

C U R S O S E C O N G R E S O S

**Urban changes in
different scales:
systems and
structures**



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REGENERATION AND NEW URBAN INTERVENTIONS – THE *POLIS* PROGRAMME IN PORTUGAL

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Abstract : The theme of urban renewal and environmental quality in cities has drawn increasing attention over the last few years in Portugal. The Regional Development Plan for the 2000-2006 period has set the regeneration of urban areas and their environmental improvement as ones of its major aims, considered of strategic importance for the country's development.

In this paper we propose to analyse one of the programmes of urban regeneration that was implemented in Portugal in 2000 (Resolution of the Ministers Council nº 26/2000), whose major goal was the improvement of the quality of life in cities, from urban and environmental operations, to increasing the attractiveness of cities and their competitiveness in the National Urban Network System - *Programa de Requalificação Urbana e Valorização Ambiental das Cidades (POLIS)*.

Keywords: urban renewal; quality of life in cities; urban environmental policy

INTRODUCTION

A large majority of the Portuguese population lives currently in urban areas, such that the major problems directly experienced by the population are especially those related with the urban environment, particularly the lack of quality public spaces, green and leisure areas, the degradation of the historical centres and the rise in traffic congestion problems.

It should be further noted that over the last few decades, severe urban development errors were made which led to the creation of “commuter” neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the metropolitan areas where quality of life is clearly deficient.

The challenges facing cities are complex within the current setting of multiple and significant changes, and the emergence of new lifestyles which, alter land use and modify governance conditions. The high levels of uncertainty which characterise urban tensions today, the new conflicts of interest and the functional diversity of urban areas demand new governance models and innovative policies.

In an increasingly more globalised society in which the tertiary sector of the economy is still rapidly expanding, urban areas should be essential focal points in the process of economic and social development. This function as “development levers” cannot be performed by cities which do not offer a quality environment and satisfactory levels of attractiveness. Thus, urban regeneration and upgrading is highly relevant, not only for the cities themselves, their inhabitants and users, but also as a fundamental component in a model of societal development as a whole.

This concern with urban regeneration and environmental improvement in cities has come to attract growing attention in the last few years in Portugal. The 3rd National Regional Development Plan (*III Plano de Desenvolvimento Regional* - MEPAT 1999, for the 2000-2006 period) and the National Economic and Social Development Plan – Prospective View for 2000-2006 (*Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento Económico e Social – Visão Prospectiva*)¹ have elected the regeneration of urban areas and their

environmental improvement as one of the major goals of strategic importance in improving their competitiveness, bolstering their role within the National Urban System and enhancing their inhabitants' quality of life.

The Polis Programme is in fact an innovative instrument of urban policy, which aims to address the issues of urban regeneration and environmental improvement in cities, and where public-private partnerships and intergovernmental cooperation play an essential role.

As stated in the Resolution of the Council of Ministers, No. 26/2000, of 15th May, which establishes the Polis Programme, it does not aim to resolve all the urban and environmental problems of Portuguese cities, but rather attempts to show that all efforts are worthwhile, through exemplary and demonstrative interventions, and that it is possible to intervene and create quality spaces where there was previously only abandonment and degradation.

This paper aims to present the Polis Programme as an instrument in implementing a new urban policy. To this end, we seek to analyse the programme's goals, the concluded operations and those still underway, and the results that have already been achieved.

The paper is divided into five points:

- The Polis Programme – background and goals;
- The Programme's implementation and supervision instruments;
- Public participation and the Programme's visibility;
- Projects and typology of the Polis operations;
- Conclusions – Polis “a new way of experiencing the cities”.

1. THE POLIS PROGRAMME IN PORTUGAL – BACKGROUND AND GOALS

The Polis programme appears following a number of initiatives at a world and European level that boosted debates on the need to create new global and local policies, directed at sustainability, with particular focus on cities. The following comprise landmarks in this process:

- the Green Book on Urban Environment (EEC 1990), the Rio Conference in 1992, the Aalborg Charter of 1994, produced by the group of European cities for sustainability and the European Community's 5th Environmental Action Programme (1992 – 2001);
- the United Nations Johannesburg Conference in 2002 and the European Community's 6th Environmental Action Programme (2001 - 2010).

As we have already mentioned above, urban regeneration and environmental improvement in cities has drawn growing attention in Portugal in the last few years, and the integration of competences in environmental and spatial planning issues into one single ministry undeniably contributed to the launching of the Polis programme, which encompasses these two components.

The Polis programme is a recent experience in Portugal, specifically designed to integrate urban regeneration and improve the urban environment of cities (Resolution of the Council of Ministers, No. 26/2000, of 15th May).

The Polis's main goal is to improve the quality of life in cities, through interventions in urban planning and the environment, directed at increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of urban centres, since these play a fundamental role in structuring the National Urban System.

The Polis's main specific goals are the following (MAOT, 2000):

- develop large-scale integrated operations in urban regeneration with a significant component dedicated to environmental improvement;
- develop actions that contribute to the renewal and revival of urban centres, which further promote their multi-functionality and reinforce their role in the region where they are located;
- support other regeneration actions that can improve the quality of the urban environment and boost the presence of structuring environments like waterfront areas (river and sea);
- support initiatives that aim to increase the availability of green areas, promote pedestrian areas and restrict traffic in urban centres.

The most expressive component of the Polis programme is to accomplish a relatively restricted number of interventions in urban regeneration with a relevant environmental dimension, which would be exemplary in character and would serve as a model for other actions to be undertaken in the country (component 1 – Integrated Urban Regeneration and Environmental Improvement Operations, which contemplate two lines of action – actions identified for their relevance and exemplary character and other interventions to be identified).

The remaining components, some also including specific lines of action, are the following:

- Component 2 – Actions in Cities with Areas Classified as World Heritage;
- Component 3 – Urban Upgrading and Environmental Improvement in Social Housing Areas;
- Component 4 – Complementary Measures to improve the urban and environmental conditions in cities, which includes five lines of action (support for new forms of urban mobility; support for the installation of environmental information and management systems; support for urban and environmental upgrading in areas surrounding schools and support for actions with positive impacts on urban quality of life).

The intention, when implementing these components, was to boost four major emblematic purposes, the creation of Green Cities, Digital Cities, Knowledge and Entertainment Cities, and Intergenerational Cities (Resolution of the Council of Ministers, No. 26/2000, of 15th May).

Green Cities should be understood as those in which the environment plays a key role in the process of urban regeneration and upgrading. Digital Cities are those which promote the use of new digital technologies, for all purposes, particularly, commercial, educational, cultural, recreational, and civic participation. The Knowledge and Entertainment Cities are those which adopt culture, the sciences and technology as the new frontiers of development. The Intergenerational Cities are understood as those which are aware of the need to avoid the spatial segmentation of the urban fabric into age or social groups, promoting the historical heritage and coexistence among different lifestyles.

“Within this reference framework, the Polis Programme was anchored on some fundamental principles: demonstration based on objective evidence, mobilisation around the improvement of the urban environment; intervention in the realities of existing urban complexes so as to enrich the perception of cities, and the expectations, identity, acknowledgement and respect for social agents.” (Silva, Mónica M. and Correia, F. Nunes, 2005, p.36).

In the first phase of the programme’s implementation, 18 cities were selected, of which 6 belong to metropolitan areas. This choice was based on the report that launched the Polis Programme (annex to the Resolution of the Council of Ministers, No. 26/2000,

of 15th May). The remaining 10 cities were selected by an independent jury, following the assessment of 53 applications, totalling thus 28 cities within the scope of component 1 of the programme (Fig. 1).

The cities considered were selected taking into account a number of criteria:

- ensure that the actions to be undertaken would contribute to the consolidation of the National Urban System, in cities with an important role as centres of regional development, located in the interior and close to the national borders;
- the regeneration of medium-sized cities with a strong economic capacity but with a deficient quality of urban life;
- the establishment of new focal points or centralities in the metropolitan areas;
- the revitalization of industrial zones that have been abandoned or are rundown;
- the improvement of waterfront areas, with high environmental importance, and their integration in the city's life;
- the revival of historical centres, with high heritage significance, and their integration in the urban fabric;
- the availability of strategic planning instruments or urban intervention projects that have already been discussed or approved, and which have rallied broad consensus within the cities;
- contribute to bolstering the creation of green cities, digital cities, knowledge and entertainment cities and intergenerational cities.



Figure 1 – Geographical location of the 28 selected cities

These 28 urban projects have together contributed to strengthening the identity of the cities, resolving some of their main urban and environmental problems and boosting their role and specificity in the National Urban System. This system is conceived as a polycentric decentralised city network, capable of supporting the surrounding regional development (internal cohesion) and improving the populations' quality of life, goals which are both considered structural in the pursuit of sustainable development in Portugal (Partidário, M. R; Correia, F.N, 2004, p.415). Apart from these 28 projects, the Directorate-General of Spatial Planning and Urban Development (*Direcção Geral do Ordenamento do Território e Desenvolvimento Urbano* - DGOTDU), under the Normative Despatch No. 45-A/2000 of 21st December of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (*Ministério do Ambiente e do Ordenamento do Território* – MAOT), has also subsidised a number of smaller-scale Polis actions (at times called Mini-Polis), implemented through contract-programmes with City Councils, particularly interventions in cities contemplated under component 1 and component 4 of the Programme. Examples are the projects under component 4 of Barreiro, Elvas, Funchal, Lagos, Moita, Santarém and Tavira, and those under component 2 (cities classified by UNESCO as Heritage of Humanity, Évora, Guimarães, Porto and Sintra).

In terms of funding from the Polis programme relative to the 28 projects mentioned above, the main sources are Community funds, under the 3rd Community Support Framework (50% of the financing), funds from the Central Government (12%), Local Authorities (8%), private investment (20%) and other financial sources (10%), through protocols with City Councils and other institutions.

2 – THE PROGRAMME'S IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPERVISION INSTRUMENTS

All of the 28 operations included in component 1 of the Programme, due to their scale and multifaceted nature, were based on a Strategic Intervention Plan, prepared by the programme's promoters, where all the actions to be accomplished were identified, as well as the respective funding sources, costs and deadlines. The urban reorganisation resulting from the interventions foreseen under the Polis Programme, as set out in the Strategic Plans, were undertaken through urbanisation plans or block plans, prepared by the promoting body and the project manager.

The Mini-Polis were implemented through urbanisation plans or block plans that were already foreseen in the existing Municipal Master Plans.

The Strategic Plans were negotiated with the local authorities or contracted through Protocols between the MAOT and each City Council, the latter comprising thus the social objects of the Polis Societies, which were in charge of managing the interventions. The Polis Societies are the result of a partnership between the Government and the City Councils, whose stock capital corresponds to Community funds and national subsidising, where the share in the stock capital corresponds to 60% for the State and 40% for the City Council.

At the national level, 22 Polis societies were created, whereas for the remaining cities, as for the Mini-Polis, the option was for contract-programmes which regulated the actions between the State and the local authorities that were responsible for ensuring that the projects were accomplished. In the case of the Porto Polis (under component 1), the Porto Society 2001 was in charge of its management, since the intervention was an integral part of urban regeneration programme promoted by the organisation of the European Capital of Culture.

The operational management of the interventions was attributed to a private company contracted by the Polis Societies through international public tenders, except for 10 cities in which, by government decision, management was handed to the *Parque Expo S.A.* company (created to administer the environmental regeneration and urban renovation of the area where the International Exhibition of Lisbon was held, the EXPO'98, today called the *Parque das Nações*).

Aimed at supervising the implementation of the Strategic Intervention Plans, Local Commissions were created, comprising local agents (citizens, residents, traders, entrepreneurial, environmental and heritage safeguard associations), which are regularly informed about and discuss the development of the projects, even though final decisions, as stipulated in the legislation, lay with the City Council or the Municipal Assembly.

3 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE PROGRAMME'S VISIBILITY

Apart from the Local Commissions mentioned above, the involvement of citizens in the programme has been strongly implemented, through a communication strategy which includes placing informative panels on the projects bearing their calendar (a clock showing the count down to the programme's conclusion) and the creation of information centres which provide citizens with information on the projects underway. A significant percentage of the Polis Societies have internet pages describing the projects and how far projects are along.

The participation of the population is an important element of the Polis projects, well expressed in fact in the programme's slogan "A new way of experiencing the cities" ("*Uma nova forma de viver as cidades*"). This participation has had greater expression in the public presentations and discussions of urbanisation and block plans in which citizens have participated strongly.

Another aspect which has contributed to the programme's visibility and the population's involvement has to do with a number of initiatives carried out, such as itinerant exhibitions of the projects to be accomplished, Polis tours in the places the programme has been implemented, educational actions and environmental awareness campaigns for young people in partnership with schools, and published information materials on the projects.

The Polis programme created a mascot, called *Popis*, to attract children to the environmental dimension. The mascot symbolises the programme's four emblematic purposes mentioned previously. *Popis* is visionary and optimistic because he knows that his city can be a better place to live; he is inspiring and motivating because he shows you what can be done to improve the city; he is selfless because he believes that well-being is for everyone, so he wants a city in which everyone can feel content; he is ecological since he is well aware of the dangers that threaten the environment; and he is fun, because work for him is not everything, and as such, he wants a city where there are spaces for everyone to enjoy (Fig. 2).

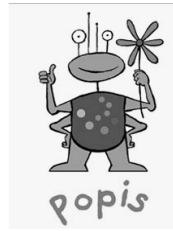


Fig. 2 *Popis*, Polis Mascot and *Pimpolis*, the Ermesinde Polis Mascote (in the Valongo municipality) (<http://www.polisalbufeira.pt> and <http://polisermesinde-cmvalongo.net>.)

The *Valongo* Polis also created a programme mascot whose name was chosen in a school competition. *Pimpolis* materialises the values associated with the Polis Programme, namely with respect to environmental issues (Fig. 2).

4 – POLIS INTERVENTION PROJECTS AND TYPOLOGY

Given that a majority of the Polis programme interventions took place under components 1 and 4, the projects focused strongly of the regeneration of waterfront or coastal areas and, in some cases, the regeneration of industrial sites. The bolstering or creation of centralities, in many cases related with the renewal and recovery of historical centres, was another of the dimensions found in the projects. In general, works mostly occurred in regenerating public spaces and in creating new forms of mobility, with the creation of parks and green zones, construction of buildings supporting leisure and culture, pedestrian thoroughfares and cycling lanes, and deterring parking lots. The construction or recovery of buildings to install Environmental Monitoring Centres was also part of several Polis projects, with the aim of disseminating environmental values and monitoring the different environmental descriptors, facilities which were practically nonexistent in Portuguese cities.

Not being possible to present in this paper all the projects already conclude and those that still underway, in table 1 we present a summary of some projects and in fig. 3, 4 and 5, some images of Polis interventions.

Table 1 – Interventions and indicators for some Polis projects

Polis	Area of intervention	A Few Indicators and Projects
VianaPolis (Management Parque Expo)	Historical centre, City Park, <i>Campo da Agonia</i> and Riverfront zone. http://www.parqueexpo.pt	Creation and improvement of park and green areas 339500 m ² ; creation and renewal of public areas 71500 m ² ; regeneration of riverfront 4710m; cycling lanes 9250 m; pedestrian areas and traffic restriction in street districts 10000 m; creation of new pedestrian thoroughfares 9250 m; deterring parking 2600 places; demolition for urban renewal 66500 m ²
ViséuPolis (Management Parque Expo)	Creation of the City Park of Aguireira, of Radial de Santiago and Parque Linear, Regeneration and upgrading of the area occupied by the Fair of S. Mateus and environmental upgrading of the Paiva River. http://www.parqueexpo.pt	Creation and improvement of park and green areas 480000 m ² ; creation and renewal of public areas 303665 m ² ; pedestrian pathways built 3; cycling lanes created 6500 m; pedestrian thoroughfares and traffic restriction in street districts 33840 m ² ; creation of new pedestrian thoroughfares 10320 m; deterring parking 560 places; demolition for urban renewal 13500 m ²
PolisMatosinhos (concluded in 2004) (Management Parque Expo)	Revival and upgrading of the seafront area, between the pier of the Leixões Port and the Praça da Cidade do Salvador (Atlantic Pathway Project), recovery of the monument of Senhor do Padrão.	Creation and improvement of park and green areas 5300m ² ; creation and renewal of public areas 9600 m ² ; creation of new pedestrian thoroughfares 3200 m; pedestrian bridges built 9; deterring parking 250 places http://www.parqueexpo.pt
GaiaPolis (Management Parque Expo)	Restructuring of the riverfront zone, between the far western end of the Historical Centre and Cabedelo, construction of a civic centre, together with the construction of an urban park in	Creation and improvement of park and green areas 160000m ² ; creation and renewal of public areas 81675m ² ; regeneration of riverfront 3000m; regeneration of seafronts 700m; cycling lanes created 3000 m; creation of new pedestrian thoroughfares 2225m; deterring parking 250 places.

	Afurada, urban park of Vale de São Paio and recovery of the fishing centre of Afurada and the fishing port platform.	http://www.parqueexpo.pt
PolisAlbufeira (Management Parque Expo)	Revival and upgrading of the seafront area, construction of a pedestrian thoroughfare between the Oura beach and the fishing port, degradation control of cliffs, devolution of the Ancient Centre to pedestrian traffic. Landscaping of Vale Mangude and integration of the existing sewage treatment plant.	Creation and improvement of park and green areas 100000m ² ; creation and renewal of public areas 30300m ² ; regeneration of riverfront 1600m; regeneration of seafronts 2100m; cycling lanes created 4100 m; pedestrian thoroughfares and traffic restriction in street districts 25000m ² ; creation of new pedestrian thoroughfares 4100m; deterring parking 1180 places; demolition for urban renewal 13000 m ² http://www.parqueexpo.pt
Polis	Area of intervention	A Few Indicators and Projects
CoimbraPolis (Management Parque Expo)	Renewal and upgrading of the River Mondego front with the creation of the Mondego Green Park. Creation of a pedestrian thoroughfare and cycling lane between the downtown and high areas of the city; enhancement of the historical heritage, with the recovery of the Convent of S. Francisco as a Congress Centre.	Creation and improvement of park and green areas 405000 m ² ; creation and renewal of public areas 70265m ² ; regeneration of riverfront 2850m; pedestrian bridges built 2; cycling lanes created 3800m; pedestrian thoroughfares and traffic restriction in street districts 16200m ² ; creation of new pedestrian thoroughfares 3800m; deterring parking 3000 places; demolition for urban renewal 2100m ² . http://www.parqueexpo.pt
CostaPolis (Management Parque Expo)	Regeneration of the seafront area; intervention in traffic control and upgrading of the beach train, linking the town and the beaches. http://www.parqueexpo.pt	Creation and improvement of park and green areas 100000m ² ; creation and renewal of public areas 138600 m ² ; regeneration of waterfronts 7650m; cycling lanes created 14200m; creation of new pedestrian thoroughfares 32000 m; deterring parking 2600 places
LeiriaPolis (Management Parque Expo)	Urban and environmental regeneration and upgrading of downtown Leiria, in the area near the Castle and the riverside zone (devolution of the Lis River to Leiria), transforming this area into an attractive space interlinking green park and historical centre.	Creation and improvement of park and green areas 282982 m ² ; creation and renewal of public areas 106513 m ² ; regeneration of riverfront 7650m; pedestrian bridges built 13; cycling lanes created 11950m; creation of new pedestrian thoroughfares 11950m; deterring parking 1250 places; demolition for urban renewal 750m ² . http://www.parqueexpo.pt
Porto (Project concluded)	Renewal and upgrading of the seafront area of the City Park and the Av. Montevideu. Construction of the Atlantic Pathway along the coastal strip, following the beaches from the Praça da Cidade do Salvador to the Molhe beach.	Building of a viaduct in front of the city park for road traffic; creation of pedestrian thoroughfares and cycling lanes; deterring parking 450 places; renewal of green areas; renewal of public areas and construction of the transparent building (project of architect Manuel Solá – Morales)
PolisVila Real	Renewal and upgrading of Vila Velha and Historical Centre; regeneration of the riverside zone of Tourinhas; recovery of the former industrial site; urban upgrading of the Ferreiros neighbourhood; environmental and landscape enhancement of the Corgo and Cabril Valleys.	Renewal of public areas 16273m ² ; creation and improvement of park and green areas, 138722 m ² ; upgrading and creation of pedestrian thoroughfares 710m; deterring parking 500 places; pedestrian bridges built 9; construction of a panoramic lift 1; construction of a cable car 850 m long; Environmental Monitoring and Analysis Centre. http://www.polisvilareal.pt/polisvilareal.htm
BragançaPolis	Landscaping of the Castle hillside; urban renewal of the Historical Centre; regeneration of the riverside zone of the Fervença River (2nd phase); construction of the Camões Praça with underground parking lots.	Deterring parking 336 places; construction of pedestrian thoroughfares; improvement of public areas; grassroots construction of public areas, 4500m ² ; creation and improvement of green areas. http://www.cm-braganca.pt
PortalegrePolis	Upgrading of road accesses; intervention in the historical centre; construction of parking lots; regeneration and improvement of gardens and green areas; urban renewal of public pedestrian pathways; recovery of the Portalegre Castle. http://www.cm-portalegre.pt	Correction of one of the main city entry roads; creation of pedestrian thoroughfares in the historical centre; parking lots 300 places; regeneration of the Corredoura and Tarro Gardens, with the creation of a pedestrian thoroughfare between them; renewal and upgrading of the city's other emblematic public areas: Praça da República/ Praça da Sé and Portalegre Castle axis; Environmental Monitoring and Analysis Centre.
PolisChaves	Renewal and upgrading of the riverside areas of the Tâmega River and the Rivelas and Caneiro Streams; regeneration of public areas and edified structures of heritage value. http://www.cm-chaves.pt	Pedestrian corridor, cycling lanes (about 6410m) and recreation and leisure areas in the riverside areas of the Tâmega River and the Rivelas and Caneiro streams; creation of the City Park near the Tâmega River; recovery of the forts of S. Francisco and S. Neutel; Regeneration of green areas nest to the thermal complex of Caldas de Chaves; pedestrian lane on the Roman bridge; construction of the pedestrian bridge over the Tâmega; construction of the Multipurpose Park with 65000 m ² , where the weekly and annual markets are held, as well as exhibitions; Environmental Monitoring and Analysis Centre.
PolisMarinha	Environmental renewal of the Bernardas	Regeneration and upgrading of the Riverfront zone, including

Grande	Stream; revival of the Traditional Centre; construction of public areas; improvement and construction of Green Parks. http://www.cm-mgrande.pt	regularising its layout, cleaning up of river banks, creating pedestrian and cycling lanes (250m intervention) and recreation areas; improvement and building of City Park (intervention area 7 ha); regeneration and upgrading of the industrial zone into public area, with pedestrian connection to the historical centre; recovery of heritage building (former resin factory, currently municipal market)
AveiroPolis	Renewal and upgrading of the abandoned port zone; regeneration and upgrading of the urban front at the city's entrance; regeneration and upgrading of the areas surrounding of some of the canals of the Aveiro Estuary. http://www.polisaveiro.com/	Renewal and upgrading of public areas, especially those related with nautical activities; creation of new road connections and upgrading of existing ones, aimed at reorganising the urban circulation system; creation of cycling lanes and pedestrian thoroughfares; Creation and improvement of parks and green areas; renewal and construction of buildings for nautical activities and others for recreational purposes.



Fig. 3 – Regeneration of riverfronts, green areas and urban parks, CoimbraPolis and LeiriaPolis (<http://www.coimbrapolis.pt> and <http://www.parqueexpo.pt>)



Fig. 4 – Cycling lanes and pedestrian areas, PolisAlbufeira and PolisMarinhaGrande (<http://www.polisalbufeira.pt> and <http://www.cm-mgrande.pt>)



Fig. 5 – Urban Regeneration of the historical centre, PolisCasteloBranco, and Regeneration of the Seafront (<http://www.poliscastelobranco.pt> and <http://www.polisalbufeira.pt>)

5 – CONCLUSION – POLIS “A NEW WAY OF EXPERIENCING THE CITIES”

To conclude, we can state that the Polis Programme has contributed to providing solutions for a number of urban and environmental problems in the selected cities, improving their quality of life, their attractiveness, competitiveness and bolstered their role and specificity in the National Urban System.

The Polis Programme undoubtedly comprised an innovative instrument in urban policy, and the following should be highlighted:

- the adoption of new organisational models at the institutional level based on cooperation and partnership between the central and the local authorities, thus guaranteeing the programme greater efficiency;
- the technical integration of the urban planning and environmental dimensions, or in other words, an interconnection between planning and spatial management and the environment, following a rationale of sustainable development in the cities;
- the use of the existing critical mass, in the implementation of the interventions, making responsible the involved agents and with strong implication of the local citizens;
- greater functionalism for the interventions through specialised companies in the area of project management, ensuring a better cost-efficiency relation;
- the great importance attributed to reviving the identity of each city;
- acknowledgement of the urban dimensions of culture and heritage as part of the environmental projects, essential in obtaining greater support and collaboration from the populations.

Despite this positive view, the programme has had some difficulties, resulting especially from political rotation and the State’s financial restraints.

However, we must highlight that, having terminated, the Polis Programme has unquestionably contributed to “a new way of experiencing the cities”.

Note

¹ Apart from these documents, attention should be drawn to: Programme for the Consolidation of the National Urban System (*Programa de Consolidação do Sistema Urbano Nacional* - PROSIURB, 1994); National Economic and Social Development Plan (*Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento Económico e Social* - PNES, 1998) and the Study on the National Urban System (*Estudo sobre o Sistema Urbano Nacional* - DGOTDU, 1997).

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