

FACT SHEET

Overseas Duty Visit Panel on Development

Spatial planning and urban renewal in Barcelona

Table 1 – Basic information on Barcelona

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Basic facts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barcelona, the capital and most populous city of Catalonia and the second largest city in Spain, has an area of 101 km² and a population of 1.6 million. It is located at the Mediterranean coast, between the mouths of the rivers, Llobregat and Besòs. • Barcelona is a major economic centre, with one of Europe's principal Mediterranean ports. Founded as a Roman city, Barcelona was the capital of the Counts of Barcelona and the Crown of Aragon. Besieged several times during its history, Barcelona today is an important cultural centre and a major tourist destination, and has a rich cultural heritage. Particularly renowned are the architectural works of Antoni Gaudí and Lluís Domènech i Montaner that have been designated as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world heritage sites. • Barcelona is governed by the Barcelona City Council, which comprises 41 councillors elected by universal suffrage. The Council is led by the Executive, which is chaired by the elected Mayor. The City Council has jurisdiction in the internal affairs of the Council, including municipal tax, urban planning, environment, housing and economic promotion. |
|-------------|---|

Table 2 – Spatial planning in Barcelona

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Responsible authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Mayor for Housing, Urban Planning and Council Internal Affairs. |
| Major policy paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Metropolitan Master Plan of Barcelona published in 2003 in response to the new economic and social challenges of the 21st century. The Master Plan is an integral plan which establishes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) land classification categories such as urban land, development land and agricultural land; (b) the regulation of land uses and development density restrictions; and (c) a list of development programmes to be implemented. |
| Spatial planning policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the guiding principles of the spatial planning policy include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The city government plays a key role in formulating the spatial planning policy. Commercial enterprises, professional associations, advisory bodies, social entities and citizens are consulted to determine the best spatial planning option for Barcelona. In many cases, the city government co-works with the private sector to implement large urban development projects. (b) International events such as the 1992 Olympic Games are used to enhance prestige, attract private investment, and focus and motivate the city's workforce. Buildings and infrastructures constructed for the events are of high quality and serve a double purpose: for short-term use during the events and as a means of regenerating a decaying area of the city in the long-term. (c) Public building locations are carefully planned to enhance city development and prevent duplication. (d) Innovative architectures and thinking are encouraged. (e) The city government invests in transport infrastructures to improve accessibility, thus enhancing economic and social activities. |

Table 3 – Urban renewal in Barcelona

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Responsible authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Mayor for Housing, Urban Planning and Council Internal Affairs. |
| Major policy paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Metropolitan Master Plan sets out a list of urban renewal projects to be implemented in the next five years. |
| Urban renewal policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the guiding principles of the urban renewal policy include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) emphasizing strong political and local leadership to drive the urban renewal process; (b) providing tax incentives and grants to refurbish properties; (c) conserving buildings of heritage value for public uses such as schools, libraries and cultural centres; (d) using public funds to renovate historic buildings which are in poor condition; and (e) completing building renovations to a high standard, both interior and exterior. |

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit

| |
|--|
| La Rambla (spatial planning) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> La Rambla is the best known landmark of Barcelona. Connecting the Plaça Catalunya to the Columbus monument and filling with opera houses, cafés, kiosks, and flower and animal stalls, La Rambla is one of the favourable destinations for both tourists and local people. |
| Universal Forum of Cultures (spatial planning) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Universal Forum of Cultures was a 141-day international event that took place in Barcelona from 9 May to 26 September 2004. The venue is now home to several massive events around the year, including the Primavera Sound Festival and the La Mercè concerts. |
| Port Vell (urban renewal) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, the Port Vell, the city's old obsolete harbour was a run down area with empty warehouses, industrial buildings, refuse dumps and railroad yards. In one of the most drastic urban renewal projects, the area was transformed into a yacht basin and entertainment centre, opening the city up to the sea. A coastal road was moved underground, and a pedestrian street now stretches from the Columbus monument to the suburban area of Barcelona. |
| 22@Barcelona (urban renewal) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22@Barcelona is a project that aims to fully integrate Barcelona in the new technological revolution of the knowledge economy. The Poblenou district, the main hub of Spanish industrialization during the 19th century, has become the leading economic and technological platform in Barcelona and Catalonia. |
| Diagonal Mar (urban renewal) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Diagonal Mar is a large urban redevelopment project centred around Barcelona's Avenue Diagonal. The district consists of residential areas, three office buildings, hotels, a shopping complex, a convention centre and a 35-acre public park, making it attractive to tourists and local citizens. |

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

| Santa Caterina market (urban renewal) |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Santa Caterina market, which is located at the centre of an old neighbourhood carrying the same name, is a covered retail marketplace which houses restaurants and vendor booths. One of the attractions of the Santa Caterina market is the roof, which is conceived as a curved and light surface that floats on a set of cables. Its outer surface is formed by colourful ceramic mosaics. |

Research and Library Services Division
20 November 2007
Tel: 2869 9644

Fact sheets are compiled for Members and Committees of the Legislative Council. They are not legal or other professional advice and shall not be relied on as such. Fact sheets are subject to copyright owned by the Legislative Council Commission (the Commission). The Commission permits accurate reproduction of the fact sheets for non-commercial use in a manner not adversely affecting the Legislative Council, provided that acknowledgement is made stating the Research and Library Services Division of the Legislative Council Secretariat as the source and one copy of the reproduction is sent to the Legislative Council Library.

References

1. Barcelona Field Studies Centre. (2004) *Barcelona's next post-Olympic urban challenge: The Universal Forum of Cultures 2004*. Available from: <http://geographyfieldwork.com/pdf/forum2004.pdf> [Accessed 16 November 2007].
2. Barcelona Field Studies Centre. (2007) *Urban Studies in Barcelona*. Available from: <http://geographyfieldwork.com/barcelona.htm> [Accessed 16 November 2007].
3. Barcelona Municipal Society. (2005) *The 22@ Barcelona Project*. Available from: http://www.audis.it/doc/22@Barcelona_1.pdf [Accessed 16 November 2007].
4. Barcelona Municipal Society. (2006a) *Current state*. Available from: <http://www.22barcelona.com/content/blogcategory/38/157/lang,en/> [Accessed 16 November 2007].
5. Barcelona Municipal Society. (2006b) *Urban Innovation*. Available from: <http://www.22barcelona.com/content/blogcategory/50/297/lang,en/> [Accessed 16 November 2007].
6. Barcelona Regional S.A. (2004) *Urban Forum: Planning the Future of Cities in China*. Available from: http://www.cdb.com.cn/meeting/english/07/e07_013.pdf [Accessed 16 November 2007].
7. Busquets, J. (2005) *Barcelona: the urban evolution of a compact city*. Harvard University, Graduate School of Design.
8. Greenstructures and Urban Planning. (2001) *Spatial Planning in Spain*. Available from: <http://www.map21ltd.com/COSTC11/spain.htm> [Accessed 16 November 2007].
9. Hereu, J. (2007) *The Besòs Planning Reform*. Barcelona City Council.
10. Mayor of Barcelona. (2001) *Thematic Committee 6 - 8 June 2001: Sustainable Economic transformation and decentralization in Barcelona, Spain*. Available from: <http://www.un.org/ga/Istanbul+5/13-Spain.PDF> [Accessed 16 November 2007].
11. Nelson, P. (2006) *The Complete Integrated City*. Available from: http://depts.washington.edu/open2100/Resources/1_OpenSpaceSystems/Open_Space_Systems/BarcelonaCaseStudy.pdf [Accessed 16 November 2007].
12. Roca, J. et al. (2006) *Monitoring Urban Sprawl around Barcelona's Metropolitan Area with the Aid of Satellite Imagery*. Available from: <http://www.isprs.org/istanbul2004/comm1/papers/53.pdf> [Accessed 16 November 2007].