EUROCITIES FLASH
an information service for EUROCITIES members

Cooperation platform 2014

Each year we invite our contact officers – one in each of our 140 member and partner cities – to join us for an informal networking and information event.

Our contact officers connect us with politicians and experts across relevant city departments, ensuring that cities can contribute to and benefit from our forums and working groups. They play a vital role within the network and in their cities.

At the cooporation platform in Edinburgh on 15-16 May 2014, we'll be looking ahead to the European Parliament elections in May this year, and the nomination of a new European Commission in the autumn.

These changes are opportunities for us to strengthen the profile of our network and push urban issues higher up the political agenda. We'll draw on members' experiences from the last elections to explore how we can engage with new MEPs, strengthen our relationship with the MEPs that are re-elected and reach out to our urban champions.

We also want to hear about your plans to connect with your local MEPs. The discussions will feed into our broader strategy for engagement with the new institutions, to be developed by our taskforce 2014.

As usual, alongside the thematic discussions we'll update you on our policy work and bring you up to speed with our forums and projects, with plenty of time for networking too.

Join us in Edinburgh!

Vanda Knowles
Secretary general - interim, EUROCITIES

Cities essential for success of Social Investment Package

At our social affairs forum in Barcelona on 5-7 March 2014, politicians stressed the fundamental role cities play in developing and implementing social policy.

The forum, on 'Building inclusive cities within the Social Investment Package', looked at the Commission's Social Investment Package (SIP) as a roadmap for social policy through to 2020.

Speaking at the evening reception, Xavier Trias, mayor of Barcelona, said: "Cities and local government must work together to demand a more active role in shaping and delivering EU social policy."

Delegates confirmed a desire to participate more in the formulation, management, delivery and evaluation of the SIP and to establish a direct link between European cities and the European Commission to better deliver priorities at local level.

The politicians also cautioned that the SIP's success will depend largely on European cities' involvement.

Henk Kool, chair of our social affairs forum and deputy mayor of The Hague, pointed out that cities "are the first to help address social problems".

Xavier Trias described the forum as "a great opportunity to share knowledge and experiences, enable mutual learning and exchange good practice".

Pictured: politicians at the social affairs forum in Barcelona
Anna Drozd, policy advisor: anna.drozd@eurocities.eu

HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from our EU urban agenda seminar

EUROCITIES president, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, mayor of Warsaw, presented our initial position on an EU urban agenda at a side event we co-organised with the CEMR during the European Commission's urban forum on 17-18 February 2014. Our seminar was an opportunity to provide the local perspective on what an EU urban agenda should include, and how it could be implemented.

Our president said an urban agenda at EU level must be based on a practical, coherent and coordinated approach which allows cities, the EU, and national governments to work more closely together.

She suggested appointing an urban coordinator to support the European commissioner for regional and urban policy in joining up EU policies with an urban dimension. Existing methods for involving cities in EU policy developments should be reviewed to see how they can be developed further. Commissioners should make urban study visits and meetings with city mayors a standard part of their programmes when they visit member states. And the urban forum should set a precedent for biennial urban summits between the EU, national and city governments.

Speaking at the event, Johannes Hahn, commissioner for regional and urban policy, said it was the right time to discuss this issue, with EU parliamentary elections and a new European Commission just around the corner.

At an afternoon press conference, the commissioner said that DG REGIO would start preparing an action plan for an EU urban agenda.

Participants agreed that an increasingly urbanised Europe needs different levels of government to work together more closely and directly. Many participants also agreed that there is a lack of accurate data at urban level, making it difficult for policy makers to understand the performance and needs of urban areas. One recommendation was for the Commission to identify new indicators - other than GDP - to more accurately measure quality of life at urban level.

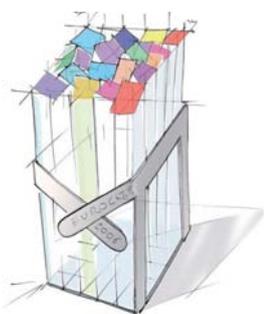Speakers at the event included Daniël Termont, mayor of Ghent; Carla Rey, deputy mayor of Venice; Michal Olszewski, deputy mayor of Warsaw; and Hella Dunger-Löper, Berlin's state secretary for European affairs.

Our taskforce 2014 will continue to develop our position on an EU urban agenda following the discussions at the urban forum.

The taskforce meets in Brussels on 31 March to discuss both the EU urban agenda and the European elections. Contact Soraya Zanardo if you would like to participate in the meeting.

Pictured: Commissioner Hahn and Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, mayor of Warsaw
Soraya Zanardo, policy researcher: soraya.zanardo@eurocities.eu
Dorthe Nielsen, senior policy advisor: dorthe.nielsen@eurocities.eu

Apply now for the 2014 EUROCITIES awards

Apply now for the chance to win one of this year's EUROCITIES awards. The awards, open to EUROCITIES members, recognise outstanding achievements in the delivery of local practices that improve quality of life for citizens.

Each year, the awards are linked to the theme of our annual conference. This year's conference, EUROCITIES 2014 Munich, on 5-7 November, focuses on energy intelligent cities.

We're inviting applications in the following three categories:

■ **cooperation** - how city authorities and other partners work together in new business models and partnerships, across city departments and city boundaries, to implement energy intelligent solutions in infrastructure and the built environment

■ **innovation** – activities or projects that showcase innovative energy efficient solutions, e.g. through decentralised energy production, smart grids and alternative fuel infrastructure or through examples of energy intelligent mobility

■ **participation** – activities or projects where cities are working together with citizens, communities and local businesses, empowering them to live, work and travel in more energy intelligent ways

The EUROCITIES awards are an opportunity to gain recognition for your city's achievements and to act as an example of best practice to cities around Europe. Last year, Brighton & Hove, Gijon and Ljubljana won awards for their 'smart citizens' initiatives.

The deadline for applications is 23 May 2014.

Call for entries: eurocities2014.eu/awards/call
2013 shortlist: bit.ly/1kC4HHR
Nicola Vatthauer, communications director: nicola.vatthauer@eurocities.eu

Staff news

Anja De Cunto, projects assistant

Anja De Cunto has joined our projects team as an assistant after completing a work experience placement in our environment forum. Before moving to Brussels, Anja worked and studied in several different European countries. She obtained her masters degree in contemporary European studies, with a focus on EU environment and energy policies, from the University of Sussex. Anja has dual nationality: Italian and Swiss.

Anja De Cunto, projects assistant: anja.decunto@eurocities.eu

Susana Forjan, Covenant of Mayors and EC-LINK

Susana Forjan will coordinate our role in the new Covenant of Mayors Office contract while project coordinator Sandra Ramos is on maternity leave until mid September. Susana will also lead on networking activities within the EC-LINK project, which aims to share experiences between European and Chinese cities on sustainable urbanisation.

Susana Forjan, project coordinator: susana.forjan@eurocities.eu

HIGHLIGHTS

155 cities apply for Mayors Challenge

Responses to the second edition of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge have exceeded the inaugural US edition, with 26% of eligible European cities applying compared to 24% in the US.

The competition is open to cities with over 100,000 inhabitants. It rewards the most innovative ideas for solving pressing urban challenges, from unemployment to improving government efficiency to better engaging with citizens. A total of €9 million in prize money is available: the grand prize winning city receives €5 million to help realise its idea, while a further four winners will receive €1 million each.

The 155 applicant cities come from 28 countries and represent more than 71 million European citizens.

Of the 155 cities, nearly half are EUROCITIES members.

Some 70% of the applicants have generated ideas to address major social or economic challenges, including energy efficiency, obesity and ageing. The remaining 30% focus on improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of local government.

Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York City, said: "These dynamic city leaders are working to find new ways to tackle some of our most pressing and common urban challenges – from youth unemployment to obesity to civic participation".

An independent panel comprising experts in innovation and urban policy is currently helping Bloomberg Philanthropies select the 20 finalists, to be announced in the spring. These will be invited to attend the Bloomberg Ideas Camp in Brussels on 29-30 April 2014 to refine and strengthen their ideas together with top policy, programme and innovation experts. They will then submit a final application by mid-summer, with the five winners to be announced in the autumn.

For more information, and a detailed breakdown of the applications, please refer to the Bloomberg Philanthropies press release below.

Pictured: Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, mayor of Warsaw; Boris Johnson, mayor of London; Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York City; Matteo Renzi, former mayor of Florence, at the launch event in London
Press release: bit.ly/Oc0oKr
Mayors Challenge: mayorschallenge.bloomberg.org
Nicola Vatthauer, communications director: nicola.vatthauer@eurocities.eu

Continuing our partnership with Cities Today

We are renewing our media partnership with Cities Today for the coming year. Launched in 2010, Cities Today is one of the leading publications on sustainable urban development. It provides analysis, case studies and features in various sectors, including transport, energy and the use of ICT in urban development.

The partnership is a chance to share ideas on tackling the issues that are affecting European cities with a global audience. As a result of our agreement in 2013, Cities Today published several opinion pieces from EUROCITIES, including a lead article in the run up to COP19 by our president, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, mayor of Warsaw, on how cities are tackling climate change.

We were also able to welcome Cities Today to our annual conference in Ghent last year. This year, our communications director, Nicola Vatthauer, is joining the editorial board of Cities Today to strengthen the partnership between our organisations.

For more information on Cities Today, visit the website below.

Cities Today: cities-today.com
Rose Montgomery, communications executive: rose.montgomery@eurocities.eu

Public Consultation on the ESPON 2020 Programme

ESPON is the European Observation Network, Territorial Development and Cohesion. It is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and member states, and has a budget of €50 million for 2014-2020.

ESPON aims to provide evidence of territorial developments in the EU to inform policy making, notably regional policy. In this context, ESPON has financed some relevant studies for cities, including the research report on 'Second tier cities and territorial development' in 2012.

ESPON will continue these activities in the new funding period and has launched a public consultation on the priorities, shape and implementation of the new programme. The consultation is based on a draft cooperation programme . The consultation is open until 2 April 2014. More information is available at the link below.

More information: bit.ly/1IyBNgq
Soraya Zanardo, policy researcher: soraya.zanardo@eurocities.eu

EUROCITIES 2014 Munich: website now live

You can now visit the EUROCITIES 2014 Munich website for the latest information on this year's annual conference. The website includes a conference programme as well as information on the EUROCITIES awards. Practical details will be added shortly, and registration will begin online in June. Keep checking for further updates!

EUROCITIES 2014 Munich: www.eurocities2014.eu
Sinéad Mullins, senior communications coordinator: sinead.mullins@eurocities.eu

Correction: annual report 2013

We would like to notify you of an error in our annual report 2013. Our business partner GDF Suez was inadvertently omitted from the members and partners page of the printed report. We have rectified the error in the online version (link below) and would like to extend our sincere apologies to GDF Suez.

Annual report 2013 & work programme 2014: bit.ly/1ggKusl

Midterm assessment of Europe 2020

The European Commission recently published its paper 'Taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy'. This followed the completion of year-long research by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) as part of a mid-term assessment of the strategy.

While the Commission paper does not draw conclusions or make recommendations, it identifies trends and rather mixed progress towards meeting the headline targets.

It specifies that: "The EU is on course to meet or to come close to its education, climate and energy targets. But given the magnitude of the crisis, we are not on track to meet our employment, research and development or poverty reduction goals, although results and forecasts vary widely across member states."

The CoR Europe 2020 platform has surveyed local and regional authorities on their progress towards each of the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives.

It also organised a series of events to discuss the findings and identify best practices to highlight progress or shortcomings.

The results of the research were published in February 2014 and add interesting findings to the Commission's paper, some of which are outlined below.

■ Some local and regional authorities have included the Europe 2020 targets in their local development plans, which has allowed them to set priorities and achieve measurable results. Others have taken a less focused approach, mainly due to financial difficulties and lack of staff to deal with the strategy at local level.

■ Progress towards the Europe 2020 targets is below expectations: gaps are widening between different European cities and regions in terms of GDP and employment, which reverses the convergence trend observed in the years preceding the global financial crisis. This is identified as a consequence of the major budget cuts undergone by cities and regions.

■ For the CoR, the weakness of the strategy is that it ignores the strengths, weaknesses and specific development opportunities of Europe's territories. In other words, it is territorially blind.

■ The CoR proposes that targets should vary between regions and cities, and that they should be set in partnership with all levels of government.

■ Concerning the European semester, it has been observed that from 2011 to 2014, efforts have focused on short term needs for fiscal consolidation rather than on the long term objectives of the strategy.

The Commission will launch a public consultation to gather proposals on how to develop the Europe 2020 strategy over the next five years. This consultation should open this spring and conclude in the autumn.

CoR Europe 2020 platform: bit.ly/1nfrBv9
Commission document : bit.ly/1g1PT1S
Soraya Zanardo, policy researcher: soraya.zanardo@eurocities.eu

WG ENP & enlargement
Barcelona | 2 April 2014

Our working group European Neighbourhood Policy & enlargement meets in Barcelona on 2 April 2014, in parallel with our knowledge society forum. Discussions will focus on smart cities, which is the working group's theme for 2014, and on the current conflict in Ukraine. Contact David Preuss to register.

David Preuss, executive assistant: david.preuss@eurocities.eu

6th European Summit of Regions and Cities

The Committee of the Regions held its 6th European Summit of Regions and Cities in Athens on 7-8 March 2014. The first day of the conference focused on securing a job-rich recovery, while the second was on the issues surrounding the forthcoming European elections. In the Greek context especially, these themes are inextricably linked. Speakers, including Greek deputy prime minister Evangelos Venizelos, said they regretted the way the economic crisis and high unemployment rates have undermined citizens' trust in their elected representatives and, even more so, in their European representatives.

Antonio Costa, mayor of Lisbon, pointed out that better use of the Europe 2020 strategy to identify common targets for local development could help improve and measure progress on issues such as youth unemployment. He stressed that local authorities are best placed to identify issues of unemployment and exclusion within their constituencies. They can also act directly on these issues, and in an integrated manner.

This point was echoed in President Barroso's keynote speech. The European Commission president urged cities and regions to make the most of a new economic cycle and use the new structural funds to invest in their territories and boost local economies. He said: "I support a stronger role of regions in planning and implementing structural funds…Regions and cities are best placed to know what the real needs of citizens are."

We displayed our 'Cities supporting inclusive entrepreneurship' and 'Cities tackling youth unemployment' publications at the event to showcase concrete examples of European cities' efforts to tackle unemployment.

Pictured: Antonio Costa, mayor of Lisbon, with Malcolm Harbour, MEP © Committee of the Regions
More information: bit.ly/NYh8Vo
Soraya Zanardo, policy researcher: soraya.zanardo@eurocities.eu

European Lab Forum: European culture refresh!
Lyon | 27-30 May 2014

European Lab Forum is an international professional forum that aims to connect people in the fields of culture, politics, economics and the media, who are working to reform entrepreneurial models and cultural policies in Europe.

The forum was launched in Lyon in 2011 by Arty Farty, a non-profit organisation that promotes independent and innovative cultural practices, and is supported by EUROCITIES member Lyon and the EU. European Lab Forum runs in parallel with Nuits Sonores, an electronic music and digital culture festival attracting some 100,000 visitors to Lyon each year.

European Lab 2014 will focus on 'Revisiting cultural policies: a new leading generation for Europe'. We are a partner, together with Culture Action Europe and UGLG – Agenda 21 for culture.

There will be a complete programme of discussions and networking activities for vice mayors in charge of culture and for city culture directors. For example:

■ in a private working session, participants will discuss current local strategies for culture, as well as new challenges for the coming years

■ a specific panel open to all forum participants will focus on 'Reinventing local cultural policies: European vice mayors in charge of culture meet today's cultural professionals', during which vice mayors will exchange views with young European professionals on innovative and dynamic approaches in the field of culture

Networking sessions and a visit to Lyon's Confluence district, a unique urban renewal project, are also on the agenda.

Please contact Julie Hervé if you would like to get involved in any of these sessions. Registrations for the European Lab 2014 are now open, and you can find the full programme at the link below.

European Lab: bit.ly/NVFnmZ
Julie Hervé, policy advisor: julie.herve@eurocities.eu

First culture forum across two cities
Belfast & Derry City | 26-29 March 2014

On the theme of 'Culture: building bridges', we will tackle the issues of improving social cohesion through culture; the power of community arts; and reaching new audiences.

Debates will focus on how arts and culture have established dialogues, built bridges, connected communities and neighbourhoods, and changed the landscapes of both Belfast and Derry City - physically and socially.

We will also explore how the sharing of diverse cultures, spaces, identities and histories has created new identities for both cities.

Registration: bit.ly/1fFwXsX
Julie Hervé, policy advisor: julie.herve@eurocities.eu

WG creative industries
Barcelona | 3-4 April 2014

Discussions will explore how Barcelona supports its creative sector, with a particular focus on the media and on design. The meeting will include a visit to the brand new Barcelona design hub; and we will also discuss how cities can and are attracting and retaining creative talents.

Registration: tinyurl.com/k9ce6no
Julie Hervé, policy advisor: julie.herve@eurocities.eu

EU funding opportunities for the cultural and creative sector

The EU has a specific programme, Creative Europe, to support the arts and cultural and creative industries.

However, there are also various funding opportunities for operators with a cultural project involving different sectors.

Other funding programmes and instruments under the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020 that can be used include Horizon 2020, COSME or Erasmus+.

The Erasmus+ programme can co-finance cultural projects with strong links to education, training and competence building.

The COSME programme aims to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of EU enterprises and SMEs and to encourage an entrepreneurial culture; it can be used by creative companies or those working in tourism, for example.

With the support of these funds, cities can make a decisive contribution to supporting the further development of the cultural and creative sectors and to strengthening their contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth.

Available at the link below, this table prepared by the European Commission presents an overview of these funding opportunities.

Funding table: bit.ly/1ltUm2F

Launching Europe's first public lighting PCP

The five ENIGMA cities (Eindhoven, Espoo, Malmo, Stavanger and Bassano) have already researched the state of public lighting in European cities and the capabilities of new lighting technologies. They are now preparing to launch an innovative pre-commercial procurement procedure.

The first step is to communicate their intentions to the lighting industry and engage in an open, constructive exchange with businesses on the public lighting systems that need to be developed. As a result of these discussions, they can adapt their ambitions and launch a call to the market.

To avoid any legal and intellectual property pitfalls that may arise when using this type of procurement, the ENIGMA project is training municipalities in PCP law on 28 March 2014 in Brussels.

The half day session is open to all interested cities, who can register at the link below.

Training information and registration: bit.ly/1i42Q0n
Denisa Naidin, project coordinator:
denisa.naidin@eurocities.eu

2014 European Enterprise Promotion Awards

The European Commission has launched the 2014 edition of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards.

These awards are designed to recognise initiatives promoting entrepreneurship and small businesses; and to share best practice on entrepreneurship policies at various governance levels.

The six categories are:

- promoting entrepreneurial spirit
- investing in skills
- improving the business environment
- supporting the internationalisation of businesses
- supporting the development of green markets and resource efficiency
- responsible and inclusive entrepreneurship.

Interested organisations must first compete at national level. By May, two finalists from each country will have been selected. A European jury will then draw up a shortlist at European level. The shortlisted applicants and all of the national finalists will be invited to the awards ceremony, which will take place during the 2014 SME Assembly in Naples on 1-3 October 2014.

For more information on how to apply, please visit the link below.

More information: bit.ly/1fi2UaE

WG branding management and city attractiveness
Genoa | 10-11 April 2014

In Genoa, members of our working group branding management and city attractiveness will focus on the role of a city's visual identity, drawing on concrete examples from Genoa, Florence and Bologna. The agenda includes plenty of opportunities for practical exchanges between members on current issues and priorities. Please let us know your current specific needs and issues on city branding and attractiveness so we can plan accordingly.

Registration: bit.ly/1ek0yFq
Julie Hervé, policy advisor: julie.herve@eurocities.eu

Seminar on Terrassa Urban System
Terrassa | 3-4 April 2014

Our working group metropolitan areas will meet in Terrassa for a seminar on the Terrassa Urban System on 3-4 April 2014.

Participants will discuss examples of collaborative territorial polycentric projects. These will include the Catalonia Innovation Triangle (CIT), presented by the city of Rubí, a member of the Terrassa Urban System.

Terrassa will also showcase its new territorial vision and will host a debate between local territorial leaders.

Registration: tinyurl.com/m67zqsy
Catalonia Innovation Triangle: bit.ly/1foOCqi
Joan Chicon & Anna Farras Sanz, Terrassa:
joan.chicon@terrassa.cat & anna.farras@terrassa.cat

2030 energy and climate framework

Environment and energy ministers discussed the European Commission's communication for a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies on 3-4 March 2014 in Brussels.

Ministers had differing views about the targets proposed for 2030. Some agreed with the Commission, or even called for stronger commitments, while others found the proposal to be too ambitious. Some member states are concerned about hindering EU competitiveness with overly ambitious targets when there is no international climate agreement. Many insisted that EU member states should share the effort of emissions reductions fairly, and that each member state's specific situation should be considered in the new framework.

The Commission presented its communication on 22 January 2014, and the European Parliament adopted its corresponding resolution on 5 February.

Both institutions suggest a 40% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

The Parliament wants to see more ambitious goals for renewable energy and energy efficiency. While the Commission proposes a 27% share of renewables in the EU energy mix for the 28 member states as a whole, MEPs call for a more constraining 30% target, with individual binding targets for each member state.

The Parliament also wants Europe to save 40% of energy compared to 2005 levels, whereas the Commission is no longer proposing an energy efficiency target.

Heads of state and government will discuss the 2030 targets at the European Council on 21-22 March 2014.

Commission proposal: bit.ly/1eyvsMB
Parliament resolution: bit.ly/MQyBhf
Council conclusions: bit.ly/1hPSMHn (environment) and
    bit.ly/P4oc3r (energy)

CASCADE learning and networking programme

More than 200 experts and decision makers from 39 European cities participated in CASCADE's one-year European peer-to-peer learning and networking programme. The programme ran from February 2013 to February 2014. It included 22 peer-to-peer learning and networking activities across the three CASCADE thematic areas: energy efficient buildings and districts; urban transport; and renewable energy generation and distribution. The 19 CASCADE partner cities worked with a further 20 cities, mainly in central and eastern Europe, for this programme: Bacau, Belfast, Bilbao, Brighton & Hove, Bratislava, Budapest, Bydgoszcz, Gdynia, Hamburg, Iasi, London Borough of Haringey, Skopje, Sliven, Rzeszow, Tallinn, Tartu, Timisoara, Tirana, Vilnius and Yerevan.

In total, there were 11 study visits, five work shadowing visits and six mentoring visits. The programme allowed city experts and decision makers to share experiences and make contact with people working on similar issues and facing similar challenges. This helped improve existing policies and projects and inspire new ones.

CASCADE: www.cascadecities.eu
Ioanna Tsalakanidou, project coordinator: ioanna.tsalakanidou@eurocities.eu

CASCADE peer advice visits

CASCADE cities are demonstrating their leadership in energy practices through peer advice visits to neighbouring cities. The visit programme, launched in November 2013, allows CASCADE cities and their neighbours to share experiences and good practices on local energy leadership. The process involves a CASCADE city visiting two neighbouring cities to give advice and support on climate change and sustainable energy projects and initiatives.

More than 36 cities in the CASCADE partner cities' countries will receive support through the peer advice visits.

CASCADE: www.cascadecities.eu
Ioanna Tsalakanidou, project coordinator: ioanna.tsalakanidou@eurocities.eu

Green energy in Budapest

EUROCITIES member Budapest features in the latest video produced by the Covenant of Mayors office.

In Budapest, there is great potential to use geothermal energy. With the support of the city authorities, an innovative partnership was established in 2011 between the Budapest zoo, the historical Szechenyi thermal bath, and the local district heating company. This partnership allows heat from the thermal waters to be recycled in order to supply warm air to 350 species of animals and 500 types of plants in the zoo. This pioneering venture has already brought benefits: heat demand is covered by a cheaper and safer energy source, reducing energy costs by a third and avoiding some 500 tonnes of CO_2.

The results of this partnership are contributing Budapest's efforts to reach its Covenant of Mayors targets of reducing 21% of CO_2 emissions by 2020.

Video: bit.ly/1fYdfWR
Covenant of Mayors: www.eumayors.eu
Susana Forjan, project coordinator: susana.forjan@eurocities.eu

Horizon 2020 info days
Brussels | 28 March 2014

DG CONNECT is hosting an information day for two Horizon 2020 calls on 28 March 2014 in Brussels: public procurement of innovative sustainable energy solutions (EE 8); and new ICT-based solutions for energy efficiency (EE 11). The event will include presentations of the calls, a Q&A session, and a networking session for participants to present their ideas.

The deadline for submitting project proposals is 5 June 2014.

Funding briefs (after login): bit.ly/1nj6l7K and bit.ly/1goWnJ8
More information on event: bit.ly/PiZJHP
More information on calls: bit.ly/1cSxHaQ

More accessible public sector websites

The European Parliament adopted its report on the Commission's proposal for a directive on web accessibility on 26 February 2014. The directive aims to ensure accessibility to the resources available on public sector websites to all users, including disabled people.

The Commission initially proposed to facilitate access for disabled people to 12 categories of public website (including social security, personal documents or higher education).

MEPs went further, voting for a text that removes the reference to these categories, and instead applying the directive to all public sector websites. The Parliament also wants the new rules to apply to websites run by private entities performing public tasks, such as those providing gas, heat, electricity, water, transport, childcare and health services.

Until the EU draws up technical web accessibility standards of its own, the level of accessibility required by the proposed directive would be level AA of the international technical standard WCAG 2.0.

It now remains to be seen if the Council of Ministers accepts, rejects or attempts to further amend the recommendations. EU officials believe agreement between the bodies to be likely, but the negotiation process will be delayed by this year's European Parliamentary elections.

Fresh discussions between the institutions will probably restart this autumn and final

agreement is unlikely to take place before early 2015.

European Parliament press release: bit.ly/1jF3j99
Interview with shadow rapporteurs: bit.ly/1driMrN
George Niland, policy advisor: george.niland@eurocities.eu

Glasgow signs Green Digital Charter

Glasgow has joined 41 major cities from 17 countries in signing our Green Digital Charter.

Supported by our Networking Intelligent Cities for Energy Efficiency (NiCE) project and the European Commission, the charter focuses on using and sharing information and communications technology (ICT) to help create sustainable low carbon societies.

Glasgow's signature supports the council's sustainability agenda already being pursued through Sustainable Glasgow and Future Cities.

By signing the charter, Glasgow commits to using digital technologies to reduce the city's overall carbon footprint, while at the same time reducing the carbon footprint of ICT in the city.

Pictured: Glasgow City Council leader Gordon Matheson signs the charter
Green Digital Charter: www.greendigitalcharter.eu
Nikolaos Kontinakis, project coordinator: nikolaos.kontinakis@eurocities.eu

KSF events in 2014

- Barcelona hosts the next knowledge society forum on 2-3 April. It will include working group meetings (smart cities, open data, e-inclusion and cyber security) on the first day, followed by a members' meeting and site visit (Barcelona FabLab) on the second day.

- Tallinn hosts the summer forum meeting on 12-13 June.

- Bordeaux hosts the autumn knowledge society forum (KSF) on 15-17 October, coinciding with the Fourth Bordeaux Digital Week.

George Niland, policy advisor: george.niland@eurocities.eu

Political agreement on reducing cost of broadband rollout

The European Council reached political agreement on the Commission proposals for a directive to reduce the cost of broadband rollout on 28 February 2014. The directive aims to ensure a minimum degree of coordination between network operators (telecoms, sanitation, energy and rail transport) in order to reduce the cost of civil engineering, and therefore the cost of deploying broadband in Europe.

According to the Commission, such coordination could save between 20% and 30% in engineering costs.

We submitted amendments last October relating to the protection of existing broadband models and city infrastructure, which were all approved by the European Parliament. The main differences to the original Commission proposals include a change of instrument from regulation to directive, and more protection of access to infrastructure.

Commission press release: bit.ly/OMXpIJ
George Niland, policy advisor: george.niland@eurocities.eu

Policy debate on e-learning

The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) organised a policy debate on 'Digital wave: supporting a cultural shift in learning systems?' in Brussels on 4 March 2014. The event was chaired jointly by David Lopez (EUCIS-LLL), Maria do Céu Patrão Neves and Maria Da Graça Carvalho (Portuguese MEPs, EPP) and brought together representatives from civil society, lobbies and consultancies.

In their joint introduction, the chairs insisted that the EU must surf the digital wave and support the development of e-learning systems through relevant means. Debate then revolved around the ability of the EU to foster and guide the development of e-learning systems, notably massive open online courses (MOOCs). The main concern here was to design an appropriate strategy for Europe while guaranteeing the quality of learning systems and managing commitments to society.

George Niland, policy advisor: george.niland@eurocities.eu

EU elections ahead: finalising transport dossiers

The EU institutions are finalising a number of dossiers before the European Parliamentary elections in May and the nomination of a new Commission in the autumn. The fourth railway package is one of these: it was adopted in Parliament plenary on 26 February. Our messages were taken on board, allowing greater flexibility for cities: the adopted definition of a 'competent local authority' is less constraining for local authorities than the original proposed by the Commission; and unduly prescriptive and mandatory detailed content in the transport plans has been avoided. The dossier must now be adopted in Council, possibly before the summer.

The Parliament's plenary session in April will be the last chance to conclude any remaining dossiers before the elections. Adoption of the Clean Power for Transport Package is expected, followed by a Council agreement also in April; and the weights and dimensions directive should also be adopted in the April plenary.

The Parliament has decided to postpone any report on the Urban Mobility Package until after the elections. The Council is still deciding on its follow up. We will continue to monitor these dossiers to ensure the final outcomes are favourable for cities.

EUROCITIES statements: bit.ly/MTaHS1 (4th Railway Package); bit.ly/NEcqM3 (Clean Power for Transport); bit.ly/1ds8jb2 (weights and dimensions directive)
Vanessa Holve, policy advisor: vanessa.holve@eurocities.eu

TIDE innovation toolbox and workshop programmes

TIDE has published its innovation toolbox, '15 inspiring transport measures that can change your city'. This showcases the innovative transport measures covered in the project. Each measure is illustrated with: good practice examples, highlighting characteristics and benefits; useful references; and key aspects for implementation, including a checklist taking into account practical aspects, such as city size, user needs, costs, timescale, stakeholder involvement and any crucial or excluding factors.

Dates and locations for the next TIDE workshops, which are split into cluster-specific groups, have also been confirmed. On 'Making innovation reality: how to get started' the next workshops will build on the discussions at the first workshop in Stuttgart, and will include site visits with experts to explain the idea of systematic transfer.

- electric mobility:15-16 May, Rotterdam

- non motorised transport: 22-23 May, Donostia/San Sebastian

- network and traffic management: 3-4 June, Reading

- public transport organisation: 4-5 June, Gdynia

- new pricing measures: 17-18 June, Milan

Innovation toolbox: bit.ly/1eFE6cm
Yannick Bousse, project coordinator: yannick.bousse@eurocities.eu

CIVITAS MIMOSA study visits

The next two CIVITAS MIMOSA study visits are as follows, with co-financing available for the participation of urban mobility experts.

- Use of new technologies to encourage more sustainable forms of mobility, Bologna, 10-11 April 2014: new traffic control centre; flexible access restrictions to the city centre; MobiMart research; clean vehicles in the public transport fleet

- Making public transport more attractive for citizens, Tallinn, 22-23 May 2014 : public transport ticketing system; public transport communication system; mobility management - making public transport more popular

More information on Bologna visit: bit.ly/1e8tYqd
Register by 30 April for Tallinn visit: bit.ly/1gehw8I
Anja De Cunto, projects assistant: anja.decunto@eurocities.eu

SUM campaign fund: final call

To support national and local campaigners with the promotion of multimodal travel, the European Commission's Sustainable Urban Mobility campaign, 'Do the right mix', has opened a third and final call for initiatives.

It offers up to €7,000 in co-financing for campaign initiatives taking place between 1 June and 31 December 2014.

Applications must be submitted before 12:00 (CET) on 1 May 2014. A committee of experts, including a EUROCITIES representative, will select one winning action per country based on a set of evaluation and eligibility criteria, available at the link below. All applicants will be notified in early June.

Evaluation and eligibility criteria: bit.ly/1fO5z8J
More information: www.dotherightmix.eu
Peter Staelens, project coordinator: peter.staelens@eurocities.eu

ECOMM 2014: register now
Florence | 7-9 May 2014

The European Conference on Mobility Management (ECOMM), 'Creating the bridge to a green, fair and prosperous mobility future', takes place in Florence on 7-9 May 2014.

Workshops and Pecha Kucha sessions will focus on themes such as: SUMPs and mobility management; electric mobility; and mobility management and city logistics.

Programme: bit.ly/1hSilHX
ECOMM 2014: www.ecomm2014.eu
Mélanie Leroy, project coordinator: melanie.leroy@eurocities.eu

Social affairs forum in Barcelona

Our social affairs forum met in Barcelona on 5-7 March to discuss the role of cities in implementing the European Commission's Social Investment Package (SIP). Among the 120 delegates attending the forum, there were mayors, deputy mayors, councillors and city officers.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to building inclusive cities and delivering efficient and effective social services at local level. Discussions covered a number of different areas, including specific workshops on migration, social innovation, local partnerships, and youth employment. The need for targeted investment in order to deal with the social impacts of the economic crisis, and the growing challenges posed by demographic change, were two underlying themes of the discussions.

Barcelona organised several study visits to demonstrate its own social inclusion policies at local level. These included the public-private partnership involved in delivering the city's telecare service; a new concept for social housing for the homeless; and innovative strategies on youth employment, migration and emigration.

Youth unemployment is a pressing concern for most cities.

Delegates agreed that there needs to be strong coordination between education and employment policy at local level to ensure that young people can make a smooth transition into the labour market. The need for social innovation in order to find new approaches to long standing social issues was also an important priority.

The forum generated unprecedented levels of support from politicians and commitment from city representatives, with a number of proposals being made that will contribute to

the social affairs strategy for the coming year. Please see the front page for more details.

For more information on the social affairs forum, see #SAFcities on Twitter.

Anna Drozd, policy advisor: anna.drozd@eurocities.eu

Mayors reflect on impact of free movement of EU citizens

Mayors and politicians from local authorities across Europe participated in an event on the impact of free movement of EU citizens at local level. It was organised by the European Commission on 11 February 2014 in Brussels.

We were represented on one of the panels by Anna König Jerlmyr, vice mayor of Stockholm for social affairs. She shared the experiences and challenges faced by her city with regards to the rapid increase of migration within the EU.

An independent study analysing the impact of the free movement of EU citizens in six European cities (Barcelona, Dublin, Hamburg, Lille, Prague and Turin), initiated by the European Commission, was presented at the conference.

Mayors from other European cities, including EUROCITIES members The Hague, London and Lisbon, expressed the need to engage in a realistic discussion at European level.

Viviane Reding, vice president of the European Commission, cited EUROCITIES as a notable example of transnational networks that should be encouraged at EU level.

Our partnership with the European Commission

We have for the third time been awarded a European Commission grant to strengthen the social inclusion dimension of urban policies for the period 2014-2017.

The grant, which is funded by the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), is a follow up from the previous PROGRESS programme. It enables us to work in close partnership with the European Commission, via the directorate general for employment, social affairs and inclusion.

The grant will provide us with additional human and financial resources to support our activities related to social inclusion. For example, we are in the process of setting up a taskforce on the implementation of the European Social Investment Package (SIP) and will mainstream social inclusion into all our forums. We will also organise mutual learning events, such as peer reviews and study visits, and will prepare advocacy tools, such as publications of good practices, information videos and infographics. This grant will further enable us to ensure that the city perspective is reflected in EU social policy making and that cities are fully equipped to meet growing social challenges in Europe.

Silvia Ganzerla, senior policy advisor: silvia.ganzerla@eurocities.eu

European Roma summit to focus on local level
Brussels | 4 April 2014

This high level event on 'going local on Roma inclusion', organised by the European Commission, will bring together five European commissioners, including President Barroso and Vice President Reding, as well as heads of state and representatives from EU member states, European and international institutions, regional and local authorities and civil society. EUROCITIES members are invited to participate.

More information: bit.ly/1erYvzb

More information: bit.ly/1kif3i9

Edinburgh Outdoors – enjoying the city's parks

In Edinburgh, you can enjoy the city's parks at the click of a mouse or the touch of a button on your smartphone.

The city launched Edinburgh Outdoors in February 2013 as a way of making information about the city's parks and green spaces more accessible for citizens and tourists alike.

The digital service is built on open data and comprises a website, smartphone app, Facebook and Twitter account, which users can interact with, providing their own observations, events, comments and images.

Edinburgh Outdoors offers practical information such as park maps and the location of public facilities, as well as details about local monuments and tree collections.

The city works together with local parks groups to determine what information is of most interest to citizens, and is continually adding new features. In future, Edinburgh hopes to add routes for cyclists, pedestrians and runners, by importing data from partners.

Edinburgh Outdoors has been well received, with citizens actively contributing and talking proudly about their local parks.

It has had a positive impact on citizens' health and wellbeing, and encourages people to get out and get involved in their local community.

Find out more about Edinburgh Outdoors by reading our latest 'cities in action' case study at the link below.

Case study: bit.ly/1kM2Xxh
Rose Montgomery, communications executive: rose.montgomery@eurocities.eu

Barcelona becomes first iCapital

EUROCITIES member Barcelona was on 11 March announced as the first European Capital of Innovation (iCapital). The Catalan city is being recognised for its use of new technologies to bring the city closer to its citizens.

In 2011, Barcelona city council launched the 'Barcelona as a people city' project, which uses new technologies to promote economic growth and better quality of life for citizens. Measures include:

■ open data initiatives, offering valuable information to individuals and private companies

■ sustainable city growth initiatives on smart lighting, mobility and residual energy

■ social innovation

■ promoting alliances between research centres, universities, and private and public partners

■ providing 'smart services' through ICT

Barcelona wins €500,000 to scale up and expand its innovation efforts. The other finalists were EUROCITIES member Grenoble and Groningen in the Netherlands. The prize was announced during the European Innovation Convention in Brussels on 10-11 March 2014.

Commission press release: bit.ly/1i8rqgt

Nantes Creative Generations
Nantes | 22-25 October 2014

Nantes Creative Generations (NCG) is seeking applications from young people, aged 18-30, to present their innovative and inspirational projects, linked to European citizenship, at its forum on 22-25 October 2014.

As well as showcasing their own projects, participants will have the chance to learn from peers across Europe, and to gain better understanding of the European dimension of local projects.

Nantes Creative Generations (NCG) is an initiative set up by EUROCITIES vice president, Nantes Metropole, and the city of Nantes, together with a number of NGOs, to bring together young European citizens who are involved in projects or initiatives designed to strengthen European citizenship.

Applications are welcome from young citizens of any country that is a member of the Council of Europe, and must be submitted by 31 May 2014 using the application form available below.

Application form: bit.ly/1hOaLi5
More information: www.nantescreativegenerations.eu

Meeting in Brussels?

EUROCITIES offers meeting rooms in an ideal location, a stone's throw from the European institutions. Special prices are available for our members.

■ capacity for 75 people

■ catering services

■ interpretation booths

■ projection facilities

■ free WIFI

■ special conditions on request

■ half day rentals accepted

Flash 134 ■ March 2014

Olivier Baeselen, finance, HR and office manager: meetingrooms@eurocities.eu   +32 (0) 2 552 08 82   www.meetingroomsinbrussels.eu

11

events

• EDINBVRGH •
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
15-16 May 2014

EUROCITIES cooperation platform

Join us in Edinburgh
registration starts soon

Photo: Jack Brown

Metropolitan Solutions	**Hanover, Germany**	**7-11 April 2014**
Technologies and services for cities		www.metropolitansolutions.de
iUrban Conference	**Rotterdam, Netherlands**	**9-11 April 2014**
Sustainable competitiveness: make it happen		www.iurbanconference2014.nl
ECOMM 2014	**Florence, Italy**	**7-9 May 2014**
European conference on mobility management		www.ecomm2014.eu
City Visionaries	**London, UK**	**14-15 May 2014**
How do cities compete in a changing market?		www.inytcities.com
EUROCITIES cooperation platform 2014	**Edinburgh, UK**	**15-16 May 2014**
Annual networking event		bit.ly/1ieEGzt

More events at: www.eurocities.eu

Disclaimer: Flash is an exclusive members' service not for distribution outside EUROCITIES membership