



Ever smarter cities

Delivering sustainable urban solutions and quality of life for Europe

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Europe's future lies in its cities. They are where the main challenges and opportunities in Europe come together. Well-performing cities and metropolitan areas are crucial not just for the local, regional and national level, but for Europe as a whole. Their performance is critical to Europe's global competitiveness and to the new start for the EU launched by the European Commission.

At local level, many cities are already working with citizens, industry and researchers to develop smart, sustainable and integrated solutions that improve quality of life for citizens, while dramatically reducing emissions and energy and resource consumption. But tackling the broader challenges goes beyond local competences and requires concerted and coordinated efforts at all levels, from local to global.

Continued effort is needed at EU level to support and strengthen initiatives that make Europe's cities smarter. These should focus on Europe's larger cities, where strategic investments will deliver more results faster; where a critical mass of SMEs is innovating; where innovation clusters can most effectively develop; and where the best opportunities for public-private partnerships exist to develop innovative solutions.

What are smarter cities about?

Becoming a smarter city is not an end goal, but a continuous process to be more resource efficient whilst simultaneously improving quality of life.¹ Smarter cities are part of the paradigm shift of technology development towards open data, open interfaces and platforms, as well as open smart city standards. There are no one size fits all solutions: becoming smarter will mean different things to different cities. Most of all, it is crucial to involve people in the process: there can be no smart city without smart citizens.

Smarter cities are inclusive places that use technology and innovation to empower, engage with and capitalise on citizen participation. Engaging citizens goes beyond the uptake of technology; it extends to the co-creation of ideas and solutions. Smarter cities can

¹ Previous EURO CITIES statements on smart cities and Horizon 2020 are available here:

<http://nws.euocities.eu/MediaShell/media/EUROCITIES%20statement%20on%20Smart%20Cities%20Communication%20Oct%202012.pdf>

<http://www.euocities.eu/euocities/publications/EUROCITIES-response-to-public-consultation-on-Smart-Cities-Communities-initiative-WSP0-8PLHCR>

<http://nws.euocities.eu/MediaShell/media/EUROCITIES%20statement%20Horizon%202020.pdf>

encourage this using new governance and transparency tools such as living labs, tools to integrate citizen input in urban planning, and spaces and support for start-ups. Successful smart cities will facilitate this participation, co-creation and co-production with citizens and other local partners.

Smarter cities are leading the way towards CO₂ neutrality and delivering cost effective and efficient solutions. To create a city that is sustainable and offers high standards of living, smarter cities will need to exploit state of the art green technologies. They will need to connect policies across a wide range of areas, including energy efficiency, urban mobility, and ICT.

Next steps for smarter cities at EU level - the way forward

The European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities (EIP SCC) has instigated a new way of working strategically at EU level using a broad partnership approach to connect different Commission directorate generals, stakeholders and sectors. EURO CITIES and a number of our members have benefitted from direct engagement in both the EIP's high level and sherpa groups, as well as in the former stakeholder platform.

In the longer term, the EIP SCC has real potential to break down silos and stimulate actions for smarter cities by bringing ideas, potential partners and resources together in one place. It can increase its impact by reinforcing elements of its focus and activities, including:

- Fostering co-creation and co-production of solutions by cities, industry and researchers. Innovation should be driven by city needs to ensure a citizen and market demand-driven approach. This is crucial for avoiding the poor uptake of new solutions that is sometimes associated with supply-led initiatives. Technological solutions and innovations should meet the needs of citizens.
- Implementing a structured means of identifying and maintaining an overview of city needs and challenges. This should recognise that the diversity of cities impacts on their strategic choices to become smarter.
- Complementing the replicability of smart city solutions with a more structured exchange of knowledge between cities and other stakeholders so that more cities can learn from leading cities. Continuous learning, replication and transfer of ideas and knowledge between cities is essential. Cities with similar typologies will identify with one another and can benefit from learning and knowledge transfer. We are willing to contribute our experience of structured exchanges, such as those carried out through the CASCADE project on local sustainable energy leadership²
- Ensuring that process innovation is systematically included and integrated with technological innovation. Urban planning considerations should always be taken into account in any new smart city solutions, so that solutions work within the

² www.cascadecities.eu

complex urban environment of integrated planning, policy making and delivery, and take advantage of opportunities for connectedness and systems integration

- Looking beyond ICT, energy and mobility to address urban sustainability issues such as air quality, noise, resource efficiency and the circular economy, water management, fuel poverty, local green jobs, and health issues.
- Creating links with existing initiatives that focus on developing sustainable urban solutions, such as the Green Digital Charter (GDC)³. Through the GDC, cities commit to using digital technologies to reduce emissions and tackle climate change.
- Striving for scalable solutions, including through open data and common performance indicators and data collection procedures. The CITYkeys⁴ project will contribute to this objective over the coming year.
- Helping cities avoid technology and vendor lock-in by further developing open standards, interfaces and platforms. This year's H2020-SCC-03 call for proposals is a step in the right direction.
- Clarifying the link between the work undertaken within the EIP SCC and future EU funding priorities for smart cities. This would help stakeholders assess the added value of engaging in the EIP SCC.

EU financing for smarter city developments

The funding available for smart city initiatives under Horizon 2020 is a vital resource for supporting collaboration and innovation between cities and other partners, and for developing and testing new urban solutions. Cities are leaders of innovation, including in areas such as co-creation, creation and adoption of open platforms, open data, adopting flexible solutions, procurement of innovation, implementing integrated solutions, and citizen engagement. Supporting the capacity of cities to innovate is an investment in Europe's future.

The Horizon 2020 calls for smart city lighthouse projects have generated considerable interest from stakeholders. Nine of our members were among the first round of cities whose lighthouse projects and replication ideas will be co-funded under the H2020-SCC-01 call. In cooperation with the selected cities, we will reinforce the sustainability and replicability of the projects by sharing results and best practices with our wider network.

Horizon 2020 could be strengthened with a greater focus on capacity building in cities during the project application process. A pre-submission check by the Commission could help cities better define the content and ensure the consistency of their proposals. Better advice on involving private companies and industry without infringing EU and national legislation on tenders and sub-contracts would also be welcome.

³ www.greendigitalcharter.eu

⁴ www.citykeys-project.eu

In addition, innovative financial instruments will be very important for leveraging private sector investment, including for cities. Many local authorities would need technical assistance to structure larger strategic projects and make use of financial instruments.

The broader context - smarter cities and an EU urban agenda

The growing debate on an EU urban agenda is a real opportunity to design a policy framework that empowers cities to deliver the Europe 2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as the 2030 climate and energy framework. An EU urban agenda should help connect European and national policies that impact on cities, and better involve cities in their design and coordination.

It should be made clear to stakeholders, including cities, how the different EU initiatives are linked, what their added value is, and how their impact on the ground fits with the EU's broader strategic objectives. In relation to smarter cities, an EU urban agenda could:

- Help streamline EU initiatives that deal with reducing greenhouse gas emissions in cities, such as the Covenant of Mayors, Mayors' Adapt, Green Digital Charter and the Smart Cities EIP.
- Coordinate work on sustainability indicators between the smart cities activities and follow up actions to the 7th Environmental Action Programme (7th EAP).

We will continue to fully engage with EU level efforts designed to help our cities become smarter. The next steps at EU level must recognise that direct involvement of cities is essential for making an impact on the ground. Only with cities on board can we ensure that smart city solutions meet the real demand and needs in cities and of citizens. This is vital for the uptake of new technologies, and to ensure that smart city initiatives generate markets, growth, sustainability and social inclusion.