

European Study on the revitalization of village-centers and city-centers

The National Housing Agency (Anah) has implemented a Study about « the new model of public intervention » of the private housing, closely related to the territories and inhabitants issues.

Through various studies which have already been conducted (tomorrow's shops, promotion of economic impact of public investment and intangible value), the Agency is proposing support tools with a decentralized engineering, which plan the identified needs by small local authorities for requalification of their old center.

In 2017, the Anah gave to Remarkable Sites and Cities of France a study on European practices, in order to provide the strategic and operational thinking on « impact of public policies about old housing ». This European Study, with a duration of 2 years, will compare the practices and difficulties on the topic and will identify which who can be applicable in the French model of public intervention.

1. Context

In the framework of the experimental program of village centres revitalisation and its action for the Programmed operations for the improvement of the housing – Urban renewal (OPAH-RU), the Anah is questioning about the globality of the social and urban intervention, needed to grow the territorial attractivity (housing, shops, companies, economy...).

For each analyzed territory, this study :

- Will Identify the intervention policies on the old existing housing, in cities and rural village centres located in the same area, will present the National strategy on this topic,
- Will formalize best practices on Enhancement of Heritage and Old housing and will identify the difficulties linked to the limits or absence of regulation and/or engineering capacities and/or loosing on knowledge for the local implementation.

The Association Remarkable Sites and Cities of France, also involved in the strategic and operational reflection on the topic, is leading this Study on two complementary parts : a first based on the survey of rural or urban local communities (in France, Belgium and Bulgaria), then, a second part on 9 other cities in different countries, which will allow to focus on best practices about 3 issues, which are essentials :

1. Governance Perimeters between State, Regions and cities
2. Engineering and funding with a special attention on role of European funding, duration of projects and evaluation criteria
3. Concertation: to territorial diagnostic procedure to the operational implementation

It is about identify the know-how, tools and proposals for actions of local, regional and national governance, as a resource for urban attractivity.

2. Issues

1. To Identify the key levers contributing to the creation of value on the territory (thanks to the housing included in the urban project and connected to the economic and touristic policy) and to valorise the European public policies contributing to the creation of value on the territory.
2. To support innovation and reflexion which in order to develop national tools and to readjust the devices for a visibility of territorial identity supported by residents and by the commitment of local elected representatives.
3. To develop the engineering for territories of little cities, relevant to the needs and to the evolution of multidisciplinary problematics

3. A first achieved phase : the analysis of 4 pilot territories

In the framework of the first phase of the Study, 4 cities have been chosen in 3 European countries. Surveys, based on a common questionnaire, have been realized in each territory in order to establish a global diagnostic and a inventory of public policies about revitalization of old districts.

The 4 pilot territories

City of Bouillon – Belgium

The City of Bouillon has been chosen for its situation in a country managed by a Federal State with very different regional policies between Wallonia and Flanders. The City of Bouillon is also involved in cross-border european programs, especially with the French city of Sedan, member of the network Remarkable Sites & Cities. Bouillon is finally involved in a rural development plan and in a urban renewal program handled by the Ministry.

City of Pont-Saint-Espirit – France

The City of Pont-Saint-Espirit is located in the Department of the Gard and is a member of Remarkable Sites and Cities. Pont-Saint-Espirit has a Remarkable Heritage Site whose the Plan for Safeguarding and Valorisation will be approved in 2018. The city is involved in the experimental program of the French government about the village centres revitalisation – the call for expression of interest « Village centres ». Its old centre is a high-priority district of the city policy. Finally, the City is part of the Experimental Plan for new protected areas in the Occitany Region.

The City of Gabrovo – Bulgaria

The bulgarian city of Gabrovo is facing various issues : social inequalities, bad condition of public infrastructure, a urban functional aspect and a energy system characterised by their poor performance...

Thus, the municipality has shifted towards a cross-cutting policy in order to face these difficulties, especially through a regional plan of development and EU programs.

City of Joinville – France

The City of Joinville, in the Department of Haute-Marne, is member of Remarkable Sites and Cities. Prizewinner of the experimental program on village centres revitalisation, Joinville is today fighting to protect its Heritage located in the historical centre and to make it a real lever for development and attractivity of its territory, especially through the implementation of a Remarkable Heritage Site in its old centre.

4. Following of the study

The aim of the second phase of the Study is to further the 3 working areas. The best practices and urban reflections research and solutions to the territories challenges will be operated with the 4 pilot cities but also 9 other satellite territories, in Europe and in the Mediterranean Sea area : Bulgaria, Marocco, Germany, France, Poland, Spain, Italy, Lithuania and Netherlands.

This analysis will happen during the whole 2018 year with results on early year 2019.