



The Green City Dimension

How are urban initiatives and actions supporting Green, Just and Productive Cities in the EU?

UAEU Webinar: 27 September 2021

On the series of webinars

With the current form of the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) coming to an end, it's essential that we capitalise on its achievements, explore linkages and synergies with other relevant initiatives and feed into its renewal process. In this context, a series of three webinars will be organised in line with the Green, Just and Productive city dimensions, as established under the New Leipzig Charter (NLC). Entitled '**How are urban initiatives and actions supporting Green, Just and Productive Cities in the EU?**', the webinars will showcase examples and initiatives from cities on how to develop resilience and further the implementation of these dimensions at the local level, and providing a space for discussing achievements, remaining issues and future opportunities to help cities face their challenges in a strategic way and thus contribute to sustainable urban development.

The webinars will take place on the following dates, between **14:00 – 16:00** CEST:

The Productive City	The Green City	The Just City
20 September 2021	27 September 2021	4 October 2021

They will be based around the [series of articles on the 14 Partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU](#) which link actions and activities with other relevant EU projects and initiatives supported by Cohesion Policy (including Urban Innovative Actions, URBACT and Article 7 cities benefitting from the European Regional Development fund (ERDF)).

The webinars are open to anyone who is interested, and we especially welcome the participation of UAEU Partners, representatives from URBACT, UIA and Article 7 Cities, and interested cities and managing authorities who would like to benefit from these presentations and discussions.

The Green City

The Green City Webinar is **2-hour session** taking place on **27 September 2021**. The webinar will bring together experience from cities, with a focus on how to further the implementation of this NLC pillar. In particular, experiences from Action Leaders of the Urban Agenda for the EU, as well as cities from Urban Innovative Actions (UIA), from URBACT and others benefitting from Article 7 cities implementing ERDF will be showcased. Speakers in this section of the webinar will tackle the discussion from the angle of **energy efficiency, regeneration and nature-based solutions**.

The focus of the webinar will then turn to the future, featuring presentations from relevant DG's at the European Commission on on-going or upcoming initiatives related to urban development and according to the thematic angle of the Green City. The webinars will feature

key insights and conclusions, Q&A with participants, and a guided discussion on future opportunities involving all speakers in the webinar.

Narrative of the webinar

Setting the scene: the New Leipzig Charter

Urban transformation is based on the integration of the social, ecological and economic dimensions of sustainable development. Thus, the [New Leipzig Charter – The transformative Power of Cities for the Common Good](#), which represents the key policy framework document for sustainable urban development in Europe, defines three distinct dimensions of EU cities:

- Green
- Productive
- Just

For the Green City, the Charter highlights the following elements:

- Cities play a pivotal role in **combatting global warming and ensuring high environmental quality for air, water, soil and land use**. They are called on to protect and regenerate endangered ecosystems and to **use nature-based solutions** where high-quality green and blue infrastructure can accommodate extreme weather conditions.
- Well-designed, managed and connected green and blue areas are a precondition for healthy living environments. Further, the development of high-quality urban environments for all includes **adequate access to green and recreational spaces**.
- The green transition requires **investments in innovative and efficient technologies** as well as fundamental **changes in the way we produce and consume**, allowing for the establishment of a circular economy which redefines and ensures a sustainable use of resources, while significantly reducing waste and carbon emissions. In that respect, **active and low-carbon forms of mobility and logistics** should be promoted including a modal shift to public transport, walking and biking.

In this context, 2 articles have been drafted on the topic of the Green City, which aim at showcasing practices and experiences (from the UAEU, UIA, Urbact and Article 7 cities) on how different tools and funding support can help cities face their challenges in a strategic way towards sustainable urban development. These are:

Articles #2: [Striving towards a greener Europe - Climate adaptation and energy](#), by Marcelline Bonneau;

Articles #4 [Cities' transformation in the post COVID-19 era with a focus on urban planning transition driving change in urban areas](#), by Eleni Feleki.

Additional reflections on the Green City:

- With urban areas becoming increasingly populated, the demand for electricity and heat will dramatically increase. As a result, it is expected that **the global carbon footprint produced by cities will triple by 2030**. It is also in cities that up to 80% of natural resources are consumed and about half of the global waste produced. This leaves no doubt that cities need to be in the forefront to tackle climate change and foster the energy transition. If Europe will meet its ambitions and achieve climate neutrality by 2050, restore biodiversity and move to a clean, circular economy, that will be mostly due to the ability of cities to change and innovate the way they engage with our natural resources and environment.
- The **Covid 19 Pandemic** and related restrictions have posed serious challenges to our economies and societies but have also alleviated the pressure on the environment and raised awareness on the **importance of protecting and preserving our natural resources, as well as minimize energy waste** by changing habits. The recovery may also represent an opportunity to accelerate sustainability transitions: how will new trends in living, working and producing change the way cities should be designed? Can we expect less pressure on urban areas and a tendency to move towards the countryside and what implications would that have on **land take**? Will commuting and travelling trends evolve to new standards? We should build on the momentum and **avoid to go back to the old habits** by using as inspiration the innovative solutions experimented by our cities. Naturally national and EU actors as well as businesses and citizens- who are also users, producers, consumers and owners - need to also contribute to this paradigm shift.
- Furthermore, as testified by the launch of the [New European Bauhaus](#), there is increasing awareness on the need to **rethink our cities and the use - and re- use of the public spaces**, make them more pleasant, sustainable, safe and accessible. Cities are clearly called to come up with solutions, creative ideas and innovations to make this aspiration reality through experimentation. Cities like Prato, as we will learn in this webinar, have some interesting experiences to share on how we can **transform, regenerate and make green and inclusive** the urban space.

- The bottom line is that a **holistic approach is needed to achieve the Green Deal objectives** starting from the local level. A shift toward circular economy and the use of nature-based solutions can be the key for a societal transformation where space, resources and goods are designed, produced, managed - but also restored - in a more sustainable and responsible way. Such approach, however, should also be **inclusive**: the green transition shall make sure no one is left behind and that social divides are not further amplified.
- Initiatives and programmes such as Urban Innovative Actions, URBACT and the Urban Agenda for the EU have extensively invested in **promoting and experimenting green solutions** in the domain of energy transition, mobility, air quality, climate change, circular economy, and sustainable use of land, among others. How can we capitalise on the lessons learned and **strive for integrated and cross-sectoral approaches** toward a more sustainable way of designing our cities? How can smaller cities learn and capitalise on these unique experiences? This webinar will provide an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved and experimented so far, and how we can best capitalise on such experiences looking ahead at the new tools and initiatives available to cities at EU level.

What do we want to achieve with the “Green City” webinar

- Learn from local good practices on how cities can play their part in facilitating the green transition through a) promoting the sustainable use - and reuse - of spaces and resources; b) protecting while granting access to key natural resources, c) enabling the transition to new consumers habits and approaches to a sustainable and responsible production.
- Explore how EU institutions are supporting on-going or upcoming initiatives that help and support the transformation process undertaken by cities to become greener, and how cities can benefit from these initiatives/projects.
- Investigate how local initiatives could be upscaled and transferred, and how we can capitalise on the lessons learned and knowledge generated so far.

Programme

27 September 2021: The Green city

Time	Session
14:00 – 14:05	<p>Welcome and introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agnese Macaluso, Urban Agenda for the EU Technical Secretariat – session moderator • Pia Laurila, Policy Officer, Urban and territorial development DG REGIO, European Commission
14:05 – 14:35	<p>PART 1: Dynamics and solutions around UAEU Actions and other EU initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marino Cavallo, Head of Department of Research, Innovation and EU Projects, City of Bologna, Italy • Valerio Barberis, Councilor for urban planning and environment, City of Prato, Italy • Ana Bretaña, Urban Regeneration unit, Nasuvinsa, Region of Navarra
14:35 – 14:50	<p>Concluding remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleni Feleki, Urban sustainability expert and Lead Expert of the URGE Network, URBACT <p>Q&A with participants</p>
14:50 – 15:20	<p>PART 2: Future EU opportunities towards green cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marie Yeroyanni, Senior Expert Innovating Cities, DG RTD, European Commission, Unit C2 Future Urban and Mobility Systems • Benjamin Caspar, Policy Officer, Biodiversity, DG ENV, European Commission • Pia Laurila, Policy Officer - Urban and territorial development, DG REGIO, European Commission
15:20 – 15:50	<p>Guided discussion (with all speakers) and Katerina Fortun, Policy Analyst, Adaptation to Climate Change, DG CLIMA, European Commission and Tim Caulfield, Director, UIA</p>
15:50 – 16:00	<p>Conclusion and main takeaways</p>