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**City regeneration
to Berlin: the district
Marzahn-Hellersdorf**
Valeria Di Palma

Among the many effects produced by the German unification, the urban crisis of the weaker east regions is surely not negligible. The extended decrement of the population has caused an increasing number of lodgings to be exceeding with respect to the capability of the inhabited market to absorb the patrimony not used. In 2001 more than one million apartments (about 16% of the whole inhabited stock of the east Germany) were free and this has brought to a wide scale demolition policy financed by the State and, as consequence, about 350.000 lodgings, for the most part realized with prefabrication techniques (Plattenbauten), had to be destroyed. In the area of Berlin such a situation can be observed in the X° District, situated in the east periphery of the city. The district was created in 1979, when the population of Biesdorf, Marzahn, Hellersdorf, Kaulsdorf, Mahlsdorf and other smaller areas were unified until reaching a demographic threshold of approximately 50.000 inhabitants and a surface of 61 kmq (at least an half of the whole area is now occupied by the Marzahn district which is, by the other things, the core of the demolition and substitution intervention described below). This district has been constructed between 1976 and 1989 and includes 58.500 lodgings constructed with the prefabrication technique. Its urban system was based on the rational principle which implies the separation among the primary functions. The entire urban renewal is articulated in fields of action:

- the improvement of the economic conditions

through courses of professional qualification;

- promotion of occupation on wide scale;
- stabilization of the district structure thanks to social initiatives and measures;
- renters turnover, in this way improving buildings and infrastructures;
- promotion of the image of the district;
- integration of Russian-Germans immigrates through the constitution of a forum.

Though the renewal interventions and the great engagement to create a compact social structure, the quarter still appears marked from the rigidity of the original urban system, also because the complicated disposition of the buildings seems to cause important problems of adaptability to the new needs and to the realization of common spaces. Only some buildings 'symbol' of the renewal, as Eastgate (the new trade centre) and Freizeit Forum (that includes some social structures), and some new parks supplied with facilities, have been able to improve the image of Marzahn. This shows that the demolition and substitution policies, when they are not supplied with a planning of elevated quality can't correct the distortions generated by a previous and worried season of urban growth.