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CONCLUSIONS TOWARD SAUL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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John Zetter has given us some thoughts on what Luxembourg can draw out of this Symposium. I will look briefly at the wider question of what *SAUL* can draw from it. These are just some personal impressions from Anita and me – not necessarily the formal or final conclusions – which will be developed later by the *SAUL* Steering Group as a whole.

First, let me remind us of where this Symposium fits in to the *SAUL* project. The Launch Conference in London addressed the primary Key Issue of the vital role of urban landscapes in quality of life; but we also went on to look at the second issue of Planning through Partnerships, or co-operative planning. In the first Symposium in Dortmund, we tackled the third Issue of Regional Identity, and the potential of new urban landscapes to change and develop people's perceptions of their sense of place. This second Symposium continues that focus on the importance of regional spatial planning; but it goes further, to ask important questions about regional governance and urban landscapes.

The Minister of the Interior set us off by emphasising the importance of the *SAUL* issues in Luxembourg, not just in terms of land-use planning, but because the regeneration challenges of the South region cannot be seen in isolation from the whole country's needs to find a balance between the different and contrasting elements of the expanding city and the post-industrial South, invoking transport policy and economic development strategy. For Luxembourg, these are urgent issues; but they are also common factors for all regions.

Philippe Peters gave us the big picture, and also the essential insights into the complexity of the underlying challenges and questions for this region. The message for us all is that we have to understand the detail and the practical needs of each region; because while we can share knowledge and learn from others' experience, there are no standard formulaic answers – solutions must always come from within.

Dr. Fürst spelt out clearly the formal differences between government and governance. He gave us the theoretical basis for much of what we are seeking to address through *SAUL* – but perhaps in our practical work we often approach these issues through more instinctive or pragmatic routes.

He posed the question – how far can regional governance (as distinct from government) provide solutions to these challenges, and seemed to doubt the wisdom of relying too much on the regional governance concept, since it needs a minimum of formal government structures for stability and continuity. I want to return to this point in a moment. He gave a helpful emphasis on the need for practical tools for managing governance, and the need for stage management of informal actors, in which intermediary agencies can play a key part.

Jaap Modder gave me plenty of excellent headlines for my conclusion to this Symposium: “green spaces are our crown jewels”, and “it's an issues thing – you can only mobilise people around issues”. He explained the context of their regional spatial planning – moving from a city focus to an emphasis on the whole region, developing landscapes on a regional scale; and seeing the region in its national and international context.

He described how planning is an essential ingredient of housing and industrial growth; and the importance of the waterway corridors; with transport structures as the backbone for access.

He emphasised the importance of four factors – a sense of identity – having an urgent or challenging agenda – finding committed regionalists to act as the essential champions – and having the right institutions for implementation. Finding new uses for the transformation of old sites can often be the focus for planning as a bottom-up partnership process.

His final headline quotation is a key message for *SAUL* – “the important thing in planning is implementing it”. We agree.

The Working Groups this afternoon really have lived up to their name. We have already heard their reports and it is clear a great deal of work has been done, which we will need to digest and put into the *SAUL* work in progress

In conclusion, it is clear that a balance between formal and informal governance is essential, but again, what constitutes the right balance has to be determined in each set of circumstances. Clearly, informal structures are better suited to some tasks rather than others – but by their nature, they are flexible; they tend to be fluid; they may be unpredictable; and they carry risks. These are, of course, the very qualities which also make them dynamic, with the potential to bring about real change.

We should also recognise the potential for informal structures to have a far-reaching influence, over time, on the different kinds of formal structures of government for spatial planning in Europe; and if these processes of combining government structures with informal processes are encouraged, they can have the effect of changing the formal attitudes in the long term. There is already firm evidence of that. For example, Saarland (near neighbours of Luxembourg) gave a short account earlier, in one of the Working Groups, of how the *SAUL* learning process has influenced the development of informal processes for planning new solutions for urban landscapes, working alongside the formal institutions of government; and how this new partnership approach has already influenced the views and plans of the formal level, introducing changes with potentially far-reaching results. It would be good to have a short account of that work-in-progress posted on the *SAUL* website now, to encourage wider discussion.

Two final points - This morning I told you that the purpose of today was to learn from one-another, and John Zetter has been monitoring this Symposium as part of the *SAUL* programme to evaluate the project’s influence. So it is important for everyone to capture what we have learnt from today. Please think about those questions on the evaluation form.

And now, on behalf of us all, I want to thank Philippe, Ursula and all the Luxembourg colleagues for making this both a stimulating and an enjoyable Symposium.