attention to the problems of citizens who are distant or inconvenienced by them.

Dear partners, by registering alongside the city of Agen, in the Active Citizen network, you have wished to participate in the search for a solution to the issue of civic engagement, and for this I thank you.

We now have six months to refine our work, before starting the implementation phase of activities for the next three years.

On the program: transnational meetings and the animation of an action group of local partners, all supported by our expert (Christophe), to arrive at a concrete action plan for our territories.

By taking part in the Urbact program, our cities have the opportunity to reach beyond our borders, on a European scale, while actively participating in strengthening ties between the countries of the European Union.

Thank you for your attention.