



THE PRAGUE CHARTER

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POST-WAR URBAN RENEWAL OF UKRAINE

October 12, 2022

The Conference on Architecture and Building Culture Policies (ECAP 2022) took place in Prague as one of the official events of the Czech Presidency of the Council of European Union on 11. - 12. October 2022. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Regional Development CZ in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture CZ the Czech Chamber of Architects, the Architects' Council of Europe and other partners.

As a response to the immense destruction caused by the Russian aggression on Ukrainian territory an international panel¹ comprised of Ukrainian architects and European experts on post-war urban renewal was set up to formulate policy recommendations. Drawing on lessons learnt from recent post-war reconstruction of cities and regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Georgia, as well as from efforts in Germany and the Netherlands after the WWII and considering the current situation in Ukraine, the panel formulated the following recommendations for the post-war urban renewal of Ukraine.

¹ The pannel members included: Anna Bondar, Kees Christiaanse, Lidiia Chyzhevskya, Haris Piplaš, Gyler Mydyti, Petr Návrát, Otar Nemsadze, Robert Youssef.

1. The Ukrainian planning authorities in the driving seat of the post-war reconstruction

While acknowledging that a significant part of the post-war reconstruction will need to be financed by international aid, it is vital that **actions of all foreign organizations are in line with strategic development objectives set by the Ukrainian urban planning authorities**. The ownership of all urban and regional planning and architectural policy initiatives shall be with the Ukrainian national, regional and local government. This is in line with the Principle of Aid Effectiveness as defined in the OECD Paris Declaration.

At the same time, it will be important to build **multidisciplinary teams** combining **local and international knowledge**. The position of architects in the process shall be strengthened, including copyright protections of their original design, as architects initiate technological innovations, create places and communities and often instigate important social changes.

2. Strengthening local capacities in planning and coordination

Adequate effort needs to be provided to **strengthen capacities at regional and local level**. Even if dealing with the post-war reconstruction may be overwhelming for some local government bodies it is important that their capacities are increased to be able to decide and coordinate so that **principles of subsidiarity, decentralisation and self-governance** are preserved.

Regional administration (oblast) shall be in the position to **help midsized and small municipalities to plan and coordinate urban reconstruction and development** interconnecting urban design and economic and social development. It is especially small municipalities in declining regions that will need the most help to be able to reverse the negative demographic and economic developments.

3. People- and community-centred planning and design

Understanding local community needs and respecting project context is important in order to create new and regenerate destroyed communities and to avoid uniform soulless and placeless developments.

Community engagement should be considered not only as a requirement for any development project, but active public participation in project design should be used as **a useful tool for the creation of liveable neighbourhoods**. All agents of post-war reconstruction should have the skills and capacity needed to design and organise public participation processes to understand community needs, reflect them in design and to run effective project public consultations.

4. Connecting planning and urban design with sustainable economic and social development

Cities are complex organisms, and the built environment is the manifestation of their social and economic conditions. As such the **built environment and social and economic development shall be planned in an integrated way**. Post-war reconstruction needs to regard creating new opportunities in employment, education or community services while developing the built environment. While generating new opportunities the precious values of unique Ukrainian natural landscape and heritage shall be preserved.

Architecture, urban planning and design are among the most effective tools in dealing with **climate change**, because they address both **mitigation and adaptation**.

This approach requires **cross sectional cooperation** that should replace the traditional sector centred public administration (silo mentality).

5. Long-term planning even in emergency situations

Lessons learnt from relevant post-war developments show that **temporary solutions often become permanent**. Rapid recovery schemes e.g. in temporary housing or drinking water provision often funded by international donors and implemented by aid agencies tend to stay permanently in place as there is later low capacity to replace them with permanent solutions.

Even if limited funds allow only a partial or temporary solution, local **authorities should plan for the targeted situation and the partial solution shall be a piece of the final whole**. For instance, new housing units shall be part of a comprehensive masterplan that will plan for future gradual upgrades setting this partial development into a holistic system of public amenities, blue-green and mobility infrastructure.

6. Securing the supply of affordable housing

Housing provision is one of the key tasks in the post-war reconstruction efforts. It is therefore important to create **institutional frameworks**, such as municipal housing corporations that will quickly **deliver long-term housing solutions**. Municipalities have to develop an adequate stock of communal housing and operate it on the rental market for the citizens.

The focus should be on **creating mixed-use, energy-efficient, high density walkable neighbourhoods** with high quality urban design integrating new housing into the local context. Affordability and environmental sustainability can be achieved if **different sources of funding are pooled** and streamlined through professional housing corporations. It is recommended that the new housing stock is a **balance** between **private, public and cooperative ownership** and **caters to different demographic groups**.

7. Professional development and knowledge exchange for public servants

The reconstruction effort will require a **new cohort of skilled public servants** in the fields of urban planning, architecture, urban and landscape design or mobility. These should be **deployed across the country** to municipalities and regional administration to support planning and coordination of reconstruction.

New teaching capacities should be created by foreigner and local universities to create an adequate mass of skilled professionals. This can include specialised intensive (one year) master programmes delivered jointly by leading EU universities and their Ukrainian counterparts.

Skilled Ukrainian **professionals working abroad** in the built environment professions should be motivated to **return home** and join the post-war reconstruction efforts particularly in the public service.

8. Public private partnerships

Urban reconstruction efforts in the past were most effective in places where the **public and private sector worked together** in a transparent and predictable manner. This cooperation requires establishing **trust-based relationships** and understanding of the needs of each party, business needs of the private sector and objectives of the public sector.

Private sector should be **incentivised to invest** not only in prospering cities but also **in less prosperous regions**. It will be the role of the **public sector to help create growth poles** where growth is lacking.

Both sectors should cooperate on creating **business friendly environments in regions** taking into account local potentials for economic development such as the human capital.

9. Institutionalising design competitions and incorporating them in the building culture

It is important to **enhance capacities of Ukrainian public administration in using design competitions** to award projects to teams that propose the most adequate architectural or urban design solutions. Competitions shall become an integral part of public procurement and building culture.

Competitions offer a **transparent way** of finding the most suitable team to work on a project. The contracting authority has the **support of a professional jury** and can **choose the most appropriate design from several proposals** based on predefined criteria. In this way time and money invested can be saved as competition generates more effective outcomes. Competitions also **create community interest** and a successful conclusion can contribute to community identity and pride.

10. International building exhibition “IBA Ukraine” as catalyst of sustainable post-war reconstruction

Having in mind the above mentioned topics it is to be recommended that an International building exhibition according to the German IBA model is organized in Ukraine. To achieve the most favourable outcomes, IBA Ukraine could be organized following these principles:

- as a tool to **promote a democratic and socially oriented building culture** as opposed to autocratic tendencies,
- as a **vehicle to showcase and interconnect practical and innovative solutions** in topics including zero carbon urban design, housing typologies, sustainable mobility, local economic development or community engagement,
- as a **decentralised event scattered on several sites** across Ukraine and **spread in time** (e.g. 10 years) with strong **community engagement** aspect,
- as a **process to develop reconstruction projects** with a critical approach focused on placemaking that creates strong local identities,
- as a **lean professional organization** that can handle and help **implement multiple projects** of different scale,
- as a **wide range of scalable model projects** from overarching masterplans to emergency repairs of damaged buildings and everything in between,
- as a platform for **international knowledge transfer** and **policy development** and as a partner in **planning education**.