

## Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January: Urban City tour: Visit to La Mina District

From 9.00h to 12h30

Meeting point: Hotel Catalonia Ramblas

The district of *La Mina* is located in the municipal council of Sant Adrià del Besos in the border of Barcelona. *La Mina* was born as a housing estate in the early 1970's in a moment in which Catalonia received a large inflow of migration from other parts of Spain and created a situation where marginal urban development became a problem and a governmental intervention was necessary. *La Mina* is a government initiative implemented to rehouse population that was living in other metropolitan areas under highly precarious conditions, building their own homes and having no services.

Most of the population settled in *La Mina* were migrants ( mostly south Spain) and population from the oldest slums (including the ones in Catalonia).

In its early years, *La Mina* was characterized by high unemployment insufficient resources in an extremely young population, together with physical isolation, a poor quality urban environment and insufficient government intervention, providing the perfect conditions for marginalization and the emergence of the negative reputation that the district has had for most of its life. The lack of personal and economic prospects in the 1980's, made easy the consumption of heroin among the population and also for organized groups of drug sellers to establish operations there

Despite some improvements, this part of the city deteriorated and by the end of the 1990s, it was experiencing a series of problems that made an intervention essential:

- The physical and social isolation of the district and its residents, the product of physical barriers and social stigmatization
- A serious degradation of the area from an urban development
- Weak social networks
- A chronic lack of training and low or no professional qualifications causing the high impact of unemployment on the district.
- A focus on irregular and some cases illegal activities
- Anti-social behaviour by small groups that prevented other residents from freely using public spaces.

The *Consorti del Barri de La Mina* was created in 2000 to articulate, to plan and manage the transformation plan for the district. This body relies on the participation of the regional government of Catalonia, the Municipal councils of St.Adria del Besos and Barcelona and the provincial government of Barcelona. The objectives are to transform the district through global, integrated intervention in order to strengthen the community in the medium-long term and return the district to its normal state.

With these objectives, the *Consorti de la Mina*, has articulated its intervention in relation to the following axes for action:

- The social action plan in order to give social and educational support to the residents; the work-family balance; local economic development; community participation and development; civic-mindedness in public areas...
- The creation of social , educational, cultural and sports facilities
- Better access to housing and its restoration
- The urban development of public spaces
- The creation of new social housing
- The management of urban development
- Cooperation in improving personal safety
- The communication plan, to disseminate and inform people of the transformation plan and to improve the public image of the district.

The transformation plan had a ten year horizon (2000-2010) that coincided with the duration of the *Consorti*. The plan is a project that is at very advanced stage and which is having a positive impact on the lives of people living in the district. The urban development initiatives, which represent the most visible transformation, will be ready by 2010 or shortly thereafter. With regard to the fundamental objective of the transformation plan, it is expected that work will have to continue beyond 2010.