



# Urban agenda for the EU

## Multi-level governance in action

Regional and  
Urban Policy



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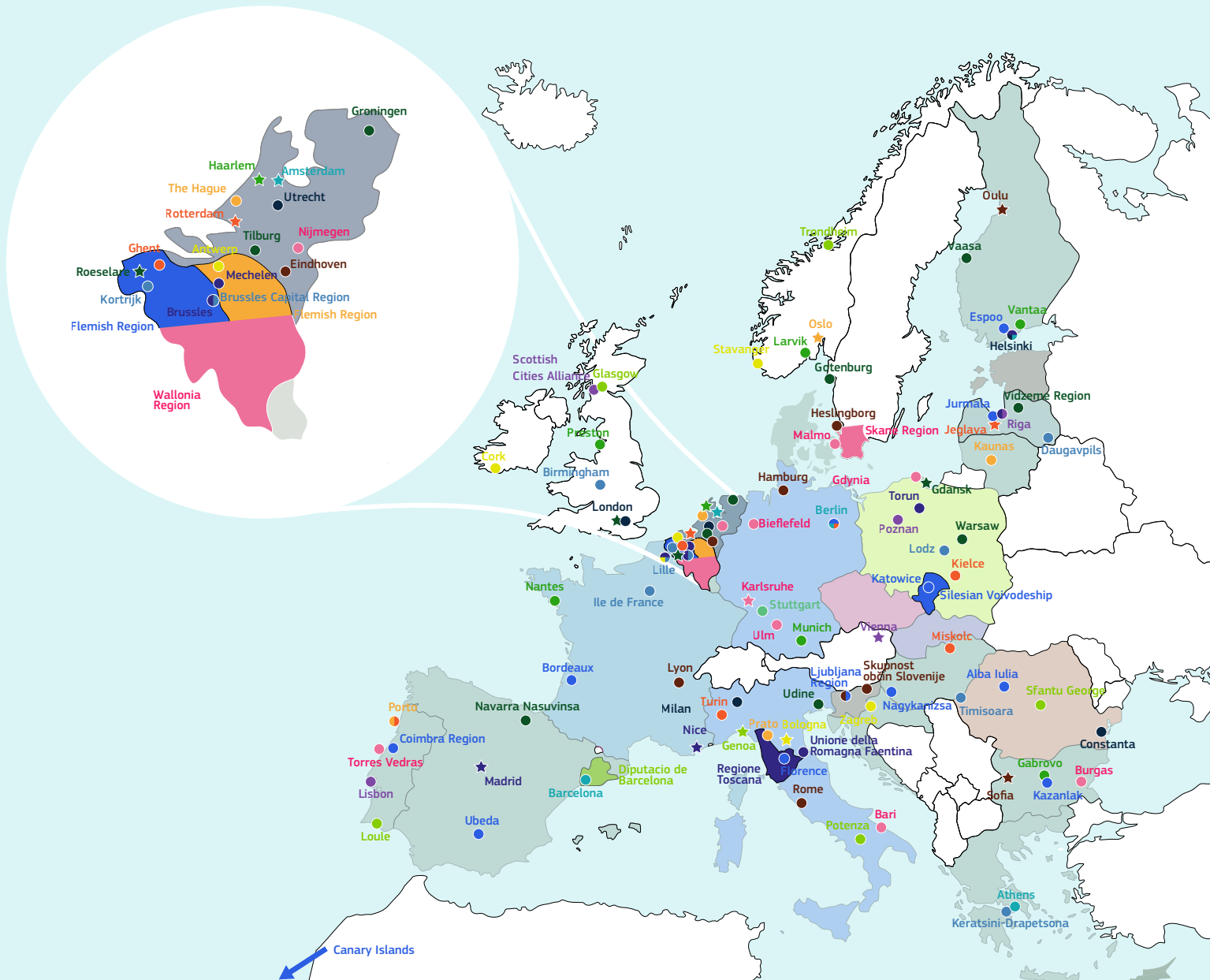
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**Legend**

- Participating EU Member States
- ★ Coordinator City
- Coordinator Member State
- Partner Regional Authority
- Partner City



**Amsterdam Partnership**

- Air Quality
- Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees
- Housing
- Urban Poverty

**Bratislava Partnership**

- Circular Economy
- Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy
- Urban Mobility
- Digital Transition

**Malta Partnership**

- Climate Adaptation
- Energy Transition
- Public Procurement
- Sustainable Use of Land

**Vienna Partnerships**

- Security in Public Spaces
- Culture/Cultural Heritage

**Partners involved in the Urban Agenda for the EU partnerships**

This map only represents geographical entities. European institutions, organisations and programmes such as the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, EUROCITIES, URBACT, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions – as well as many other organisations actively involved in the partnerships – are not indicated on this map.



# Foreword

The world is in a constant state of flux. Global changes are having a direct and increasing effect at local level. European citizens are facing pressing challenges in all places – environmental degradation and climate change, demographic transition, migration and social inequalities – and cities are on the frontline to deliver solutions: they remain poles of attraction, offering increased employment possibilities and social services to their surrounding regions and are the closest to citizens. To ensure the sustainable and resilient development of Europe, we need to follow the principle of multi-level governance, working together with cities and all stakeholders, at all levels.

Multi-level governance and partnership are at the heart of the **Urban Agenda for the EU**, launched in May 2016 to improve the urban dimension of policies. Stemming from a joint effort of the European Commission, other EU institutions, Member States, regions and cities, the Urban Agenda for the EU strives to strengthen cities' ownership of EU and national policy-making and implementation, and their capacity to ensure a more sustainable development of urban areas.

Multi-level governance must go hand in hand with effective partnerships, addressing problems beyond administrative borders and beyond policy silos together with all relevant actors. In this endeavour, this brochure is truly inspirational and useful, as it shows how we are driving transformative change, by working across and beyond levels of governments, sectors and territories.

Cohesion Policy is at the heart of this process. Around 115 billion euros is being spent in cities; out of which 17 billion are implemented locally through integrated urban development strategies managed directly by urban authorities. For the next European budget, after 2020, the European Commission is proposing a stronger urban dimension by earmarking 6% of the total European Regional Development Fund budget per Member State for sustainable urban development. The proposal also introduces a Policy Objective 'Europe closer to the citizens', and a new European Urban Initiative acknowledging that the urban dimension of Cohesion Policy relies on a



strategic multi-level partnership with local authorities and civil society.

This brochure shows in concrete terms what the Urban Agenda for the EU is bringing to the European citizens. It gives an overview of where we stand, what we have achieved so far and the crucial importance of multi-level governance for policy-making. The Urban Agenda for the EU will remain a decisive milestone towards the reinforcement of the urban dimension in all EU relevant policies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Crețu'.

**CORINA CREȚU**  
Commissioner for Regional Policy



# State of Play of the Urban Agenda for the EU

The [Pact of Amsterdam](#), adopted in May 2016, was a key milestone in the development of a shared EU-wide approach to urban challenges. Through it, the Urban Agenda for the EU was launched, marking an important step towards realising the potential for cities to shape policy alongside national and EU actors.

[The Urban Agenda for the EU](#) is an innovative urban policy initiative, which has put multi-level governance into action. It has enabled cities, Member States, the European Commission and other key stakeholders to come together to jointly tackle pressing urban matters and deliver concrete outputs for the benefit of EU citizens.

“The Urban Agenda for the EU is boosting the role of cities in national and EU policy making to better connect the EU with citizens’ needs.”

## There is scope to strengthen urban policy in the EU

Cities are centres for driving positive change and development, supporting the move towards a sustainable society. Many of the challenges we face today – social segregation, air pollution, provision of affordable housing, and climate change, to name a few – are being tackled in cities. At the same time, cities are positioned to develop innovative solutions to these challenges by, for example, promoting inclusion and better integration through the establishment of a new European Migrant Advisory Board (see [p. 28](#) in this publication).

The Urban Agenda for the EU has provided valuable support and impetus to urban policy thinking and dialogue in Europe. An information hub, [‘One Stop Shop for Cities’](#), provides an entry point to other EU policies with an urban dimension. Evidence-based policies in the EU are enhanced by the [Urban Data Platform](#), which offers a wealth of information on European cities and regions. There is a strong [urban dimension in Cohesion Policy](#), with delegated responsibilities for cities to select projects which are part of an integrated urban strategy. Projects

funded through the [Urban Innovative Actions](#) and [URBACT](#) provide additional support to research and practice.

There is scope to further reinforce urban policy in the EU through stronger and closer cooperation between cities, Member States and the EU. This is where the Urban Agenda for the EU is making a concrete and positive contribution. It is an ‘umbrella’ for all urban policy initiatives, helping to strengthen urban policy at all levels, from city to Member State to EU.

“Our commitment to having an Urban Agenda shows that we are putting urban matters higher on our agenda and are ready to listen more to our cities when it comes to what works for them and what needs to be improved.”

*Corina Crețu, Commissioner for Regional Policy*

## ...and to contribute to the UN New Urban Agenda

Through its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the [United Nations 2030 Agenda](#), the Urban Agenda for the EU is also outward-looking and connected to global challenges. To read more about the Urban Agenda for the EU and how it supports the [New Urban Agenda](#), see chapter [‘International commitments of the Urban Agenda for the EU’](#).

“Building skyscrapers is not urbanisation, urbanisation is a process. It is city dwellers who make for good urban outcomes, not buildings, and we need to listen to the people to design better lives for them.”

*Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif of Malaysia,  
Executive Director of UN-Habitat*



### ...by supporting better regulation, better funding and better knowledge

The Pact of Amsterdam states: “In order to realise the full potential of the European Union and deliver on its strategic objectives, the Urban Agenda for the EU strives to involve cities in achieving Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge.”

Better regulation is supported through more effective implementation and coherent implementation of existing EU policies, legislation and instruments. Better funding is about identifying, supporting, integrating, and improving sources of funding so that urban policy actors can better understand and access it. Better knowledge is about further building the knowledge base on urban issues and reinforcing/strengthening the mutual exchange of knowledge and good practice.

### ...by piloting territorial impact assessments

The European Commission is carrying out impact assessments, including a territorial assessment to better understand how future EU legislation might impact territorial units such as cities. In addition, the European Commission has set up a platform ([REFIT](#)) to improve existing EU legislation, involving national authorities and other stakeholders. The need to increase involvement from local and regional authorities in this platform has been recognised and will be further explored. The [Communication of the Commission on subsidiarity and proportionality](#), issued at the end of 2018, confirms this intention. It addresses the need to amend better regulation guidance to highlight the importance of screening and assessing territorial impacts, and to more clearly present assessments, evaluations and explanatory memoranda.

“The urban impact assessments strengthen better evaluations and urban innovative actions help the EU to capitalise on the strength of cities to find innovative solutions for the citizens of Europe.”

*[EUROCITIES, Statement on the Urban Agenda for the EU](#)*

### ...based on an integrated approach

Silo thinking leads to silo solutions. This is contrary to an integrated approach to urban development. The importance of integrated urban development was affirmed by the [Leipzig Charter of 2007](#), and is a cornerstone of the urban dimension of Cohesion Policy. European cities must continue to be supported in a manner that allows them to design and implement integrated strategies; Cohesion Policy currently supports this and will continue to do so in the future.

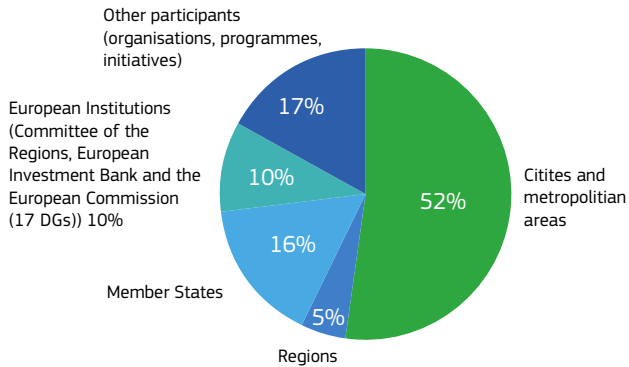
The priority themes of the Urban Agenda for the EU are not addressed individually, but in a connected and joined up manner which depends on input and collaboration between experts from different policy fields, and from different levels of government and society. For example, air quality cannot be addressed without also considering urban mobility (transport) and energy transition (clean energy).

### ...and based on participation

In the EU regulatory framework, multi-stakeholder involvement, partnerships and wider public participation are mentioned as key principles in a series of policy documents. The [European Code of Conduct](#) proposes a strengthened partnership approach in planning and spending and lays down a common set of standards to improve consultation, participation and dialogue with partners during the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds. The urban dimension of Cohesion Policy ensures a participatory approach through the involvement of relevant stakeholders, now and in the future.

Most actions under the Urban Agenda for the EU are delivered through partnerships, each made up of a variety of members. The fourteen partnerships have brought together 23 Member States, 96 cities and/or metropolitan regions, 10 regions and 17 DGs of the European Commission, and no less than 33 institutions, ranging from European umbrella organisations, programmes and networks, to civil society organisations and private companies. In total, 262 partners work together, embodying the principle of shared ownership and multi-stakeholder involvement.





Number of partnership entities

Partnerships are in regular dialogue to build joined-up solutions; one of the most valuable features of the Urban Agenda for the EU is its capacity to link policy actors who would otherwise not be in contact.

“The Urban Agenda for the EU is a milestone for cities and for Europe. It delivers impact through the multi-level governance in a partnership approach, which strengthens mutual understanding and collaboration across Europe.”

*EUROCITIES, Statement on the Urban Agenda for the EU*

### Delivered through partnerships

The Pact of Amsterdam set out a range of priority themes for the Urban Agenda for the EU, from urban mobility to jobs and skills. Most actions are delivered through partnerships, each made up of various members.

In 2016, four partnerships were established around urban poverty, the inclusion of migrant and refugees, air quality and housing; these are the Amsterdam partnerships. A year later the Bratislava partnerships followed, addressing digital transition, urban mobility, jobs and skills in the local economy, and the circular economy. These were followed by the Malta partnerships, covering the sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions, climate adaptation, public procurement and energy transition. In early 2019 the partnerships on culture and cultural heritage and security in public spaces were established, known as the Vienna partnerships.

### ...and action plans

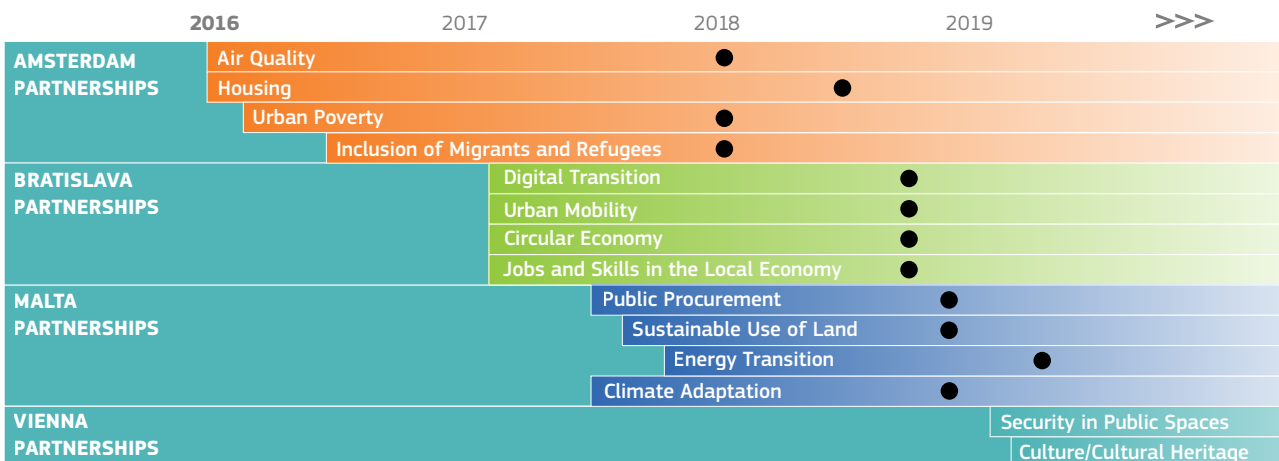
Each partnership delivers through action plans, which are finalised by consensus and cover improvements in regulation, funding and knowledge, but may also extend to policies, governance and practice.

“The emerging action plans of the Urban Agenda for the EU are excellent roadmaps to addressing the challenges faced by Europe’s urban centres. Policy development and implementation of such plans are crucial for the future of Europe.”

*Kieran McCarthy, Member of EU Committee of the Regions and Independent City Councillor of Cork*


### ...in an open and dynamic way

The Urban Agenda for the EU has continually evolved, mobilising greater numbers of urban, regional, national and EU actors at each stage. The website of the [Urban](#)



● Final Action Plan

Urban Agenda for the EU partnerships timeline



[Agenda for the EU](#) is the central information resource for anyone interested, offering details of the partnerships, news and updates related to the Urban Agenda for the EU.

The twelve action plans are inspired by the needs of cities and their inhabitants; everyone is invited to contribute through public consultation. In this way, the Urban Agenda for the EU offers a unique way to bring Europe closer to its citizens.

The Urban Agenda for the EU remains fully committed to openness, transparency and improvement. As of early 2019, it is running an online stakeholder consultation to explore possible ways to improve its utility and effectiveness. All stakeholders are invited to contribute [online](#).

## Addressing new urban challenges

Two years after the Pact was established, Member States, cities, the European Commission and other relevant stakeholders decided to create two new partnerships: Security in public spaces and Culture/cultural heritage. These two topics are highly relevant in the urban development context.

The challenges, with regard to security in public spaces, are many. They include access to good quality and non-segregated basic services (such as education, health and social care, and law enforcement), societal resilience and community empowerment and enhancing the protection of buildings and infrastructure. Urban authorities, who are familiar with local challenges, are amongst the most important players when it comes to ensuring that actual and perceived security issues are addressed.

Culture and cultural heritage are vital assets for regional competitiveness and social cohesion and help to shape the identity of cities and regions. Furthermore, cultural participation has a significant impact on residents' quality of life, contributing to their wellbeing and sense of belonging. Cities are perceived as laboratories of cultural innovation; they play a key role in enabling citizens and communities to benefit from culture and cultural heritage, while simultaneously mobilising stakeholders and authorities to act in support.

## Evolving over time

Now three years on, implementation is well underway. Twelve of the 14 partnerships have launched an action plan, through which (to date) 114 distinct actions are under implementation. Each individual action aims to solve urban problems and to contribute to the evolving policy landscape across Europe. Each action has a specific

output. This may be a policy toolkit to assist urban policy actors in better managing social and affordable housing in Europe (an action by the Housing Partnership), a legal handbook on innovative public procurement (an action by the Public Procurement Partnership), or making microfinance more available to migrants and refugees (an action by the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees Partnership).

## Maintaining political momentum

Following the Pact of Amsterdam and the Council Conclusions (2016), the call to more effectively involve cities in national and EU policy-making continued. The [report from the European Commission to the Council of the EU](#) on the Urban Agenda for the EU, the [resolution of the European Parliament on the 'role of cities in the institutional framework of the Union'](#), the [Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on 'implementation assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU'](#), and the [EUROCITIES statement 'EU partners delivering added value for citizens'](#) demonstrate commitment from all levels.

During the Romanian Presidency, the Urban Agenda for the EU has been reinforced by the [Bucharest Declaration](#) supported by all levels of government and other stakeholders. The incoming German Presidency has announced that it will renew the [2007 Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities](#) to redefine the principles of sustainable urban development in light of current frameworks and challenges. The experiences of Urban Agenda partnerships with multi-level urban governance, co-creation of policies and citizen participation will be drawn upon to contribute to this renewed Leipzig Charter, to be presented in the second half of 2020. In the European Commission's legislative proposal for the future Cohesion Policy, support to the Urban Agenda is included in the [European Urban Initiative](#).

## Achievements of the Urban Agenda for the EU

The following pages in this brochure highlight the diversity and variety of actions and achievements so far. Over the following chapters the role of the Urban Agenda for the EU in building innovative and good governance, working in a more integrated way to addressing cross-cutting issues, and in implementing the UN New Urban Agenda are highlighted. This is followed by a range of 'action stories' and examples of actions supporting better regulation, better funding and better knowledge. The reader will be taken through the multiple programmes and initiatives addressing sustainable urban development.

## OBJECTIVES

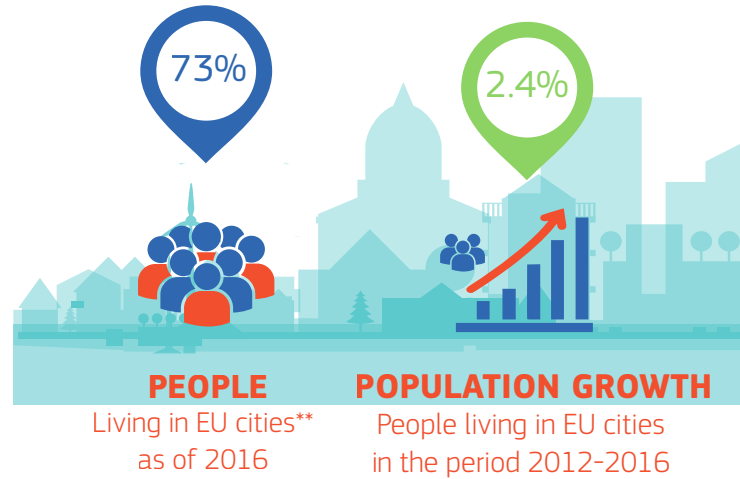


- BETTER KNOWLEDGE
- BETTER FUNDING
- BETTER REGULATION

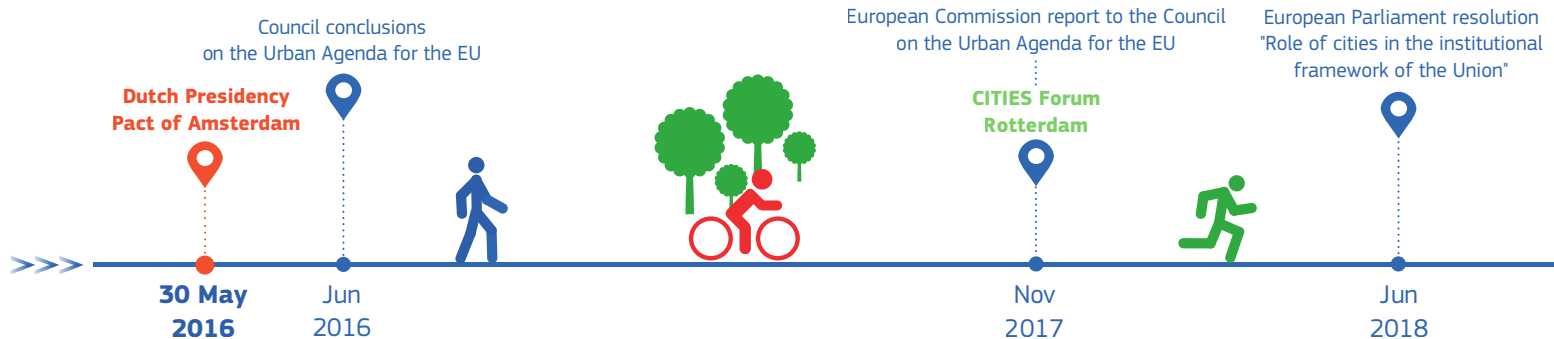
# URBAN AGENDA

*“MOST EU POLICIES HAVE AN URBAN DIMENSION. LET’S WORK WITH CITIES!”*

Corina Crețu  
European Commissioner for Regional Policy



## TIMELINE



## AMSTERDAM PARTNERSHIPS

## BRATISLAVA PARTNERSHIPS

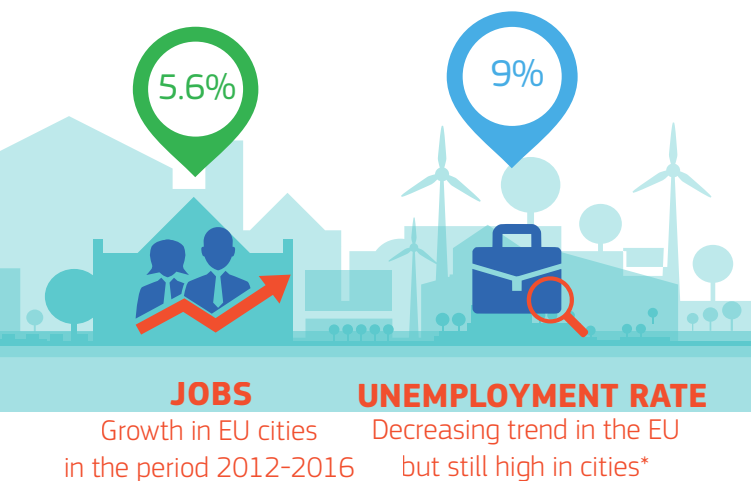
## MALTA PARTNERSHIPS





# WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER CITIES

## A FOR THE EU



### 14 PRIORITY THEMES

#### AMSTERDAM PARTNERSHIPS

- URBAN POVERTY
- INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS REFUGEES
- AIR QUALITY
- HOUSING

#### BRATISLAVA PARTNERSHIPS

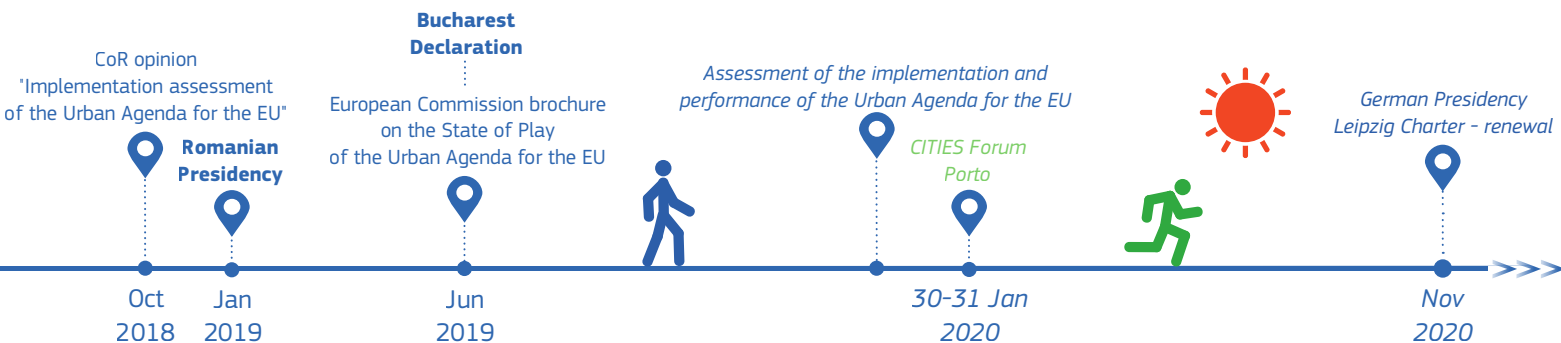
- DIGITAL TRANSITION
- URBAN MOBILITY
- JOBS SKILLS IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY
- CIRCULAR ECONOMY

#### MALTA PARTNERSHIPS

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF LAND
- CLIMATE ADAPTATION
- PUBLIC PROCUREMENT
- ENERGY TRANSITION

#### VIENNA PARTNERSHIPS

- CULTURE/CULTURAL HERITAGE
- SECURITY IN PUBLIC SPACES

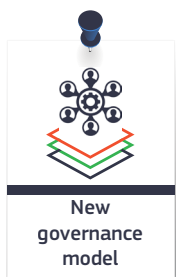


### PARTNERSHIPS

#### VIENNA PARTNERSHIPS

\*Data source: EUROSTAT, Elaboration: JRC  
\*\* Cities cover cities, towns and suburbs

# The Urban Agenda for the EU promotes innovative and good governance



## Inspiring urban governance

The Urban Agenda for the EU promotes innovative and good governance, which is reflected at the level of coordination structures and policies in Member States and regions. Some Member States have

been inspired by the Urban Agenda for the EU and applied similar approaches at national and/or regional level. This was the case in Poland, Italy and in the Basque region in Spain, to take three examples.

### Poland: The Partnership Initiative of Cities and the national collaboration agreement

In Poland, new approaches to cooperating on urban issues were initiated through the adoption of its National Urban Policy in 2015. Later, in 2017, the Polish Ministry of Investment and Economic Development launched the Strategy for Responsible Development, which comprises several instruments dedicated to cities. One of them is the Partnership Initiative of Cities. Three pilot networks on air quality, mobility and urban regeneration – inspired by the Urban Agenda for the EU – are essential to this initiative. This was strongly related to the fact that Polish partners are active in twelve partnerships.

The Partnership Initiative of Cities uses a combination of the working processes of the Urban Agenda for the EU, and those of URBACT. Inspired by URBACT, 34 municipalities with their local stakeholders regularly come together at the national level to explore ideas and projects to put in place. There are two kinds of meetings: individual pilot network meetings, and meetings bringing together the three pilot networks to explore synergies and to ensure a more

integrated approach to local design. The activities of the pilot networks are twofold; each of the 34 cities describe potential actions, and each of the three networks elaborates recommendations to national ministries on specific policy areas (in a manner comparable to partnerships under the Urban Agenda for the EU). This working process allows the better sharing and understanding of ideas and actions amongst Polish cities and thus leads to a more inclusive decision-making system.

Polish urban governance has seen further innovations. A national collaboration agreement was signed at the first National Urban Forum in Krakow on 1 April 2019 by representatives of several Polish ministries, regional governments, cities and their associations and scientific communities involved in urban development. The agreement aims to foster the implementation of the Polish National Urban Policy whilst promoting actions in the field of sustainable urban development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Polish Ministry of Enterprise and Technology coordinates implementation of the SDGs, alongside the Strategy for Responsible Development, ensuring consistency of national priorities with global challenges and objectives. Besides this, Poland is implementing the New Urban Agenda through concrete actions, such as the Clean Air Programme, the Package for Medium-Sized Cities, and the Human Smart Cities Programme.

### Italy: Enthusiasm leads to new national networks

Italy has the highest number of cities involved in the Urban Agenda for the EU. The Italian Agency for Territorial Cohesion works with large and small cities to jointly implementing this initiative. The Agency supports the application of smart city strategies in metropolitan ag-

glomerations primarily through the National Operational Programme Metropolitan Cities (PON METRO). Smart solutions rolled out in bigger urban areas, and the experiences of smaller cities via regional programmes and within the Urban Agenda for EU, are mutually supportive.

Within PON METRO a Technical Secretariat coordinates a national network of cities of all sizes and several national ministries and agencies. This network aims to combine learning experiences across various plans and programmes in Italy. Capitalising on the knowledge of the partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU is another key task. The network is open to Italian cities active in the partnerships as well as those not involved in the Urban Agenda for the EU.

### The Basque Region in Spain: **Integrated policies as a road to success**

The urban agenda of the Basque Region in Spain is a good example of an approach to urban policies that has become increasingly integrated along the way. While an earlier strategy targeting the year 2025 focussed on sustainable construction, the BULTZATU 2050 roadmap provides a holistic and integrated regional urban agenda.

The same development can be observed for the Hábitat Urbano pilot group, which has brought together some 40 stakeholders from the public and private sectors since 2015. The responsible entities, led by the Basque Department of the Environment, Territorial Planning and Housing, became increasingly aware that the Urban Habitat concept should follow a truly transversal and cross-cutting approach and decided to broaden the thematic scope of the group. Hence, the Hábitat Urbano pilot group expanded the sustainability concept to incorporate themes such as digitalisation, health, culture and cultural heritage, employability, gender, aging, mobility, energy transition, trade and education.

The involvement of the Basque Region in both the Urban Agenda for the EU and the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations has been a key catalyst for this development.

## Enhancing cooperation between urban research and practice

Another important spinoff effect of the Urban Agenda for the EU is an enhanced cooperation between urban research and practice. The [Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe](#) has modelled its new Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2.0 on the Urban Agenda for the



### Urban Innovative Actions

[Urban Innovative Actions](#) is the name of an initiative under Cohesion Policy, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund. Its mission is to identify and test new innovative solutions, and in doing so, to support urban authorities in their efforts to achieve sustainable urban development. It is rooted in a strong commitment at European level to strengthen the urban dimension of EU policies. Urban Innovative Actions contribute to the Urban Agenda for the EU, as the initiative is thematically aligned with the Urban Agenda-related topics identified. In this way Urban Innovative Actions provides urban authorities with the opportunity to test new ideas and solutions, fostering a genuine bottom-up thematic approach. The knowledge generated by cities involved in Urban Innovative Actions will be available to practitioners and policy-makers in Europe and beyond. It will also be used to feed into the work of Partnerships in the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU.



For about 15 years, the [URBACT programme](#) has been the European Territorial Cooperation programme aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. It is an instrument of Cohesion Policy, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the 28 Member States, Norway and Switzerland. URBACT's mission is to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges by networking, learning from experience, and identifying good practice to improve urban policy. URBACT actively contributes to the Urban Agenda for the EU by having URBACT cities or experts in all partnerships and by linking the outcomes of URBACT projects and capitalisation activities to the partnerships. URBACT also directly tackles many of the cross-cutting issues identified in the Pact of Amsterdam, such as exploring integrated approaches, opportunities for smaller cities, and gender equality. Well-developed URBACT methods are also proving valuable in the implementation of strategic and integrated urban development, in Cohesion Policy and beyond.

EU priority themes. Several calls for proposals within the [Horizon 2020](#) programme explicitly refer to the Urban Agenda for the EU. The European Commission continues





to develop its efforts in urban research, as evidenced by its recent [‘Future of Cities Report’](#), the establishment of an [Urban Data Platform](#) and a [Community of Practice](#) bringing together policy-makers and researchers. Although research on urban issues is well developed, potential solutions are not always put into practice. Urban Innovative Actions offer cities the possibility to test new innovative solutions, and in doing so, fostering a genuine bottom-up approach. In addition, URBACT supports good practice and assists cities in adopting proven urban development solutions.

## Making more effective use of EU funding

Many partnerships are developing actions to make it easier for cities to access EU funding, some of which are further explained in the chapter [‘Actions of the Urban Agenda for the EU in motion’](#). Guidelines have been developed for the next round of EU funding programmes, to help the European Commission and Member States to mobilise funding towards a more integrated approach in cities.

Some ideas are coming from Urban Innovative Actions, URBACT and cities implementing the European Regional Development Fund. An effort has been made to embed these solutions and ideas in the work of the partnerships.

Some cities managed to participate in European programmes (Urban Innovative Actions, URBACT, 5% of the European Regional Development Fund dedicated to cities) as well as the Urban Agenda for the EU. They are engaged in generating plans and actions which embody the main principles of Cohesion Policy: governance based on partnerships, multi-level governance and an integrated place-based approach.

Read more about how Lisbon, Barcelona and [Rotterdam](#) benefitted from European programmes and how they aligned them with the Urban Agenda for the EU. Check out how [Turin](#) (urban poverty) and [Bologna](#) (inclusion of migrants and refugees) moved from URBACT to a successful Urban Innovative Action project. Look into the cases of [Maribor](#) (circular economy) and [Cluj-Napoca](#) (jobs and skills in the local economy) embedding their Urban Innovative Action in the work of their partnership. [Lodz](#) and [Timisoara](#) (urban poverty), [Zagreb](#) (sustainable use of land) and [Alba Iulia](#) (culture and cultural heritage) are sharing their URBACT experiences with the other partnership members.

The effort to **fight urban poverty and deprivation** at European level is not new to our shared stance on social welfare, but poverty has increased in many cities across Europe as a result of public investment cuts and the economic crisis of the past decade. Similar efforts are also being made at the European level, not only with the Urban Agenda partnership focusing on Urban Poverty, but also with other related partnerships such as Affordable Housing and Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees. Furthermore, investments via the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund are supporting projects that seek to address urban deprivation and social exclusion. In parallel with these EU funds, national programmes are addressing urban poverty. Many such instruments are concentrated in cities. Here too, city administrations play a key role in developing integrated strategies to address such exclusion and poverty problems.

Lisbon developed a strategy for areas of priority intervention. This strategy provides a range of integrated tools – a map, a grant, a task force and the [Community-Led Local Development tool](#) (supported by Cohesion Policy) – to be used and adapted in order to empower local communities and enhance quality of life for citizens.

As part of the strategy, Lisbon **established local structures for co-governance**, centred in neighbourhoods (local offices) and consisting of municipality coordinator and an executive committee comprising local stakeholders in the urban regeneration process. Local authorities, associations and other actors have also been engaged. This co-governance structure allows the municipality to implement decision-making at the local level and engage local actors. This approach is being transferred through an URBACT network called [‘Com. Unity.Lab’](#) to other cities in Europe.



Community-led local development in neighbourhoods  
Source: URBACT

**Barcelona** implements a project supported by Cohesion Policy Urban Innovative Actions, through which school playgrounds will be transformed into climate shelters and opened to the wider public (outside school hours). In addition to traditional solutions to combat heat in school playgrounds, a recreational refreshment point will be created along with new green spaces.



Schools' playgrounds open to a wider public  
Source: Urban Innovative Actions

The city of **Barcelona** is also contributing to tackling climate change under the Urban Agenda Partnership on Climate adaptation. Barcelona is leading an action to better enable municipalities to implement climate adaptation measures by utilising support from the European Structural and Investment Funds. Calls for proposals under the European Structural and Investment Funds are often complex, and the action is dedicated to developing recommendations for future Operational Programmes.

Alongside infrastructure interventions, parallel processes will be implemented in cooperation with school communities to raise awareness of climate change. Several activities will be kick-started, including for example an educational project that includes teacher training as well as the involvement of students and school professionals in the health impact assessment.

**“It’s absolutely urgent for the future and for the sustainability of cities that there really is an initiative shared by everyone in the fight against climate change.”**

*Janet Sanz, Vice-Mayor for Ecology, Barcelona City Hall*

The issue of **job creation** is one of the top priorities for the EU, Member States, cities and citizens. Cities have a key role to play in creating and supporting the right conditions for innovative investment that leads to more and better jobs for their citizens.

The city of **Rotterdam** has set-up an integrated territorial investment (ITI), financed by the European Regional Development Fund. Its aim is to **connect neighbourhoods suffering from high unemployment with areas of the city offering job opportunities, investing in research and innovation, and the low carbon economy.**

The ongoing transformation of Rotterdam’s economy has already started to influence the skills that are required from the workforce. Unprecedented new economic opportunities and challenges will drastically change needs of the labour market, and therefore, qualification and skill gaps are expected to grow significantly. This issue is especially relevant to young people in deprived areas.



Aligning young people’s educational choices with future labour market needs  
Source: City of Rotterdam; Photo: Claire Droppert

These challenges are reflected in the [Urban Innovative Actions project, BRIDGE](#), led by Rotterdam. Rotterdam tackles the urban challenge of better aligning young peoples’ educational choices with future labour market needs. This is delivered through a career and talent orientation programme that covers children from primary school age (nine years) to student entry into the labour market.

Rotterdam, which is one of the coordinators of the Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy Partnership under the Urban Agenda for the EU, connects the dots by linking their innovative solutions (Urban Innovative Actions) and their experience with the integrated territorial investment (ITI) to the partnership, inspiring many other cities.

Both in UIA and UAEU, Rotterdam is engaged to generate plans and actions grounded on one of the main principles of the new Cohesion Policy for 2021-2027 about effective governance based on partnership,



Job opportunities investing in Research and Innovation  
Source: City of Rotterdam; Photo: Claire Droppert

multi-level governance and an integrated place-based approach. At the programme level, URBACT has examined the changing EU context for cities in relation to jobs and skills as well. This work has drawn on the experiences of cities and has been informed by good practice across Europe.

“This financial support from Europe is a fantastic acknowledgement for innovative career guidance developed by mentors, deans, teachers and employers for the pupils on in Rotterdam South. This is a huge impulse enabling us to do even more for the young people in Rotterdam South.”

*Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor of Rotterdam*

## Working on an equal footing in the partnerships

Working on an equal footing with all stakeholders (in other words, avoiding a strong organisational hierarchy) facilitates new possibilities for cities to work directly with the European Commission, Member States and other actors.

“Where in the beginning we were knocking on everybody’s doors, now, if we sit here, people come knocking on our doors. ‘We have problems with implementation, can we work with you? Can you get a group of cities together?’ This would not have happened ten years ago.”

*Dorthe Nielson, EUROCITIES*

This has been also acknowledged by Nicolaas Beets, the Special Urban Envoy of the Netherlands:

“It makes a big difference whether you are talking to the European Commission from a lobby position, or from a creative opportunity to think of solutions that can help improve the situation of cities within Europe.”

And by Jan Olbrycht, Member of the European Parliament and President of the URBAN Intergroup

“The Urban Agenda for the EU is a new model of multi-level governance. The role of local authorities has been strengthened as they participate in the work of different partnerships on an equal footing with other partners. They can share their opinion on the review of existing legislation and reflect on the future shape of national and EU policies.”

The European Commission has reinforced urban policy coordination and applies the Urban Agenda for the EU as the ‘umbrella’ for its urban policy initiatives. This has increased cooperation and coordination between the respective DGs of the European Commission.

“Until now, cities were not sufficiently involved in the design of our policies and not well mobilised for their delivery; for example, for the use of EU funds. Thanks to the Urban Agenda for the EU, this will change. We can make our policies more effective, more efficient and implemented at a lower cost.”

*Corina Crețu, Commissioner for Regional Policy*



## The European Commission contributing to sustainable urban development

The European Commission Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) facilitates the overall process of the Urban Agenda for the EU by bringing EU policy expertise to partnerships meetings, and by providing (together with the European Parliament) permanent funding for a secretariat for the partnerships and maintaining communication activities with all interested parties.

The Urban Agenda for the EU is fully embedded in work across European Commission services and it constitutes the common frame for urban policy initiatives launched by the European Commission. This is particularly the case for [Cohesion Policy \(e.g. URBACT, Urban Innovative Actions\)](#), the [European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities](#), the [Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe](#), [Horizon 2020](#), the [Covenant of Mayors](#), the [Urban data platform](#), the [Community of Practice for Cities](#) and for the international commitments (the [New Urban Agenda](#) and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#)).

The European Commission has reinforced urban policy coordination to ensure better coherence in EU policy, to establish complementarities, and to build on synergies. In particular, coordination takes place at both policy and operational level, through the inter-service group dedicated to urban matters, which coordinates EU policy developments and is led by DG REGIO (but involves all pertinent Commission services). For example, partnership action plans are discussed and followed up in this inter-service group.

To reach out and help cities to better address challenges, as well as to assist them in making the most of EU funding opportunities, the European Commission launched the web portal [One Stop Shop for Cities in 2016](#). This city-centred information hub also provides an entry point to other EU policies with an urban dimension. In addition, [URBIS](#) provides tailor-made advisory services to cities to prepare and access urban investment programmes available at the European Investment Bank.

The European Commission – together with the European Spatial Observatory Network ([ESPON](#)) – has also developed a territorial impact assessment ‘Urban proofing’ and related methodologies have been integrated into the Better Regulation guidelines of the European Commission, which were approved in 2015.

To ensure the future liveability of European cities, Cohesion Policy invests in integrated sustainable urban development, supports participatory approaches and provides support to capacity building and experimentation. The urban dimension of Cohesion Policy fosters intergovernmental collaboration under the Urban Agenda for the EU and is connected to global agendas and challenges through its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda.

Every two years, a major European event – the [Cities Forum](#) – is organised by the European Commission, bringing together all relevant urban stakeholders.

## Shaping EU policies towards a place-based approach

Sustainable urban development solutions should not be limited to the physical boundaries of cities and urbanised neighbourhoods. Most urban development challenges – such as mobility and land use, for example – are felt across city regions. Energy transition challenges similarly affect rural areas, given that whilst energy is often generated outside cities (in rurally situated power plants), cities are home to concentrations of energy consumers. Such functional links between city regions and their surroundings serve as territorial ‘hinges’ between urban and territorial strategies.

This need to address both thematic challenges and territorial priorities is reflected in the [Territorial Agenda](#)

[of the EU 2020](#) promoting balanced development in the EU and a place-based approach. Regions and cities share common challenges and so debate on the post-2020 Territorial Agenda has emphasised the need for coordination with the Urban Agenda for the EU. Alignment and interlinkages are important in tackling key European issues effectively, such as demographic change, climate change, societal fragmentation, good governance and urban-rural linkages.

The linkages between the Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020, the Urban Agenda for the EU and the new Leipzig Charter, which is to be adopted under the German Council Presidency, are important, since they offer new opportunities for place-based approach policies in the EU.



# The Urban Agenda for the EU enhances integrated urban development

## Going beyond sectoral policies

The Pact of Amsterdam acknowledges that “the complexity of urban challenges requires integrating different policy aspects to avoid conflicting consequences and make interventions in cities more effective”.

As each partnership deals with a specific theme and proposes actions and recommendations within that thematic field, the partnerships are invited to consider a number of cross-cutting issues in their work. These can be thought of as principles in urban policy, such as governance across administrative borders, sound and strategic urban planning, an integrated and participatory approach, challenges and opportunities of small- and medium-sized urban areas and polycentric development, and so on.

These cross-cutting issues help to ‘connect the dots’ within and between the thematic partnerships. Cohesion Policy contributes to a shared understanding of sustainable urban development. It has invested more than EUR 17 billion across Europe through almost one thousand sustainable urban development strategies following a

place-based approach. The Cohesion Policy programmes URBACT and Urban Innovative Actions assist cities in delivering on the ground. In addition to Cohesion Policy, the actions delivered through the Urban Agenda for the EU are contributing to the integrated approach as well.

In May 2018, the European Commission presented its proposal for the new legislative framework of Cohesion Policy, continuing its strong support for sustainable urban development.

Cross-cutting issues are complex and strongly interlinked in themselves. Most cross-cutting issues are embedded in the actions developed by the various partnerships. In addition, some partnerships are addressing an issue, which is cross-cutting in itself. For example, the public procurement partnership which is addressing circular, innovative, green and social procurement. By using public procurement in a strategic manner, cities possess a powerful tool to help them reach parallel goals such as reducing emissions or creating more inclusive labour markets.

### What is behind the idea of an ‘integrated approach’?

Addressing urban challenges in an effective and inclusive manner demands policies and measures based on an understanding of their spatial, sectoral and temporal implications. Next to bringing all relevant actors together to deliver a coordinated response to an urban problem, various levels of governance need to be involved – as illustrated by the composition of the partnerships. This type of multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation is crucial as cities are responsible for the implementation of EU and national policies. Moreover, cities often face challenges that transcend their own administrative boundaries. The management of commuter flows is a case in point. On the other hand, in the absence of coordinated approaches, cities can inadvertently magnify negative consequences for their surrounding areas.





Urban Agenda for the EU – 11 Cross-cutting issues

### European Commission’s legislative proposal on Cohesion Policy beyond 2020: The New Framework at a glance

[Cohesion Policy](#) will keep on investing in all regions and the European Commission has put forward a simpler and more flexible framework to better reflect the reality on the ground.

There is a focus on five policy objectives around a (1) Smarter, (2) Greener, (3) Connected, and (4) Social Europe, and a new cross-cutting objective (5) to bring Europe closer to citizens by supporting locally developed investment strategies across the EU.

Cohesion Policy will continue to support integrated territorial and local development strategies through various tools and empower urban authorities and territorial bodies in the management of the funds, while requiring strong local partnerships with relevant stakeholders. The urban dimension of Cohesion Policy will be strengthened, with 6% of the European Regional Development Fund dedicated to sustainable urban development strategies. There is also a new [European Urban Initiative](#) to support cities to innovate, access knowledge and understand policy, and support networking and capacity building.

### Going beyond administrative borders – functional urban areas

There is an increasing mismatch between cities as administrative entities and the reality of modern urban life. The boundaries of our cities rarely cover the built-up area around a city, job or housing markets and their catchment areas, business flows and private (e.g. shopping, leisure) and public (e.g. education, culture, health) services. This applies as well to the city’s ‘ecosystem’ (air, water and energy supply, solid and sewage waste disposal) and the greenhouse gas emissions.

The urban reality is often a much wider functional area defined by flows of people, goods and services and hence it would be necessary to apply functional areas at a spatial level appropriate for effective integrated approaches to sustainable development. In functional urban areas, cooperation is based on a shared vision; on a win-win basis. This is essential for urban-suburban areas, which may be surrounded by towns experiencing specific economic difficulties and may be dependent on the core city. This is also the case for urban-rural relations.

Due to this increased mobility and interdependence, functional urban areas have become an ever more important concept for policy-makers. Solutions to many common challenges require thinking – and cooperating – beyond municipal boundaries. This is acknowledged in the



Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020 as well in the Principles on Urban Policy, recently published by the OECD.

The Urban Agenda for the EU acknowledges the importance of functional areas as a supporting concept for effective integrated approaches to sustainable development, as illustrated in some examples below.

The **Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions Partnership** developed an action to promote functional urban area cooperation as a tool to diminish urban sprawl. This is to be achieved through improved cooperation between municipalities pursuing coordinated spatial planning and appropriate financial incentive systems at the level of functional urban areas.

The partnership dealing with Urban Mobility has developed an action **integrating urban mobility policies for cities** covering their functional urban area and hinterlands. The question the partnership is working on is how to implement this in a way that respects the respective competences and responsibilities of all actors involved, while delivering results in a timely and efficient manner. The action of this partnership will collect and share examples of practical experiences with multi-level governance and partnership approaches in urban and functional urban areas across Europe.

## Including small and medium-sized cities

The public spotlight is often on the larger and more well-known cities as major focal points for urban economic development and innovation. The common assumption is that, with the potential for agglomeration and significant infrastructure investments, larger cities will always have distinct advantages over smaller cities. This approach does not, however, take into account the spatial distribution of local economies in functional urban areas clustered around smaller cities that make up the bulk of the urban settlements in Europe (OECD). In view of the growing European economy, the health and wealth of these smaller cities and their connected hinterlands should carry as much importance as the competitiveness of our larger cities.

“The European Union is for its citizens and there are at least 40% who live in small and medium-sized cities. The European Union is actually a part of all of us, so it should care about small and medium-sized cities. Especially at this moment because they have a hard time with changes in the economy.”

*Nicolas Beets, Urban Envoy of the Netherlands*



Credit: Shutterstock



The EU Action for [Smart Villages](#) (2017) is a joint initiative by the European Commission that seeks to combine actions from several policy areas relating to rural development, such as environment, regional and urban development, transport and connectivity. The aim is to improve traditional and new networks and services by means of digital technologies, innovations and better use of knowledge. Building on the experiences of [Community-led Local Development in rural areas](#), the Smart Villages initiative follows a participatory approach to develop a long-term vision and an integrated strategy aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental conditions of rural areas as well as building bridges between rural and urban areas.

To showcase practical elements of such local economies and their importance for the Urban Agenda for the EU, several actions are highlighted. Partnership themes have different implications depending on the city size but are often particularly relevant for smaller towns and municipalities. In fact, several partnership actions specifically address the challenges faced by smaller and medium-sized cities.

The **Responsible and Innovative Public Procurement Partnership** has an action on how to set up local competence centres on responsible and innovative public procurement. These centres can foster training and skills development, networking, and potentially joint purchases. Such services are especially helpful for smaller cities as they support smaller authorities in successful procurement, by pooling expertise.

Climate change is a theme that affects all cities, no matter their size. The **Climate Adaptation Partnership** proposes a **new LIFE for urban adaptation projects**. The LIFE programme is the EU funding instrument for the environment and climate action. According to the partnership, however, the programme's complexity limits access – especially for smaller municipalities or those which lack European funding expertise. The action aims to contribute to 'a new LIFE' by upscaling existing national frameworks to support cities and by suggesting concrete access improvements based on a review of LIFE's scope, conditions and application process.

The **Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy Partnership's** action Simplification 2.0 wants to help make future European Structural and Investment Funds more accessible for cities. In particular, smaller municipalities that lack the capacity and resources to take part in European initiatives could benefit from further simplification and differentiation. The **Latvian city of Jelgava** (around 60,000 inhabitants) not only co-coordinates this partnership together with Rotterdam and Romania; it also leads three of its actions.



# International commitments of the Urban Agenda for the EU

The international dimension represents an important cross-cutting issue within the Urban Agenda for the EU. Urban policies of the Member States need to collectively respond at EU level to global challenges and be in accordance with international agreements such as the [UN 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), the [New Urban Agenda](#), and the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#). Cohesion Policy also contributes significantly to their achievement, in terms of investment but also through its policy approach, involving regions and local authorities.

In 2015, the EU made a commitment to fulfil global objectives aiming for sustainable development in all places and for everyone by 2030. These are embodied in the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs, comprising many targets that relate to local competences and urban challenges. These include, for example, reducing inequalities or taking climate action. The Urban Agenda for the EU contributes to the SDG vision by directly or indirectly [providing better means for cities](#) to act and by improving the consideration of urban issues in all policies. It also delivers a vision of cities for all and sustainable urban development in accordance with the New Urban Agenda, another key document specifically highlighting the potential of cities in tackling global challenges.

At the Habitat III Conference – the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development organised in Quito in 2016 – the European Commission presented three commitments to implementing the New Urban Agenda, acting as an enabler for achieving the SDGs in relation to urbanisation challenges:

- Delivering the New Urban Agenda through the Urban Agenda for the EU;
- Developing a global and harmonised definition of cities;
- Fostering cooperation between cities in the field of sustainable urban development.

The action plans presented by the partnerships target relevant SDGs. The section that follows offers a snapshot of how the partnerships address international commitments in their action plans.



## SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries

Social inequality and socio-economic segregation are among the most complex challenges faced by towns and cities around the world. Increasing inequalities are an alarming global trend. The partnerships on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, on Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy, and on Urban Poverty are especially focussed on this goal. Ending poverty (a goal codified in SDG 1) and reducing inequalities are overarching aims informing the Urban Poverty Partnership's action plan, which focuses on child poverty, the regeneration of urban deprived areas and neighbourhoods, homelessness, and the vulnerability of Roma people.



## SDG 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Almost all actions under the Urban Agenda for the EU are linked with the targets of SDG 11. They aim to manage the rapid urbanisation and its impact on the environment, requiring multiple solutions and the participation of all levels of decision making. This is reflected in the composition of the partnerships and the thematic focus incorporating the key dimensions of SDG 11 (for example Housing or Sustainable transport). The support for balanced economic, social, and environmental growth in cities of all sizes is another common aspect linking the SDGs and the Urban Agenda for the EU. By aligning their goals with the SDGs, the Urban Agenda for the EU

partnerships translate the global development goals at other levels, bringing them closer to citizens.



### SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

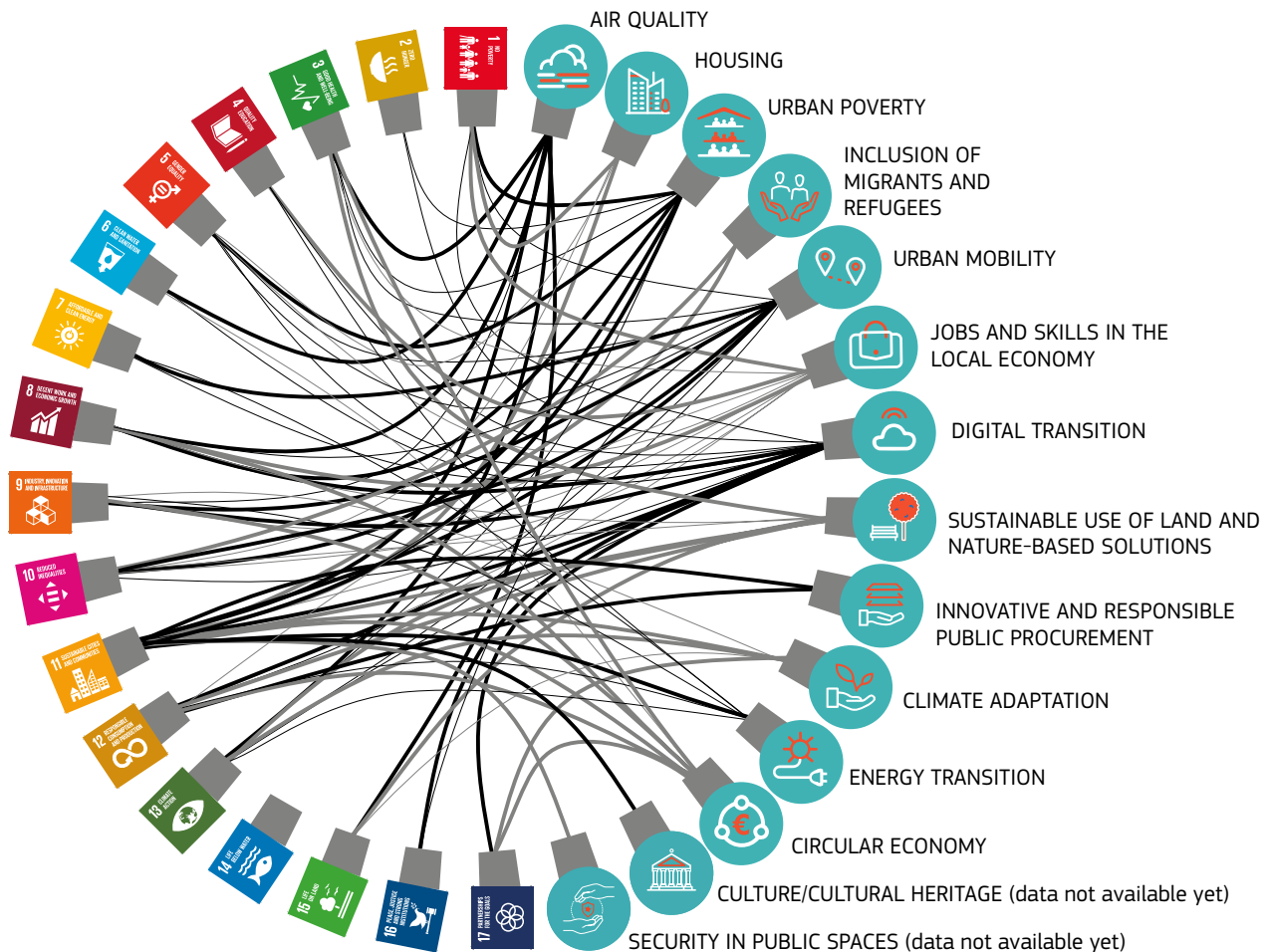
In 2017, the average temperature was 1.1 degree Celsius above that in the pre-industrial period; evidence of the strong impact that human activity has had on [global warming](#). Climate change implications represent an important cross-cutting perspective that has been tackled by several partnerships. The partnerships on Air Quality, Climate Adaptation, Energy Transition, Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions, and Urban Mobility have proposed actions that will contribute to the implementation of SDG 13 at the European level.

Two actions of the Urban Mobility Partnership propose concrete measures to sharply reduce greenhouse gas emissions stemming from transport and traffic: Scaling up innovative clean buses and Promoting sustainable and active mobility behaviour.



### Understanding the global dimension of housing: insights from the Urban Agenda for the EU Housing Partnership

According to [Eurostat statistics on housing](#), more than one in ten EU28 households spent 40% or more of their income on housing in 2016. In the same year, one sixth of the EU population lived in overcrowded dwellings, while approximately 1 person in 20 suffered from severe housing deprivation in 2016.



Linkages between Urban Agenda for the EU partnerships and Sustainable Development Goals





Adequate housing has been recognised as a basic human right globally. It goes beyond only providing shelter.

*“The right to housing does not mean that everyone is entitled to a government-provided home immediately. It means governments must ensure that everyone – particularly the most disadvantaged groups – should have access to housing that is adequate. How to accomplish the ‘right to housing?’”*

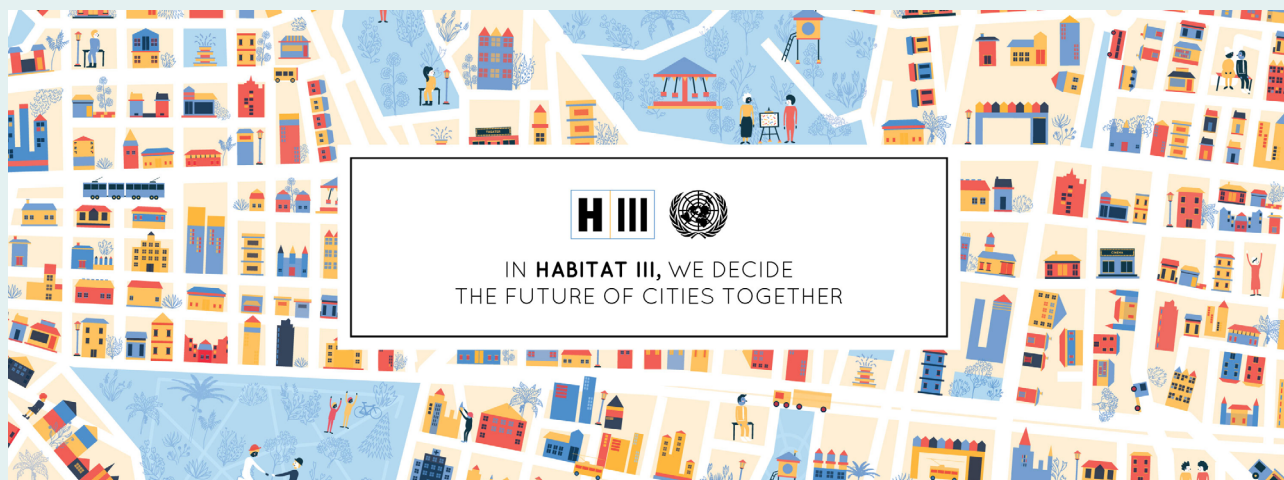
*URBACT blogpost by Laura Colini, 25 April 2019*

The Housing Partnership has been leading by example in detailing and highlighting the international dimension of its work. An ex-post analysis presented by the partnership in 2018 describes the partnership’s links with

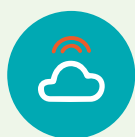
key international agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The analysis concluded that the Housing Partnership has strong potential to contribute to implementing the New Urban Agenda, for example by promoting the development of adequate and enforceable regulations and by providing policy guidance for the provision of social and affordable housing.

Several New Urban Agenda Articles have a direct link with actions put forward by the Housing Partnership. Articles 13, 14, 31, 32, 33, 105 and 107 of the New Urban Agenda emphasise the direct need for people-centric housing policies at all levels and the promotion of a wide range of affordable housing solutions.



# The Urban Agenda for the EU brings concrete solutions for its citizens



## Equipping European citizens to fully engage in the digital economy

What is it like to lack the skills and confidence to use digital technology? We live in a digital society, where smartphones, online services and digital resources enable better mobility, access to services, social connection, employability and more. These resources are central to our everyday lives and many of us take them for granted.



43% of Europeans do not have basic digital skills

But millions of people across Europe still lack the basic digital skills needed to make use of these services and resources. This can be a real barrier to their ability to find work and to make use of everyday amenities.

The Urban Agenda for the EU includes a Digital Transition Partnership. This partnership is tackling this issue by developing a neighbourhood instrument which pilots projects for access points where people can get support and training for using digital services. In addition, this action will lead to stronger civic engagement and the involvement of more citizens in the process of new service co-creation. These access points are established in places where people usually meet. The pilot cities are Helsingborg (Sweden), Oulu (Finland) and Sofia (Bulgaria).

### Being digitally included means being socially included

Digital skills and confidence are important, as you often need an email address to be able to access government services. Walking through the city of Helsingborg, you may come across a new digital access point. Here, residents and visitors can get free support and training to use

digital services. These services range from buying bus or theatre tickets, to accessing information about sport, or purchasing a parking permit.

“You made my day, now I can register and apply for an apartment, when I have an e-mail address.”

*A citizen of Helsingborg, Sweden*

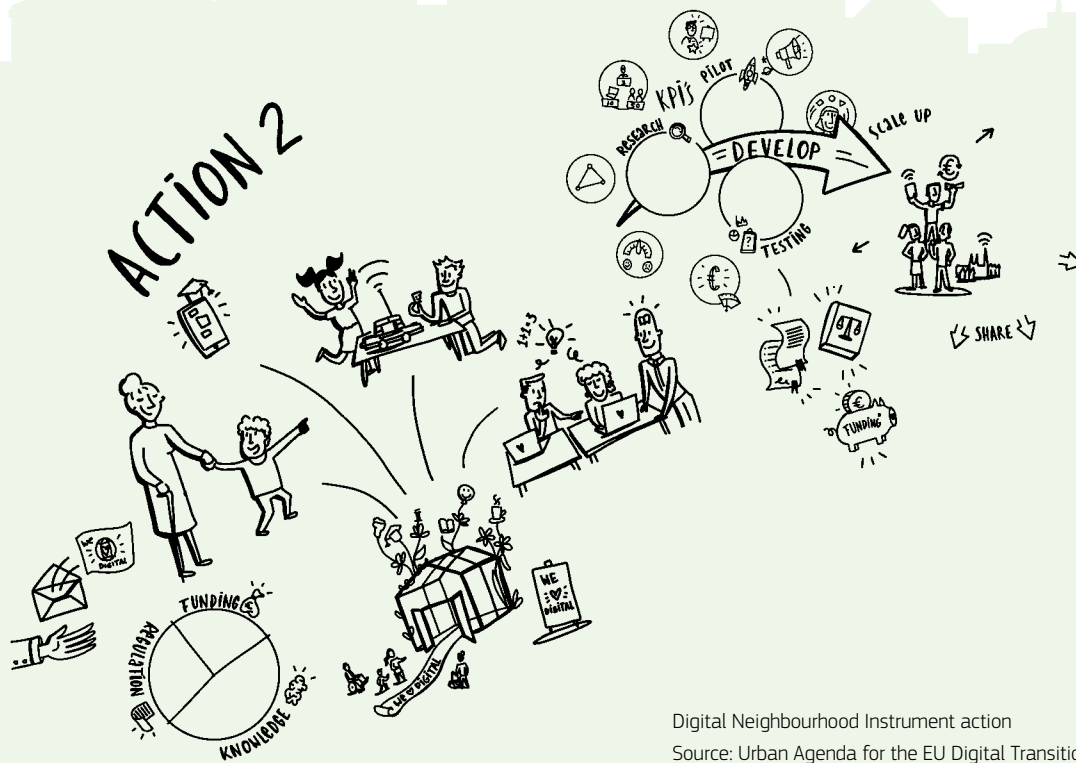
This helps to make sure that citizens are not left behind. When it comes to being digitally skilled, there is an important social element. Being digitally included means being socially included, and neighbourhood-level solutions can be the easiest for citizens.

“Being digitally included means being socially included. That is what the neighbourhood is all about. Starting in the small community, with neighbours making the first step is the way to go.”

*Eva Hveem, Helsingborg, partner city in the Digital Transition Partnership*

### Success is based on inspiring and engaging with citizens across cities

In Oulu for example, there are already over 80 digital services. As Heikki Huhmo, one of the partnership coordinators in Oulu says, “The world is digitalising faster and faster and we would like citizens to be able to participate and contribute to digital services.” Together with five other Finnish cities ([GAika](#)) Oulu is using European Regional Development Fund to create smart services for its citizens, like sharing electric cars and involving students in testing digital learning tools.



Digital Neighbourhood Instrument action  
 Source: Urban Agenda for the EU Digital Transition Partnership

Being involved as a student in developing skills to become active and engaged is something that the [URBACT project On Board](#) touches upon as well.

People sometimes need to be inspired to get involved, especially if they do not trust their abilities when it comes to digital technology. So, the service model is about inspiring and enhancing the digital skills of citizens. Services in Oulu are offered in both Finnish and English, and citizens can talk to staff to ask questions and enjoy in-person support.

### A model based on multi-level cooperation

The success of this Urban Agenda for the EU action shows that it is possible to increase the digital participation of citizens and to broaden their digital horizons. This cooperation extends to the national level as well. In 2017 EU Member States signed the Tallinn Declaration, to work to increase the readiness of European citizens and businesses to interact digitally with public administrations – strengthening the digital connection between citizen and public services.

Digital Neighbourhood Instrument is a good example of multi-level governance in action – the cities delivering on what the Member States have agreed when signing the Tallinn Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment, namely implementing the user-centricity principles for design and delivery of digital public services. The action ensures that digital services can be used by all in a non-discriminatory manner, with appropriate assistance available upon need.

### ...and aligned with European policy

This support action links in with EU efforts to build digital skills in Europe. It is also helpful for cities to know that they can make use of European funding (as in Oulu) and rely on European support at the local level:

“Since many citizens need to familiarise themselves with the new eGovernment tool, the EESC believes that Member States and their regional and local authorities should provide citizens with digital skills training and be asked to provide a digital help service or a local support service to be co-financed by EU funds.”

*European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)*

The Urban Agenda for the EU action has helped the three cities (to date) to learn and share lessons about what really works in public services. The Digital Transition Partnership also collects experiences which will be shared with other European cities.

If your city is interested to learn from this pilot action or if you would like to know more, visit the [Urban Agenda for the EU website](#) and be in contact with the partnership members.



## Re-thinking cities by reusing buildings and spaces

Walking through your city and seeing abandoned buildings can be heart-breaking, with nothing seemingly left of old glory and better times. Did you ever wonder how such underutilised spaces could be re-used and become attractive again – and how citizens can help shape this process? And what might the circular economy have to do with redesigning and re-using underutilised buildings and places?

The circular economy represents an opportunity for citizens and urban authorities to rethink their cities. In a circular vision of the city, abandoned or unused buildings are recognised as opportunities and valuable resources. They are seen as places of interaction that support their neighbourhood and allow for the re-use of existing buildings and spaces.

### Using temporary space to boost circular economy: examples from Oslo and Prato

The Vollebekk Fabrikker in Oslo is a good example of an old industrial area being redeveloped into a residential area. The centre has become a multi-functional space for developing and testing new ideas, based on the recycling and re-use of buildings and materials. The centre brings together local citizens, businesses and the public sector to develop new circular business models, based on experiences from all over Europe. A start-up entrepreneur at Vollebekk Fabrikker, Oslo, observes:

“Being part of this initiative, I got to share a lot of experience with other start-ups on the topic of circular economy. This



Refurbished business units, Prato (image: Macrolotto Zero)

initiative is supported by the local council which improves my working conditions. Finally, this space became popular very fast, welcoming many visitors interested in circular economy, so I got a free platform for publicity.”

The city of Prato, Italy, used to be a hub for the Italian textile industry. A deindustrialisation crisis left many areas and buildings abandoned. Today, many industrial buildings are being redeveloped into dynamic business units, spaces for new start-ups, innovative residential studios, laboratories, and creative hubs. Mr Valerio Barberis, Deputy Mayor of Prato, tells about the importance of this change:

“The concept of circular economy provides an extraordinary opportunity to rethink our cities. A solution is to develop innovative models for urban regeneration of spaces and buildings by reducing new land use.”

### Joining forces between partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU

The Circular Economy Partnership has developed actions to help cities and Member States drive circular economy solutions forward. The partnership has joined forces with another partnership, Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions, which also decided to identify and manage underused land. Together they aim to map underutilised buildings, assess their reusability potential, and finally to transform them. Such a new management model calls for co-creation between the urban authority and citizens.

### New model of governance: how to make abandoned buildings and spaces alive

Every city has unused buildings and spaces and it is important to make sure that new and innovative solutions can be shared across Europe. This is why the Circular Economy and Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions Partnerships believe that there is a need for a new model of governance, such as an ‘urban re-use agency’, which can act as a facilitator between existing public and private spaces and buildings ready for re-use, and the demand for private / public space. The challenge is represented by the transition from restricted urban planning management and processes toward more flexible models, in which planning and management tend toward each other, through an ever-increasing streamlining of processes. Therefore, the partnerships will develop a handbook with guidelines for cities and regions to develop strategies for the better use of abandoned buildings and spaces.





## From the side-lines into the arena - the European Migrant Advisory Board

In 2015, [over a million refugees came to the EU](#) to escape dangerous living conditions in their countries of origin. Each hoped to build a new future in a new country. But as a newcomer, it is not easy to integrate in society. Many were not allowed to choose where to live and experienced discrimination in the labour and housing markets. Many refugees ended up in cities and more than half, including doctors, teachers and engineers, did not manage to find a job.

Migrants often share the same difficulties. A partnership within the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU decided to address these issues and to improve the integration of migrants and refugees. The Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees Partnership found that experts with migrant, minority or refugee backgrounds are severely underrepresented in decision-making institutions. That needed to be changed.

### Being part of the solution rather than just identifying problems

In 2018, the partnership decided to create the European Migrant Advisory Board, composed of nine experts from different fields, all with migrant or refugee backgrounds. These experts are ambassadors of the cities and countries within the partnership. They bring the perspective of migrants and refugees in their home cities to local, national and European policy-makers. One of the board members, Ms Anila Noor, now works for the city of Amsterdam.

The board decided to conduct a survey among migrants and refugees across seven EU countries to help policy-makers understand what is really needed to improve integration. Their report, [‘Ask the People: a consultation of migrants and refugees’](#), has just been published. It found that finding a home and recognising existing skills and talents are major issues. Most migrants and refugees live in their assigned homes far away from the city centre, where most of the jobs are. Why not give them a subsidy to find a home in a place offering conditions adequate for successful integration? This topic is addressed as well in an Urban Innovative Action project, [Curing the limbo](#), led by the city of Athens (a partner within the partnership). Its aim is to provide affordable living space from the city’s available housing stock to refugees, while

in turn refugees can work to improve the quality of life in Athenian neighbourhoods. Read more about this topic in an article about [URBACT good practice](#).

Many migrants and refugees would like to learn local languages. But the quality of language classes often falls short. Local authorities should make sure that language lessons meet the necessary standards. Lowering language requirements for jobs, on the other hand, would allow migrants and refugees to integrate via work and training. One of the focus group participants in the Netherlands said: “Integration is not only about learning a language or adapting yourself to the Dutch culture, it is about getting the right economic opportunities.”

Ms Anila Noor, the board member now working for the city of Amsterdam, told the Committee of the Regions that “expectations are not understood, neither met.” According to the board’s survey, 73% of the migrants and refugees say that quality of skills assessment services for refugee and migrants is inadequate. Existing skills and talents are not recognised; migrants and refugees are forced to start their education again or work at a minimum wage. To make best use of the skills and talents, existing qualifications should be recognised.

### Participation is a right, not a gift

The board members participate in meetings with local, national and European policy-makers to convince them that there is a mutual interest in designing policies *with* migrants and refugees, instead of just *for* them. Ms Ayten Dogan, working for the Senate of Berlin, speaks positively about the board; “They taught us that it is not enough to design good programmes, we can learn from refugees and migrants, and do a better job of informing them.”

The European Migrant Advisory Board is only one of the initiatives of the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees Partnership. In the ‘To know more’ section at the end of this brochure, there are links to several videos, including Ms Anila Noor’s speech given at the 128<sup>th</sup> Plenary session of the Committee of the Regions.



The European Migrant Advisory Board in Brussels just before presenting the report ‘Ask the People: a consultation of migrants and refugees’ in Brussels, 4 March 2019. Photo: Gunnar Knechtel/Redux for the Open Society Foundations



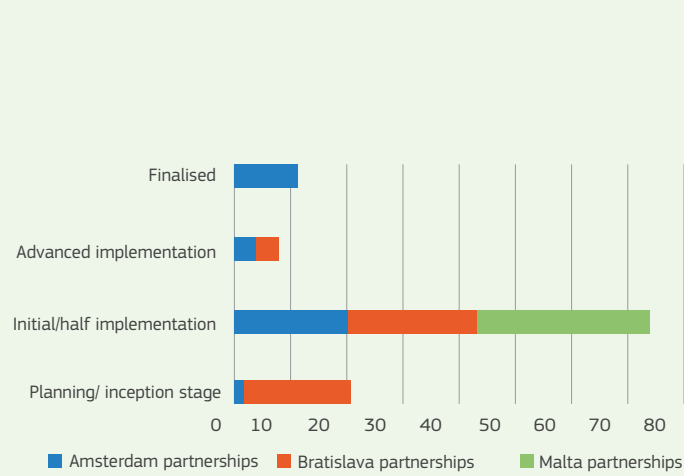
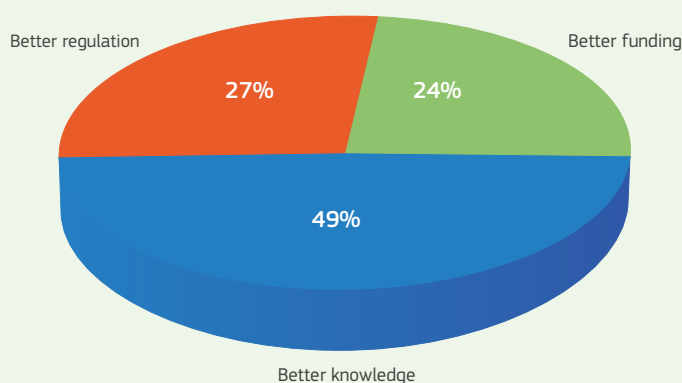
# Actions of the Urban Agenda for the EU

## in motion

This chapter provides a descriptive overview of (some of) the actions developed by the Urban Agenda for the EU partnerships. The actions show the variety and breadth of the work of the partnerships since the adoption of the Pact of Amsterdam in May 2016. The following pages highlight partnerships' achievements, shed light on which stakeholders are targeted by actions, and explore the relationships between actions leaders and the institutional levels – local, national, or EU-level – that their actions target.

### Actions per strategic objective of the Urban Agenda for the EU

Each action developed by the partnerships targets one of the three **pillars of the Urban Agenda for the EU: better regulation, better funding and better knowledge (knowledge base and exchange)**. In the chart below the actions per strategic objective are illustrated. At the moment the partnerships proposed **114 actions** which are part of action plans. The most recent partnerships have started drafting their action plans and are therefore not included in these charts.



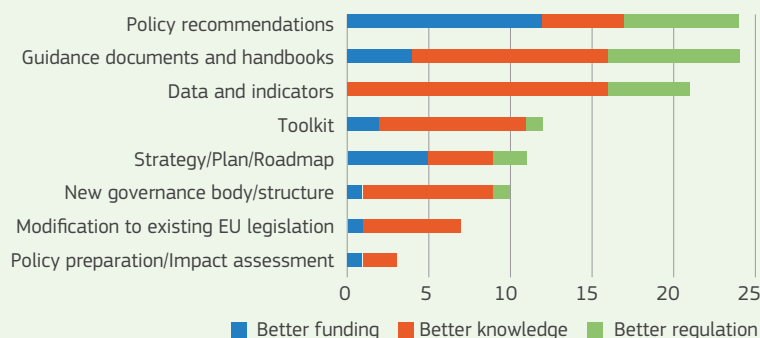
### Implementation status

The Urban Agenda for the EU is up and running! The first partnerships, launched in 2016 (the Amsterdam partnerships), are finalising their actions, whereas the Bratislava and Malta partnerships that started in 2018 are implementing their actions.

Of all the actions proposed, 11 actions are now finalised, and 21 actions are in a planning or inception stage. The remaining 82 actions are currently being implemented. Again, this only concerns the first three generations of the partnerships as shown in the implementation status chart.

## Partnerships' achievements

The actions developed cover a wide range of achievements. In the chart below, the different achievements are illustrated indicating that a majority of the actions are related to urban data and indicators, followed by policy recommendations and guidance documents/handbooks.



### Helping waste legislation to support the circular economy in cities

As soon as products or materials enter the waste stream, a set of regulatory measures apply to protect human health and the environment against harm. Where hazardous substances are concerned, regulatory measures apply. There are, however, circumstances under which the rather strict waste legislation regime is not optimised and may even be counterproductive for the circular economy. In cities, such barriers can become apparent when recycling source-separated household waste, like food waste and plastics; and when preparing re-use initiatives, such as setting up repair or second-hand shops. The Circular Economy Partnership will assess these legal and policy frameworks in order to gather more precise and comprehensive information on the regulatory obstacles and drivers for boosting the use of secondary raw materials from waste streams. The partnership will produce **policy recommendations** to adapt or complement existing frameworks in order to better facilitate the use of secondary raw materials from waste streams.

development, acting as an enabler to connect talent and all the stakeholders related with the talent supply and demand. This action will be delivered through four main initiatives. First, a Talent Observatory will be designed and conceived to provide updated and integrated information on talent supply and demand. Second, aiming at raising awareness of the need to develop career guidance through life, a Lifelong Career Guidance programme will be developed. Third, a new concept – Skills Academy – will focus on promoting skills oriented to present and future economic needs. Fourth, there will be a digital platform to successfully attract and retain talent.

The Talent Office represents an integrated approach, combining short and medium/large term solutions, all relevant actors and four initiatives that complement each other.



### Setting up a Talent Office matching talent supply and demand

The Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy Partnership has been working on several actions to support the local economy. The goal is to increase the capacity and skills of the workforce, to provide favourable preconditions for business development and to create jobs. Indeed, in the framework of a changing labour market, skills mismatch is one of the biggest issues that cities face.

In order to overcome this mismatch between demand and supply, the partnership has developed an action called 'Talent Office'. A Talent Office will be a **new governance structure**, to support and enhance talent community



### Local pact for the regeneration of urban deprived areas and neighbourhoods

The regeneration of deprived urban areas and neighbourhoods has been identified as one of the main priorities for the Urban Poverty Partnership, recognising that social and spatial factors can concentrate poverty in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. At the EU level, the partnership recommends tackling this issue through Local Pacts. Local Pacts aim to assign urban authorities a leading role in the design of their urban regeneration strategies for Deprived Urban Areas and Neighbourhoods in post-2020 Cohesion Policy. Based on a multi-level approach, it adopts a mixed place-based and people-based vision, allowing it to adopt the necessary flexibility to address the different dimensions of urban poverty through integrated strategies. The partnership has produced **policy recommendations** to tackle poverty in urban deprived areas and neighbourhoods related to the urban dimension of post-2020 Cohesion Policy.

Three Policy Labs were organised in July 2018 by the leader of this action, URBACT, to exchange experiences between four countries (France, Germany, Poland and Spain) about methods to tackle local deprivation. Detailed guidelines on how to set up a local pact are the result.



### Fostering learning and knowledge exchange about providing affordable housing in European cities

Cities, urban areas, regions and countries across the EU are in need of a stable framework of conditions to ensure that their populations can find accessible and affordable housing. A critical issue identified by the Housing Partnership concerns the systemic lack of knowledge about existing social and affordable housing solutions, which hampers learning and knowledge exchange, and limits the development and supply of social and affordable housing. To address this challenge, the partnership developed an 'Affordable housing good practice **database** on affordable housing' which gathers the best practices of the social and affordable housing sector in order to foster learning and knowledge exchange about the provision of affordable housing in European cities. The first prototype gathered a random sample of 30 projects under 9 different categories. [The link to the first prototype of the database is available online.](#)



### Improving the implementation of air quality legislation and identifying regulatory gaps in the urban environment

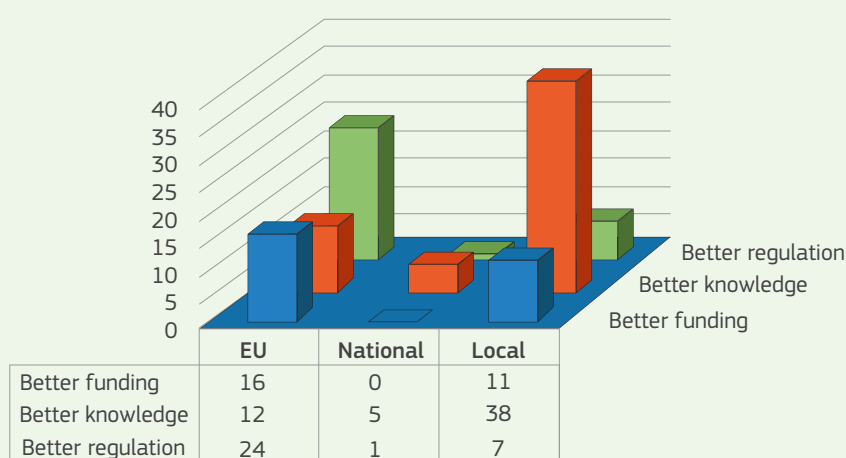
For three years, the Urban Agenda for the EU partnership on Air Quality has been working to place the healthy city higher on the EU agenda and to help realise healthy urban environments. One of the actions from this partnership – 'Identification of gaps in regulation and implementation on air pollutant emission sources' – has been carried out to help policy actors to better understand and meet the requirements of European air quality directives.

One of the outcomes of this action is a joint position paper that reviews the interaction between different regulations and the implementation of air quality legislation, including funding mechanisms and knowledge sharing. The paper was developed in response to the open public consultation for the Fitness Check on the Ambient Air Quality Directives and includes **recommendations** to improve the implementation of air quality legislation and identify regulatory gaps in the urban environment through a cooperative and integrated approach.

[The position paper Ambient Air Quality Directives is available online.](#)

## Which institutions are targeted by actions?

The Urban Agenda for the EU aims to have an impact at every institutional level, from local to EU-wide. Sharing knowledge and experience between cities is a clear focus area, as is the need to have Member States that inform and involve their cities directly within national and EU policy-making. And the EU level is also affected, demonstrating that the Urban Agenda for the EU targets EU-level policy change and is ambitious in its scope.





### Adoption of a European Child Guarantee

The Urban Poverty Partnership supports an initiative to address the lack of political and financial investment in children and young people **at EU level**: the 'Child Guarantee'. The Child Guarantee is the future cornerstone of the fight against poverty in Europe. It is the tool to realise concrete investments that benefit children and young people in Europe, and particularly the most disadvantaged. This is why the partnership invests time in keeping conversations about the Child Guarantee going. By doing so, the partnership contributes to closing the inequality gap, affording equal opportunities to children, and ultimately fighting poverty for the benefit of all of European society.

"If investing in adults and young people to improve their chances in the labour market is smart, then investing in children to close the gap before they are ready to enter the labour market is even smarter."

*Partnership action plan*

The Child Guarantee aims to invest in Pillars 2 and 3 of the European Commission recommendation Investing in Children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage. The action also includes measures to make better use of current EU instruments.

In 2018, the European Commission commissioned a feasibility study on a Child Guarantee for Vulnerable Children. [The Terms of Reference for this study are available online.](#)



### Define a set of common indicators of net land take that takes into account urban greening and re-naturalisation processes

The Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions Partnership aims to ensure that changes in urban areas (expansion, contraction and regeneration) respect the environment and improve quality of life. At present, no clear measurement of net land take has been developed and definitions of net land take provided at EU level do not frequently adhere to those adopted in national and regional urban planning laws. This action aims to define a set of common indicators of net land take that accounts for urban greening and re-naturalisation processes, as well as soil (de)sealing at various spatial levels. This

would provide a common reference **indicator for Member States and for the European Commission** in assessing the environmental impact of spatial plans and decisions and for setting reasonable targets for net land take.

Under this action, a public workshop/conference is being planned for later in 2019 that will bring together land take data experts, Member States, partners and other interested stakeholders. The outcomes of the conference will feed into and help to define the final indicator outputs of the action.



### Urban Mobility: Reinforcing multi-level cooperation and governance.

The Urban Mobility Partnership seeks to facilitate more sustainable and efficient urban mobility across Europe at **all levels of governance**. Developing and implementing comprehensive and integrated urban mobility policies for towns and cities, which cover the functional urban area and hinterland connections, requires close cooperation between different levels of government and across administrative boundaries.

This action will help to support better knowledge amongst urban planners, policy-makers and stakeholders. The partners are working together to collect and share examples of partnership-based approaches to mobility issues with a high degree of horizontal and vertical integration. The urban mobility observatory [Eltis](#) is another interesting source of information on this topic.



### Better focus on the protection and on the improvement of citizens' health

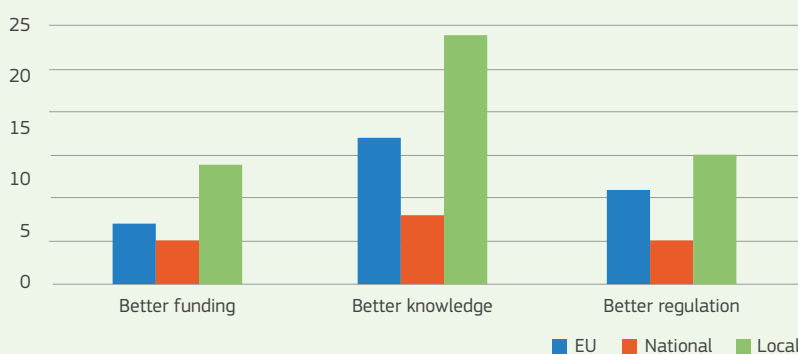
Air quality is a major determining environmental factor for quality of life in cities. An action developed by the Air Quality Partnership has produced a health impact assessment tool to measure the health gains and costs of urban planning measures. It thus aims to **help policy-makers and practitioners on local level** in their decision-making processes through the better understanding of pollution health impacts.

This new tool has been developed in the form of a downloadable Excel spreadsheet, in which data (such as urban population and concentrations of atmospheric pollutants) can be inserted to [conduct a health impact assessment analysis](#). The tool is supported by user-friendly step-by-step instructions and a background document report.

## Which institutions are leading actions of partnerships?

### The institutional levels of action leaders

Participation in multi-level governance is a key aspect of the Urban Agenda for the EU. Across all three pillars, the local level is most commonly involved in leading actions. This chart illustrates the extent of action leader involvement, from EU-level institutions (the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, etc.) to the national and local levels.



#### Digital Skills Map: online repository with good practices on digital skills development

In 2016, the European Commission adopted the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#) aimed at making the right training, skills and support available to people in the EU. However, there is a need to better include the local level in the New Skills Agenda and to create mechanisms to exchange ideas, projects and good practices. To ensure and facilitate knowledge sharing, the Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy Partnership has developed an action to create an online repository of good practices. **Led by the city of Berlin**, this action aims to establish a permanent mechanism to ensure that best practice, notably related to digital competences in vocational education and training and further education, is widely shared, recorded and further developed.

The Digital Skills Map will be launched in the summer of 2019.



#### Political training on climate adaptation

All cities and urban areas face the challenge of adapting to and mitigating the impacts of a changing climate. Climate adaptation measures sometimes require substantial up-front investment that can only be secured if there is sufficient political knowledge of this issue, and commitment. Where the commitment exists, there is sometimes a lack of political coordination when it comes to implementing such measures at the city level.

The Climate Adaptation Partnership launched an action **led by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)** that targets this issue and will provide political training on climate adaptation to local politicians in 2019. The training will be closely aligned with the [EU Adaptation strategy](#), which aims to make Europe more climate-resilient. The aim of this action will be to support local politicians to be able to better implement concrete adaptation measures in their cities.



#### A funding and financing guide for brownfield redevelopment

Brownfield redevelopment in cities presents a valuable opportunity to limit land take and prevent urban sprawl. In fact, brownfield redevelopment can be a competitive alternative to greenfield development. The main problem that this action addresses is the lack of comprehensive and up-to-date information for cities regarding how best to use EU-level funding and financing, and how to leverage private investment for brownfield redevelopment. This **action is led by the national level**, in this case Luxembourg.



#### Guidance on the use of state aid support for social and affordable housing in European cities

An increasing number of European citizens find it difficult to access adequate and affordable housing. This is most pronounced in cities and urban areas, with lower income households particularly affected. Social and affordable housing waiting lists have reached historical highs and homelessness has increased markedly. However, the overall increase in housing need in Europe has not been matched with an increase in support for social

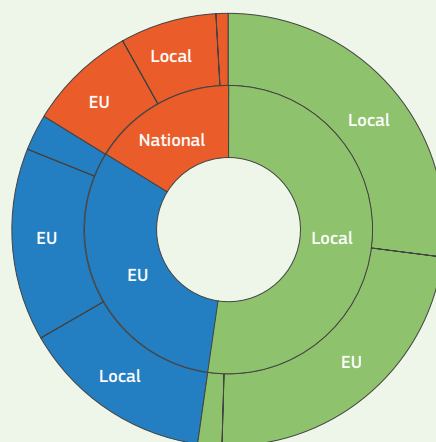


and affordable housing. The evidence shows quite the opposite: state support, especially in the form of public investment in social and affordable housing, has actually declined in the last decade. The Housing Partnership, under the **leadership of the city of Vienna** and AEDES,

the Association of Housing Corporations, has provided a [guidance paper](#) and an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by affordable housing providers with regard to EU state aid regulations, and how such challenges can be overcome.

## Action leaders and their institutional target levels

The Urban Agenda for the EU targets a wide range of urban actors. Action leaders and their institutional target levels chart combines information about action leaders and the institution levels targeted by their actions. The inner circle shows the action leaders and the outer circle shows the institutional levels that they target. The value of this chart is that it illustrates the connection between local, national and EU levels, i.e. multi-level governance and impact.



### Measuring where procurement spending goes and the impact it has (economically, socially and environmentally)

When building procurement strategies, cities need to understand where procurement spending takes place, both geographically and by industrial sector. By doing so, cities can confirm if their procurement strategy has indeed led to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and if they have used their funds on innovative (supporting new products or businesses), green or social procurement. To do this, a city needs good data on how their funds are spent. At present, it is not always clear which European data standards cities can use when collecting and processing procurement information.

The action aims to develop a common methodology **for cities** to measure their spending and the economic, social and environmental impact it has. The specific bottleneck this action addresses is the need for objective data feedback loops, which can be used to help ensure that procurement strategies in cities are accountable and evidence based. The partnership will investigate the available data standards. It will also look into methodologies for expenditure analysis for exchange of procurement data between contracting authorities. Methods for identifying wider post-procurement impacts will further be explored.

The city of Preston's experience leading the URBACT project [PROCURE](#) formed the basis for this action. Their spend analysis methodology is being transferred to six other cities as part of the [Making Spend Matter](#) URBACT network, which is currently ongoing in parallel with the partnership. Lessons learned are feeding into the partnership actions.



### Proposal for setting up a task group on financing for district energy

For many European cities and towns, one of the major zero carbon challenges is equipping buildings with sustainable heating systems. This is particularly challenging because of various building typologies, different models of ownership, and the different characteristics of the buildings. In the future, sustainable heating systems will often be developed for multiple consumers and buildings at the neighbourhood or district level. Thus, the district level is a useful and manageable scale at which citizens can be engaged.

The Energy Transition Partnership has therefore developed an action which will prepare a paper **for the attention of the European Commission** that puts forward proposals and an argument for creating a new governance body – the 'Financing for district energy' task group – led by **the city of Groningen**. The action is designed to bring

district energy and financing experts together to share experiences, collaborating to identify potential funding mechanisms and to identify the most appropriate sources of finance.



### Evaluating best practices in convenient access to public transport

Multi-modal public transport systems – such as buses, trains, trams and metro networks – can offer clean, efficient and accessible transport solutions for urban citizens. But to meet this potential, public transport must be user-friendly and convenient to access. It must incorporate a mix of ‘ingredients’, from convenient payment systems (e.g. smart ticketing) to attractive and clean spaces for passengers. Every city faces a different set of challenges in designing access to public transport. To help overcome such challenges, this action is developing recommendations to understand, on a consistent basis, how accessible public transport systems are in cities and regions. This helps to identify the impact of different best practice strategies, which in turn can optimise decision-making at all levels.

**Walk21**, an international charity dedicated to ensuring the right to walk and opportunity to enjoy it, and **UITP**, the International Association of Public Transport, is leading this action at the Europe-wide level, along with the **city of Karlsruhe**. This action **targets cities** to benchmark themselves and learn from each other.



### Helping cities develop a user-centric eGovernment model

Digital progress is transforming our economies and societies. Cities in Europe are searching for new ways to provide services for their citizens. Citizens expect services to be user-centric and delivered in a simple and transparent way. This action develops a strategy for cities to implement an e-government platform. To facilitate the implementation of the strategy the partnership will deliver an ‘open source’ toolbox with all relevant instruments available to local actors such as the Digital Service Infrastructure Building Blocks (eID, eSignature, eDelivery etc). In addition, three living labs will be organised to test the strategy and a report on the investments needed. The action is led by the **city of Eindhoven** and **primarily targets the city level**.



### Establishment of the Urban Academy on Integration

Local authorities are faced with a variety of challenges concerning the integration of migrants and refugees. However, they do not always have the necessary expertise to address these challenges. Europe is rich in terms of experiences and expertise on integration. Sharing this experience in a systematic way can help to enhance the capacity of local authorities to develop successful integration policies. To serve this purpose, the partnership established the Urban Academy on Integration. The **European Commission (DG HOME) is leading this action targeting all levels of administration**. A [first edition of the Academy](#) was organised in 2018 and a second in 2019.



### Competence building in circular/green procurement

Procedures for circular/green procurement can be difficult to understand. This is one of the reasons why circular procurement is not yet widely implemented. The difference between general public procurement and circular procurement is unclear to many buyers and their clients, managers, policy advisors and budget holders. Existing best practice is not sufficiently promoted, and there is a lack of available training and education on circular procurement for decision makers, professionals and students. The Public Procurement Partnership has therefore developed an action to address this knowledge gap.

The goal of the action is to share and unlock experience, knowledge and insights on circular/green procurement with public buyers (managers, policy advisors, budget holders, procurement professionals, etc.). **The partnership** has organised training, which has already been replicated in several cities; not only in the formal cities but also in the reference group cities. Ultimately, the main output of the action will be to equip **public buyers in local and regional authorities** across the EU with the knowledge needed to implement circular/green procurement.

## New partnerships and new priority themes



### Culture/Cultural Heritage

One of the most recently established partnerships (February 2019) focuses on culture and cultural heritage. No less than 28 partners, including 10 cities, are involved.

While cities such as Berlin and Florence are confronted with the challenges of urban growth and mass tourism, some small cities in rural areas face different economic and demographic transformation processes. The variety of experiences and between its members means that the partnership addresses a range of issues including urbanisation, gentrification, access to finance for cultural projects and heritage conservation, creation of identity, the environment, increasing mobility and growing tourism.

Mobilising citizens is central to creating and enhancing cultural heritage and common goods. The partnership is working to understand how local stakeholders can be best supported. In addition, Member States play a crucial role in promoting a multi-level approach to culture and cultural heritage. The partnership can profit from the strong expertise and existing national networks of the two coordinators, Italy and Germany, as well as those of Cyprus, France and Spain.



### Security in Public Spaces

The starting point of the recently established Security in Public Spaces Partnership is that security is a basic right for citizens. There is a significant decline in the number of Europeans who think that the EU is a secure place to live. The partnership aims to make European cities safer, and to improve citizens' perceptions of security. Through their work, the partners will identify and resolve possible tensions between security and safety measures in public spaces and the protection of freedom and privacy rights.

Defending cities against violent attacks means defending European ideals and values: freedom, democracy, tolerance, creativity, openness and inclusiveness. But this can only be done effectively when different departments, sectors, and levels work together – from police to social workers and urban planners.

“It is a quite new approach for us, but we really think it can help find new strategies with a wider vision and also provide an opportunity for local authorities to influence the decision-making process at national and European level. The multi-level and multi-stakeholder composition of the partnership is what makes it stronger than other approaches. The balanced combination of southern and northern European cities, the mix among cities, regions and Member States, and the coordinating role of the European Forum for Urban Security as a network of cities and regions give a real added value to this partnership.”

*Coordinator of the Security in  
Public Spaces Partnership*

According to the partnership, the security of citizens needs to be embedded into wider integrated urban development strategies such as urban regeneration, planning and design, smart technological developments, and prevention and inclusion. It is also in line with this integrated vision that the partnership commits to the real co-production of security with citizens: “Security in public spaces is a real current concern for our population that needs to be addressed by urban, national and European authorities.”

# Urban Agenda for the EU

## main achievements

### New Governance model

The Urban Agenda for the EU represents a new governance model, involving all levels of government and stakeholders more closely at all stages of European and national urban policy cycles.

### Urban issues are on the EU agenda

The Urban Agenda for the EU supports EU policy-makers in understanding the important role of cities

### Europe closer to citizens

Cities are the shortest link between Europe and its citizens. Through the Urban Agenda for the EU the distance between Europe and its citizens has been reduced

### Enhanced national and regional urban policy-making

The Urban Agenda for the EU inspired some Member States and regions to set up and/or strengthen their urban policy, following the principles of the Urban Agenda for the EU

### Cities are better positioned at national and EU level

Cities have an increased opportunity to be involved and have their voices heard on urban matters within national and European policy-making.

### A more integrated approach to urban development

The complexity of urban challenges requires integrating policy aspects which make interventions in cities more effective.

### Sustainable Development Goals

International urban commitments are on the agenda. The UN Habitat New Urban Agenda is delivered through the Urban Agenda for the EU.

### More cities act at EU and global level

The Urban Agenda for the EU has engaged almost 100 cities, contributing to actions addressing global, European and national urban challenges.

### Direct access to European urban data and knowledge

The European Commission has made urban data and knowledge more accessible for cities, through the one-stop-shop for cities, URBIS, the Urban Agenda for the EU website and the Urban Data Platform.

### Stronger urban dimension of Cohesion Policy

More than 5% earmarked of the total ERDF is being spent in cities to implement integrated urban strategies. The Commission proposal for post-2020 entails increased urban earmarking of 6%, a new policy objective 'Europe closer to citizens', and a European Urban Initiative.



# To know more



If you would like to know more about the **Urban Agenda for the EU**, its **partnerships**, or if you would like to get in **contact with the coordinators** or read the underlying (political) **papers**, click on the information icon and on the seven pictures on this page. They will bring you to an internet page with additional information.

- 1 If you are interested in **videos illustrating what the Urban Agenda for the EU is bringing** and more specifically what the partnerships are undertaking, click on the image to the right.
- 2 **The Commission is reaching out to cities** to help them better address urban development challenges, and to capitalise on EU funding opportunities. In 2016, the European Commission launched the web portal 'One Stop Shop for Cities'. This city-centred information hub also provides an entry point for cities to other EU policies with an urban dimension. Click on the image to the right to visit the portal.
- 3 The **urban dimension of Cohesion Policy** has been significantly strengthened in recent years. Around 115 billion euros is being spent in cities. The Urban Development Network is building capacity at the local level. Urban Innovative Actions offers cities opportunities to test innovative and creative solutions. And the URBACT programme aims to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. Click on the image to the right to know more about Cohesion Policy.
- 4 **Worldwide global initiatives and programmes on sustainable urban development** exist as well. If you are interested in the Sustainable Development Goals or in pairing with other cities in the world, click on the image to the right.
- 5 If you want to know more about important **policy and research reports and data sources on sustainable urban development**, like the State of the European Cities report, the Urban Data Platform, the Future of cities report, EUROSTAT Urban Europe (statistics on cities, towns and suburbs), and the OECD principles on urban policy, click on the image to the right.
- 6 Finally, we hope to see you at one of our events. The **Cities Forum in Porto** will take place on 30-31 January 2020. Click on the image to the right for more info on the next Cities Forum.
- 7 And do not forget to click on the image to the right to follow us on social media via **Twitter!**

