
NETWORK UPDATE - JANUARY 2019

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NEW EU INSTITUTIONS

European elections and a new Commission

The European elections will take place in May followed by the nomination of a new Commission in November 2019. Between May and November, we will see the parliamentary committees and intergroups re-established, nomination of Commissioner candidates by member states, and hearings of the candidates by the Parliament. We will ensure our visibility and influence at the different steps during that period.

Our second mayors' summit and the launch of our manifesto, 'A City Leaders Agenda for Europe' on 21 March, are first steps in terms of ensuring our upstream influence and visibility with the new EU institutions. The manifesto will set the umbrella for more detailed positioning in our different areas of work once the new membership of the Committees in the Parliament has been established and the new Commission approved. Our forums and working groups will contribute to updating our key messages on main issues. We propose to pursue two high level objectives for the new institutions:

- Appointment of a Commission vice-president in charge of urban matters to clarify responsibility within the Commission and ensure a stronger drive and coordination of EU initiatives
- Re-establishment of the urban intergroup in the European Parliament with a stronger strategic agenda on urban matters with clearer links to the urban agenda for the EU

Some of our immediate actions in 2019 to achieve the objectives will be:

- To gather intelligence from our members post-elections on MEPs from urban constituencies to identify our new urban champions. Also, to provide support to a lead MEP to gather support for a new urban intergroup
- To organise bilateral meetings between the MEPs chairing the new Committees and our forum chairs and other lead politicians to promote our network as a partner and our key messages
- To organise a visibility event in the Parliament in the autumn, possibly to kick off the new intergroup and ensure full understanding on the urban agenda for the EU
- To make the case for a Commission vice-president in charge of urban to the new Commission president ahead of the distribution of portfolios within the new college of Commissioners
- To seek to influence the hearings in the Parliament of the relevant Commissioners with questions drawing attention to urban matters
- To organise bilateral meetings between our President and/or forum chairs and Commissioners as early as possible in their mandates

Working with the EU Presidencies

In parallel, we are preparing our work with the current and incoming EU presidencies in 2019 - 2020, which also offers a series of interesting opportunities:

- Romania, January to June 2019: Collaboration on the informal council meeting on urban matters on 13-14 June 2019 (see below)
- Finland, June to Dec 2019: Focus on digital transition, initial outreach via the digital transition partnership under the urban agenda
- Croatia, January to June 2020: Collaboration with Zagreb to organise the Capital Cities meeting during the presidency and exploring possibilities for additional events
- Germany, July to Dec 2020: Contributing to the review of the Leipzig Charter. Annual conference in Leipzig during the Presidency.

THE URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU

We have finalised and disseminated our statement on the urban agenda, which has been well-received by DG REGIO, the Netherlands and the Romanian Presidency.

The Romanian presidency will host an informal council meeting on the urban agenda on 14 June, where our President, the mayor of Stockholm will be invited. Initial discussions with the Romanian presidency indicate that the ministerial meeting will focus on implementation of the urban agenda, outcomes from the partnerships, next steps and connections to territorial cohesion.

The outcome of the meeting will be a Bucharest Declaration which will aim to clarify outstanding issues from the Pact of Amsterdam as well as recommendations for next steps. They are keen to include our proposal for a high-level group on urban matters to be included as well as a request from ministers to the Commission to step up support for functional urban areas. They would also like to include a reflection on future cities and are prepared to consider further input from our side based on our forthcoming manifesto.

We will participate in the four preparatory meetings ahead of the informal council in January, March, April and May, including the meetings of Urban Development Group (UDG) and the Directors General on Urban Matters (DGUM). We will also support the Presidency's outreach to cities with a questionnaire on the urban agenda informing the preparations. We have shared the outcomes from our survey of members involved in the first eight partnerships with them. In the coming weeks we will extend our survey to the remaining four partnerships for a more complete picture of cities' experiences with the partnership approach in the urban agenda.

NEW LONGTERM EU BUDGET

Dialogue with Commissioner Oettinger

Anna Lisa Boni, secretary general, and Dorthe Nielsen, policy director, met with EU Commissioner Oettinger in charge of the negotiations on the next long-term EU budget on 9 January 2019. The Commissioner emphasised the role of cities and city mayors as vital in the EU in terms of tackling some of the challenges ahead, including climate, innovation and digital transition. We outlined our key messages related to EU's funding programmes:

- Cities must be direct partners when funding priorities are developed
- Cities need direct access to funding
- We need more integrated approaches in funding programmes to better respond to local challenges
- We need a stronger emphasis on upscaling and replication of innovative solutions

The Commissioner expects a final agreement on the next long-term budget by October 2019, once a new Parliament has taken seat and before the end of the mandate of this Commission. He was confident that member states will reach agreement on the overall size of the budget close to the proposal of the Commission of 1.114 % of national GDP, although a coalition of member states are pushing for a reduction to 1%, which inevitably would lead to cuts in the allocation for the different funding programmes. In the meantime, the Commissioner proposed that his services could facilitate the setting up of meetings with the directorates in charge of new programmes and city representatives in April-May 2019 for a more detailed exchange about priorities and implementation.

For a detailed overview of advocacy activities, messages and results achieved on cohesion policy (see also below), Horizon Europe, Life+, InvestEU, Digital Europe Programme and AMIF, see table in annex.

Cohesion policy post-2020

The European Parliament's report on the ESF+ regulation was voted on 22 November. Our social affairs forum has prepared a position on the ESF+ proposal, emphasising the need to involve cities as partners and to strengthen the territorial dimension of the social fund. Following intensive campaigning and the strong mobilisation of members, the proposals were well received by MEPs.

Due to the high number of amendments, the vote on the common provisions regulation (CPR) and the ERDF/CF regulation was postponed several times. The report on the CPR is now scheduled for a vote at the REGI committee for 22 January 2019 and the ERDF/CF regulation for February.

Our proposal for amendments focus on the active involvement of cities in the design of future programmes. We also recommended to better enable and encourage cities to combine ERDF and ESF+ locally and to make ERDF thematic concentration rules more flexible and climate-oriented, covering sustainable urban mobility. We also proposed to increase the earmarking for sustainable urban development strategies from 6 to 10%, extending it to ESF+. Our proposals notably related to thematic concentration and earmarking have been well-received. We will continue to influence the negotiations on compromise amendments in the Parliament ahead of the votes.

IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Cities as drivers of quality jobs and sustainable growth

Public procurement

On 5 December in Brussels we co-organised the second workshop of big public buyers with DG GROW. The event is part of our partnership for cities as 'large public buyers' with DG GROW and focused on zero emission construction sites. The cities of Amsterdam, Oslo, Budapest, Brussels region, Nantes, Helsinki and Vantaa attended.

We were successful in our application to be part of the high-level stakeholders' group on public procurement within DG GROW. The city of Nantes will represent EUROCITIES at these meetings and coordinate with the WG public services and public procurement. The next meeting of this working group will take place in Oslo the 23 May, back to back with the Urban Future Conference

Long-term investment

We have launched the call for the collection of case studies from cities on PPP and other financial instruments for long term investment. The examples we will collect from cities will be used to gather evidence on local challenges and good practice as well as to inform our upcoming position paper (June) on long-term investment to influence the new European Commission and European Parliament. Next meeting of the WG long term investment will take place in Brussels on 5 March 2019.

Innovation

We are working with the Urban Intergroup in the European Parliament to organise a high-level event on cities and innovation on 21 March. The event will be a good opportunity to keep influencing the future of innovation policy in Europe and securing that cities can benefit from European initiatives and funding programmes, including iCapital and Horizon Europe.

We will also strengthen our work on local innovation ecosystem by developing some key

messages for the new European Commission and European Parliament during our spring EDF forum in Florence as well as by preparing a bid for a European project on transforming historic urban areas into hubs of entrepreneurship.

Inclusive, diverse and creative cities

Implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)

On 21 February 2019 we organise a high-level event in the European Parliament on cities role in implementing the EPSR. The event will raise awareness of our members' commitment to the principles of the EPSR (we expect about fifteen cities making their own pledge) and it will be the occasion to present the finding from our first survey on EPSR and cities. The event will feature two panel debates on migration and housing with city politicians, European Commission officials, MEPs and NGOs as speakers. We expect about 150 people attending, from European institutions, civil society organisations, national governments and cities.

Mutual learning on housing and homelessness

On 6-7 December, EUROCITIES working groups on housing and homelessness had a joint meeting to learn and exchange views on Vienna's strategic approach on preventing evictions and homelessness. The city shared its practices with more than 50 participants from 18 cities. The discussions were focused on the key challenges, successful factor and lesson learnt in fighting evictions at local level. The main outcomes of the meeting are:

- A set of smart solutions on preventing evictions and homelessness
- Follow-up draft actions on improving the preventing evictions programmes in Barcelona, Birmingham, Glasgow, Ljubljana and Newcastle.

Integration of migrants and refugees

We organised the 8th Integrating Cities Conference in Milan, on 7-8 November 2018. Around 180 participants from cities and public authorities, European institutions (e.g. European Commission, OECD), NGOs and think-tanks, international organisations (e.g. UNHCR, IOM) and the academia had the opportunity to discuss and share their views and experiences on local situation and strategies for migrant and refugee integration. Political and policy representatives from over 30 cities took part in the event addressing the main challenges the cities are currently facing and highlighting good practices in different areas of integration.

The event offered a platform for the politicians who took part to promote local level action through panel discussions, interviews with the local press and the conference video. The conference hosted speeches from the deputy mayors of Thessaloniki and Turin after they

joined 37 other cities as signatories of the EUROCITIES Integrating Cities Charter. The conference also served as a launch pad for wider dissemination of the 3rd Integrating Cities Charter monitoring report that was developed by EUROCITIES based on members' feedback. The report outlines the most recent trends and analyses the progress made by cities towards the European standards on migrant integration as set out in the Charter.

In February our new project VALUES (Volunteering Activities to Leverage Urban and European Social integration of migrants) is starting. It will focus on community building at local level for integration through volunteering activities. The project will help to share the lessons learned, build capacity, provide an opportunity for cities to strengthen their ties with civil society and local volunteering actions on integration. EUROCITIES will lead a consortium of 18 partners, including the expert organisation MigrationWork and the European Volunteer Centre (CEV), and the cities of Amsterdam, Bristol, Brno, Cesena, Dusseldorf, Madrid, Nuremberg, Ostend, Riga, Sheffield, Terrassa, Thessaloniki, Toulouse, Turin, Oslo and Zurich.

Green, free-flowing and healthy cities

Strengthening our approach on climate

Our recent Climate ambition statement sets a progressive line for the network to respond to the European Commission's proposals for pathways towards a carbon neutral EU by 2050 and for the coming years. This follows on from our first climate roundtable with members and other stakeholders in September 2018 which we will work with the two lead cities, Amsterdam and Oslo, to continue in 2019. At the same time, both our environment and mobility forums are prioritising climate in 2019 with debates on decarbonising cities and climate resilience at their spring meetings in 2019.

As new President, Stockholm has highlighted climate as one of the main network priorities. Stockholm is likely to either take over the seat from Ghent at the EU Board of the Covenant of Mayors or take up a new seat at the Global Board. Those Boards are increasingly strategic in nature, due to the high-level meetings with European Commissioners and other decision makers. Together with Stockholm, we are mapping activities for 2019 while also establishing the objectives and level of ambition for 2019-2020 for climate and will keep ExCom duly informed.

Air quality

We co-organised the European Diesel Summit on 12 November 2018, with the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) and Transport and Environment (T&E). The summit drew attention to the lack of action in EU member states to deal with the legacy of dieselgate to clean up Europe's dirty cars. European Industry Commissioner Bienkowska participated in the event, where we were represented by our environment forum chair and deputy mayor

of Porto, Filipe Araújo. We supported a declaration which was launched at the event urging the EU and member states to step up actions to support cities in their efforts to ensure clean air for their citizens.

We are working with Sofia and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission to prepare the Second European Air Quality Conference (SOFAIR) in Sofia, 12 April 2019. We will ensure a strong city representation, including at political level, at the event, which comes at a timely moment to follow up on our recommendations from 2018 for the European Commission to ensure stronger measures to control air pollution sources affecting urban areas when reviewing EU's air quality legislation.

Circular economy

The European Commission, DG Environment, has invited us to contribute to a series of events - Virtuous circles - in member states where EU legislation on waste management is not yet fully implemented or where challenges persists. We have facilitated contact with cities in the relevant member states and the chair of our waste working group, Oslo, has represented EUROCITIES on three of such events in 2018 in Romania, Malta and Bulgaria. A series of new events are planned in 2019, including in Spain, Greece, Portugal and Poland, involving national and local administrations as well enterprises. For the Commission this represents a new way of tackling challenges related to the implementation of EU legislation upstream as opposed to legal proceedings. The meetings involve EU Commissioners and Commission vice-presidents directly and provide an excellent visibility opportunity for the cities involved as well as our network generally from the perspective on contributing to better implementation of EU legislation across Europe.

In addition, we continue our role in EU's stakeholder platform on circular economy as well as its annual conference on 6-7 March where we will contribute to ensure the urban dimension is strong through our circular economy task force and the circular economy partnership of the urban agenda. Back-to-back with the conference, our circular economy task force will meet with our SME working group from the economic development forum to discuss how cities support SME's to become more circular. This will be one of the final meetings of the task force who will subsequently conclude its work.

Influencing EU's mobility packages

We are working on two key legislative proposals for cities from the Commission's Mobility Packages: the General Safety Regulation and the Clean Vehicles Directive.

The General Safety Regulation is vital to ensure safer streets in cities for vulnerable road users. Ahead of a vote at Committee level in February 2019, we have met with key MEPs to strengthen 'direct vision' provisions for trucks and maintain the ambition of other important safety measures. We have contributed to a higher level of ambition in the Parliament's

legislative reports, which now go beyond the Commission's proposal to require the quicker introduction of vehicle safety features. We are now working with the Mobility Forum Safe and Active Travel Working Group to reach out to individual MEPs and secure majorities for our position ahead of the Committee vote.

The Clean Vehicles Directive establishes rules for the procurement vehicles by public authorities, including cities. We have engaged with the Parliament through meetings with key MEPs, public speaking events and joint letters with like-minded stakeholders to ensure flexibility in the choice of technologies and sufficient funding options for cities. We will prepare a trilogues paper to influence the final stretch of the negotiations between the Council and the Parliament.

European Green Capital Network

EUROCITIES and the Covenant of Mayors were represented by our then President and Mayor of Ghent, Daniël Termont at a Mayors' Conference organised by Nijmegen (NL), in November. The conference saw the launch of a call to action to enhance sustainability in all cities around the world, an initiative of the Green capital cities, which we have supported. The call to action was subsequently launched at the UN climate change conference (COP24) in Katowice in December.

The Mayors' conference was held back-to-back with the first of the European Green Capital Network workshops on the topic of future proofing cities. The workshop focused on the areas of resilience, adaptation and nature-based solutions, sharing experiences amongst the Network, which comprises the winners and finalists of the European Green Capital Award. It was the first of five workshops which, along with accompanying toolkits, form the pilot project which EUROCITIES and ICLEI are delivering for the Network.

Smarter cities

We secured a strong presence and visibility at the main smart city events in autumn 2018.

We co-organised the Nordic Edge conference in Stavanger in September, a major European event for smart cities. Anna Lisa Boni moderated a session for mayors on citizens engagement and smarter cities to open the conference. This session offered the opportunity to collect valuable information for the Cities4Europe campaign. We also organised a session dedicated to replication, gathering information on enablers and barriers to replicate smart cities solutions. More generally, we attended and contributed to the lighthouse projects' collaboration activities, identifying information from which other cities of the network can benefit.

At the Smart City Expo in Barcelona in November, we participated in the Matchmaking event as action cluster lead on business models, finance and procurement of the European

Innovation Partnership on smart cities and communities (EIP SCC). 7 cities met with different investors and 14 meetings took place in total, providing great opportunities for cities and other project promoters to get their ideas for smart city development financed. With our KSF members, we also hosted a session on citizen data to discuss with both private and public sector participants our current work developing of set of principles on citizens data, i.e. personal and non-personal data, directly or indirectly generated in the digital public sphere. The set of principles have since been further developed and a final draft will be discussed at the KSF meeting in January in Barcelona.

Through our project, ICTfootprint.eu, we ensured our presence at ICT 2018 in Vienna in December with a stand where green ICT solutions and methodologies were discussed. We participated in the Green ICT In Practice: Low Carbon ICT workshop that aimed to brainstorm and explore ideas, between industry, researchers and public administrators, on what are the priorities and opportunities in Green ICT market.

Looking ahead, we are exploring the scope for a stronger collaboration at EU level to boost upscaling of digital solutions across Europe's cities at the request of DG Connect, European Commission. We have agreed with DG Connect to initially convene the Commission, leading networks and initiatives on smart cities, including OASC, the urban agenda digital transition partnership, ENoll (Living Labs) and the EIP SCC. A first meeting will take place in January to explore the possibility to establish a common agenda and identify a set of digital solutions to prioritise for upscaling through joining forces. The outcomes of the work would influence the priorities of the new Digital Europe Programme, once approved under the new MFF agreement.

Urban innovation and governance in cities

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In October the European multi-level stakeholders' group finalised the proposal for the European Commission on SDGs. We were able to ensure a strong local dimension in the final paper. Decision about the future of this stakeholder group is still being discussed within the EC, however, EURO CITIES will continue to work with the CoR and CEMR on raising awareness with the European institutions on the key role that cities play in making SDGs concrete.

In 2019 we are also kicking off with the SDGs task force; we will start with a collection of good practice on cities and SDGs. This should possibly lead to a series of study visits for cities mutual learning on SDGs. We also would like to organise a task force meeting in Brussels in June to engage European level stakeholders in the discussion about localising SDGs.

EU-China partnership on sustainable urbanisation

We officially presented our Cooperation plans and guidelines report during the 2018 China-

EU Conference on Sustainable Urbanisation in December 2018. This report outlines the results of joint activities between European and Chinese cities. It analyses the lessons learnt from twinnings and partnerships between EU and Chinese cities and provides tips on how to develop a successful partnership with a Chinese city.

At the same event, we organised the ceremony for the first EU-China City-City partnership award. Manchester and Wuhan were awarded for the duration, quality and effective partnership they have. The partnership, which dates back to 1986, has created business-to-business links, sporting and cultural ties and has seen a significant number of students from Wuhan studying at Manchester universities.

Cohesion policy implementation and metropolitan cooperation

On 12-14 December 2018, we organised a joint seminar and WG meeting of WG cohesion policy and metropolitan areas in Warsaw. The seminar of 80 participants and a line-up including the OECD, DG REGIO, the Polish government and the Urban agenda partnership on sustainable land use, looked at how cohesion policy has supported metropolitan cooperation and how it will support it in the future period. There were presentations from Warsaw and Florence and study visits featuring projects supported by cohesion policy in the metropolitan area.

Annexes:

- *Overview of actions and outcomes on new MFF funding programmes*
- *Overview of ongoing projects (infographic)*
- *Overview of projects proposals*

