



NET ZERO CITIES

Proceedings of 2025 Conference

Deliverable D3.5

Overview of the 2025 EU Cities Mission conference held in
Vilnius, Lithuania

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
CCC	Climate City Contract

Summary

This deliverable (D 3.5) is an overview of the activities and content of the fourth NetZeroCities conference, held in Vilnius, Lithuania, from 6-8 May 2025.

The deliverable is connected to SGA2-NZC task 3.3.1 ('Cities Mission mid-term conference'), which "provides additional resources to scale the 2025 Cities Mission Conference already planned in NetZeroCities task 12.6 and SGA-NZC task 9.5 into a mid-term Conference for the Mission, taking stock of the work achieved halfway through the journey to 2030 climate neutrality, and looking towards the remaining steps to be seized by the end of the Mission."

As per the task description, this 2025 flagship edition of the event had "a significant public dimension component," that included representatives from Mission-minded cities, stakeholders and citizens, accommodating well over the suggested 700 delegates and presented "engaging formats for interaction between participants, and to ensure high quality of service," also via a highly suitable venue.

The conference, as outlined in the deliverable, was coordinated by ICLEI with LGI and CKIC supporting the organisation (alongside the European Commission and the City of Vilnius). All work packages contributed to the content.

Keywords

Conference, Mission Cities, Mission-minded cities

Conference summary

The EU Cities Mission Conference 2025, held from 6-8 May in the 2025 European Green Capital of Vilnius, Lithuania, welcomed over 825 participants from across Europe and beyond to accelerate progress toward the Mission's goal of 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030. Co-organised by NetZeroCities, the European Commission, and the City of Vilnius, the event showcased cities' climate successes and was an outstanding opportunity for them to share knowledge and collaborate to replicate those successes.

The overall theme of the conference was "Harnessing City Successes: Advancing Climate Action for 2030", to spotlight the progress and ambition of Mission Cities and their partners as they strive to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. High-level speakers in person and via recorded messages underscored the important status of the event for cities and included: **Teresa Ribera**, European Commission Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition; **Patrick Child**, Manager for the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission, Acting Director-General, DG ENV, European Commission; and former US Vice-President **Al Gore**, as well as many city mayors and deputies. The awarding of a Mission Label to 39 Mission Cities was also a programme highlight and further conveyed to cities the significance of their achievements to date and their crucial work ahead.

Based around sessions distributed across various thematic 'tracks' - including finance, peer learning and technology - the conference programme covered critical topics to Mission Cities including innovative finance and strategic enablers for the 2030 transition, as well as discussions on engaging Mission-minded cities, including in Ukraine.

In addition to the core itinerary, the event featured many opportunities for networking and interaction, creating space for dynamic exchanges across professional and geographical backgrounds. This included in the exhibition area, which featured 21 stands showcasing innovation and activity across Europe in initiatives such as the New European Bauhaus and Smart Cities Marketplace and offered a lively arena for knowledge-sharing that was fully utilised by guests.

Attendees were able to keep track of the events of the conference, as well as connect with other guests and receive important updates, via a highly functional conference app. Twice-daily social media posts and live updates included professional photographs and eye-catching graphic recordings that visualised discussions and added interest both for participants and followers online. The use of a professional moderator helped sustain energy and deepen message retention.

Local site visits to end the conference offered insight into Vilnius's own sustainability efforts, including a tour of the Tech Zity Vilnius innovation campus and the Sand Offices Business Center, a sustainable and environmentally conscious workspace. A guided bicycle tour allowed participants to explore Vilnius's green mobility infrastructure.

The 2025 conference required collaboration across multiple projects – NZC, SGA-NZC, and NZC-SGA2 – given its scale and breadth.¹ This deliverable covers the operational elements of the event, encompassing venue arrangements, participant attendance, site visits, as well as partnerships and communications. The programme components, including event facilitation, plenary sessions, and parallel breakout sessions, will be addressed in NZC D12.11.

¹ NetZeroCities Grant Agreement Number 101036519; SGA-NZC: Grant Agreement Number 101121530; SGA2-NZC Grant Agreement Number 101139652

1 Attendees and registration process

The event was designed to accommodate a maximum of 950 participants and to ensure a balanced and targeted audience the conference team implemented a quota-based invitation system. This approach helped reach the intended stakeholders while maintaining diversity across sectors. Each quota was managed by a designated lead responsible for outreach and coordination. The total number of registrations before the event was more than 930.

The largest group invited to the event were the Mission City representatives, reflecting their central role in the EU Cities Mission. Other significant groups included members of the NZC consortium, representatives from research and innovation projects related to the Mission, and representatives from Mission-minded cities. Smaller but strategically important quotas were allocated to representatives from the European institutions, national-level stakeholders, the private sector, the research community, and media. Additional invitations were extended to external partners, including youth and citizen representatives, to ensure inclusivity and broader societal perspectives.

Registration was managed through the online Canapii system. Participants registered via a dedicated link, submitted their details, and were approved by the conference team. This process allowed for close moderation and quality control to ensure the right audiences were reached. Upon arrival at the venue, participants were checked in based on their online registration and received their badges on site.

On the days, the event welcomed 825 participants in person, with 100 Mission Cities, plus 38 Mission-minded cities represented, and a broad range of other stakeholders. Approximately 50 participants attended in a political capacity. The final attendance reflected the diversity and balance intended by the quota system, which was successfully implemented and closely matched the initial targets.

2 Programme

The 2025 conference offered a balance of conference plenaries, breakout sessions, and site visits. Further details on these will be shared in the NZC Conference deliverable (see reference above). In addition to this, a dedicated VIP programme was offered on days two and three, and several opportunities to network were offered across the three days, during coffee breaks and mealtimes.





 PROGRAMME 			
06.05.2025-Day 1		07.05.2025-Day 2	08.05.2025-Day 3
	08:00 - 09:00 Registration	08:00 - 09:00 Registration	08:00 - 09:00 Registration
	09:00-10:30 Opening: Celebrating Mission Cities' Successes - Plenary Room	09:00-10:00 The Baltic View: A Regional Perspective on Energy Transition, Innovation, and Shared Governance - Plenary Room	09:00-10:00 What will it take? Strategic enablers for the 2030 transition - Plenary Room
	10:30-11:00 Coffee Break	10:00-10:30 Mission Label Ceremony - Plenary Room	10:00-11:00 Building bridges across Europe - Plenary Room
	11:00-12:30 Breakout Sessions	10:30-11:00 Coffee Break	11:00-11:30 Coffee Break
	12:30-14:00 Lunch	11:00-12:30 Breakout Sessions	11:30-12:45 Breakout Sessions
	14:00-15:30 Breakout Sessions	12:30-14:00 Lunch	12:45-14:15 Lunch
	15:30-16:00 Coffee Break	14:00-15:30 Breakout Sessions	14:15-15:30 Closing: From Dialogue to Shared Action - Plenary Room
	16:00-17:00 Advancing Climate Action Locally: Policy, Investment, and Partnership - Plenary Room	15:30-16:00 Coffee Break	15:30-17:30 Site Visits
	17:00 Drinks - Onsite	16:00-17:00 Financing the Future - Plenary Room	
		19:00 Dinner - The Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania	
		*Programme subject to change.	

Figure 1 – Final conference programme

2.1 VIP Programme

The VIP programme was designed to ensure a seamless and well-supported experience for mayors, ministers, EU representatives, and other senior stakeholders. In the lead-up to the event, VIP attendees were provided with tailored information packs, including detailed schedules, venue guidance, and priority event access. This was supported by regular updates and logistical guidance through the conference app, enabling real-time communication and coordination.

Each VIP was also given direct contact numbers for designated members of the coordination team, ensuring they could access immediate assistance throughout the conference. During the event, the PA system at the Expo Centre was used to deliver targeted announcements, helping to guide VIPs efficiently between sessions, lunches, and site visits.

A key highlight was the high-level VIP lunch, which was exceptionally well-attended and provided a valuable opportunity for cross-city exchange, EU dialogue, and informal networking. The atmosphere was positive, and feedback from attendees reflected strong appreciation for the event's organisation and strategic focus.

Overall, the VIP programme contributed to a highly professional and engaging environment, ensuring senior guests were well-informed, supported, and able to make the most of their participation in the Mission Cities conference.

2.2 Site visits: Exploring Sustainability in Vilnius

On Thursday afternoon, 8 May, guided site visits organised by the City of Vilnius offered participants the opportunity to explore local sustainability initiatives first-hand. Each visit was designed for a maximum of 100 participants. Transportation was provided from the LITEXPO venue to each destination. The visits highlighted innovative approaches to sustainable development, architecture, mobility, and urban planning. A summary of each site visit is provided below.

Tech Zity Vilnius

Participants were given an exclusive look at Tech Zity Vilnius, a future hub for technology and creative industries currently under development in the heart of the city. Once completed, Tech Zity will be the largest technology campus in Europe, bringing together start-ups, scale-ups, and creative companies in a dynamic environment that combines work, culture, and community.

The visit took place in the historic setting of a former sewing factory, where original interior elements are being repurposed for the future campus. One of the highlights was the Materials Library, showcasing design components that reflect the project's commitment to sustainability and circular principles. Participants learned about the vision, architectural approach, and development timeline of Tech Zity, with the first phase expected to be completed by the end of the year. The visit concluded with transportation back to the Vilnius city centre.

Sand Offices Business Center

This visit introduced participants to Sand Offices, one of the most sustainable office buildings in Vilnius. The guided tour focused on the building's cutting-edge infrastructure and environmentally conscious design features. Participants learned how sustainable choices in construction and operation contribute to both environmental goals and improved well-being for building users. The visit offered insight into how Sand Offices sets a standard for future urban workspaces. Transportation back to the city centre was provided at the end of the tour.

Bicycle Tour of Sustainable Vilnius

An active and engaging cycling tour allowed participants to explore Vilnius through the lens of sustainability and green mobility. Starting at LITEXPO, the route passed through Vingis Park, along the Neris riverbank, by Vilnius Town Hall, and concluded at the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in the heart of the city. Along the way, participants learned about the city's initiatives to promote climate neutrality and enhance cycling infrastructure.

The tour was supported by a team of accompanying cyclists to ensure safety and comfort. Covering approximately 15 kilometres over two and a half hours, the ride provided both a scenic and informative perspective on Vilnius' commitment to sustainable urban living. The endpoint was within walking distance of recommended accommodations.

Registrations

A total of 116 participants registered for the Bicycle Tour of Sustainable Vilnius, 90 for the Sand Offices Business Centre, and 39 for Tech City, with 60% participation rate on the days.

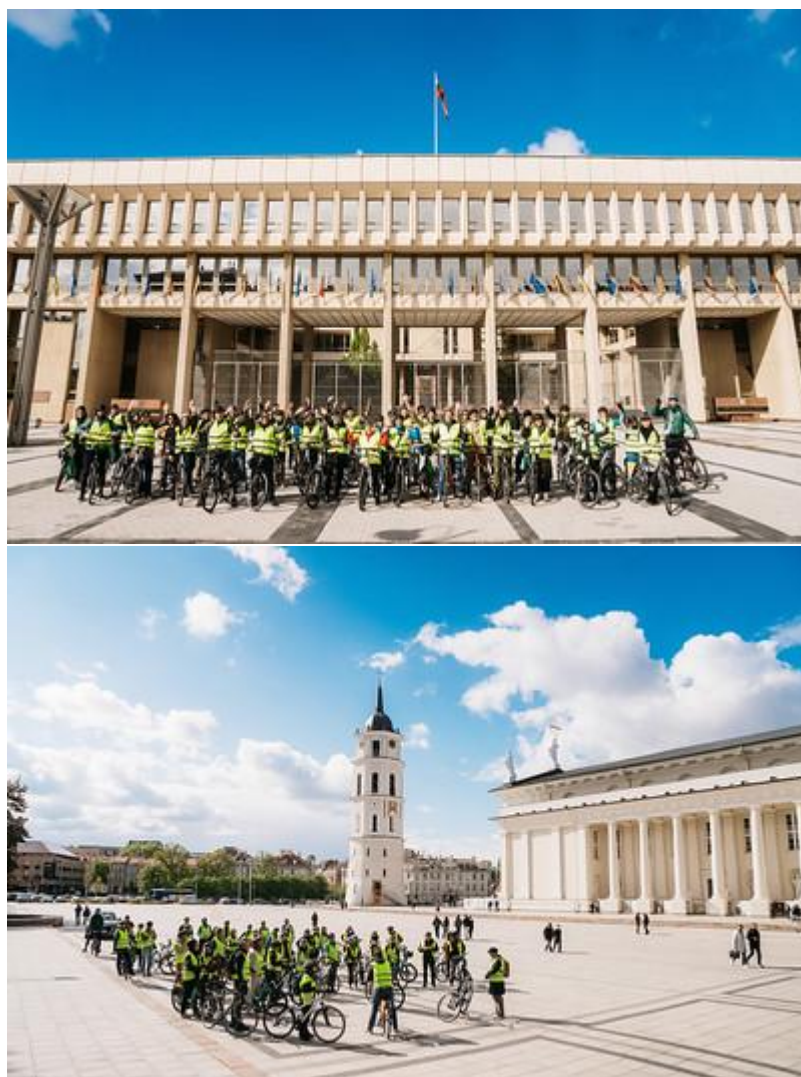


Figure 2 - City bicycle tour (site visit)

3. The Event Logistics

The Cities Mission Conference 2025, held from 6–8 May at LITEXPO in Vilnius, was supported by a comprehensive logistical plan that ensured a seamless experience for over 800 participants. Careful attention was paid to venue setup, catering, AV, exhibitor support, and participant support, enabling the event to run smoothly and foster meaningful interactions and effective knowledge exchange.

3.1 Interactive exhibition area

The central exhibition area served as the hub for participant interaction outside formal sessions. Rather than a static showcase, the space hosted an interactive exhibition featuring 21 furnished stands. Stand sizes varied from 9m² for external partner stands to 36m² for R&I cluster project stands. Each exhibitor was expected to provide an engaging, interactive element to attract visitors and encourage dialogue around the initiatives, organisations, projects, or clusters represented. Additionally, poster displays showcasing achievements from Pilot Cities were prominently featured at the exhibition space.

Material shipments were permitted in advance of the event, and on-site logistical and technical support was available throughout the setup day, Monday, 5 May. The stands remained in place throughout the three-day event and were dismantled after the final lunch or closing plenary on Thursday, 8 May.

The exhibition was integrated within the main catering area, ensuring continuous visibility and interaction. Exhibitors were encouraged to be present during peak times, particularly coffee breaks, lunches, and the Tuesday evening cocktail reception, to maximise engagement.

3.2 Networking Spaces and Informal Meeting Areas

To complement the structured programme, LITEXPO offered multiple informal networking areas, with a particular focus on lounges located in the exhibition and catering space. These zones were designed to encourage spontaneous conversations and help participants build cross-sector connections.

3.3 Catering and Social Events

All catering was provided within the exhibition hall to maintain traffic and encourage interaction. The schedule included three coffee breaks per day (two on Thursday) and a daily lunch buffet, with dietary requirements accommodated. All catering offered was fully vegetarian with vegan options.

A drinks reception on Tuesday afternoon took place in the exhibition space, providing an informal networking opportunity in a relaxed atmosphere. On Wednesday, 7 May, the City of Vilnius hosted a formal networking dinner at the historic Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, offering participants a culturally rich experience and a taste of the local cuisine.

3.4 Venue Services and Participant Support

The registration area opened daily at 08:00, managed by a dedicated team overseeing check-in and badge distribution. At the entrance, there was also an info desk where participants could find answers to their questions. A staffed cloakroom, operated by LITEXPO, was available throughout the conference.

Participants had access to free Wi-Fi and venue signage supported easy navigation. The event also offered a conference app, Canapii (Appendix 1), which featured:

- Full programme with session and speaker information
- Interactive map of the venue
- Exhibitor listings
- Personalised agenda builder
- Networking and chat functionality
- All logistical information, reducing the need for paper materials

Dedicated spaces including clearly marked parallel session rooms, a speaker room and a media room, and supported the operational needs of moderators, speakers, and press. Daily technical checks ensured smooth AV performance and correct session setups in each room.

The City of Vilnius provided a dedicated team of event assistants who supported a wide range of logistical and operational tasks throughout the conference, including, breakout room coordination and participant guidance.

In preparation for the event, participants received a logistical pack containing detailed information about travel options, hotels, site visits, and local services (Appendix 2: Logistical Pack). Additionally, an

operational briefing was developed and shared with the consortium to coordinate behind-the-scenes logistics and session timing.

LITEXPO Breakout and plenary room furniture, first aid, security, stands and equipment were coordinated with the venue and budgeted under SGA NZC project costs.²

3.5 Transport and Accessibility

To facilitate access to the venue, complimentary shuttle buses ran between LITEXPO and key city locations each morning and evening. Three designated routes covered popular pickup points. In parallel, the City of Vilnius offered free public transport to all registered participants throughout the event to promote sustainable travel.

4. Integration of partners beyond the consortium

The Cities Mission Conference 2025 in Vilnius successfully demonstrated how partners beyond the core consortium can be meaningfully integrated into Mission activities, both structurally and strategically. This year's edition took a major step forward in creating a collaborative, inclusive, and networked environment for actors aligned with the Cities Mission goals but not formally part of the NetZeroCities consortium.

A key innovation in the event layout was the integration of external initiatives through a centralised booth area, which encouraged visibility, fluid interaction, and genuine exchange. Strategic positioning at the heart of the conference space helped ensure high traffic and engagement. Initiatives with dedicated booths included the **Smart Cities Marketplace, New European Bauhaus, CLMS-Cities, CIVITAS, DUT Partnerships, EIB, Intelligent Cities Challenge, Covenant of Mayors, Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change, NetworkNature, Scalable Cities, CapaCITIES 2, European Urban Initiative**, and the **EU Green Capital Award**. Their presence stimulated dynamic conversations and helped connect policy, innovation, and investment communities.

In addition to these individual presences, projects funded under the Cities Mission Work Programme were represented collectively in thematic clusters. These included:

- **Urban Planning & Design:** *Climaborough, Re-Value, UP2030*
- **Urban Greening and Renaturing:** *GreenInCities, Regeneration, Urbreath*
- **Mobility & Transport:** *SPINE, UPPER, Amigos, Elaborator, Just Streets, Reallocate, metaCCAZE, Mobilities for EU*
- **Positive Energy Districts:** *ASCEND, NEUTRALPATH, BIPED, ExPEDite, TIPS4PED*
- **Ukraine Cluster:** *SUN4Ukraine, U_CAN*

Each cluster had a dedicated booth space and was supported by a **NetZeroCities Thematic Champion**, who facilitated preparation, coherence, and communication with the event organisers. To complement the exhibition space, each cluster held a dedicated **panel session**, chaired by a European Commission representative, providing a platform to articulate collective insights and experiences, highlighting outcomes, challenges, replication, with a unified voice. The session titles were:

- **Positive Energy Districts (PEDs) – Outcomes, Challenges & Future Prospects**

² SGA-NZC:101121530

- ***Reflecting on Methods, Indicators and Tools for Inclusive and Climate Neutral Cities for Nature-Based Solutions***
- ***Urban Planning for Climate Impact***
- ***Getting Things Done! Successful Measures Ready for Replication in Mobility and Transport***
- ***Bridging Borders for Climate Neutrality: Partnering Ukrainian Cities with EU Mission Cities***

The conference also enabled progress on tangible collaborations. Several key agreements were formalised:

- A **manifesto between Scalable Cities and NetZeroCities** to accelerate the deployment of Positive Energy Districts in European cities.
- A **Collaboration Agreement with the UPPER** Horizon Europe Project, building on the MoU signed last year with the CIVITAS Initiative, to reinforce cooperation in sustainable urban mobility.
- The **joint paper “Europe’s journey to climate neutrality thanks to European Cities”, co-authored by the Covenant of Mayors, NetZeroCities and CapaCITIES**, marked a significant step in aligning local ambition with EU strategic direction.

In a particularly timely session, **NetZeroCities and NetworkNature** tackled the pressing question of how to finance nature-based solutions in cities. Bringing together finance experts, city representatives, and projects like **UNP+**, **MERLIN**, **GoNaturePositive!**, **NAIAD**, and **Invest4Nature**, the session explored how cities can shift investments from grey to green infrastructure to address both climate and biodiversity challenges (Network Nature, 2025).

This spirit of alignment was echoed during the City-Industry Dialogue sessions, where discussions on market transformation were brought to the fore by Climate-KIC CEO Kirsten Dunlop and ICLEI’s Managing Director Wolfgang Teubner. The integration of voices from the private sector underscored the importance of engaging innovative market actors alongside institutional stakeholders.

Finally, the event provided a fertile ground for informal coalition-building, energising conversations, and cross-sectoral networking. As noted by participants, the human factor, i.e. sharing ideas, motivation, and mutual support, played a key role in fostering collaboration that goes beyond formal agreements.

This holistic approach to integrating external partners illustrates the strength of the Cities Mission ecosystem and confirms its capacity to serve as a platform for strategic alignment, co-creation, and collaborative delivery of Europe’s climate-neutrality goals.



Figure 3 - Civitas Booth; Signature NZC-Upper collaboration agreement; Thomas Osdoba and Frans Verspeek (chair of the Scalable Cities Community & the signatory of the Manifesto).

5. Messaging and Communication

5.1 Building-up participation before the event

Efficient and timely communication is key to build up participation in high-profile events such as the Cities Mission Conference. The target audience for the event on-site included around 900 participants spread between Consortium partners, Mission Cities representatives, R&I Cities Mission partner projects, European Commission representatives, private stakeholders, national platforms and other Mission-minded cities.

Each audience group was targeted through dedicated emailing threads for tailored messaging, with a dedicated contact for Q&As.

A strategic messaging document was also prepared to provide context and guidelines to consortium partners in support of their outreach and public communication on the event.

Mission Cities nonetheless remained the primary target audience and were the main focal point for communication, through targeted email or via regular updates through the monthly Digests, including:

Four targeted emails:

- Early February – Registration open
- End of February – call for city-led sessions
- Mid-April – 1 month to Vilnius
- End of April – Last call for registrations

And more than ten briefs on the conference featured in the monthly digests and digest reminders to share practical information.

The event was also promoted online through the NetZeroCities' Website, with a dedicated [Cities Mission Conference 2025](#) page frequently updated to include the latest version of the programme, and on social media.

Across LinkedIn, Instagram, and X, pre-event posts were shared to gain momentum for the conference. However, there were limited communications via external channels due to the event being invitation-only.

Two posts were made in the lead up to the conference:

- A 'one week to go' to share information on the live stream, posted on 29 April 2025
- An [interview with the Mayor of Vilnius](#), posted on 2 May 2025

The 'one week to go' post gave general information surrounding the conference to external audiences as well as the opportunity to share and promote the information regarding the live stream for the plenary sessions for audiences who wanted to see part of the conference. On LinkedIn for instance, the post had 57 likes, 10 reposts, and 1,254 impressions.

The blog post which featured an interview with the Mayor Vilnius was an opportunity to spotlight the city of Vilnius, host city of the conference. It was also an opportunity to deliver a sense of excitement before the conference begun to audiences. For example, on LinkedIn, this post had 79 likes, 11 reposts, and 2,188 impressions.

5.2 Visual identity

A vibrant visual identity was created to elevate the communication strategy and reinforce the aesthetic appeal and professional tone of this event.

The official conference visual was adapted across a range of digital and print materials including:

- Social media and emailing banners
- Screen layouts for plenaries and parallel sessions
- Posters
- Badges
- Moderation cards
- Digital and physical signage
- Roll-ups
- Background wall for the NetZeroCities' stand

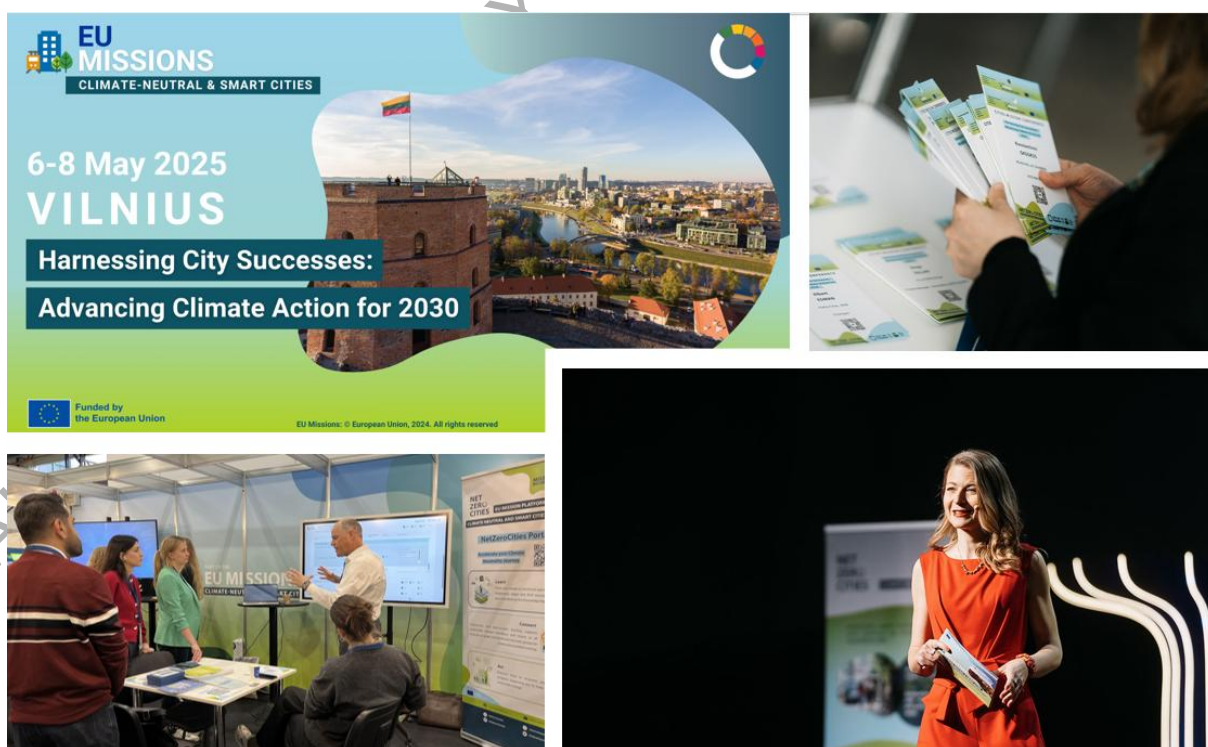


Figure 4 - Coherent visual identity

5.3 Social media coverage

Social media coverage of the conference included posts on LinkedIn, X, and Instagram twice per day (morning and evening) to introduce the agenda for the day as well as do a 'wrap up' of the day, a total of six posts. Many Instagram 'stories' were posted throughout the day highlighting plenary sessions, breakout sessions, the exhibition area, and reposts from audiences to gain real-time engagement. A skeleton social media plan was prepared before the conference to provide a clear overview and structure for posts across each platform. This approach ensured foundational content was ready, while deliberately leaving flexibility to add and complement posts with real-time information as the event unfolded, guaranteeing dynamic and relevant social media coverage.

5.3.1 LinkedIn

During the days conference 6-8 May, [NetZeroCities LinkedIn](#) gained over 200 new followers, 23,934 impressions, 969 reactions, 19 comments, and 98 reposts as well as 778 page views and 423 unique visitors.

The most highly engaged posts were the Mission Label announcement (379 reactions, 52 reposts, 9 comments, 9,365 impressions) and the post from day 1 (172 reactions, 15 reposts, 3 comments, 4,188 impressions).

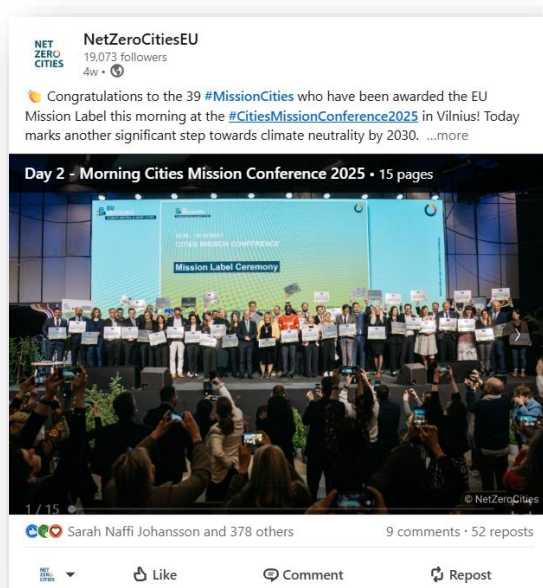
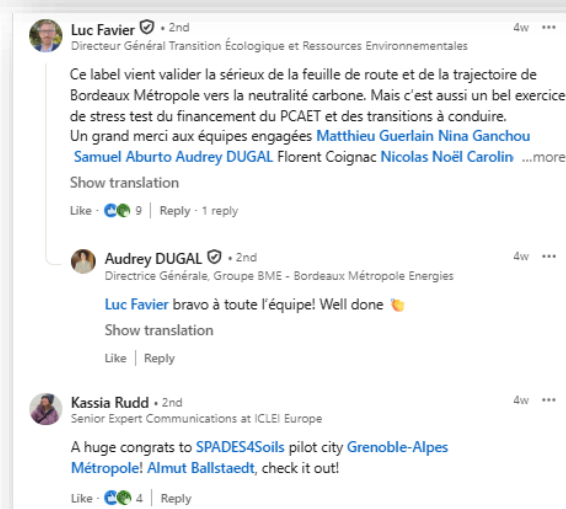
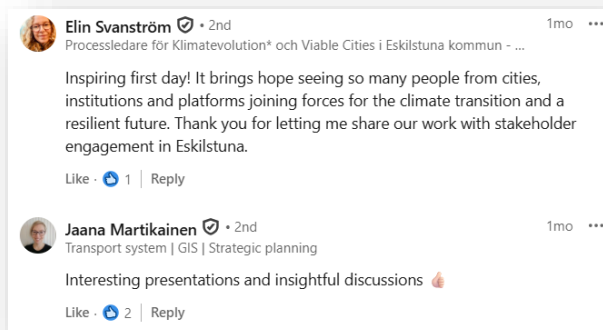
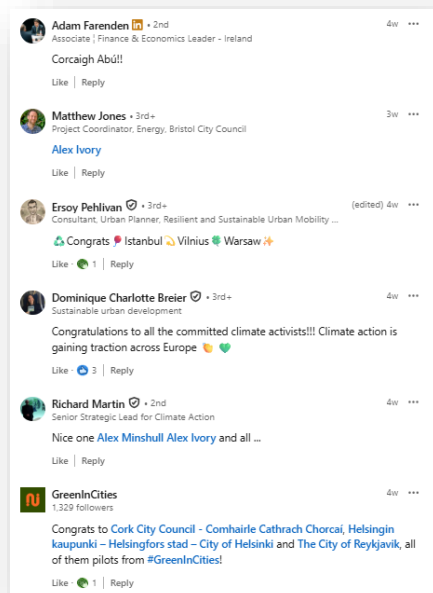


Figure 5 - LinkedIn highlights





5.3.2 Instagram

The social media coverage included posting twice daily on Instagram, also utilising the 'story' function, to present 'in-the-moment' and 'behind-the-scenes' content. It allows for easy reposts for audience's stories as well. Stories also serve as an interesting tool for those who could not attend in person at the conference and the feature enhances visibility, with new stories being displayed prominently at the top of users' feeds.

On Instagram, [@netzerocitieseu](https://www.instagram.com/netzerocitieseu) gained over 10,000 views on conference posts, including stories, with 76.3% of those being from followers of the account already and 23.7% being non-followers. Over the three days of the conference, over 2,300 accounts were reached, and NetZeroCities' account received almost 500 profile visits. A 'highlight' was also created to keep the stories from the conference that can be revisited by audiences, therefore extending the visibility of the conference content. This will give an insight into the Cities Mission Conference for new followers as well as newcomer city representatives who might attend in future years. The conference highlight can be found on the Instagram page.

Top posts and stories were:

- The Mission Label ceremony post with 78 likes, 25 profile visits, and 1,760 views (42% from followers and 59% from non-followers).
- The wrap-up post from day two on 7 May with 74 likes, 4 comments, 19 profile visits, and 1,244 views (58% from followers and 42% from non-followers).

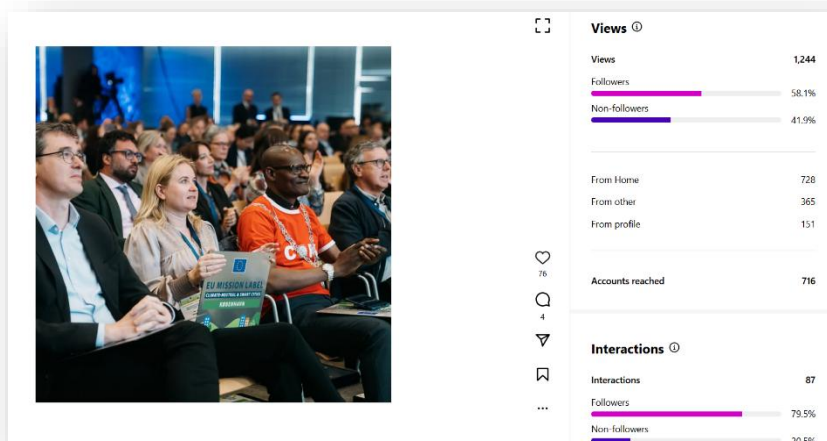


Figure 6 - Instagram reactions

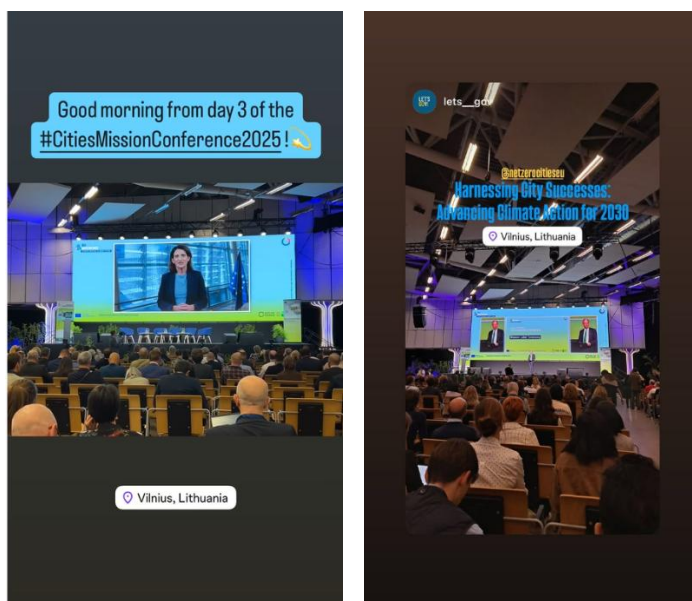


Figure 7 - Examples of stories on Instagram

5.3.3 X

On X, [@NetZeroCitiesEU](#) also posted twice daily (at the beginning of the day and end of the day) during the conference, at the same time as LinkedIn and Instagram. The posts were tailored to audiences on X with shorter and more compact content. Over the three days, we gained almost 2,300 impressions on posts, 27 likes and 5 retweets. The most successful post was the Mission Label ceremony with 435 impressions, 31 clicks, and 8 likes.

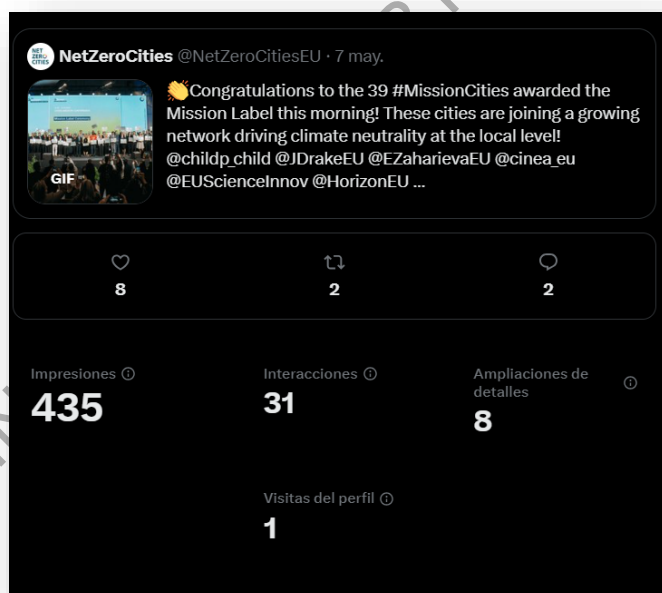


Figure 8 - Post on X on Mission Label Ceremony

5.4 Cities Mission Times



Figure 9 - Front cover from 'Cities Mission Times' print

At the Cities Mission Conference 2025, [The Cities Mission Times](#) was launched, which was enthusiastically received by participants.

The 16-page printed booklet was available for attendees at check-in and throughout the venue and all copies were distributed by the end of the conference.

Inside, readers discovered local climate initiatives and citizen engagement stories alongside features on finance, private sector action, smart cities, mobility, buildings and housing, energy, national coordination, and even the role of sport in the transition.

Each section showcases how European cities are accelerating the journey to climate neutrality.

5.5 Photo and video coverage

For this year's Cities Mission Conference, the company [SCUARE](#) was commissioned to produce high-quality photos and videos, ensuring this landmark event was thoroughly and professionally documented.

- The [photo album](#) is available in open access to everyone (though NetZeroCities must be credited for their use).
- The [wrap up video](#) from the conference was released on 10 June, capturing the event's atmosphere and key highlights in a dynamic and inspiring format.
- **Twenty-nine interviews** were also conducted on-site with cities. The NetZeroCities communication team is processing the transcripts and footage to produce a series of engaging testimonies from cities to be released on social media and used as illustration for various editorial pieces on the NetZeroCities blog.

A selection of photo was also provided daily by the photographer to our Community Manager, contributing to the high quality of social media coverage throughout the three-day event.

5.6 Streaming

To ensure broader outreach and accessibility, all plenary sessions were live streamed on [NetZeroCities' Youtube channel](#), allowing those unable to attend the event in Vilnius to engage with key parts of the conference content online. The [recordings of these sessions are available on Youtube](#).

5.7 Follow up communications

A follow-up email was sent on 23 May to all participants and Mission Cities' officers (regardless of their participation) to share the highlights and materials available from the conference, including:

- A detailed summary of [the conference, including photos](#)
- Access to the presentation slides on the [NetZeroCities Portal](#)
- Access to the [recordings](#) of plenaries
- Access to the [photo album](#) and **graphic recordings**
- A list of calls to action and key messages from the conference.

The communication was addressed to more than 1300 contacts with a 39% open rate. The conference highlights were shared again to Mission Cities in the monthly digest sent on 28 May.

The final conference [wrap-up video](#) and [press release](#) were published and promoted on social media on 10 June and will close the event's communications when shared in NetZeroCities' international newsletter, monthly Mission Cities digest and quarterly newsletter in June/July.

6. Participant feedback

A survey was sent to all attendees directly after the conference asking for feedback on both the organisation and programme elements, as well as for more information on how they travelled to Vilnius and to and from the conference.

Questions inviting comment included:

- Did you find the breakout session(s) useful?
- Were there any plenary session(s) you found less relevant? Please explain.
- What improvements would you suggest for future Cities Mission events?

Responses showed a high satisfaction with the venue (size, food, service), though some guests felt it was too far from the city centre.

- "Food and the arrangements around food service worked well"
- "The venue and the facilities were perfect"
- "The venue fit the size of the Conference. I guess the only downfall was that it was hard to reach from the city centre, and I found it cold."
- "Good facilities and food, but poor location (too far)"

As can be seen in figure 10, the overall conference experience was rated highly. On the programme and content, again respondents had a generally positive view, but some felt that there were too many sessions (noting, however, that this allowed more topics to be covered) or they were too general.

- "Overall a great conference, great atmosphere, lots of opportunities for networking."
- "It was an interesting conference with good opportunities for networking."
- "I think this was the best conference yet :) "
- "It was an unforgettable "adventure"! The spirit of the event was quite inspiring!"
- "Too general contents in many of the sessions"
- "Too many sessions at the same time (a complex issue as this is good for diversity of themes)"

Noteworthy suggestions for future conferences included: running parallel sessions twice to allow more participation; fewer and shorter plenaries; and more city-led sessions.

Figure 10 - Samples from attendee survey

1. Which days did you attend *Harnessing City Successes: Advancing Climate Action for 2030* in Vilnius?



2. How satisfied were you with the overall conference experience?

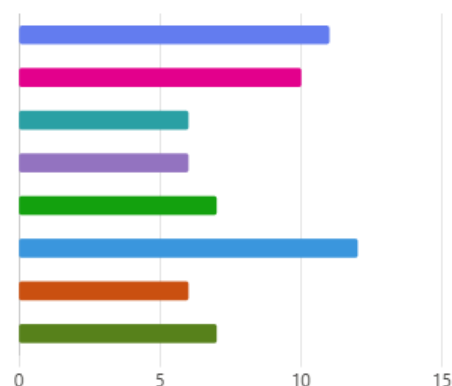


4. How satisfied were you with the conference venue and facilities?

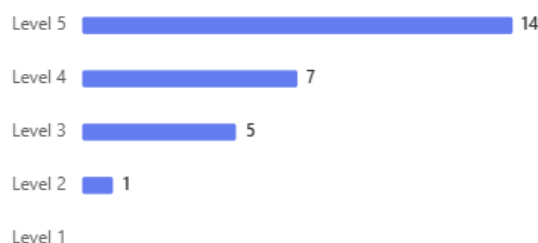


9. Which plenary session(s) did you find most insightful?

6 May Opening: Celebrating Mission Cities' Successes	11
6 May Advancing Climate Action Locally: Policy, Investment and Partnership	10
7 May The Baltic View: A Regional Perspective on Energy Transition, Innovation, and Shared...	6
7 May Mission Label Ceremony	6
7 May Financing the Future	7
8 May What will it take? Strategic enablers for the 2030 transition	12
8 May Building bridges across Europe	6
8 May Closing: From Dialogue to Shared Action	7

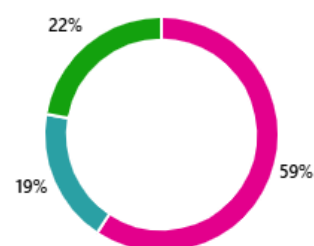


6. How relevant were the sessions to your work on climate neutrality?



17. How did you travel everyday to Litexpo ?

Walk	0
Cities Mission Conference shuttle (bus)	16
Taxi	5
Bicycle	0
Other	6



Conclusion and next steps

The EU Cities Mission Conference 2025 in Vilnius successfully demonstrated the transformative power of collaborative urban climate action, bringing together 825 participants from across Europe in an inspiring and supportive atmosphere to quicken the journey toward climate neutrality. A further 780 (and growing) watched the proceedings online following the event, bringing the audience to over 1600. During the days of the conference, [NetZeroCities' LinkedIn](#) gained over 200 new followers, and 23,934 impressions on LinkedIn, and on Instagram over 10,000 views on conference posts,

Thanks to the strong coordination among partners and the dedicated efforts of the NetZeroCities organising team, the Mission Team from DG RTD, and the City of Vilnius, the conference ran smoothly and received positive feedback throughout the event. The programme stood out thanks to the commitment of session organisers, as well as the thoughtful combination of engaging moderation, visual

documentation, and interactive elements such as the site visits and the interactive exhibition, which all contributed to a memorable and meaningful experience for participants.

Throughout the event, a strong sense of collaboration and a shared commitment to the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission were clearly present, contributing to a solid foundation for continued dialogue and collective action in the years ahead.

This landmark three-day event, which built on previous editions of NetZeroCities conferences and reached our widest audience yet, proved that when cities, institutions, private sector partners, and civil society unite around a shared vision, meaningful progress becomes not just possible, but inevitable.

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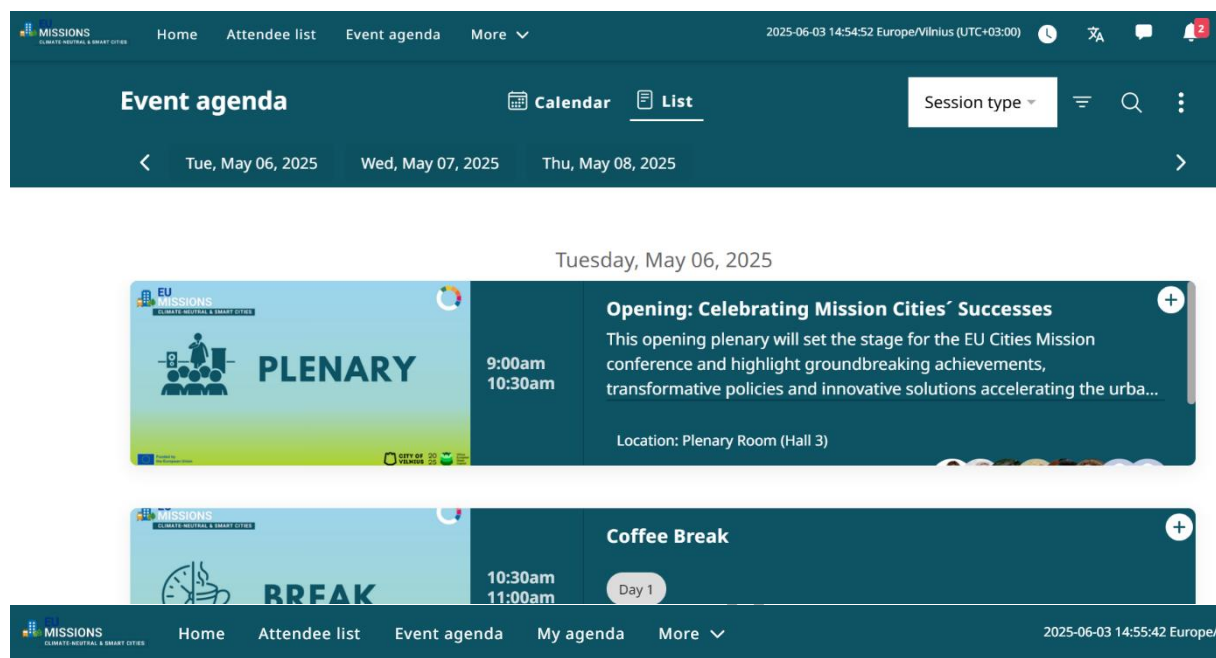
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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Screenshots from the Canapii app



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Coordinator of the Italian
Mission Cities, Comune di
Bologna



Olga Kordas
Director, Viable Cities

The screenshot shows the official website for the EU Missions Climate-Neutral & Smart Cities conference in Vilnius, Lithuania, held from May 6-8, 2025. The header includes navigation links: Home, Attendee list, Event agenda, My agenda, Speakers, Exhibitors, Forum, Logistical info, and Floorplan. The main banner features the event title, dates, and the theme "Harnessing City Successes: Advancing Climate Action for 2030". It also mentions the City of Vilnius as the host and the European Union as the funder.

Day 1: May 6, 2025

- PLENARY**: Opening: Celebrating Mission Cities' Successes. Location: Plenary Room (Hall 3) | May 6 9:00am EET.
- BREAK**: Coffee Break. May 6 10:30am EET.
- BREAKOUT SESSION**: 6.6 Strategic Public Procurement for... Location: Breakout Room 6 (Room 5.3) | May 6 11:00am EET.
- BREAKOUT SESSION**: 5.7 National dialogue on better funding - Part 1... Location: Breakout Room 7 (Room 5.2) | May 6 11:00am EET.
- BREAKOUT SESSION**: 4.5 From Challenge to Change - The Outcomes o... Location: Breakout Room 10 (Room 5.6) | May 6 11:00am EET.
- BREAKOUT SESSION**: 5.3 Overcoming financial challenges: effective... Location: Breakout Room 11 | 11:30am EET.

Day 2: May 7, 2025

- PLENARY**
- PLENARY**
- BREAK**
- BREAKOUT SESSION**
- BREAKOUT SESSION**
- BREAKOUT SESSION**

The footer includes the same navigation links and a timestamp: 2025-06-03 14:56:37 Europe/Vilnius (UTC+03:00).

Logistical info

Getting to and around Vilnius

This section provides logistical information for attendees, focusing on public transport options in Vilnius. It includes a grid of images showing various modes of transport: plane, train, bus, ferry, car, and cycling. A QR code for the "Public Transport Pass" is displayed, along with the text "Cities Mission Conference Vilnius 2025 6-8 May, 2025".

Public Transport Pass
Cities Mission Conference Vilnius 2025
 6-8 May, 2025

Complimentary direct buses will operate daily between Vilnius city centre and LITEXPO, the

Appendix 2 - Logistical pack



Cities Mission Conference

Practical information

Dates

6–8 May 2025

Conference Venue

The conference will take place at LITEXPO.

The address of the venue is Laisvės av. 5, Vilnius 04215, Lithuania.

Link to virtual tour: <https://www.gidas360.lt/hmd/litexpo/custom/>

Event language

The event will be held in English. Lithuanian language translation will be available in the main plenary session room.

Livestream

The conference will be livestreamed to Vilnius City Municipality Facebook and YouTube channels as well as NetZeroCities platform.

Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi username: LITEXPO

No password needed

Event App

The Mission Conference will be using Canapii as the provider for the event app. All participants will be invited to the event app shortly before the conference. On the app, they will be able to see the full programme with session descriptions and speakers, make their own personalised programme, check out the event attendee list, send messages to other participants, as well as read up on venue and city logistical information.

Social media handles

The hashtag for the event is #CitiesMissionConference2025. Please use it when sharing pictures and posts online.

Dinner

On Wednesday, 7th May, the City of Vilnius will host an exclusive dinner and drinks reception at one of the city's most prestigious venues – The Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania (Katedros a. 4). Located in the heart of Vilnius Old Town, this historic Renaissance and early Baroque residence once served as the political, diplomatic, and cultural centre of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Today, the restored palace stands as a symbol of national heritage and offers a unique atmosphere for special gatherings.

The dinner will take place from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM, offering guests a memorable experience of fine dining, drinks, and an excellent opportunity for networking in a culturally rich and welcoming setting. The menu will be fully vegetarian.



Cities Mission Conference Logistical Pack


**CITY OF
VILNIUS**

 20
25

 Vilnius
European
Green
Capital

The evening will begin with a reception held outdoors, where we'll ensure your comfort with warmth provided throughout. As for the dress code, we kindly ask guests to dress in smart casual attire – and don't forget to bring a jacket, as the weather can be a bit cool in the evening.

Site visits

On the afternoon of Thursday, 8th May, you are invited to take part in external site visits showcasing sustainable innovation in Vilnius. These visits will offer valuable insights into the city's forward-thinking approaches to sustainability, with three options available. A binding registration form for the site visits will be shared closer to the event with those who expressed interest when registering for the conference.

- Visit to [Tech Zity](#) (100 persons)**
 Get an exclusive look at Tech Zity Vilnius – a future tech and creative industries hub currently under development in the heart of Vilnius. Once completed, it will be the largest technology campus in Europe, bringing together start-ups, scale-ups, and creative companies in a city-like environment that combines work, culture, and community. The visit will take place in the historic premises of a former sewing factory, where one of the spaces – the Materials Library – displays original interior elements from the old industrial complex. These details are being carefully selected and repurposed for the future hub, reflecting the project's commitment to sustainability and circular design. Construction of the first phase is currently underway, with completion planned by the end of this year. During the visit, participants will learn more about the vision, scale, and architectural approach behind Tech Zity Vilnius. The site visit will conclude with transportation back to Vilnius city centre by bus;
- Visit to [Sand Offices Business Center](#) (100 persons)**
 Discover Sand Offices, one of the most sustainable office buildings in Vilnius. This guided visit will introduce the building's innovative infrastructure and environmentally conscious design solutions. Participants will learn about the sustainable choices behind the building's construction and operation, and how these contribute not only to reducing environmental impact but also to improving the well-being of those who work within its spaces. The tour will highlight how Sand Offices exemplifies the future of sustainable work environments in urban settings. The site visit will conclude with transportation back to Vilnius city centre by bus;
- Bicycle Tour of Sustainable Vilnius (100 persons)**
 Join an active cycling tour that explores Vilnius' green spaces and sustainable mobility initiatives. Starting from the conference venue, the tour will highlight key landmarks such as [Vingis Park](#), the Neris riverbank, [Vilnius Town Hall](#) and finally - [The Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania](#), while introducing the city's efforts in promoting climate neutrality and cycling infrastructure. Safety measures will be ensured by an accompanying team of cyclists, with additional support if needed. The tour starts at Litexpo, and ends in [The Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania](#) (in the very centre of Vilnius) a comfortable walking distance from any recommended hotel. The tour will take approximately two and a half hours and cover 15 km.


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Vilnius
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Getting to Vilnius is easy

Vilnius is well-connected to most European destinations, with its international airport offering direct flights to major cities in under three hours.

However, if you prefer more sustainable travel options, we've listed some alternatives below.

- Vilnius is highly accessible by international bus services, with frequent routes to major cities across Europe. Comfortable long-distance buses provide direct connections to destinations such as Warsaw, Riga, Tallinn, and Berlin and beyond, offering a convenient and affordable travel option.
- A train bookable via bahn.de operates between Berlin and Vilnius, via a stay in Warsaw.
- A DFDS ferry operates six days a week from Kiel to Klaipeda, Lithuania, offering connections from Nordic cities like Stockholm, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, and Oslo. Helsinki is accessible via Tallinn.

For train travel and ferries, [The Man in Seat 61](https://www.govilnius.lt) guide on routes from Vilnius is also worth checking out.

Arrival and departure



<https://www.govilnius.lt/plan-your-trip/arrival>



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Cities Mission Conference Logistical Pack



Getting around Vilnius

Vilnius International Airport is located within 15-20 minutes from the city centre and LITEXPO. You can reach the city centre in 3 ways:

- Dedicated buses to and from the event venue
- Free public transport
- Taxi Services
- Green Travelling Choices

The most convenient route from the airport to the city centre is bus route 3G.

Complimentary buses

Scheduled buses to and from the event venue Litexpo (Laisvės av. 5) will be available for your comfort. Please find the detailed routes and timetables below.

Please find the exact location of the bus stops [here](#).

Daily Morning Buses

To ensure you get a seat on the shuttle to Litexpo in the mornings, we highly recommend taking the first bus. Please note that seating is limited and we cannot guarantee a spot for everyone on later buses. Planning ahead helps everything run smoothly. Thank you for your understanding!

Route1: Cathedral – Marriot – Konstitucijos av. – Litexpo
[Route1 Map](#) (Click on the link)

Cathedral (Departure)	7:40	7.50	8.00
Courtyard by Marriot	7.43	7.53	8.03
Holiday Inn	7.47	7.57	8.07
Europe Square	7.50	8.00	8.10
Litexpo (final stop)	8.10	8.20	8.30

Route 2: Cathedral – Novotel – Neringa – Hilton – Litexpo
[Route2 Map](#) (Click on the link)

Cathedral (departure)	7:40	7.50	8.00
Novotel	7.43	7.53	8.03
Neringa	7.47	7.57	8.07
Hilton	7.50	8.00	8.10



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Cities Mission Conference Logistical Pack



Litexpo (final stop)	8.10	8.20	8.30
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Route3: Tymo Market – Novotel – Neringa – Hilton – Litexpo
[Route3 Map](#) (Click on the link)

Tymo Market (departure)	7.40	7.50	8.00
Archangel Conference Center	7.42	7.52	8.02
Novotel	7.47	7.57	8.07
Hilton	7.50	8.00	8.10
Litexpo (final stop)	8.10	8.20	8.30

Evening buses

Evening shuttle will operate the same three routes as in the morning - just in reverse. The buses will await you outside the venue according to the timetable.

Tuesday evening (May 6th):

- 17:00 – 1 bus each route
- 18:00 – 1 bus each route
- 19:00 – 2 buses each route

Wednesday evening (May 7th):

- 17:00 – 4 buses on route [Route1](#); 7 buses on [Route2+Route3](#)

Thursday evening (May 8th):

- 15:30 - 4 buses leave for site visits to [Sand Offices](#) or [Tech Zity](#) and drop off all participants at the stops of [Route2+Route3](#) and [Route2+Route1](#) accordingly
- 15:30 cyclists will finish site visit at Cathedral Square at 17:30
- 15:30 – 2 buses leave via [Route1](#), 2 buses go via routes [Route2+Route3](#)

Attention! Due to limited capacity, the buses will depart only once they are full.



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Free public transport

To use public transport, download the Trafi application, which provides routes, schedules, maps, and tickets. Once connected with your payment card, you can purchase single-ride tickets directly.

More information on Trafi: <https://www.trafi.com>



Free Public transport for conference guests on 6th-8th May.

You don't need to scan the QR code or show it to the bus driver. You only need to show the pass if you are controlled.

Taxi

There are several taxi services available in Vilnius, including both app-based and traditional options:

- Bolt – a popular ride-hailing service that allows you to book a car via a mobile app. Bolt also offers green choices, such as electric car rides and a tree-planting policy for carbon offset. To use Bolt, download their application and provide your payment card details: <https://bolt.eu>
- Uber – another ride-hailing option available in Vilnius, offering various vehicle types, including environmentally friendly choices. More information on Uber: <https://www.uber.com>
- A2B – taxi option available in Vilnius. More information: <https://a2b.lt/>



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Cities Mission Conference Logistical Pack



2025



Other green travelling choices in the city

- **Cycling:** Vilnius has a growing network of bike-friendly routes. You can rent a bicycle or an electric scooter through CycloCity or other bike-sharing services available in the city.
- **Walking:** Many hotels and the conference venue are within walking distance of key city attractions, making walking a sustainable and enjoyable option.
- **Electric Car Sharing:** Services like Spark offer an eco-friendly way to navigate Vilnius with fully electric vehicles.

<https://www.govilnius.lt/plan-your-trip/getting-around-vilnius->

Public transport	Taxis and ride sharing services	Car-sharing services	Electric scooters are a quick way to get from point A to...
One of the first things you need to do when you get to Vilnius is install...	For those that prefer the convenience of a cab,	Love driving but love being eco-friendly too?	Pastaruosius dvejus metus labai padaugėjo žmonių, kurie naudoja...
→	→	→	→

Accommodation: we invite you to stay at our partner hotels

We strongly recommend booking the hotel as early as possible.

- **Radisson Blu** (Konstitucijos av. 20, Vilnius, 09308)
[Email](#) your reservation enquiry for a 15% discount mentioning MISSION CITIES
- **Amberton Cathedral** (L. Stuokos-Gucevičiaus st. 1, Vilnius, 01122)
Book your room [here](#) using MISSION CITIES code
- **Hilton Garden Inn** (Gedimino av. 44B, Vilnius, 01110)
[Email](#) your reservation enquiry for a 15% discount mentioning MISSION CITIES



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Other hotel options with special prices

- **Holiday Inn** (Šeimyniškių st. 1, Vilnius, 09312)
Special price starting from €97
[Email](#) your enquiry mentioning MISSION CITIES
- **Courtyard by Marriott** (Rinktinės st. 3, Vilnius, 09234)
Special prices starting from €137 (breakfast included)
Book your room [here](#)

Useful Information

Language: Lithuanian is the official language of Lithuania but English is widely spoken.

Local Time: Lithuanian time is UTC/GMT +2.

Currency: Lithuania's currency is the Euro (€).

Payments: Using cards and contactless payments is widely common, e.g., in buses, cafes, and shops, making it easy to navigate without having cash.

General Emergency Code for Lithuania: 112.

International Dial Code for Lithuania: +370.



Get to know about Vilnius legend, culture and some facts about one of the greenest cities of Europe: <https://www.govilnius.lt/plan-your-trip/about-vilnius>

Download our mini guide for our top recommendations on Vilnius' heritage and sights: <https://shorturl.at/Cmd4b>

Greetings from the European Green Capital 2025!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X75kPQ9Yuks>



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