

# 20. The role of strategic planning in development of Ljubljana

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From 1918 - 1991 Ljubljana was the principal city of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, the most economically developed republic in the former Yugoslavia. Due to polycentric development policies in 1970s and 1980s Ljubljana developed as a medium-size city contrary to Belgrade and Zagreb.<sup>85</sup> In year 1991 Ljubljana became the **capital city** of independent Slovenia and in 2004 one of the EU capital cities. Since the end of 1990s Ljubljana has been one of the most competitive cities in Central and Eastern Europe, without entering the process of more intensive city internationalisation, until the accession to the EU in year 2004. As a result of successful macro-economic policies and comprehensive and relatively well coordinated sectoral policies by the Government of Republic of Slovenia (1992 - 2004) - the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana (NUTS 5) and Ljubljana urban region (NUTS 3) became the most important location of economic activities in Slovenia, with relatively high economic and social cohesion, and quality of life of local citizens.

But urban planning and strategic urban development was neglected since 1991 because of the priorities of macro-economic reforms, and the connotation of such planning with the former socialist regime. Market forces, not planning prevailed until the end of 1990s, when the need for planning regulation was recognised to control and direct the spatial development of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana and Ljubljana urban region.

## 20.1. “Capital city” formation and internationalisation of Ljubljana

Ljubljana became the capital city in year 1991 after independence of the Republic of Slovenia from the Yugoslav Federation. This was an important “trigger” for the capital city formation and internationalisation of Ljubljana. The process of city internationalisation and integration into the world economy has been reinforced since 1992, not only through economic links (i.e. trade (re)orientation towards EU countries, FDI, privatisation and or take-overs, tourism and cultural links), but also through memberships, links and co-operations of Slovenia within global networks, European organisations and institutions (e.g. EU, European Council, WEU, EBRD, etc.) and regional and cross-border associations (e.g. CEFTA, Alps-Adriatic Working Community, SECI, Pact of Stability for South-East Europe etc.), including different sectoral links and networks with professional association and individuals. The other impact of internationalisation is the development in transport infrastructure (motorways, ports, railway) and telecommunications, transnational intercity flights, and the importance of the information society (e.g. commerce, banking, governance, etc) (Pichler-Milanović, 2002, 2005a).

<sup>85</sup> According to the results of the ESPON 1.1.1 study (2004) Slovenia is the most polycentric country in Europe despite the small size of Slovenia ([www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)).

The most visible form of Ljubljana's capital city formation and city internationalisation can be seen in establishment of new ministries and government offices, foreign embassies, consulates, representatives of international organisations and foreign companies, foreign tourists and visitors. At the end of 1990s Ljubljana became one of the most competitive cities in Central and Eastern Europe, without entering the process of more intensive internationalisation (i.e. city's exports, FDI, foreign tourists, etc) until the accession to the EU (Pichler-Milanović, 2002; 2005a, 2005b, 2006).

Traditional **twinning** links from 1970s and 1980s between the city of Ljubljana and Bratislava (Slovakia), Chengdu (China), Parma and Pesaro (Italy), Tbilisi (Georgia), Chemnitz (East Germany), Leverkusen and Wiesbaden (Germany), or cities in the former Yugoslavia, have been reinforced since year 2000 with links with other capital cities in Europe. The EU membership of Slovenia in year 2004 has further reinforced the position and role of Ljubljana as one of the EU capital cities in different European urban networks, and strengthening of the role of Ljubljana vis-à-vis other nearby cities in the cross-border Alps-Adriatic region, especially towards Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, Trieste (Italy) and Graz (Austria) (Pichler-Milanović, 2002, 2005a, 2005b). Ljubljana is also a member of international urban networks and organisations such as Eurocities, WHO Healthy Cities, Civitas, Les Rencontres, Global Cities Dialogue, CLRAE, etc. Since 1997 Slovenia has been eligible to participate in different EU programmes (e.g. FP, INTERREG, ESPON, URBACT, INTERACT, etc.) where Ljubljana was selected as a preferable case study city from Slovenia. Participation in these links and networks occurred due to active role of academics, researchers, civil servants, non-profit organisations from Ljubljana in international associations, networks, and organisations. Therefore until year 2001 the city internationalisation developed as a result of internationalisation of the new state of Slovenia, and cooperation and participation of public and private institutions, companies, social groups and individuals in different links, networks and associations - and not as a result of an explicit strategy for internationalisation of the city of Ljubljana (Pichler-Milanović, 2002; 2010a; 2010b).

In year 2001 the Centre for Tourism was established at the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana and the first Strategy for development of tourism with actions plans and programmes (2001 - 2004) was approved enhancing the role of Ljubljana as the capital city of Slovenia. In year 2005 partnership agreement was signed between the Centre for Tourism in Ljubljana and the Ministry of the Economy of RS for coordinated promotion of Ljubljana at the local and (inter)national levels. As a result of these activities the Strategy for development of tourism in the Ljubljana 2007 - 2013 was approved in 2006 that is known as the official "city marketing strategy". As a result the number of overnight visitors in Ljubljana has increased from 200.000 (2001) to 350.000 (2006). In year 2006 most tourists came from UK, Italy, Germany, USA, Austria, France, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain. Most foreign visitors come to Ljubljana for business meetings, conferences, summer festivals, weekends, and holidays ([www.ljubljana.si](http://www.ljubljana.si)). Ljubljana is easily accessible by motorways from Austria, Germany, Italy, Croatia or by air. Since 1992 international airport near Ljubljana has developed many inter-city direct links with scheduled, and charter flights, mainly to other European cities. Ljubljana became the hub for the South-east European countries, but direct airlines are still missing with some capital cities in the EU. Most frequent flights are to Brussels, Munchen, Frankfurt, Vienna, and Paris ([www.lju-airport.si](http://www.lju-airport.si)).

During the Slovenian presidency of the EU in the first half of year 2008, the city of Lju-

ljubljana also staged some cultural, scientific and meeting events. But the most important activities and official meetings were held at the new international conference centre Brdo near the town of Kranj, located near the international airport, 30 km north from Ljubljana. Therefore the internationalisation of Ljubljana was not on the policy agenda until the year 2007, when it was explicitly stated in the new urban development strategy of Ljubljana. The city internationalisation was somehow in the shadow of the capital city formation and different interests of the Government of Slovenia, ruling political parties, or individual economic sectors or investors. The Urban Municipality of Ljubljana has also prepared two publications »Ljubljana – where the Europe meets« and »Ljubljana 2025«: the capital city in dialogue with creative people, urban and natural environment, and the future«, as a city promotion and marketing activity for tourists, foreign residents, and students, visiting and/or living in Ljubljana (Pichler-Milanović, 2010b).

## 20.2. Local government reforms: Establishment of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana (NUTS 5) and Ljubljana urban region (NUTS 3)

Ljubljana is the largest urban settlement and a town in Slovenia with approx. 250.000 inhabitants. Despite being the largest city in Slovenia, Ljubljana contains only about 15 % of the total Slovenian population. This relatively low primacy rate of Ljubljana is directly related with the specificities of the urban and settlement system and polycentric development policies in Slovenia from the end of 1960s onwards (see Figures 17 and 36) not favouring the growth of Ljubljana, as was the case in Zagreb and Belgrade.

In December 1994 new Local Self-Government Reform Act has changed the local administrative division of Slovenia - from 62 communes to 147-192-193-210-211 municipalities (NUTS 5) by year 2010 of which only 11 are urban municipalities. At the same time the state (re)created 58 local administrative (NUTS 4) units, equivalent to previous communes (NUTS 5), with the exception of Ljubljana (former five communes) that become one NUTS 4 unit after year 1994.

From 1955 - 1994 the city (agglomeration) of Ljubljana was administratively divided into **five communes**: Center, Bežigrad, Šiška, Moste-Polje and Vič-Rudnik. In 1991 the territory of Ljubljana agglomeration (five communes) comprised of 902 square km and 321.607 inhabitants (density of 356 inhabitants per square km) - which expressed the diversity of city's geographic location and morphological form. Division of the city into five communes was made in the context of decentralisation (i.e. self-management) reforms to achieve 'even' redistribution of resources (e.g. services, housing, industrial investments, etc.) despite disadvantages for urban planning and management.

Therefore the local government reforms in late 1994 transformed the city of Ljubljana administratively and spatially. The official city territory was reduced from 902 to 272 km<sup>2</sup>. The administrative division of the agglomeration into five communes was abolished with establishment of the **Urban Municipality of Ljubljana** and 9 surrounding small municipalities: Brezovica, Dobrova-Horjul-Polhov Gradec, Dol pri Ljubljani, Ig, Medvode, Škofljica, Velike Lašče and Vodice, with their own mayors and municipal councils (Pichler-Milanović, 2005a).

In 1995 the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana became the largest local authority in Slovenia. The democratic local elections (1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010) brought directly elected mayors and city municipal councils. The first elected mayor was dr. Dimitrij Rupel (Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, 1994 - 1998), followed by Mrs. Viktorija Potočnik (Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, 1998 - 2002), Mrs. Danica Simšič (Social Democrats, 2002 - 2006), and Mr. Zoran Janković (independent list 2006 – 2010, and since 2010). Current Mayor of Ljubljana, Mr Zoran Janković obtained 65 % of the electorate in October 2006, as an independent candidate from the List of Zoran Janković, consisting of well known people from all spheres of public life in Ljubljana, such as scientists, lawyers, doctors, sport, culture and media people, who represents the majority in the City Council. In October 2010 at the local elections in Slovenia, the Mayor of Ljubljana Mr Zoran Janković was re-elected with majority of votes and more than half of the City Council members come from the List of Zoran Janković ([www.ljubljana.si](http://www.ljubljana.si)). The Urban Municipality of Ljubljana has directly elected Mayor (with four deputy mayors appointed by the Mayor), the City Council (45 directly elected local politicians), City Management Authority (with more than 20 different departments and offices), 17 local city districts, and other legislative, management or advisory bodies ([www.ljubljana.si](http://www.ljubljana.si)).

Until year 2010 no regional NUTS 3 administrative provinces has been established as yet in Slovenia, due to long-term professional and political debates about the number and size of administrative regions (provinces). For data collection and analytical purposes 12 statistical NUTS 3 regions (known in 1980 as geographical or planning regions) have been used since 1995. These 12 statistical NUTS 3 regions are also used in regional policy and programming documents known as development regions until the process of regionalisation is completed in the future. From January 2008 there are also two NUTS 2 European cohesion regions – more developed West Slovenia NUTS 2 region and less developed East Slovenia NUTS 2 region, but without political representations. Ljubljana urban region (NUTS 3) is a part of West Slovenia NUTS 2 region (see chapter 5).

Therefore the jurisdiction and territory of the city of Ljubljana is different now than in it was before year 1994. Ljubljana is the capital city of Slovenia as the EU member state, the most important and the largest urban municipality in Slovenia. But the urban agglomeration, urban region or functional urban area of Ljubljana is much larger than the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana. Due to lack of administrative regions (provinces) in Slovenia, the cooperation between the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana and 26 other municipalities in Ljubljana urban region is not sufficient for effective implementation of different strategies, operational programmes and projects being formulated at the (inter)national, regional or (inter)municipal level.

## 20.3. Towards fully-fledged EU membership - macro-economic and regional policies

After independence in 1991 Slovenia regained the economic development level from year 1990 only in year 1994. Since 1994 economic and institutional reforms in Slovenia have been under direct influence of EU recommendations for achieving Maastricht convergence criteria (1992), improved export competitiveness, and harmonisation of legislation,

standards, norms and policies, as necessary requirements for fully-fledged membership of the EU in year 2004. According to the Accession Partnership signed between Slovenia and the EU in year 1997, harmonisation of legislation was the most important policy activity of the pre-accession strategy of Slovenia, taking place according to the National Programme of the Republic of Slovenia for the Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire (1998).

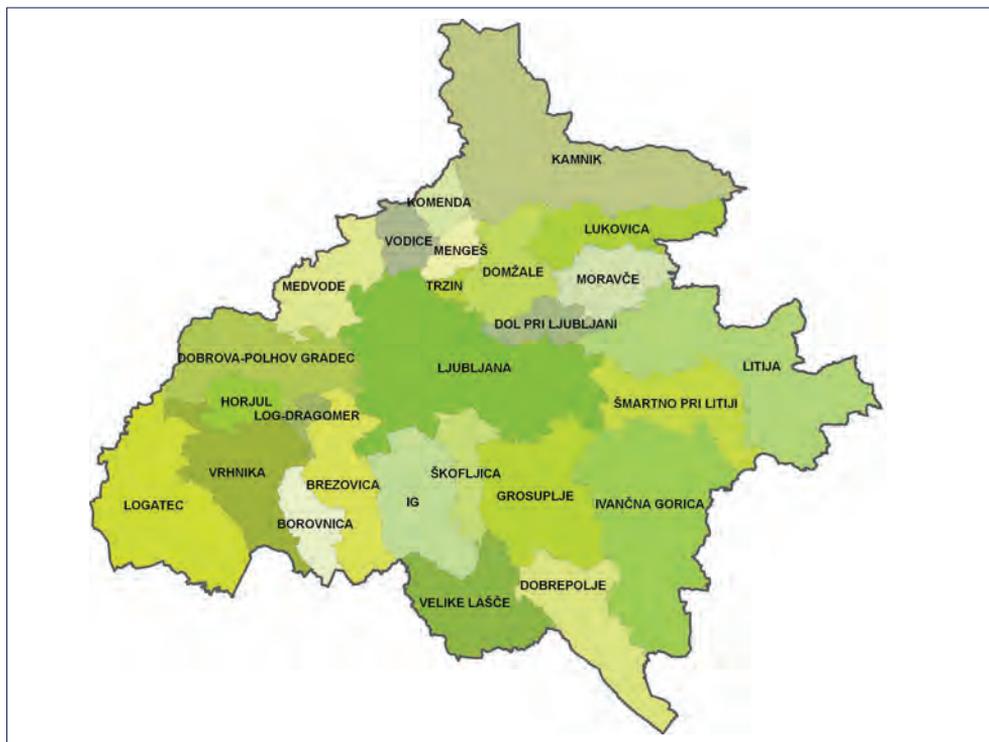
The first **strategic development document** at the national level which had have a top-down influence on the development of the city of Ljubljana and urban region became the Strategy for the Economic Development of Slovenia: Approaching Europe - Growth, Competitiveness and Integration (1995), as a strategic national document that sets out the factors of economic development, long-term goals, development scenarios, and the main guidelines for the state activities in particular areas. The strategy took into account social, spatial, environmental, regional, sectoral and other potentials, limitations and conditions. It defined long-term objectives of economic development and accession to EU, and the role of regional policy for successful implementation of sustainable development. From 1995 - 2000 **sectoral development programmes and strategies** with different impact on regional and local development were also adopted. National Development Programme of Republic of Slovenia (NDP) was adopted in 2001 together with the new Strategy of Economic Development of RS and the Strategy of Regional Development of RS. In the pre-accession period the NDP was an annex to the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire, and a programme basis drawing financial resources from different forms of pre-accession aids in accordance with the priorities of Accession Partnership between Slovenia and the EU. By participating in the EU pre-accession structural instruments (PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD) Slovenia was preparing to enter the system of the Structural Fund and the Cohesion Fund after accession to the EU in year 2004. In June 2005 the new **National Development Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia**, as an umbrella document embracing all sectoral development strategies, was adopted by the Government of Slovenia as the principle strategic development policy of Slovenia, the new EU member state, followed by the National Development Programme 2007 - 2013 with National Strategic Reference Framework 2007 - 2013 and Operational programmes approved by the EU (Pichler-Milanović, 2008; www.umar.gov.si).

In 1993 the Government of RS divided regional planning to regional (economic) development and spatial planning. Macro-economic development is in the hands of the Office for Macro-economic Analysis and Development of RS. Government Office for Local Self-government and Regional Development of RS is responsible for regional policies while spatial planning policies are under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of RS. The elements of regional policy up to the end of 1990s were determined within different ministries and different legislative procedures. Slovenia was solving regional problems on a more or less individual level in the form of partial interventions into the economy and preparation of the macro-economic and regional development strategy of Slovenia for the EU accession in year 2004. Regional policy in Slovenia has been traditionally targeted towards less developed regions in east Slovenia, and less developed municipalities (NUTS 5) and/or settlement (NUTS 7) areas, with population decline, high unemployment, structural problems, border areas with Italian and Hungarian ethnic minorities, and Roma population, and other peripheral and border areas (Černe, Kušar, 2006). Since year 2005 new regional policy documents brought new identifications of less developed areas - within statistical or development NUTS 3 regions and not at the national

level as before. Each of current 12 (statistical or development) regions need to prepare regional development programmes and some of them have also prepared the regional spatial development concepts as a way of inter-municipal cooperation, until formation of the administrative provinces in the future. Slovenia is geographically very diverse and inter-regional disparities will exist in future, therefore effective regional policy is needed to diminish the gap between more developed and less developed regions.

As a result of these macro-economic and top-down sectoral policies since 1991, the Ljubljana urban region (LUR) with 13 % of the Slovenian territory and 25 % of total population, represents the most important location of economic activities that generates 35 % of the country's GDP. In LUR the GDP per capita is for 30 % higher than the national average. LUR accounts for 27 % of exports and 37 % of country's imports respectively, 40 % of the total value-added, and almost half of all foreign investments in Slovenia. Productivity (e.g. value added per employee) is more than 25 % higher than in Slovenia while the average salary is 20 % above the national average, mirroring the concentration of employment in higher value added activities (i.e. banking, insurance, public administration, pharmaceuticals), and showing a rather successful transformation from the socialist industrial city to service based Central European capital city" (Pichler-Milanović, 2005a; 2010a; 2010b; [www.rralur.si](http://www.rralur.si)). The Urban Municipality of Ljubljana is the most economically developed location not only in Ljubljana urban region but also in Slovenia.

Figure 77: »Ljubljana urban region (NUTS 3)« with 26 NUTS 5 municipalities.



Source: Regional Development Agency of Ljubljana urban region ([www.rralur.si](http://www.rralur.si)).

**Central Slovenian NUTS 3 region** (or Ljubljana urban region - LUR) is the largest region in Slovenia with approx. 500.000 inhabitants consisting of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana and other 26 NUTS 5 municipalities. In year 2002 **Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region** was established with the main task to prepare Regional Development Programmes of LUR for period 2002 - 2006, and the new programming period 2007 - 2013, as well as the operational programmes with the list of priority projects of regional importance eligible for EU funds. LUR is (still) without political representation.

The overall development goal of LUR is the following: "Ljubljana Urban Region is a conurbation, intertwined with nature. The region will achieve high level of global competitiveness and high-quality living through encouraging creativity and co-operation. The entire region will benefit from Ljubljana being "a European capital". To achieve this goal the main activities of LUR are:

- development of relationships between the public and private sector at the local, regional, national and international levels in order to promote development initiatives and enhance coherent regional development;
- acceleration of integrated regional development;
- planning and implementation of regional and other development programmes;
- acquisition of domestic and foreign financial support. The most important development programmes of LUR are: accessibility for quality of life, preserved heritage, efficient high-quality spatial planning, efficient municipal utility services, equal opportunities – contribution to the region's competitiveness, culture – competitive advantage of the region, e-administration, supportive entrepreneurial environment ([www.rralur.si](http://www.rralur.si)).

In December 2007 the Regional Development Agency of LUR advertised the public tender for preparation of the first regional spatial development concept and strategy following the new Spatial Planning Act (2007) as a joint venture between the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana and other 26 municipalities in LUR that will need to be completed and approved the regional council in year 2010 ([www.rralur.si](http://www.rralur.si)).

## 20.4. Spatial development policies

During transition reforms in 1990s spatial and physical (land use) planning was in »flux« while directions from the spatial planning documents approved in 1980s were officially extended until recently. In 1990s only several amendments were added to the existing articles of the spatial planning legislation (i.e. Spatial Planning Act in Transition, 1993, 2000; Settlement Planning Act, 1993, 1997; Building Land Act, 1997; Construction Act, 1999, 2000). In 2002 the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (after 10 years delay) adopted the new **Spatial Planning and Management Act and Construction Act** with Spatial Management Policy, and two years later the **Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia with Spatial Order** (2004). These documents were the first new spatial planning documents after Slovenia's independence introducing a new legal system and a market economy values. The Spatial Planning Act deter-

mines the responsibilities and procedures in spatial planning, and defines the types and contents of spatial documents at the national and local level. At the national level these documents are **Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia** with, **Spatial Order of Slovenia**, and **Detailed Plan of National Importance**, and at the local level, these are the **Municipal Spatial Development Strategy** with **Spatial Development Order**, and the **Local Detailed Plan**. The law also introduces a new document, the **Regional Spatial Development Concept**. With this document, the municipalities and other local communities have an opportunity to coordinate their strategic development issues at the regional level. This is an optional document, filling the gap between national and local planning level until the establishment of new administrative regions (provinces) in Slovenia. In April 2007 the National Assembly of Slovenia adopted the new (modified) **Spatial Planning Act** with new hierarchy and content of spatial planning documents (e.g. bringing detailed land use plans back to the legislative agenda) at the national, regional and local levels. As a result all municipalities are now obliged by the law to prepare the new detailed municipal spatial development plans until the end of year 2010 (Pichler-Milanović, Kreitmayer MacKenzie, 2008).

**Spatial Development Strategy of Republic of Slovenia** (2004) is further promoting polycentric urban development of Slovenia through 51 centres of (inter)national, regional and inter-municipal importance (together 62 urban settlements including city clusters/conurbations) and functional urban areas of 15 centres of national importance (i.e. regional centres). Ljubljana, the capital city, with Maribor, the second largest city near Austria, and Coastal conurbation (Koper-Izola-Piran) at the Adriatic sea near Italy and Croatia are also defined as centres of international importance. The new concept of polycentrism (as before 1990s) highlights the improved (equal) accessibility to public goods – administration, jobs, services and knowledge, located in these region and urban centres. They are also employment and service centres and important transport nodes in Slovenia. Therefore polycentric (urban) development of (3-12-16-19 urban centres) corresponds to the balanced regional development, and development of transport infrastructure in Slovenia ([www.gov.si/mop](http://www.gov.si/mop)).

Spatial planning documents of Slovenia are not favouring per se the role of Ljubljana as the capital city of Slovenia – but only as a centre of international importance together with Maribor and Coastal conurbation (Koper-Izola-Piran).

## 20.5. New spatial development strategies of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana

As already mentioned before urban planning and strategic local development was neglected in 1990s in Slovenia because of the priorities of macro-economic reforms, and the connotation of such planning with the former socialist regime. Market forces, not planning prevailed until the end of 1990s, when the need for planning regulation was recognised to control and direct the spatial development of Slovenia, municipalities, local communities, towns and other settlements. Urban planners tried to control the post-Second World War development of Ljubljana primarily through the Master Plan (1966) and long-term comprehensive development document for the period 1986 - 2000

called "Ljubljana 2000". The latter was initially approved in 1986 but partly revised in 1995 in line with the market ideology and property rights reforms (i.e. restitution, privatisation, abolishment of compulsory purchase, etc.). The revised urban plan proposed densification and recycling of the existing urban built-up area and renewal or rehabilitation of the built environment from 1950s and 1960s. The greatest deviation from the original master plan occurred in form of 'illegal and semi-legal' construction of individual (family) houses without planning and building permission on land not designed for that use. In Ljubljana the scope and scale of this type of development was however less significant than in other large cities of the former Yugoslavia such as Zagreb or Belgrade. The other related phenomenon that occurred due to this unplanned dispersed development of free-standing single-family houses was the large scale of suburbanisation in late 1980s and 1990s, with insufficient provision of local infrastructure (water supply and sewage system) and local services (schools, kindergardens), and the increase in individual motorisation, daily commuting and transport congestion in 1990s (Pichler-Milanović, 2005a; 2010a, 2010b; Pichler-Milanović et al., 2007).

Since year 2003 local authorities including the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana are also obliged by the law to formulate and adopt their own long-term spatial development strategies, and detailed land use plans. The spatial development plans adopted in the 1980s were mainly in use in 1990s with only minor changes to accommodate some new ad-hoc projects that were not in accordance with the original spatial plans from 1980s (i.e. new commercial, recreation or housing areas). After adoption of the Spatial Planning and Management Act (2002) and Spatial Development Strategy of RS with Spatial Order (2004), the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana has been preparing the new generation of municipal spatial development documents while up-dating and revising the land-use and site/location plans. The new Spatial Development Strategy with Spatial Planning Concept for the city of Ljubljana was adopted in June 2002 under paradigm of sustainable development. This sustainable urban development strategy also listed some programmes and projects that are needed for improvement of the city competitiveness, quality of life and sustainability - but not specifically the internationalisation of the city of Ljubljana. These two documents are now part of the new Spatial Development Plan of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana prepared according to the new spatial planning legislation (2002, 2007) that was in the process of public hearing and institutional negotiations from October 2007 until May 2010. This strategic city development document was adopted in July 2010 by the City Council of Ljubljana and approved by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of RS. In year 2007 the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana has adopted the new »Vision of the City of Ljubljana by year 2025« emphasising 23 strategic projects (from the list of approximately 100 projects) to be realised until year 2025, linking the three principal urban development aims of Ljubljana: »Ideal city« (i.e. the optimal city size – for living, working, recreation), »Sustainable city« (i.e. preserved natural and urban environment in the city and urban region), and »Slovenian metropolis« (European competitive capital city) (Pichler-Milanović, 2010a, 2010b; [www.ljubljana.si](http://www.ljubljana.si)).

The principle goal of the comprehensive Strategic Development Plan of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana is »smart city growth«, emphasising also the internationalisation of the capital city through urban revitalisation, as the city of art, culture and knowledge, the safe and healthy city. Ljubljana is also an important transport node at the cross-road of V and X European corridors. The urban development strategy also emphasises the qual-

ity of life for local citizens, preservation of local identity, enhancement of city competitiveness, use of information technology, while at the same time solving the new urban development constraints such as: suburbanisation and urban sprawl, decline of the city centre, inadequate maintenance of cultural heritage buildings and housing estates, and loss of urban identity with expansion of market forces and globalisation of the cityscapes. At the national level it is also important to strengthen the innovative, competitive, attractive and polycentric Ljubljana urban region. The geo-strategic location of Ljubljana needs to be enhanced with strengthening of links and networks with other cities and regions in the cross-border Alps-Adriatic region, Central Europe, South-east Europe, and the Mediterranean in order to become a strategic location of the new European "potential integration zone" - Alpe-Adria-Pannonia (Pichler-Milanović, 2010a; 2010b).

The capital investment projects in Ljubljana that are approved at the national level are: new sports centre, university and technical library, new medical centre, and improvement of transport infrastructure. In Ljubljana urban region (NUTS 3), the most developed region in Slovenia, with competitive and sustainable capital city of Ljubljana with high quality of life, the most important regional development projects are: waste collection plants, integrative public transport, logistic centre, enterprise zones with technology parks, flood protection, and establishment of (natural) public parks. At the local level - the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana listed some strategic projects, of which the most important is the new railway and bus station in the city centre with offices, hotels, restaurants, shops, etc. Due to current financial and economic crisis since year 2008 some of these important city development projects are put on hold (Pichler-Milanović, 2010a, 2010b).

**Detailed Spatial Development Plan of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana** (land use and site/location plans) has also been prepared together with revisions or adaptations of the existing land use development plans. Environmental impact assessments are required by the law including the expecting impact of the new spatial plan that was adopted in July 2010. The revised drafts of these detailed and new land use plans are also approved after many years of preparation or adaptations and modifications.

The **Capital City Act** has been also approved after some delay due to some disagreements between the Government of RS and the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana regarding the financial transfers from the national to city budgets ([www.ljubljana.si](http://www.ljubljana.si)).

The new spatial development strategy of Ljubljana was prepared taking in consideration the international recommendation (UN, CEMAT, EU), especially from the new EU documents such as: Lisbon Agenda and Gothenburg Agenda, Territorial Agenda and Leipzig Charter (2007), UN HABITAT Agenda (1996), and CEMAT Ljubljana Declaration on spatial impacts of sustainable development (2003). Also national legislation, sectoral strategies and programmes, professional studies, as well as needs and demands of the various departments of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana and Ljubljana urban region were taken in consideration for preparation of the new comprehensive spatial development strategy and land use plans of Ljubljana. Therefore, for the first time after 20 years, the strategic development of Ljubljana has been prepared as a result of vertical and horizontal integration of different documents at the (inter)national, regional and local levels. After approval of the new Strategic Spatial Development Plan of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana the next important phase in the city development of Ljubljana will be the

implementation of these (demanding) strategies, development goals, programmes, and projects - formulated at the national, regional and local levels, through public private partnerships and involvement of citizens and civic organisation in the implementation process – taking in consideration also the current financial and economic crisis and lack of investment capital from public and private sources as well as property market collapse and new demands for energy efficiency, retrofitting of buildings and low carbon cities (Pichler-Milanović, 2010a, 2010b).

## 20.6. Towards Competitiveness and Sustainability: A ‘Story of Success’?

The EUROSTAT Europe of Regions survey at the end of 1990s had shown that level of development in Ljubljana Urban Region (NUTS 3) was ranked 144th among the 281 EU urban regions, including some cities from the other accession countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, and Cyprus). Among Central and Eastern European urban regions the level of development was slightly higher only in Prague (index 103) but Ljubljana urban region was well ahead of Budapest (index 80) and Warsaw (index 73) (Pichler-Milanović, 2005a). Recent study of about 70 medium-size European cities according to 74 (selected) indicators available from European comparative databases has shown that the city of Ljubljana is ranked among top-20 cities, and the only one from the new EU member states (Giffinger et al. 2007).

Lack of coherent strategic planning policies at the national, regional and city levels during transition reforms in 1990s in Slovenia, and »investment-led response of public leadership in a »planning« vacuum« in the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana and surrounding municipalities in Ljubljana urban region, coupled with day-to-day urban problems and side-effects of transition reforms (e.g. privatisation, restitution, de-centralisation, etc.) have transformed intra-urban pattern of Ljubljana (i.e. suburbanisation and urban sprawl, de-industrialisation, tertialisation, differed maintenance of buildings in the city centre and housing estates, loss of urban identity, traffic congestion, etc.) (Pichler-Milanović et al., 2007; Pichler-Milanović, 2005a, 2010a). Many projects were not developed according to the urban development strategy from 1986, or detailed land use plans, but according to the needs and demands of the market economy and new private investors. Due to lack of administrative NUTS 3 regions (provinces) in Slovenia there is weak cooperation and strong competition between municipalities in Ljubljana urban region, with the strong central position of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana, as the largest urban municipality in Slovenia vis-à-vis other municipalities in Ljubljana urban region.

Recently there has been some more cooperation between the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana and surrounding municipalities in LUR during formulation of the regional development programmes 2004 - 2006 and 2007 - 2013, and implementation of some infrastructure and environmental projects as well as during the preparation of the Regional Spatial Development Concept of Ljubljana Urban Region (2008 - 2010).

Between 2005 - 2008 lack of cooperation between the Mayor of Ljubljana, Mr Zoran Janković, and the former Prime Minister of Slovenia Mr Janez Janša (2004 - 2008) was

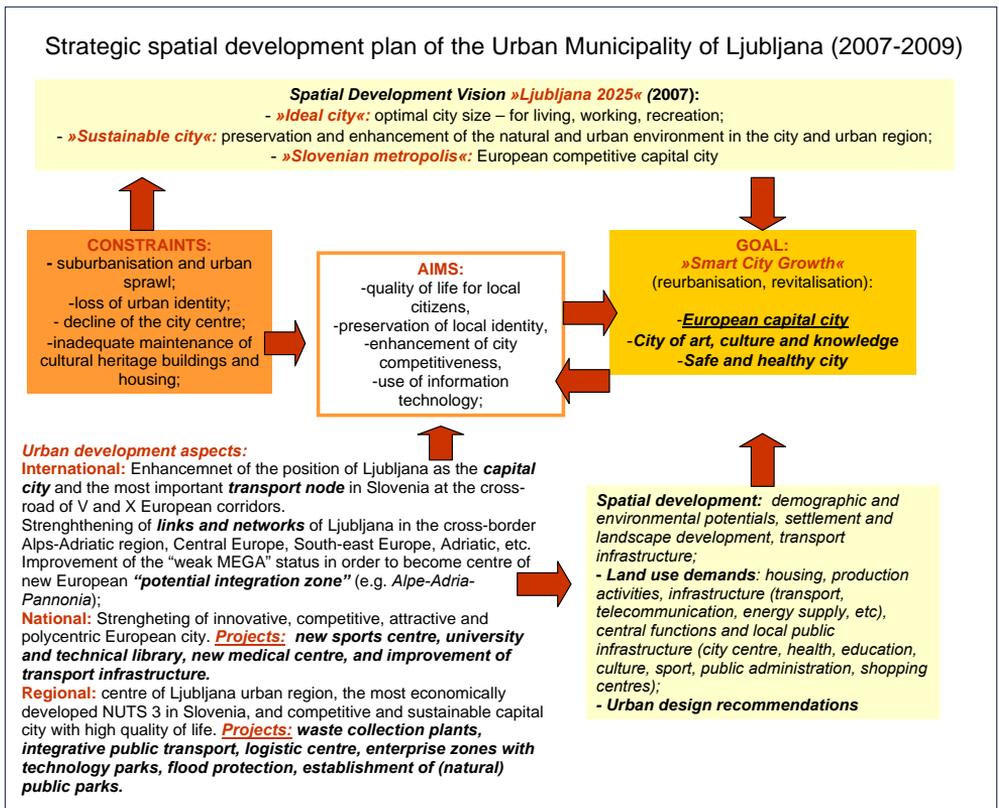
also counterproductive for the urban development of Ljubljana, and implementation of some projects of the national interest in the capital city of Ljubljana.

Due to some political conflicts between Slovenia with Italy, Austria and Croatia regarding the status of ethnic minorities, and unresolved land and property rights, there is also lack of more active inter-city cooperation between Ljubljana, and the near-by cities in the cross-border Alps-Adriatic region - Trieste, Udine, Gorizia (Italy), Villach-Klagenfurt, Graz (Austria), Istrian towns, Pula, Rijeka, Zagreb (Croatia).

Therefore the successful implementation of the new spatial development strategies and land use planning documents at the national, city and regional level, depends upon the ability of local leaders to encourage active involvement of different professions, social groups and local communities, as well as efficient role of the city authority in implementation activities. Strong political leadership with co-operation and partnership between different public and private institutions and other stakeholders that was often lacking in 1990s are critical now for the progress and essential for the implementation of comprehensive national, city and regional strategies in future. The most important spatial management activities in Ljubljana need to be focused on improving the international position, role and identity of Ljubljana within the European urban networks, while marketing the city's competitive advantages through implementation of the "flag-ship" projects. At the same time improving the economic and social cohesion and quality of life for local citizens is crucial for sustainable development of Ljubljana. The overall goal of the new spatial development vision, strategy, programmes and individual projects are to achieve the »competitive and sustainable Ljubljana with its own identity in national, cross-border, European and global networks« (Pichler-Milanović, 2010a, 2010b).

Ljubljana may never become the Central European metropolis - as might be the result of global city formation and city competition between Vienna, Berlin, Prague, Budapest or Warsaw. Yet, as a result of cultural heritage, stable political and economic conditions, improved social cohesion, quality of life, city identity and geo-strategic location in Europe – the city Ljubljana has the opportunity to become an attractive meeting place and tourist destination between two global cities in Europe - Venice and Vienna. Strengthening the political, cultural and transport links to support well established economic relations with cross-border cities and regions in Austria, Italy, Croatia and other cities in Central and South-Eastern European countries, are of critical importance for the future role of Ljubljana in Europe. At the same time Ljubljana needs to preserve the quality of life for local citizens to avoid the problems of homelessness, urban decline, social and spatial polarisation, crime and vandalism, or overcongestion, known to many other European cities.

Figure 78: Strategic spatial development plan of the Urban Municipality of Ljubljana (2007-2009).



Source: Regional Development Agency of Ljubljana urban region ([www.ruralur.si](http://www.ruralur.si)).