

Making EUROCITIES more impact-driven

Introduction

This note provides an update of the developments towards a new strategic framework for EUROCITIES, including a vision for the network, goals, strategic objectives and next steps. It is based on debates with the executive committee and forum chairs in September 2018 and February 2019, as well as sessions at our annual conference with politicians and officers in Edinburgh in November 2018.

A clear vision for EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES is the leading network of major European cities, working together to ensure a good quality of life for all our citizens. We strive for a Europe where cities are genuine partners with the EU to create a better future where:

1. People take part in an inclusive society
2. People progress in a prosperous local economy
3. People move and live in a healthy environment
4. People make vibrant and open public spaces
5. City governments address global challenges
6. City governments are fit for the future

Goals and strategic objectives

The draft vision includes six proposed goals for EUROCITIES. A goal-oriented vision and way of working will allow us to communicate more directly and clearly what type of societies cities are seeking to build throughout Europe, putting citizens first. The purpose of the goals is to enable EUROCITIES to:

- become more impact-oriented
- be clear on the scope of our work
- identify transversal synergies where possible
- provide strategic guidance to members working together on urban challenges

The first four goals are formulated as people-oriented, goals five and six have city governments as their explicit object. The issues that goals five and six deal with impact and are impacted by all the first four goals. The aim is to address a frequent concern raised by members about the need to break silos, and to be more dynamic in helping members address new challenges.



Under each of the six goals, we have developed a set of strategic objectives (see below) that will serve as the basis of our network’s strategic plan. The strategic objectives are about the action city governments take to meet the goals. Each objective should deliver concrete outcomes or results, e.g. through collaboration between groups of cities committed to the specific objective in our network.

Goal 1: People take part in an inclusive society

1. Fight urban poverty and social exclusion
2. Ensure access to adequate and affordable housing
3. Facilitate the inclusion of refugees, migrants, ethnic minorities and people with diverse backgrounds
4. Ensure quality and inclusive education
5. Deliver quality social services
6. Support inclusive local labour markets

Goal 2: People progress in a prosperous local economy

1. Stimulate the creation of quality jobs

2. Manage new economic business models and trends
3. Promote the attractiveness of cities for people, business and investments
4. Address local skills and future needs to tackle mismatches
5. Support the transition to a circular economy
6. Strengthen infrastructures in and between cities

Goal 3: People move and live in a healthy environment

1. Promote accessible and clean water
2. Ensure clean air
3. Reduce noise pollution
4. Manage the collection, recycling and reduction of waste
5. Promote safe, connected and sustainable urban mobility
6. Support the transition towards clean fuels and vehicles
7. Support urban food systems

Goal 4: People make vibrant and open public spaces

1. Promote the co-creation of cultural activities and spaces for urban development and cohesion
2. Regenerate and design open and inspiring public spaces for and with people
3. Ensure green areas and biodiversity in urban planning
4. Strengthen safety and security in public spaces

Goal 5: City governments address global challenges

1. Fight climate change and enable the energy transition
2. Tackle rising inequalities
3. Drive digital transformation

Goal 6: City governments are fit for the future

1. Promote innovative city government and administration
2. Ensure the financial sustainability of cities
3. Manage the use of disruptive technologies to transform public services
4. Strengthen public participation in decision making
5. Explore strategic partnerships and co-creation of public services

6. Promote gender equality and fight all discrimination
7. Plan for the cities of the future

Delivering on the goals and strategic objectives

A clear feedback from members has been that EUROCITIES should continue to ensure that cities are influential at EU level and can maximise access to EU funding opportunities. Also, learning and sharing between cities and building capacity to tackle challenges are considered essential activities of the network in the future. That feedback will continue to guide our future activities, while also keeping in mind the need to become more impact driven and break down silos.

Our current activities for members are heavily focused on forum meetings, which in addition to our annual conference and cooperation platform amount to some 14-15 larger corporate events per year. The majority of forum meetings take place in clusters within a few weeks in March and October. This has some clear advantages in terms of predictability of the meeting schedules. However, it also creates peak pressures and contributes to maintaining our silos. In 2020, we would like to test a new approach to forum meetings, where forums chairs jointly plan to spread the big forum meetings out across the year.

Following the approval of the new strategic framework at our annual conference in Prague in November 2019, we would like to use 2020 as a transition year during which we test new ways of working related to the strategic objectives, with a focus on results and impact, paving the way for further changes in 2021. This will require us to think out of the box to create more targeted activities to match the needs and ensure progress in specific areas.

For example, how can we deliver on strategic objective 5.1 about tackling climate change and enabling energy transition? Which cities, working groups and forums are ready to commit to being involved? Do we need to engage other stakeholders? What are the changes to the EU framework we want to work for? What are the needs in terms of mutual learning and knowledge sharing? And which commitments are cities willing to take locally and collectively to meet the objective?

We have already in 2018 and 2019 seen good examples of working differently and more results-oriented activities within our network. For example, we have started a Climate Roundtable with Amsterdam and Oslo to better deal with strategic climate governance issues. Our social affairs forum is testing a social innovation LAB in March 2019, replacing the traditional spring forum meeting, to better co-create solutions. Other forums are testing new ways of working with the private sector on specific urban challenges. We recently launched a series of pledges on implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, making cities' contribution to the EU clear and concrete.

Those are just some of the examples, which has potential to deliver a positive impact for the network and for members. Such activities for 2020 will have to be carefully balanced with existing working methods through the continued involvement of forum chairs and vice chairs, working group chairs as well as the oversight of the Executive Committee.

Next steps

Date	Event	Action
20 March	ExCom and forum chairs (politicians) meeting	Progress update
March-April	Spring forum meetings	Presentation of the proposed goals and strategic objectives, and recommendation for new ways of working for 2020
End April	Brussels office internal meeting	Debrief from spring forum meetings and planning for next steps
26 April	Deadline for feedback on the goals and strategic objectives	Feedback can be sent to: marta.marcuzzi@eurocities.eu
15-17 May	Cooperation platform, ExCom and forum chairs (officers) meeting	Presentation and agreement on goals, strategic objectives and on new ways of working
3-4 June	ExCom and forum chairs (politicians) meeting	To be defined
Late June or early September	Forums and WGs chairs joint meeting	Approval of goals and strategic objectives and agreement on implementation phase in 2020, including clear outcomes and results of activities
26 September	ExCom and forum chairs (officers) meeting	To be defined
October	Forum meetings	Progress update on the strategic framework
20-22 November	Annual conference and AGM, and ExCom (politicians) meeting	Overall final approval on new strategic framework

Additional background information

Following the launch of our internal review at the AGM in Ljubljana in November 2017 we spent much of the past year reflecting on the work and activities of our network. Key highlights in our reflection process were the surveys on EUROCITIES' general performance and communications services, as well as our discussions at the spring forum meetings, cooperation platform in Athens, and ExCom meetings in Vienna and Ghent. The outcomes from the surveys and meetings were complemented by additional reports and input from secretariat staff, academics and external consultants.

The survey results are generally positive. It is also clear that there is room for improvement, notably when it comes to strengthening results of our work and breaking down silos. Seeing also the increased recognition of the role of cities globally, we believe it is time to provide our organisation with a new impetus for the coming decade. What are we trying to change or influence over the next ten years? And why are we doing what we do? These are the questions

we need to answer to ensure that our work will be as effective and meaningful as possible - for our citizens, for our cities and for Europe.

The strategic objectives listed in this document are meant to serve as an umbrella for the work of EUROCITIES and will form the basis of our network's strategic plan over the coming years. The strategic plan will be part of a broader strategic framework, the structure and timeframe of which is set out in the model below:

