

Regional Governance Luxembourg, 31st March 2004

INTRODUCTION/WELCOME

Michel Wolter

Minister of the Interior, Luxembourg

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all of you to Luxembourg!

A special welcome to

- *Clive Fox* (the senior representative of the Lead Partner),
- *Prof. Dr. Dietrich Fürst* from the University of Hannover and *Jaap Modder* from the Nijmegen-Arnheim Region (the two Keynote speakers)
- and the representatives from the communities and the institutions in the South Region of Luxembourg.

Dear Guests,

Let me start by asking you: Are you all familiar with the landscapes of Southern Luxembourg? Have you noticed the rough, manmade landscapes of red soils? Have you seen the vivid towns between the green hills yet? Have you been in touch with the industrial history and the present industrial potential of this region? I am pleased to hear that some of you already did have the opportunity to visit and get to know them better.

Preserving, qualifying and structuring these landscapes as a part of the densely settled South Region is a major goal of SAUL.

It presents three important opportunities:

Firstly, taking part in SAUL will help finding a *balance between landscape and urban settlements* in the context of the settlement pattern of the future. The international consultants from various fields of planning whom we have discussed with in the last years all have made a strong point of this.

Secondly, SAUL will draw our attention to the *process of cooperation* which is needed in order to adequately develop the closely knit fabric of brownfields, small towns, agriculture and nature reserves - which may also be man-made.

Thirdly, SAUL wants to make sure that the *greenspaces are accessible – both physically and mentally*. I am convinced that in modern societies, landscape and open spaces contribute largely to the quality of life sought after by the inhabitants of cities and regions.

We have to consider both – the open space and urban development - if we want to *find ways of making full use of what the urban, suburban and rural areas have to offer*. This is not only true for the SAUL point of view, but it is also one of the *key messages* which the brand-new “IVL” - the Integrative Development Scheme for Settlement, Transport and Landscape - tells the government and the people of Luxembourg ever since it was published early this year. Philippe Peters will tell you more about it in his presentation this morning (à voir)

In the context of SAUL as well as in the context of IVL, we are talking about landscapes that are as special as their inhabitants: tough, versatile, shaped by their industrial heritage and full of a potential of unknown abilities.

A large number of these inhabitants are already involved in the process of making the South region a better place to live and work in.. They work in organizations, and they are actively engaged in councils or institutions.

SAUL presents an important opportunity to activate and coordinate all these informal and formal actors who work together on projects and plans for urban landscapes.

SAUL will test the extent to which new informal structures will work on a topical issue of regional planning: that is, in urban landscape planning. By bringing out the full potential of SAUL, we can practice cooperation, test new instruments in planning-processes and we will be able to link the many different activities that are associated with qualifying the urban landscape.

Supporting and engaging in informal planning processes is a considerable challenge for a national institution. As the minister responsible for planning, I fully endorse this policy directed towards the partnership between communities, the government and other stakeholders.

Being a SAUL partner, Luxemburg can finally learn from other regions. We are looking forward to your ideas.

And I do hope you will have a good time in Luxemburg.