



NET ZERO CITIES

Proceedings of NetZeroCities conference n°2

Deliverable D12.10

Version N°1

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This project has received funding from the H2020 Research and Innovation Programme under the grant agreement n°101036519.

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AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Document Information

Grant Agreement Number	101036519
Project Title	NetZeroCities
Project Acronym	NZC
Project Start Date	01 October 2021
Related Work Package	WP12
Related Task(s)	Task 12.6
Lead Organisation	Eurocities
Submission Date	
Dissemination Level	Public

History of reviews

Date	Submitted by	Reviewed by (Name & WP)	Version



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Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
P2P	Peer-to-peer
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
CCC	Climate City Contract

Summary

This deliverable is a summary of the second NetZeroCities conference which was held in Brussels, Belgium, in June 2023 (M21).

This deliverable is connected to Task 12.6 which aim is to organise three open conferences, possibly connected to existing events, between M4 and M48. The objective for each event is to attract a minimum of 150 participants and to target a wide range of stakeholder groups in order to ensure dissemination of the project findings, including local, regional and national public authorities; EU institutions; policy makers; research and academia; businesses including SMEs; industry; civil society and finance.

Keywords

Conference, workshops, panels, event



Conference overview

1 Introduction

From June 26th to 27th, the “**Mission in Progress: Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission 2023 Conference**”, jointly hosted by NetZeroCities and the European Commission, convened. The event was held in Brussels at the Maison de la Poste, a [sustainable events venue](#) situated within Tour & Taxi, a cornerstone of Brussels’ urban development.

This two-day gathering marked the second meeting of the 112 Mission Cities participating in the 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission. The conference's primary objective was to facilitate in-depth discussions and knowledge sharing, with the overarching aim of enabling European cities to take bold climate action and achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

1.1 Attendees

The conference was attended by practitioner and political representation from 103 of the 112 Mission Cities. In addition, there was attendance from one of the non-Mission Pilot Cities, Drammen.

The conference attracted over 450 participants across the two days including over 60 mayors from Mission Cities. See figures 1 & 2 for a breakdown of participant numbers by day and type of attendee.

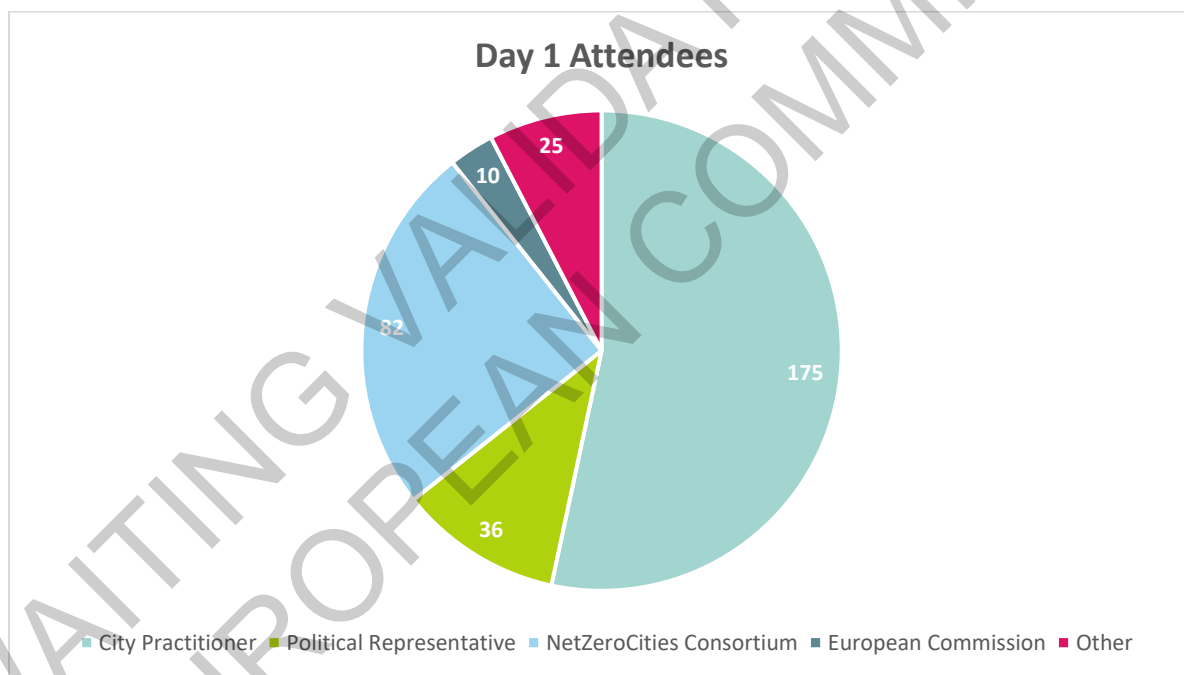


Figure 1 Day 1 breakdown of participant numbers by attendee type



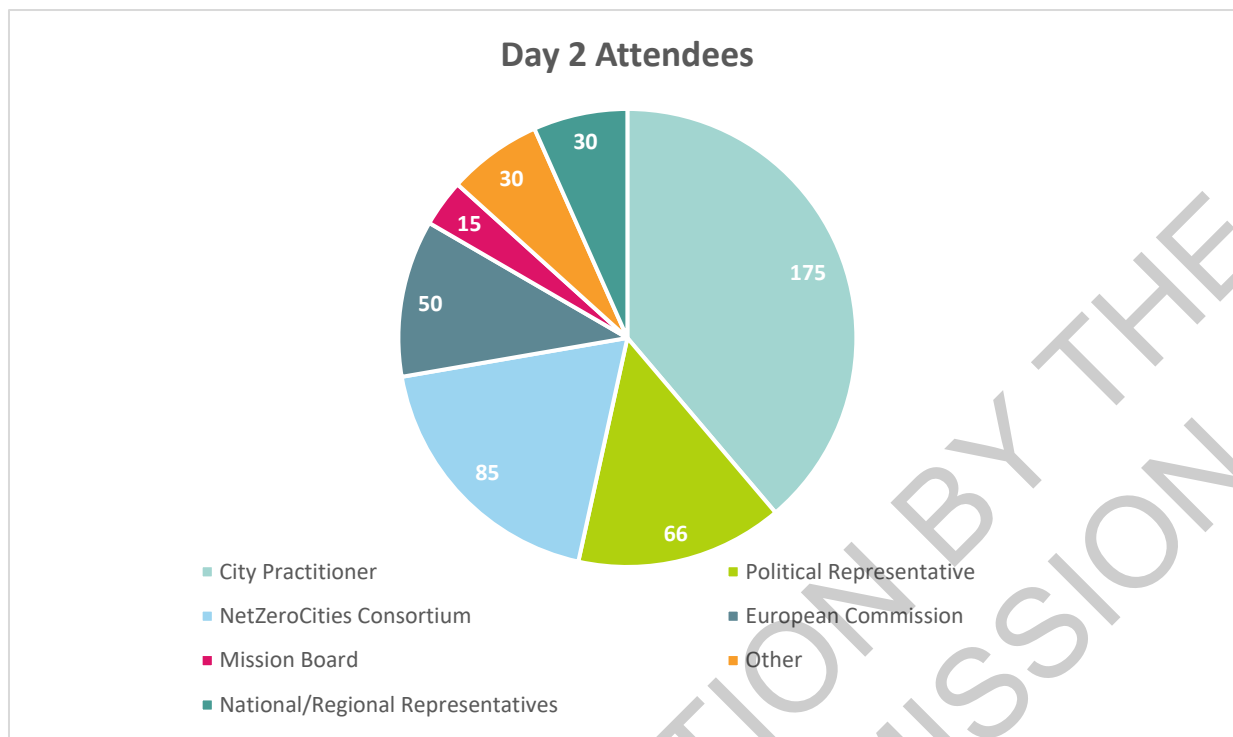


Figure 2 Day 2 breakdown of participant numbers by attendee type

1.2 Programme

The two-day programme was primarily designed by NetZeroCities and the Cities Mission Secretariat. Sessions were also co-designed with some Mission Cities, CINEA and other Cities Mission stakeholders.

The first day was open to Mission City practitioners and mayors. There was a strong emphasis on peer-to-peer exchange and learning with a focus on policy challenges, capability building and engaging with key thematic challenges on the journey to climate neutrality.

The second day was open to a wider audience, including representatives of both national and regional networks/institutions as well as persons from across the European Commission. A two-track approach to the agenda was taken to create a strong offer for all attendee types, particularly Mission City mayors. In practice, this meant the afternoon of day two was split into a 'political' and 'practitioner' track. The political track was the principal offer for Mission City mayors, providing a space for them to engage with members of the European Commission, MEPs and financial stakeholders engaged in the mission of financing climate neutrality.

Monday 26 June	
09:00 – 09:50	Registration, coffee/pastries and project stands
09:50 – 09:55	Opening & welcome from Katharina Moser (Event Facilitator)
09:55 – 10:00	Welcome keynote speech from André Sobczak, Secretary General, Eurocities
10:00 – 11:00	NetZeroCities Updates & Panel Conversation
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	Peer-to-peer exchange session



13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 16:00	Thematic knowledge exchange sessions
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30–18:00	Policy challenges exchange session
18:00	End – city drinks offsite

Table 1 Day one full agenda

Tuesday 27 June			
General track			
09:00 – 09:30	Registration, coffee/pastries and project stands		
09:30 – 09:40	Welcome keynote speech from Marc Lemaître, Director General for Research & Innovation, European Commission		
09:40 – 10:00	Impulse statements Cities as Frontrunners of the Climate Transition		
10:00 – 11:00	Panel 1 Climate-Neutral Cities by 2023: A Political Reality Check		
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break		
11:30 – 12:00	Panel 2 The European Green Deal at Local Level: Challenges & Co-Benefits		
12:30 – 13:00	Photo moment		
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break		
Political track		Practitioner track	
14:00 – 15:30	Investment Roundtable	14:00 – 16:00	Pilot Cities: In the Spotlight
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break	16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:00 – 17:00	Meeting with the Mayors & MEPs	16:30 – 17:30	Cities Mission – Funding opportunities and partners
General track			
17:30 – 17:45	Closing plenary		
17:45 – 18:00	Conclusions from Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President, European Commission		

Table 2 Day two full agenda

1.3 Venue

The event was held at the Maison de la Poste. Once the administrative hub of Tour & Taxis, Europe's former shipping giant, the recently renovated site is now Brussels' premier events centre with 15 heritage event rooms.

The venue is recognized with the Green Key eco label, Maison de la Poste aligns with Tour & Taxis' sustainable vision, fostering environmentally responsible practices.





Figure 3 Maison de la Poste building

1.4 Name badges

Each attendee received a personal badge with their name, organisation and job title. The other side of the badge displayed the agenda for the two days and had a QR code for any attendees to access the detailed agenda.

Following informal feedback conversations with NZC partners, it was suggested that in the 2024 edition of the event, personal pronouns will be included on name badges. This will create a welcoming and inclusive environment, allowing all attendees to participate authentically and confidently.

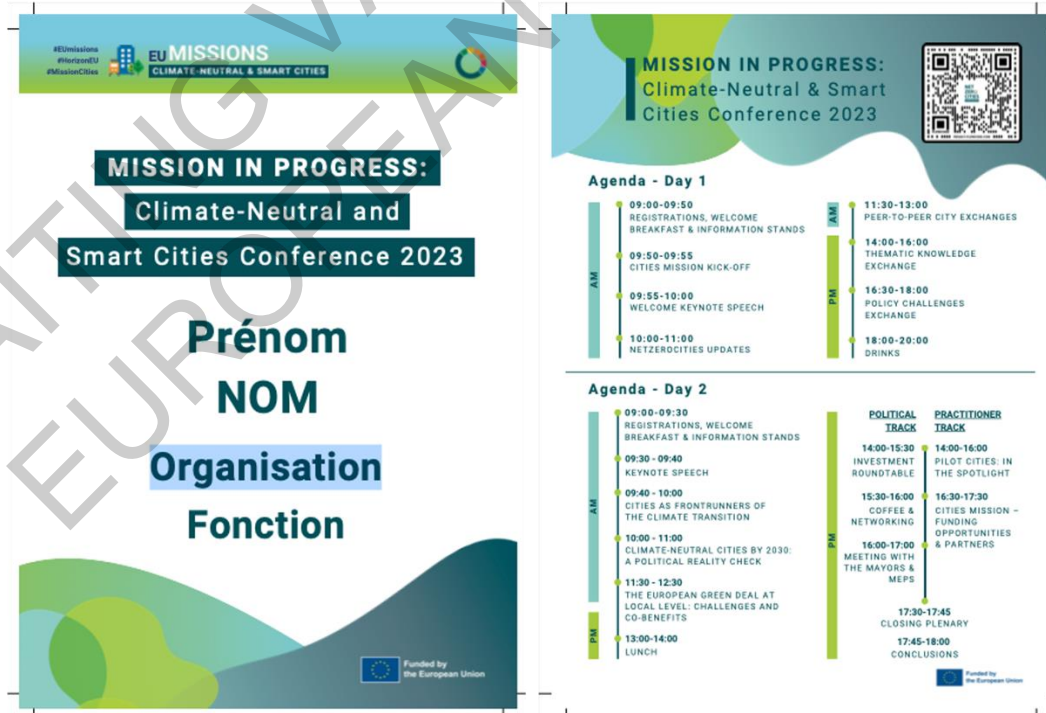


Figure 4 Name badge template



1.5 Facilitation

A professional events moderator, Katharina Moser of Moderating EU, was selected to facilitate the conference and lead many of the diverse sessions offered to delegates. Among several moderators considered, Katharina had previously moderated the first Cities Mission conference – Let's Go! Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission Kick Off - in June 2022. Her existing knowledge of where the 112 Mission Cities stood in their respective and collective journeys to climate neutrality, as part of the Cities Mission, made her the preferred choice. With this understanding of the Cities Mission, it was agreed that continuity with the moderator would be best to welcome the Mission Cities back and ensure a seamless transition into the discussions, fostering a sense of familiarity and expertise.



Figure 5 Katharina Moser, event facilitator

1.6 Project stands

The event provided many networking opportunities between different cities, Cities Mission projects and initiatives and other stakeholders related to the Cities Mission. During the coffee and lunch breaks, information stations were set up for participants to be able to discuss Mission-critical concepts and ideas with the following organisations and initiatives:

- European Investment Bank (EIB)
- Mission Innovation Urban Transition Missions
- Covenant of Mayors
- CapaCITIES
- DUT Partnership
- CrAft
- CLIMABOROUGH
- Re-Value
- UP2030
- UPPER
- SPINE
- Neutralpath
- ASCEND
- European Commission (including Cities Mission and Mission on Climate Adaptation)

As NetZeroCities expands its service offer to cities and partnership working under SGA1, the 2024 edition of the event will endeavour to facilitate the participation of Cities Mission projects and initiatives in session design in addition to offering the option of a project stand for networking opportunities.



Figure 6 Project stations at the event

1.7 Live stream & translation

On the second day of the event, the following plenary sessions were live streamed:

- Keynote speech from Marc Lemaître, Director General for Research and Innovation, European Commission – [link to recording](#)
- Impulse statements: Cities as frontrunners of the climate transition – [link to recording](#)
- Panel 1: Climate-neutral cities by 2023: a political reality check– [link to recording](#)
- Panel 2: The European Green Deal at local level: challenges & co-benefits – [link to recording](#)
- Closing conclusions from Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission – [link to recording](#)

The morning plenary sessions were livestreamed in six different languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Polish and Italian. The simultaneous translation was provided by translation specialists, Coligua.

The recorded sessions in English can be viewed via the links provided above.



1.8 Conference Communications

Communications for the Cities Mission Conference 2023 was organised into three stages: communications in the lead up to the conference, communications during the two-day conference, post conference communications.

Communications into the lead up of the conference consisted of announcing the conference to Cities and other target groups such as related projects. A social media 'Save the Date' visual was created as the main Cities Mission Conference 2023 image. It was created to be eye-catching with its use of the Cities Mission and NetZeroCities' colours as well as give a taster of what the conference will be like. This was done by using images from the 'Let's Go! Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission Kick Off' in June 2022. The visual can be found below. Pre-conference communications used a range of channels such as: the [NetZeroCities Portal](#), social media posts on NetZeroCities channels, emails to the NetZeroCities consortium, the NetZeroCities website, and email invitations to Mission Cities inviting them to register, what is in store, and practical information for their attendance. Below are some social media post examples of the types of communication taken.



Figure 7: Save the Date Event Visual



Figure 8: Example Twitter Post Announcing the Conference



Two months before the conference, [an article](#) was written and published on the NetZeroCities' website to announce the Cities Mission Conference 2023, who the conference is for, what to expect, and invite Mission Cities to register. Specific social media posts across NetZeroCities' channels were designed to give a taster of what to expect at the Cities Mission Conference, specifically the keynote speakers. Further, [a Cities Mission Conference 2023 webpage](#) was created six weeks prior to the conference to host information related to the conference, including the conference agenda.



Figure 9: Cities Mission Conference 2023 Website Page

During the two-day conference, the communications team had created a social media plan for the two days to ensure balanced coverage of the sessions and speakers. They carried out 'live tweeting' on the [NetZeroCities' Twitter](#) account and introductory and 'key takeaways' posts on [NetZeroCities' LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#). Notes from session speakers and keynote speakers were taken to ensure accurate 'live tweeting' of quotes from speakers who were 'tagged' in the social media posts along with images of them delivering their sessions to harness greater interaction with the posts from target audiences. The notes taken were also utilised for the post-conference article for NetZeroCities. The introductory and 'key takeaways' posts on LinkedIn and Instagram included information on the agenda for the day ahead, the link to the live stream (section 1.7), and key information to take away at the end of the day which focused on key discussion points, news, and highlights from day one and day two. This was done at the beginning and end of each day and included images taken during the day to ensure that online audiences could view some of the snapshots from the days. During the conference, audience members were asked to use the hashtag '#MissionInProgress' if they posted about the conference from their respective social media accounts in order to attract interaction from different audience groups through other channels.





Figure 10: Example Instagram Post to Kick-Off the Conference



Figure 11: Example Twitter Post of 'Live Tweeting'

For post-conference communications, an article was written to showcase the conference, its takeaways, its impacts, and to highlight progress made by cities. [The follow-up article](#) is hosted on the NetZeroCities website. Additionally, social media posts were created to provide 'key takeaways' from the two-day conference and redirect users to the article for a more in-depth read. The recordings from the live stream of plenary sessions from Day 1 and Day 2 of the Conference were uploaded to the [NetZeroCities YouTube](#) channel. The recordings were also posted in the Knowledge Repository on the NetZeroCities Portal to allow users to re-watch the sessions or for anyone who might have missed the conference. Further, information about the conference as well as the link to the article was included in the fourth NetZeroCities newsletter which was sent beginning of July to subscribers.

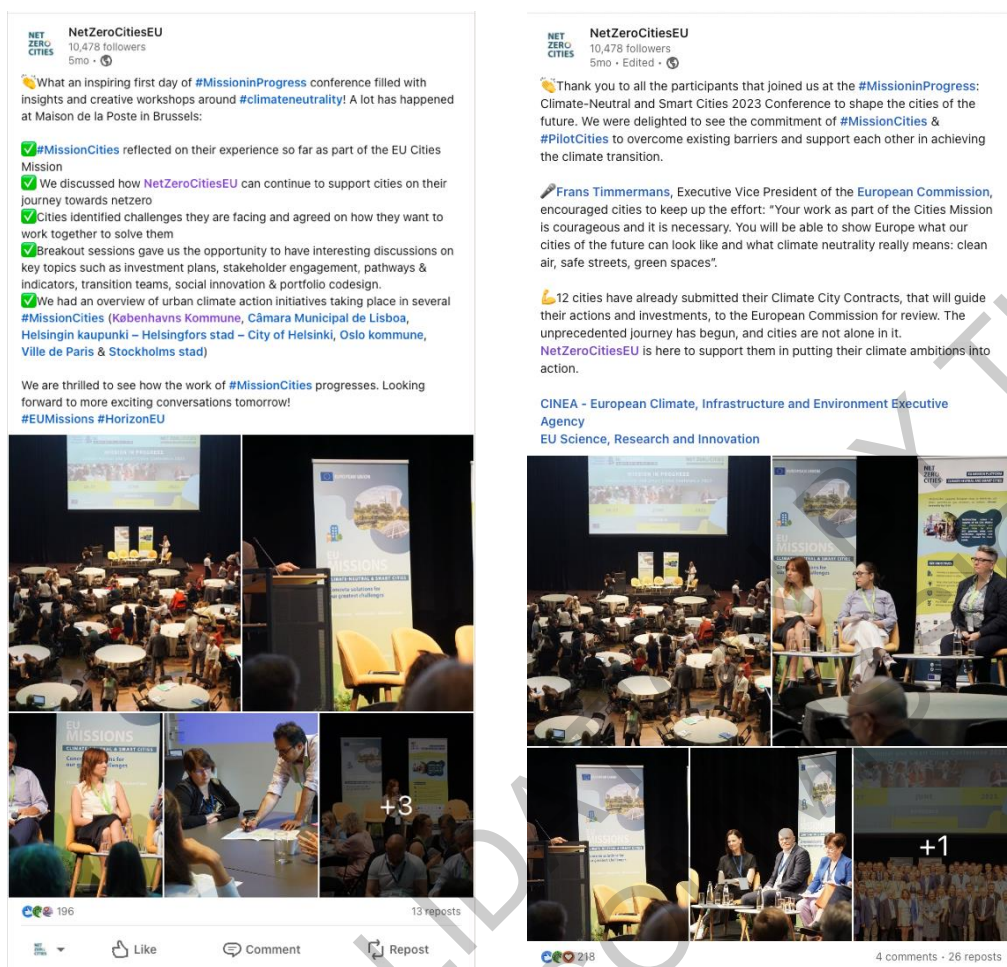


Figure 12: Example LinkedIn Posts of 'Key Takeaways'

Conference proceedings

2 Day one proceedings – Monday 26 June

2.1 Day one keynote speech

André Sobczak, Secretary General of Eurocities, delivered the keynote speech for day one of the Cities Mission 2023 conference and set the tone for two days of collaborative working. Representing one of the leading networks of European Cities, André's insights and call for open discussions aligned well with the collaborative spirit needed to address the challenges and goals of the Mission Cities. The address provided a framework for fruitful collaborations between Mission Cities and other relevant stakeholders over the conference duration.

A full recording of the speech can be [found here](#).

2.2 NetZeroCities Updates

To kick-off discussions for the day, Mission City practitioners were given food for thought with NetZeroCities updates from Thomas Osdoba, NZC Programme Director at EIT Climate-KIC, followed by a panel discussion with NZC representatives. The discussions focused on the CCC process and its evolution, and upcoming city support for 2023 and early 2024, with a chance for Q&A from cities.



Before the panel discussion, participants were asked to speak to the person next to them and discuss their shared experience of the Cities Mission to date. Participants were then asked to reflect on these discussions and share their expectations for the conference using Slido. The majority of participants mentioned collaboration in some way. Please see Appendix 1 of this document for the full Slido results.

Panellists:

- **Thomas Osdoba**, NZC Programme Director, EIT Climate-KIC
- **Francesca Rizzo**, Professor, Politecnico de Milano
- **Jane McLaughlin**, Climate Neutral Cities Advisor
- **Anthony Zacharzewski**, President, Democratic Society
- **Joost Beunderman**, Director, Dark Matter Labs

The main takeaways from the panel discussion were:

- There is a need for **better communication** from NZC to national governments, but the current efforts are not sufficient. It is important for all stakeholders to work together strategically.
- The **mission label** is expected to be completed by the middle of August for the first round, but there is still work to be done on it. The value of the label will increase over time, but immediate resourcing may not be available directly.
- The post-it notes from the participants highlighted various themes and needs. These include **stability, confidence, acceptance, determination, validation**, honesty, recharging, interesting experiences, recognition of importance, awareness, ambition, action, commitment, and convening power.
- Specific needs mentioned include **clarity in the mission label, transparency, certainty about CCC goals, knowledge about pilot projects**, and the importance of receiving feedback, policy solutions, and data about targets. Social innovation, political leverage, and stakeholder engagement were also mentioned as crucial.
- The participants expressed the need for inspiration, motivation, synergies, hope, and practical ideas. They also emphasized the importance of **collaboration, cooperation, connections, networking, and exchanges with other cities and stakeholders**.
- **Financial support** and sustainable finance were mentioned as critical needs, with participants expressing the need for funding, investment, and practical advice on securing financial resources.

2.3 Peer-to-peer city exchanges

The peer-to-peer city exchanges session was designed for cities to discuss and prioritise issues and explore ways of working.

For this session, the conference hall was partitioned into distinct working groups, each dedicated to a specific thematic category. Attendees were invited to choose a category that aligned with their interests and then proceed to the corresponding section of the room, where they could join a table for in-depth discussions. Each table was facilitated by members of the NZC consortium.

The following topics were covered:

1. Finance and procurement
2. Governance and engagement
3. Planning and spatial – transport



4. Emissions and decarbonisation sectoral methodologies including residual emissions
5. District level approaches
6. Other: beyond city competence, open data, and other Missions

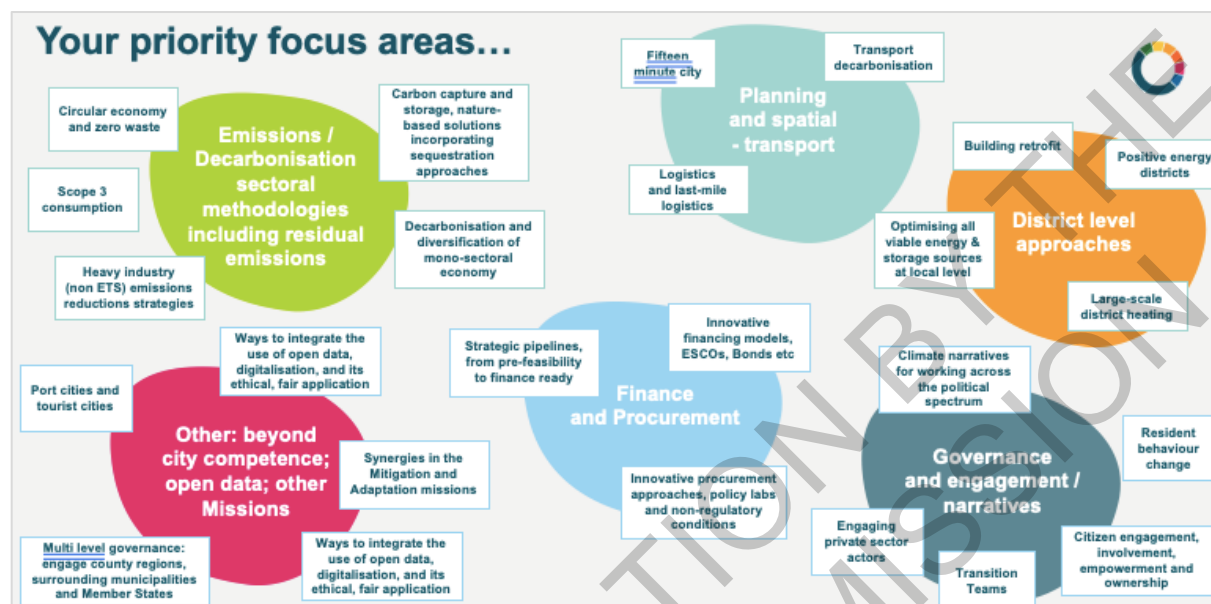


Figure 13 Priority focus areas

For each topic, the following questions were:

- Rank sub-topics in order of priority.
- What are the common barriers and challenges?
- Which of these will most benefit from an ongoing peer-to-peer collaboration? (Rank these in order)

This session represented one of the first major opportunities to trial peer-to-peer engagement as explored through the Support Needs Assessment Process and outlined in D1.8. The synthesis of SNAP meetings and workshops yielded over 40 distinct issues suitable for peer-to-peer collaboration. These were distilled into six overarching areas and 26 individual sub-topics (see figure 7). Participants collaborated at tables to address priorities within these topics and determine the preferred peer-to-peer working formats. At the end of this session participants were asked to share one short take away from the topic discussions and share their top priority topic using Slido (for the full list of responses see Annex 2 of this document).

The outcomes of this synthesis process have played a pivotal role in shaping the design of the City Support Groups and influencing strategic thinking regarding service delivery and peer-to-peer opportunities for Mission Cities in the future. For a full detailed takeaways from this session, refer to Annex 3 of this document.

2.4 Thematic knowledge exchange sessions

The thematic knowledge exchange sessions were delivered as part of the NetZeroCities Capability Building Programme (SGA1 T4.2) that aims to support cities at various stages of their CCC design process. Following the first NZC Summer School (Milan, June 2023), the sessions were delivered to give participants an understanding of the content that would be delivered through future NZC Summer and Winter Schools (SGA1 T4.2.2).



Multidisciplinary breakout rooms covered the following topics:

- Transition teams
- Portfolio co-design
- Investment Plans
- Stakeholder engagement
- Pathways and indicators
- Social innovation

Participants were given the option to participate in two of the six thematic sessions. Resources from these sessions were shared on the online group and attendees were also directed to the dedicated online Capability Building programme groups on the [NZC portal](#).



Figure 14 An interactive Thematic Knowledge Exchange session

2.5 Policy challenges exchange

The policy challenges exchange session focused on urban climate action initiatives that require collective policy action. This session was designed in collaboration with the Nordic cities of Helsinki, Oslo, Copenhagen and Stockholm.

Six Mission Cities shared local climate action initiatives that, to be effective, need policy coordination at the European level:

- **Copenhagen:** Working towards a post-2025 climate plan that includes Scope 3 emissions and aims to achieve climate positivity. Focus on changing the energy system and utilizing waste-to-energy plants. Challenges in financing carbon capture and storage (CCS).
- **Helsinki:** Aiming for carbon neutrality by 2030, prioritizing the heating, transport, and construction sectors. Implementing strategies like the Energy Renaissance project and energy efficiency requirements for new buildings.



- **Paris:** Striving for climate neutrality by 2050, with an emphasis on retrofitting social housing, reducing car dependency, and promoting collaboration across EU, national, and city levels.
- **Oslo:** Targeting a 95% reduction in direct greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, particularly in transport, waste, and construction sectors. Collaborating at the EU level to address emissions beyond the city borders.
- **Lisbon:** Combining climate neutrality, adaptation, resilience, and social inclusion. Updating the 2050 plan to align with more ambitious CCC targets for 2030.
- **Stockholm:** Aiming for a 50% reduction in consumption-based emissions by 2030. Targeting climate positivity by 2030 and fossil fuel-free status by 2040. Implementing policy measures such as reducing single-use plastics and strengthening product declaration requirements.

City presentations were followed by discussions carried out in a world café format. Participants discussed policy needs, implementation challenges and desired outcomes in groups using the above climate action initiatives as examples.

During the session participants were asked to participate in a Slido poll where they were asked to share their city, one policy challenge and one clear wish for policy support from the European Commission. For the full results of this poll, please refer to Annex 4 of this document.

Outcomes of this session were used to inform the development of policy labs under T14.4.2 of the NZC grant agreement.



3 Day two proceedings – Tuesday 27 June

3.1 Group photo

On the second day of the event one representative from each Mission City in attendance was invited for a group photo, alongside the Cities Mission Board Members and Mission Manager.



Figure 15 2023 Cities Mission conference group photo

3.2 Morning sessions

Day two kicked off with a [video](#) named "EU Cities Mission: Mission in Progress." It showcased insights from Mission City mayors, local administrators, Members of the Mission Board, and the Mission Manager. The video provided an understanding of what the Cities Mission meant to these stakeholders, shedding light on its significance and impact.

3.2.1 Day two keynote speech

Marc Lemaître, Director General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission, gave the day two keynote speech. Reaffirming the European Commission's support for cities as the leaders in the transition to climate neutrality, the key takeaways from Lemaître were:

- The critical role of cities and their significance as frontrunners in achieving sustainability and addressing the climate emergency.
- The importance of a systems perspective and ambitious goals, like having at least 100 Climate Neutral cities by 2030.
- Mission progress was noted, with 112 cities working toward this goal, and 12 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities (CCCs) submitted for appraisal.
- The need for attention to citizen engagement, collaboration among public authorities, and securing funding, especially from private sources.

A full recording of the speech can be found [here](#).



3.2.2 Impulse statements: Cities as frontrunners of the climate transition

Impulse statements – brief but impactful - were delivered by key speakers. Barbara Trachte, State Secretary for Brussels Capital Region, and Kim Jørgensen, Director General of the European Investment Bank, shared essential perspectives from different stakeholders to the Mission and provided food for the day's discussions.

Barbara Trachte stressed the role of cities in transitioning to a more social, circular, and climate-neutral economy. She highlighted the interconnectedness of the environment, climate, and economy, emphasizing citizen and business involvement. Trachte's strategy includes making buildings climate-neutral, recognizing cities as hubs for innovation in climate action.

Kim Jørgensen underscored EIB's commitment to supporting the green and digital transition in cities. Initiatives like ELENA, JASPERS, and the InvestEU Advisory Hub were mentioned. Jørgensen noted the increasing funds in renewable energy, committing to support €1 billion in green projects by 2030. Collaboration, including initiatives like REPowerEU providing €5 billion in loans, was highlighted as essential for achieving climate neutrality.

A full recording of both impulse statements can be found [here](#).

3.2.3 Panel 1: Climate-neutral cities by 2023: a political reality check

The panel discussion delved into the progress and challenges faced by cities involved in the Cities Mission, one year after their selection. Moderated by **Patrick Child**, Deputy Director-General at the European Commission's DG Environment and Cities Mission Manager, the panel featured insightful remarks and discussions from:

- **Anders Almgren**, Mayor of Lund
- **Minna Arve**, Mayor of Turku
- **Emil Boc**, Mayor of Cluj Napoca
- **Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz**, Chair of the Cities Mission Board
- **Karen van Dantzig**, Dutch Urban Envoy

In the panel discussion, three key themes were emphasised: **flexibility in climate contracts, multi-level involvement, and financing importance**. The panel provided a comprehensive overview of the Cities Mission's impact, challenges, and collaborative efforts toward achieving climate neutrality by 2030.

A full recording of the panel can be found [here](#)

3.2.4 Panel 2: The European Green Deal at local level: challenges & co-benefits

This panel delved into the local and broader impacts of the Mission, exploring how cities, citizens, and businesses can derive maximum benefit while addressing challenges and co-benefits. Moderated by **Rosalinde Van der Vlies**, Director of "Clean Planet" at DG Research and Innovation, European Commission, and Deputy Mission Manager, the panel featured insights from:

- **Tanya Hristova**, Mayor of Gabrovo
- **Anna Lisa Boni**, Deputy Mayor of Bologna and Coordinator of the network of Italian Cities
- **Allan Pilgaard-Jensen**, Deputy Director, ProjectZero
- **Giorgia Rambelli**, Director of Mission Innovation, Urban Transitions Mission

The takeaway message echoed the importance of engagement, empowerment, and embracing challenges for successful mission outcomes. Overall, the panel encapsulated the complexities and



opportunities in localizing the European Green Deal, emphasizing collaborative, innovative, and citizen-centric approaches.

A full recording of the panel can be found [here](#)

3.3 Afternoon sessions

After the lunch break on day two the agenda split into two 'tracks': the political track and the practitioner track. The political track was designed for political representatives of Mission Cities, representatives from national institutions and other high-level representatives from the European Commission.

3.3.1 Political track

3.3.1.1 Investment Roundtable

The Investment Roundtable invited high-level speakers and Mission cities' Mayors to discuss how financial institutions, philanthropies, investment funds and other partners can mobilise funding and finance to help make the climate transformation happen and how the Climate Neutrality Investment Plans can be made most useful both for cities and investors.

Moderated by **Kirsten Dunlop**, CEO, EIT Climate KIC, the roundtable contributors were as follows:

- **Caspar Boendermaker**, Specialist Business Development and Sustainability, Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten (BNG)
- **Paweł Chorąży**, Managing Director for EU Funds, Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK)
- **Emmanuelle Nasse Bridier**, Executive Director Urban Resilience Initiative, Meridiam
- **Matiss Paegle**, Investment Director BaltCap | Member of Cities Mission Board
- **Werner Schmidt**, Director Urban and Territorial Development Department - Projects Directorate, European Investment Bank
- **Sergio Urbani**, Director General, Fondazione Cariplo
- **Venera Vlad**, Associate Director, Sustainable Infrastructure Group, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The Q&A covered topics like joint ventures for city projects, EIB financing, and transforming the financial sector. In the closing segment, speakers discussed innovative solutions, knowledge transfer through programs like EBRD's Green Cities, and the need for streamlined procurement rules. Mayors emphasised the importance of practical support, and speakers called for collaboration, innovation, and municipal engagement to ensure success for all 112 cities in their climate endeavours.

3.3.1.2 Meeting with the Mayors & MEPs

This meeting between political representatives of participating cities, Members of the European Parliament (Urban Intergroup, with Vice – President MEP Andreas Schieder) and the Mission Manager, Patrick Child (Deputy Director-General of the European Commission's DG Environment), served as an opportunity to have a frank exchange on the political reality in climate-ambitious cities and on their challenges and needs.

The discussion offered a platform to develop ideas how to improve multilevel governance for the benefit of cities and their citizens. From these discussions arose four key areas for focus for the Mission Secretariat:

1. The necessity of national support
2. Unlocking funding for Mission Cities
3. Improved sharing between Mission Cities
4. Further support at European level



This was a closed-door session, open only to Mission City political representatives and colleagues from the Cities Mission Secretariat, DG RTD.

3.3.2 Practitioner track

3.3.2.1 Pilot Cities: in the spotlight

Nineteen presentations were made (18 in person; 1 sent by video) in this Pilot Cities: In the Spotlight session. The presenters were tasked with 'pitching' their hopes, aspirations, vision for their activities to tightly defined parameters: 3 minutes, 3 slides, and no text. To incentivise sticking to these parameters, the facilitator offered the prospect of a chocolate should the speaker stick to the 3 mins marker. (Unfortunately, the same could not be applied to the text-images parameter, which some of them broke in the build-up to the session).

In anecdotal feedback, participants and audience alike enjoyed listening to the presentations and learning more about the pilot activities recently launched, and also particularly liked the 'Business Card' approach we took to connecting interested parties during the presentation (using a QR code attached to a Microsoft form, to leave a calling card and message for someone they wanted to connect with).

A full recording of this session can be found [here](#).

3.3.2.2 Cities Mission – Funding opportunities & partners

Designed in close collaboration with the European Commission, this session was designed to present concrete funding and partnership opportunities for Mission Cities from a range of European institutions and initiatives. In a one-slide format, the following initiatives and opportunities presented:

- **Jennifer Wendelius**, Driving Urban Transitions (DUT), presenting DUTs 2023 call for projects related to the 15 Minute City, Positive Energy Districts, and Circular Urban Economies
- **Vasileios Tsanidis**, European Innovation Council (EIC), presenting a CSA call providing support to test EIC innovations with public and private procurers
- **Kathleen McCarron**, Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) presenting their second call for proposals for innovative solutions in sustainable urban development
- **Giorgia Rambelli**, Urban Transitions Mission (UTM), presenting opportunities for cities for join the city cohort of the Urban Transitions Mission
- **Hiro Ito**, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), presenting EBRD Green Cities
- **Krisztina Severnyak**, European Investment Bank (EIB), presenting the European Local Energy Assistance service





Figure 16 European Innovation Council presentation

3.3.3 General track

3.3.3.1 Closing plenary

The final plenary discussion before the conclusion of the event was moderated by **Patrick Child**, Deputy Director-General DG Environment and Cities Mission Manager. Patrick Child commented on the criticality of co-creative and collective action in the Mission, a recurring theme throughout the events. The discussion was held in the plenary hall with:

- **Dovydas Kaminskas**, Mayor of Tauragė
- **Natalia Chueca**, Mayor of Zaragoza

A full recording of the closing plenary can be found [here](#).



Figure 17 Closing plenary speakers

3.3.3.2 Conclusions from Frans Timmermans,

Frans Timmermans', Executive Vice President of the European Commission, address served as a fitting and impactful conclusion to the conference, providing a sense of optimism tempered with a serious acknowledgment of the challenges ahead. His recognition of mayors handling the migration crisis locally underscored the importance of grassroots action. His remarks not only encapsulated the essence of the two-day event but also instilled a sense of purpose and responsibility in participants, making it an excellent concluding note for the conference.

A full recording of the conference conclusions can be found [here](#).



Figure 18 Frans Timmermans gives conclusions to the event



Appendices

4 Appendix 1 NZC updates session Slido Results

Thinking about your shared experience, what is one thing that you want to get out of this conference

- 68 mentioned they want collaboration/synergies/dialogue to find innovative and impactful solutions and implement them (but horizontally, beyond workshops, including private sector and the public and without additional bureaucracy).
- 16 mentioned they want funding/money/financial solutions.
- 14 mentioned the importance of political/policy influence and engagement and multi-level governance.
- 12 mentioned communication, storytelling etc. for increasing public acceptance.
- 11 mentioned processes (climate investment plans, climate budgeting, planning transition, establishing national networks, twinning, transition teams, use of the portal, urban planning, monitoring...).
- 6 mentioned legislation, regulation, or procurement.
- 6 mentioned data-related topics.
- 6 mentioned scope 3.
- 5 mentioned energy-related topics.
- 5 mentioned transport/mobility.
- 2 added negative comments about CCCs.
- 1 complimented CAs.

5 Appendix 2: P2P session Slido results

Share one short take away from the topic discussions and what is your top priority topic that you would like to focus on?

Governance and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilevel governance is crucial for effective climate action. • Engaging different stakeholders, including citizens and the private sector, is essential. • Collaboration and systemic coordination are needed to achieve climate goals. • Prioritize implementation over planning and match influence with investments. • Uniting positive narratives can drive motivation for change and reduce perceived risk.
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Finance and Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative finance and green funds are necessary for sustainable projects. Mobilize funding to support citizens in converting their assets. Encourage private sector engagement through investment co-financing and green procurement.
Data and Knowledge Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange ideas and share expertise to create tangible action items. Clarify specific data needs for inventory sharing between cities. Open data initiatives can facilitate better decision-making.
Climate Goals and Scope 3 Emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for scope 3 emissions and focus on transport decarbonization. Climate neutrality objectives are a priority, aligning with national governments. Consider scope 3 emissions in city climate strategies.
Urban Planning and Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban planning plays a crucial role in achieving climate goals. Implement district-level actions for more sustainable communities. Climate-friendly retrofitting and district heating can highlight community aspects.
Citizen Engagement and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen engagement is key to achieving climate objectives. Empower citizens to be active participants in climate action.
Positive Narratives and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize positive narratives and honesty to inspire change. Effective public engagement and communication are necessary for successful climate initiatives.

6 Appendix 3: Detailed P2P session key takeaways

Category	Questions	Key Takeaways
Finance and procurement	Rank topics in order of priority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic pipelines: from pre-feasibility to finance ready. Innovative financing models: ESCOs, Bonds, Community investment vehicles (e.g., cooperatives, crowdfunding). Innovative procurement approaches, policy labs and non-regulatory conditions.
	What are the common barriers and challenges?	<p>Common barriers when it comes to innovative finance models include regulatory hurdles, lack of understanding of the private sector, risk assessment complexities, resistance to change and limited data availability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with energy providers who own data. Bureaucratic procurement even for basic things. <p>Reference points lacking; visibility needed for new financing vehicles, emphasizing outcomes, not just models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge gaps when it comes to what models work and what initial funding do they use. Climate budgeting as a common best practice.



		<p>How to work with public subsidies, private financing and local loans combined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowdfunding for small projects. • Co-creation projects and pilots with the private sector rather than just sharing the information or outcome. <p>A solution-driven framework is needed, the formation of a tactical working group has been proposed to provide these solutions faster.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge overload: P2P needs to be very specific on both tools and topics. • Everyone is very busy: they need a clear mindset both to share and learn. • Building toolkit of finance solutions.
	What of these will most benefit from an ongoing peer-to-peer collaboration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness and understanding. • Limited data availability. • Reference points lacking.
Governance and engagement	Rank topics in order of priority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate narratives for working across the political spectrum. 2. Engaging private sector actors. 3. Citizen engagement, involvement, empowerment, and ownership. 4. Resident behaviour change. 5. Transition Teams.
	What are the common barriers and challenges?	<p>Challenges include breaking down silos, governance awareness, engaging stakeholders, local authorities' role, reaching actors without media access, lack of motivation, positive narratives, language barriers, and transition team operation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing the state level into the discussion. Cities are forces to lead climate action and pressure governments. • Ideological narratives only appeal to green energy. • Creating ownership for specific emissions reductions targets beyond city competency. • Understanding of skills, profiles and work force needed to create new governance teams. • When cities are gathered on round tables at the European levels, they are more inclined to favor climate action.
	What of these will most benefit from an ongoing peer-to-peer collaboration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising governance awareness - Reaching actors without media access. - Addressing lack of motivation. - Facilitating peer-to-peer interactions between cities and authorities - Fostering cooperation and commitment to climate action at the European level.
Planning and spatial – transport	Rank topics in order of priority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overcoming conspiracy theories and political challenges 2. Increasing public transport and reducing car use, by addressing gentrification and spatial/social justice issues too. But also coordinating city and transport planning for efficient logistics 3. Changing mindset towards car ownership and promoting alternative modes of transportation



	<p>What are the common barriers and challenges?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing infrastructure: Many cities have built car-based transportation systems over the years, leading to sprawl and making it difficult to transition to more sustainable modes of transport. - Political challenges: There are political challenges in advancing new concepts such as the 15-minute city, as conspiracy theories and fear can hinder progress. - Zoning process: the zoning process presents a challenge in determining how to build necessary services in areas where they are needed. - Increasing car use: despite efforts to promote public transport, there is still a trend of increasing car use that needs to be addressed. - Gentrification and social justice: the challenge of ensuring spatial and social justice in urban planning, particularly avoiding gentrification. - Mindset shift: overcoming the mindset of car owners and promoting alternative modes of transport. - Financial constraints: finding ways to finance sustainable transport initiatives. - Infrastructure: improving infrastructure to support sustainable transport options. - Generation gap: addressing the cultural shift and different attitudes towards sustainable transport across generations. - Learning from examples: studying successful cases, such as Oslo, and learning from their experiences.
	<p>What of these will most benefit from an ongoing peer-to-peer collaboration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structured approach: taking a structured approach to implementing concepts and learning from successful examples. - Leading by examples: having champions who lead the way in advocating for and implementing ideas and concepts. - Step-by-step approach: overcoming barriers by gradually addressing and solving each challenge encountered. - Research component: including research as a key component to gather data and insights for decision-making - Selling a vision: effectively communicating a vision for a better city to inspire and motivate people, even when faced with the realities of the current situation.
<p>Emissions and decarbonisation sectoral methodologies including residual emissions</p>	<p>Rank topics in order of priority.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Circular economy and zero waste 2. Carbon capture and storage, nature-based solutions incorporating sequestration approaches 3. Decarbonisation and diversification of mono-sectoral economy 4. Heavy industry (non ETS) emissions reductions strategies 5. Scope 3 consumption
	<p>What are the common barriers and challenges?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political will, multilevel alignment, and social behavior change is crucial for addressing climate change effectively. Infrastructure development needs to focus on sustainable and resilient solutions. - Quality data sources are missing, making it difficult to accurately measure emissions and their impact. - Behaviour change is challenging, even with data, but can be influenced through pricing and regulation while ensuring equity and social considerations. - Identifying cities with progress, selecting specific sectors for political mandate (e.g., construction), and addressing food and consumption can facilitate more effective climate action.



	<p>What of these will most benefit from an ongoing peer-to-peer collaboration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality data sources missing: Collaborating with peers can help share knowledge, expertise, and data sources, improving the availability and accuracy of data for measuring emissions and understanding their impact. Peers can learn from each other's experiences and best practices in data collection and analysis. - Behaviour changes through pricing and regulation: Peer-to-peer collaboration allows sharing successful strategies and lessons learned in influencing behaviour change through pricing mechanisms and regulatory approaches. Different regions or cities can collaborate to find effective ways to encourage sustainable behaviours while respecting individual freedoms and ensuring social equity. - Identifying cities with progress and learning from them: Collaborating with other cities that have made progress in addressing climate change can provide valuable insights and best practices.
<p>District level approaches</p>	<p>Rank topics in order of priority.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with citizens, finding incentives to encourage citizen participation. 2. Determining whether the approach should be top-down or bottom-up. 3. Mapping best practices and providing financial incentives for private citizens.
	<p>What are the common barriers and challenges?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment and funding: finding sustainable financial models and attracting capital to overcome the high costs of building retrofit and district heating projects. - Regulations and governance: multi-level governance and the need for alignment of policy directions. - Technical barriers: such as transitioning from individual heating to district heating systems, ensuring quality control of works, and addressing technical capacity and expertise. - Energy sources: Questions arise about whether there is enough potential for sustainable sources and how the democratic distribution of resources. - Citizen engagement: incentivizing them to participate, coordinating communication and services, addressing energy poverty, and ensuring a one-stop-shop for citizens. - Data and information: access to data on building usage and the progress of retrofit projects. Obtaining data on the energy inputs already made is important for planning and tracking progress. - Collaboration and P2P learning building partnerships and collaborative relationships between cities and stakeholders. - Scalability and replication: sharing resources, adopting and adapting solutions, and engaging with experts. - Ownership models: involvement of public and private stakeholders, distribution of benefits and creating shared solutions.
	<p>What of these will most benefit from an ongoing peer-to-peer collaboration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping best practices and providing financial incentives for private citizens, identifying the starting point for each city. - Financial models and organisational governance, developing joint applications for funding and projects (connectivity and partnerships). - Sharing knowledge and experiences through workshops, site visits and online platforms. - Taking advantage of existing networks and prioritizing within cities.

7 Appendix 4: Policy exchange session Slido results

Please share your City, one policy challenge and one clear wish for policy support from the European Commission

23 cities responded

Valladolid, Lappeenranta, Gabrovo, Cork, Thessaloniki, Izmir, Lahti, Milan, Trondheim, Kozani, Klagenfurt, Bologna, Bergamo, Paris, Bristol, Aarhus, Valladolid, Amsterdam, Dortmund, Drammen, Lisbon, Limassol, and Dublin.

Policy challenge

Building rehabilitation, cabotage, circular economy (including IT material, capacity and strategy), change cars for bicycles, electric cars or alternative options, quality indicators and efficient policy making, tourism regulation, blockage from national government, engage national and regional governments, mobility (speed limits, zero emission machinery, LEZ, fuel quality and road tolls), behaviour change, industry relocation, land use, nature based solutions, (open) data and gathering, GDPR and carbon removal credits.

Policy support from EU

Cities want more EU financial and technical support as national governments often block climate action at local level. This includes space for experimentation and innovative solutions. Main areas where they want support: procurement/public tendering/labels (especially in the food, fashion, and building sectors), mobility (requiring alternative modes of (public) transport and new infrastructure), behaviour change, collaboration with the private sector (including funding). Several cities call for bigger investments in railways, energy infrastructure and carbon capture. Some have mentioned carbon tax, methane bans or degrowth.

