

# Urban Sustainability Policies at a Local Level: The case-study of Portugal

André Barros & Henrique Cabral\*

Department of Animal Biology, Faculty of Sciences, University of Lisbon

(\*[hncabral@fc.ul.pt](mailto:hncabral@fc.ul.pt); Phone: +351 21 750 08 26; Fax: +351 21 750 02 07)

Sustainability, although being an extremely complex and subjective concept, is becoming more and more a key issue on the development of human societies. This subject is particularly important in areas where most of human activities co-exist: urban areas. The sustainability of cities, or urban sustainability, plays an important role on policy-making at different levels: international, national and local. At the international and national perspectives, the approach to this problem and the consequent legislation and initiatives just establish priorities and thresholds; the real and functional objectives and measures are defined and applied locally in the territory, making this perspective crucial to establish functional balance between socio-economical development and environment in urban areas. This paper analyzed the strength of policies that local governments have on urban sustainability, dividing this concept in ten key categories: international initiatives on the theme of urban sustainability; mobility; energy; waste management; climate change; water management; noise; land-use; green areas and environmental education. Local governments reveal a strong support for the initiatives proposed internationally concerning the environment in cities but they do not have a homogeneous perspective of this subject. They act mostly on waste and water managements and reveal less concern in domains such as noise and climate changes.

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