

# PRESS RELEASE



## ICT and Social Media to Make Urban Living Happier

### *New EU Project Aims to Help Citizens Rebuild Neighbourhood Living*

LISBON, Feb. 14, 2013 – Across the world, research shows that cities have lost the sense of neighbourhood and community living that used to make people feel more connected to each other and urban environments happier places to live.

The cities of Aalborg, Denmark, Birmingham, UK, Lisbon, Portugal, and Milan, Italy are joining forces on the 26<sup>th</sup> February in the historical quarters of Lisbon, Portugal to combat this growing loss of traditional neighbourhood structures. Thanks to a grant from the European Commission's Smart Cities Programme, the cities will join with other actors from across Europe to launch **MyNeighbourhood** – a project specifically designed to use ICT and social media tools to help recreate a lost sense of the urban neighbourhood as a sequence of connected and trusted communities where people shared a sense of belonging.

“**MyNeighbourhood** aims to create a new and ‘smarter’ conception of the ‘City’ that focuses on people and their well-being rather than just ICT infrastructures alone. **MyNeighbourhood** will use new technologies and citizen generated data to help recreate a lost sense of neighbourhood that is rooted in local place, common ties and personal interaction,” says Project Lead and Founder, Professor Alvaro Oliveira of Portugal-based company Alfamicro.

For example, Lisbon and **MyNeighbourhood** will partner together in Mouraria -one of the city's most traditional neighbourhoods – to engage citizens in the co-creation of innovative neighbourhood-driven initiatives that 1) increase the social cohesion and quality of life in Mouraria, 2) improve security and 3) promote new businesses and improve local economy. It will do so by using popular gamification techniques to encourage people to get involved and contribute to a new online platform that combines the data and functionality of existing City Information Apps (i.e. MyCityWay, Foursquare) with new tools that connect people locally both on- and offline.

“The ultimate aim of **MyNeighbourhood**,” Professor Oliveira observed, “will be to kick-start a viral effect wherein neighbours and friends (within cities and across Europe) will use the open **MyNeighbourhood** site to reconnect with one another, share new ideas, create new ways of interacting and help make their daily lives ‘smarter.’”

Follow [MyNeighbourhood @MyN\\_EU, #MyN\\_EU](#) - [Become a MyNeighbourhood fan on Facebook!](#)

#### Note to Editors:

1. **MyNeighbourhood** is a three-year project funded under a CIP IST PSP WP2012: Theme 1, ICT for ‘Smart’ Cities
2. **EurActiv.com** is leading the dissemination and communication of **MyNeighbourhood**.