

NET ZERO CITIES SGA2-NZC

Non-Mission City Needs & Pathways

Second Annual Update

Authors: Francesco Palmia (ICLEI ES), Ana Nava Tazo (ERRIN)

Contributors: Jennifer McIntosh (ICLEI ES), Charline Mougin (Eurocities)

AWAITING APPROVAL BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Disclaimer

The content of this deliverable reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Document Information

Grant Agreement Number	101139652
Project Title	SPECIFIC GRANT AGREEMENT N°2 TO SCALE THE CITIES MISSION PLATFORM
Project Acronym	SGA2-NZC
Project Start Date	1 January 2024
Related Work Package	WP1
Related Task(s)	Task 1.1
Lead Organisation	ICLEI
Submitted by	Charline Mougin, Eurocities
Reviewed by	Charline Mougin, Eurocities
Submission Date	March 2026
Dissemination Level	Public

Table of contents

Introduction	5
1 Mission-minded cities outreach and coverage	6
1.1 Geographic distribution	8
1.2 Population size	9
1.3 Territorial representativeness	10
1.4 Background engagement in existing climate-related and EU initiatives	13
1.5 NetZeroCities and Covenant of Mayors: an outreach gap analysis	15
1.6 Conclusions and recommendations	17
2 Mission-minded cities engagement	21
2.1 Breadth and Depth analysis	22
2.2 City-level engagement patterns	23
2.3 Conclusions and recommendations	25
Bibliography	28
Annex 1 The Mission-minded cities database	29
Annex 2 Reflection on analytical choices and limits	33
Annex 3 Additional results	35

List of figures

Figure 1 Intensity of engaged Mission-minded cities in EU and Horizon Europe countries (exc. New Zealand)	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
Figure 2. Visual representation of the frequency of engaged MMC per population categories	10
Figure 3. Population coverage by Mission Cities (MC) and engaged Mission-minded cities (MMC)	12
Figure 4. Share of network-active and network-inactive Mission-minded cities	14
Figure 5. Number of networks joined by Mission-minded cities	14
Figure 6. Comparison between signatories of the Covenant of Mayors that are Mission-minded cities and vice-versa	16
Figure 7 NetZeroCities Services - Breadth and Depth Analysis	23
Figure 8. Visual representation of the number of NetZeroCities services engaged by Mission-minded cities	24
Figure 9. Population Distribution of MMC in EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries (Boxplot excluding the top 1%)	38

List of tables

Table 1 Overview of analysed dimensions and corresponding analytical objectives	8
Table 2 Definition for population categories	10
Table 3. Population coverage by Mission Cities and Mission-minded cities per Region	11
Table 4 Mission-minded cities population coverage by engagement patterns	13
Table 5 Country typology based on NetZeroCities engagement and CoM outreach potential	17
Table 6 NetZeroCities Services	22
Table 7. Mission-minded cities with high engagement frequency (7 or more NetZeroCities services)	24

Table 8 Operational Definition of Engagement by NetZeroCities Service	29
Table 9 Regions (Based on the NetZeroCities Barometer only including EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries)	31
Table 10 N° of MMC by country type	35
Table 11 N° and Share (%) of MMC in EU Member States and HE Associated Countries by Region	35
Table 12 N° of MMC by Country	37
Table 13 Population Statistics for EU and HE Associated Countries MMC and for not-EU MMC	38
Table 14 Frequency of MMC population categories (only EU and HE Associated Countries MMC)	39
Table 15 Population coverage of MMC (EU and HE associated countries) by Region	39
Table 16 Population coverage of MMC (EU and HE associated countries) and Mission Cities by Country	41
Table 17 N° and Share (%) of MMC participating in City Networks or EU initiatives	41
Table 18 N° of City Networks or EU Initiatives MMC are Engaged in	41
Table 19 N° and Share (%) of MMC and Network-Active MMC per Region	42
Table 20 Network activity by country	43
Table 21 N° and Share (%) of MMC and Network-Active MMC per Population Category	43
Table 22 N° of CoM Europe cities and MMC	43
Table 23 N° of CoM Europe cities also MMC by Country	45
Table 24 N° and Share (%) of CoM Europe cities also MMC by Region	45
Table 25 N° and Share (%) of CoM Europe cities also MMC by Population Category	45
Table 26 Share (%) of MMC Engaged by Population Category and Service Frequency	46
Table 27 Share (%) of MMC Engaged by Region and Service Frequency	46

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
MMC	Mission-minded cities
MC	Mission Cities
NZC	NetZeroCities
CoM	Covenant of Mayors

Summary

This deliverable provides the second annual update on the engagement of Mission-minded cities (MMC) with the NetZeroCities (NZC) service portfolio, two years into the opening of the service offer to cities beyond the 112 Mission Cities. It addresses a key need to better understand who is being reached (chapter 1), how cities engage with available services (chapter 2), and how this engagement can be further strengthened to support progress towards climate neutrality.

Based on a newly developed database covering **835 cities across 59 countries** as of November 2025, the analysis shows that NetZeroCities has successfully established a broad and diverse outreach, with half of Mission-minded cities not previously active in major EU climate initiatives. Overall, the Cities Mission now reaches approximately 35% of the total population of EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries (11% in Mission Cities and 24% in engaged Mission-minded cities).

This confirms the programme's ability to open up the Mission to a wider community of cities and to build an inclusive foundation for engagement across different national and local contexts.

A central finding is that NZC services play distinct but insufficiently connected roles: a small number of high-reach services (such as the Mission Portal and the Mission-minded cities newsletter) act as entry points, engaging over half of MMC. More targeted formats such as peer learning programmes enable deeper, multi-service engagement, but reach only a limited subset of cities. National-level services reach broadly but are weakly connected to the wider portfolio, limiting their potential as gateways to further support. Strengthening the connections between these services represents a key opportunity to support cities in progressing from initial contact to more sustained and comprehensive engagement.

The results show that engagement is geographically uneven and concentrated in a limited number of countries, with a strong presence of small and medium-sized municipalities. At city level, engagement is strongly concentrated in one or two services, while intensive multi-service engagement remains limited and is more frequent among medium-sized and larger cities. Differences in engagement patterns across city sizes suggest the value of continued tailoring of support to reflect varying capacities and needs, particularly to ensure that smaller municipalities can fully benefit from the available offer.

Overall, the findings provide an evidence base to inform the next phase of implementation. By reinforcing service pathways, improving connectivity across the portfolio, and continuing to adapt the offer to different city profiles and contexts, NetZeroCities is well positioned to further enhance its impact and support cities in their transition towards climate neutrality.

Keywords

Mission-minded cities, Needs, Pathways, NetZeroCities offer.

Introduction

The European Union's Mission "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030" pursues two complementary objectives (European Commission, 2021): supporting selected Mission Cities in achieving climate neutrality by 2030, and scaling up results, solutions, and learning pathways to all cities. NetZeroCities, as the current Cities Mission Platform, plays a central role in delivering this second objective by engaging and supporting *Mission-minded cities*¹ in achieving climate neutrality by 2050 or earlier.

Two years into the launch of the four years Mission-minded cities support programme (SGA2-NZC), NetZeroCities has rapidly operationalised this scale-up ambition. Since 2024, a diverse portfolio of services has been launched, including informational tools, peer-learning programmes, training formats, advisory support, and country-level engagement mechanisms (NetZeroCities, 2026c). These services have generated engagement between these cities and NetZeroCities.

A systematic and consolidated understanding of *who* these Mission-minded cities are, *where* they are located, and *how* they engage with NetZeroCities has so far been lacking. Earlier analytical work explored the needs and pathways of a small sample of cities (around 60) that had expressed early interest in the Mission (Palmia et al., 2024). However, this analysis was conducted before the NetZeroCities service portfolio was fully operational and could not capture the breadth, diversity, and empirical engagement patterns that have since emerged.

In order to support more targeted outreach, strategic prioritisation, and tailored service design for Mission-minded cities, it is essential to move towards an evidence-based analysis of *actual engagement* with NetZeroCities services. To this end, NetZeroCities undertook a systematic effort to build a comprehensive Mission-minded cities database, consolidating all recorded points of engagement between Mission-minded cities and the NetZeroCities service portfolio.

For the purposes of this report, **engagement** is defined broadly as any form of interaction between a Mission-minded city and a service offered by NetZeroCities. This includes, among others, subscribing to the Mission-minded cities Newsletter, accessing the NetZeroCities Portal, applying to or participating in programmes such as the Twinning Learning Programme, online discussion groups, study visits, or the Online Planning Lab, engaging in one-to-one exchanges through the Mission-minded cities Helpdesk (see Annex 1 for more details), or participating in national support ecosystems organised by NetZeroCities. This definition captures the *presence* of engagement but does not assess its quality, intensity, or outcomes. A qualitative assessment of Mission-minded cities' experiences and satisfaction with NetZeroCities services is provided separately in Deliverable D1.23 (forthcoming).

The resulting database comprises **835 Mission-minded cities across 59 countries**. The deliverable presents the results of an analysis of this database and is structured in two main chapters. Chapter 1 examines *who* the Mission-minded cities engaging with NetZeroCities are, focusing on their geographic distribution, population size, territorial representativeness, prior participation in EU climate initiatives, and outreach gaps. Chapter 2 addresses a second set of research questions and analyses *how* Mission-minded cities engage with the NetZeroCities service portfolio, combining a service-level breadth-depth analysis with a city-level assessment of engagement frequency.

¹ This term refers to cities that have set a target to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 or earlier but are not part of the 112 cities participating in the Cities Mission.

Together, these analyses provide an empirical basis to inform strategic reflections on outreach, service design, and the future positioning of the NetZeroCities offer for Mission-minded cities.

Overall, the analysis shows that NetZeroCities has **reached a broad and diverse set of Mission-minded cities**, but that engagement is uneven across countries, and city sizes. Outreach is concentrated in a limited number of countries in Southern Europe and Western Asia and largely driven by small and medium-sized municipalities. Approximately half of Mission-minded cities were not previously active in major EU climate initiatives, indicating that NetZeroCities is reaching **beyond established networks and EU initiatives**.

In addition, the analysis shows that Mission-minded cities engage with NetZeroCities in highly differentiated ways. A small number of services achieve broad outreach, while others reach fewer cities but are associated with deeper, multi-service engagement. At city level, **engagement is strongly concentrated at low frequencies**, with most cities interacting with only one or two services and intensive multi-service engagement remaining the exception. Geographic location has limited influence on engagement intensity, whereas city size emerges as a more relevant differentiating factor, with **medium-sized and larger cities more frequently engaging across multiple services**.

These findings point to clear implications for the planning and tailoring of the NetZeroCities offer. They underline the need to balance consolidation in countries where engagement is already strong with targeted outreach in contexts where engagement remains limited, but potential is high. They also suggest the importance of differentiating communication, service design, and engagement pathways according to city size, national context, and prior experience with EU climate initiatives.

Engagement patterns suggest the need to recognise and plan for differentiated roles within the NetZeroCities service portfolio. High-reach services can be positioned more clearly as entry points, while more selective services can be framed as opportunities for sustained or advanced engagement. Strengthening the visibility and connections between services, particularly between National support services and the wider NetZeroCities offer, could support clearer engagement pathways. At the same time, tailoring communication and service design to different city sizes may help enable smaller cities accessing the full portfolio.

Building on this analysis, the next report will move beyond a descriptive mapping of engagement to explore the underlying drivers and barriers shaping Mission-minded cities' participation in NetZeroCities. In particular, it will attempt at a more qualitative approach towards cities and regions that remain underrepresented in the current engagement patterns to understand constraints related to capacity, governance context, and access to information. Special attention shall be given to national-level dynamics, examining how existing initiatives, platforms, and intermediaries can be leveraged to strengthen outreach and increase engagement where participation has so far remained limited.

1 Mission-minded cities outreach and coverage

This chapter addresses the first set of research questions:

WHICH CITIES ARE ENGAGING WITH NETZEROCITIES? TO WHAT EXTENT DO THESE MISSION-MINDED CITIES ALREADY HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF PARTICIPATION IN EU INITIATIVES AND CITY NETWORKS?

Leveraging the Mission-minded cities database (Annex1), the chapter examines outreach and coverage across several analytical dimensions (Table 1). First, it analyses the **geographical distribution** of engaged cities. Second, it examines the **population size** of participating municipalities. Third, it **assesses territorial representativeness** by analysing the share of regional and national populations

covered by engaged Mission-minded cities. Population coverage and engagement patterns at regional² and national level provide a proxy to assess representativeness and to identify gaps in outreach in terms of both geography and city size.

Beyond these structural dimensions, the chapter also examines the extent to which Mission-minded cities were already **active in existing climate-related or EU cooperation frameworks** prior to engaging with NetZeroCities. Specifically, participation in the Covenant of Mayors and membership in the Eurocities and ICLEI city networks are considered. This dimension, referred to in the analysis as “network activity”, is used as a proxy to explore whether NetZeroCities outreach predominantly reaches cities that are already well integrated into European policy and cooperation frameworks, or whether it also engages cities with more limited prior exposure to EU-level climate initiatives.

Finally, the **Mission-minded cities database is cross-checked with the Covenant of Mayors signatory database**. This comparison supports an assessment of overlap and divergence between NetZeroCities outreach and another major European climate initiative with more than 12,000 signatory municipalities. It also helps identify potential entry points and strategic opportunities for expanding outreach to underrepresented city groups.

Overall, the chapter answers the following points:

- Where are Mission-minded cities located?
- What is the composition of Mission-minded cities in terms of population size?
- By region and country, what is the population coverage of Mission-minded cities in relation to Mission Cities and country population?
- Are Mission-minded cities network-active or -inactive?
- Taking the Covenant of Mayors, a major EU climate-related initiative, as an example, where are the NetZeroCities's outreach gaps and what opportunities can be identified?

Analysed dimension	Objective
Geographical distribution of Mission-minded cities	To assess the spatial outreach of NetZeroCities across regions and countries, and to identify geographic imbalances in engagement that may affect cross-regional comparability and highlight underrepresented areas.
Population size of Mission-minded cities	To understand which types of cities, by population size, are engaging with NetZeroCities services, and to assess whether engagement is skewed towards specific urban size categories (e.g. small, medium, or metropolitan cities).
Population coverage	To evaluate the territorial representativeness of engaged Mission-minded cities by analysing the share of regional and national populations covered, and to identify gaps between city engagement and population reach.

² Regions are defined using a macro-regional classification applied exclusively to EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. These countries are grouped into Western Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, and Western Asia. All countries that are neither EU Member States nor Horizon Europe Associated Countries are aggregated into a single category labelled “non-EU countries”. This classification differs from the one used in Deliverables D1.1 and D1.2 and has been updated to align with the regional framework applied in the NetZeroCities Barometer. A detailed list of countries by region is provided in Annex 1. Limits to this approach are discussed in Annex 2.

Network activity (participation in the Covenant of Mayors; membership in Eurocities and ICLEI)	To assess whether NetZeroCities outreach predominantly reaches cities already active in EU climate initiatives and city networks, using network participation as a proxy for prior experience and readiness to engage at EU level.
Outreach gap between NetZeroCities and the Covenant of Mayors	To identify overlap and divergence between NetZeroCities and a large-scale European climate initiative, and to highlight potential opportunities for expanding outreach to cities not yet engaged with NetZeroCities services.

Table 1 Overview of analysed dimensions and corresponding analytical objectives

1.1 Geographic distribution

The 835 Mission-minded cities that engaged with NetZeroCities through November 2025 are located across 59 countries, with a strong concentration in EU Member States (68%) and Horizon Europe Associated Countries (28%) (Table 10) (European Commission, 2026). In addition, 31 Mission-minded cities are located in 18 countries outside the EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries.

Within EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, engagement is not evenly distributed across regions (Figure 11, Table 11)³. Southern Europe and Western Asia account for a relatively high number of Mission-minded cities, with 33% (265) and 19% (153) of the Mission-minded cities. Whereas, Eastern, Northern, Western Europe exhibit a limited pattern of engagement (around 15% for each region).

The regional level analysis is not highly representative because of the uneven concentration of Mission-minded cities in a limited number of countries⁴. A small number of countries account for a substantial share of Mission-minded cities, notably Türkiye (132 cities), Italy (64), and Spain (56). On the contrary, the majority of countries account for a limited share of Mission-minded cities. Of the 42 Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, 31 account for fewer than 20 Mission-minded cities, 21 of which account for fewer than 10 (Table 12). This uneven regional and national distribution limits the comparability of results across regions, as observed differences may reflect underlying country composition and population structures rather than substantively different engagement dynamics.

Engagement in these non-EU countries remains limited, with an average of approximately two Mission-minded cities per country (Table 12). The United States represents an outlier, with five cities engaged with NetZeroCities (Longmont, Los Angeles, Memphis, Miami-Dade County, and Niagara Falls). Unless otherwise specified, the analysis presented in this report focuses exclusively on Mission-minded cities located in EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. Further details on this analytical choice are provided in Annex 2.

The presence of Mission-minded cities in non-EU and non-Horizon Europe countries indicates that engagement with NetZeroCities services is not systematically linked to the presence of Mission Cities. This pattern is also observed in several Horizon Europe Associated Countries that do not host Mission Cities but nonetheless show engagement through Mission-minded cities. Examples include North Macedonia (6 Mission-minded cities), Ukraine (21), Moldova (5), Serbia (4), Tunisia (2), New Zealand (2), and Kosovo (1) (Table 12).

³ For a definition of regions and of regions categories, see footnote 2 or Annex 1

⁴ The regional analysis is not representative also because of the uneven representation of countries in the regional categories. See Annex 2 for an overview on the limits to the use of the geographic categories.

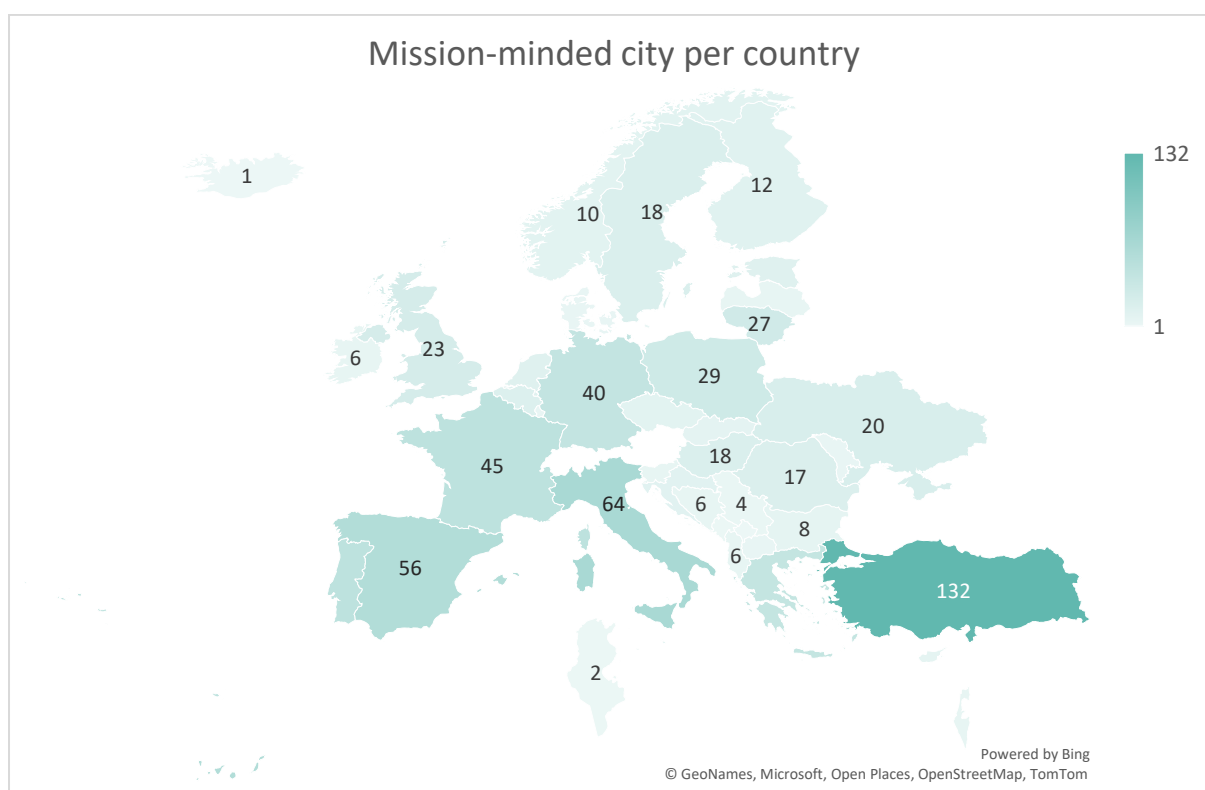


Figure 11 Engaged Mission-minded cities per country
 (EU and Horizon Europe countries exc. New Zealand)

1.2 Population size

In terms of population size, NetZeroCities engagement is primarily driven by smaller municipalities rather than major urban centres. Engagement among Mission-minded cities in Europe and Horizon Europe Associated Countries is largely concentrated in small towns (fewer than 50,000 inhabitants) and medium-sized cities (between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants)⁵ (Figure 2).

Population category	Definition (population size)
Large metropolitan areas	Cities with a population of 1.5 million inhabitants or more
Metropolitan areas	Cities with a population between 500,000 and 1.5 million inhabitants

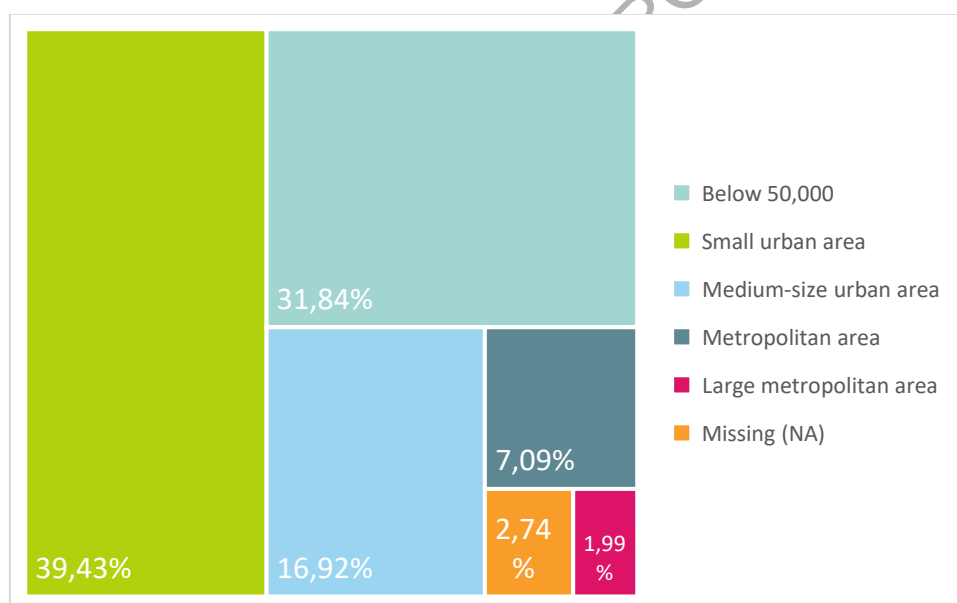
⁵ The analysis uses population categories taken from: OECD. (2024). Urban population by city size (indicator). OECD. doi: 10.1787/b4332f92-en. See Annex 1 for more information.

Medium-size urban areas	Cities with a population between 200,000 and 500,000 inhabitants
Small urban areas	Cities with a population between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants
Small towns	Cities or municipalities with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants

Table 2 Definition for population categories

Overall, 71.3% of engaged cities have fewer than 200,000 inhabitants, with small urban areas accounting for 39.4% and towns below 50,000 inhabitants for 31.8%. At the lower end of the population spectrum, the dataset includes very small municipalities with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, such as San Lawrenz (Malta, 748 inhabitants) and Emirler (Türkiye, 726 inhabitants).

Large and metropolitan cities are comparatively underrepresented. Larger cities are less prevalent in the dataset, but they are nonetheless present. Within the EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, the largest engaged cities include Berlin (Germany, 3.8 million inhabitants), Kyiv (Ukraine, 2.95 million), Ankara (Türkiye, 5.86 million), and London (United Kingdom, 8.98 million). These cities represent important metropolitan and capital regions, yet they remain numerically marginal compared to the overall population of small and medium-sized Mission-minded cities.


Figure 22. Visual representation of the frequency of engaged MMC per population categories

1.3 Territorial representativeness

By engaging with Mission-minded cities, the **Cities Mission reaches approximately 35% of the total population of EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries** (Table 3). Mission Cities account for 10.6% of the population, while engaged Mission-minded cities account for an additional 24.4%.

At regional level, the population coverage of Mission Cities typically ranges between 7% and 12%. When combined with the engagement of Mission-minded cities, the **overall coverage generally converges around 23–30% across most regions**. This indicates that engagement with Mission-minded cities

complements the territorial reach of Mission Cities and contributes to a more balanced population coverage of the Cities Mission.

In most regions, engaged Mission-minded cities cover approximately 15–20% of the total population (Table 3, Figure 3). Western Asia represents an outlier, where engaged Mission-minded cities account for around 69% of the regional population. This comparatively high value is primarily explained by the composition of the dataset in this region, where several entities that engaged with NetZeroCities self-declare as “cities” but correspond to administrative units with larger population coverage overlapping with multiple municipalities (e.g. provinces or regions). As a result, the population coverage value for Western Asia should be interpreted with caution (see Annex 2 for further discussion of the analytical limits).

Region	Population (M)	Mission Cities Population (% of regional pop.)	Engaged Mission-minded cities Population (% of regional pop.)	Population covered by both MC/ engaged MMC (% of regional pop.)
Eastern Europe	141.4	7.3	15.7	23.1
Northern Europe	106.8	8.9	20.6	29.5
Southern Europe	154.4	11.7	17.4	29.1
Western Asia ⁶	96.6	21.1	68.7	89.8
Western Europe	192.0	7.6	16.3	24.0
Total	691.2	10.6	24.4	35.0

Table 3. Population coverage by Mission Cities and Mission-minded cities per Region

⁶ Please see Annex 2 for details on the results for Western Asia

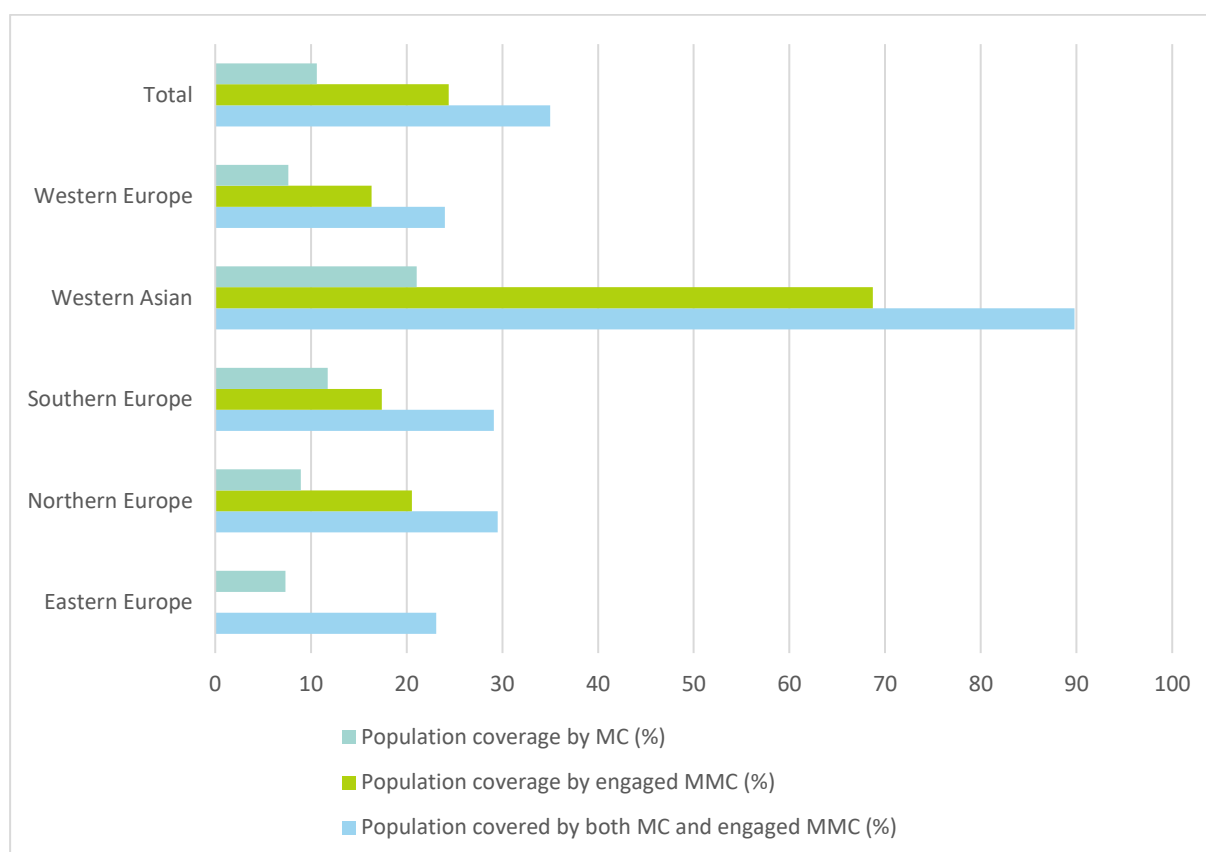


Figure 33. Population coverage by Mission Cities (MC) and engaged Mission-minded cities (MMC)⁷

At national level, the relative contribution of Mission Cities and Mission-minded cities varies significantly across countries (Table 16). In several cases, Mission-minded cities account for a larger share of national population coverage and substantially expand the territorial reach of the Cities Mission beyond Mission Cities alone. This is observed, for example, in Austria (30% of the national population covered by Mission-minded cities compared to 1% by Mission Cities), Belgium (23% vs. 8%), the Czech Republic (20% vs. 1%), and Portugal (39% vs. 9%). In other countries, population coverage is driven primarily by Mission Cities, including Finland (29% covered by Mission Cities compared to 16% by Mission-minded cities), Latvia (36% vs. 10%), as well as Iceland, Hungary, and Sweden. A third group of countries shows more balanced contributions between the two groups, including France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland, and Romania, where Mission Cities and Mission-minded cities each contribute to national population coverage within similar ranges.

Finally, engagement with Mission-minded cities, and the associated population coverage, is also observed in several Horizon Europe Associated Countries where no Mission Cities are present. This is the case, for example, in North Macedonia (49% population coverage through 6 Mission-minded cities), Moldova (32% through 5 cities), and Ukraine (15% through 21 cities). In these contexts, Mission-minded cities represent the primary channel through which the Cities Mission reaches national urban systems.

⁷ See Annex 1 for information on the sources for population data

Similar levels of population coverage can result from different compositions of engaged Mission-minded cities (Table 4, for a detailed definition of the engagement patterns see Annex 1). In some countries, population coverage is primarily associated with the participation of a limited number of large metropolitan areas. For example, in Türkiye, several Mission-minded cities have populations exceeding one million inhabitants, meaning that engagement by a relatively small number of large urban centres accounts for a substantial share of national population coverage.

In other countries, comparable levels of population coverage are achieved through the participation of a larger number of small and medium-sized municipalities. For instance, in Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, and Greece, engaged Mission-minded cities are predominantly small or medium-sized, and population coverage results from the aggregation of multiple municipalities rather than from a few large metropolitan areas. For example, the average population of the 27 Mission-minded cities in Lithuania is approximately 52,000 inhabitants. These differences should therefore be interpreted as reflecting both engagement patterns and underlying national urban structures.

Metropolitan-driven coverage (6 countries)	Small cities-driven coverage (17 countries)	Low coverage / fragmented engagement (16 countries)	Mixed / lack of data (3 countries)
Türkiye (75%), North Macedonia (49%), Moldova (32%), New Zealand (29%), Serbia (22%)	Estonia (50%), Lithuania (49%), Cyprus (42%), Malta (41%), Portugal (39%), Greece (37%), Belgium (31%), United Kingdom (29%), Bulgaria (28%), Czech Republic (27%), Germany (26%), Spain (25%), Croatia (24%), Finland (23%), Hungary (22%), Sweden (21%), Ukraine (19%), Montenegro (11%)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (14%), Norway (14%), Poland (13%), Romania (13%), France (12%), Italy (12%), Luxembourg (12%), Latvia (10%), Slovenia (10%), Slovakia (9%), Netherlands (8%), Ireland (6%), Iceland (5%), Denmark (4%), Tunisia (0.001%)	Austria (30%), Albania (27%), Israel (17%)

Table 4 Mission-minded cities population coverage by engagement patterns⁸

1.4 Background engagement in existing climate-related and EU initiatives

In this chapter, we examine the extent to which Mission-minded cities were already active in EU climate-related initiatives and city networks while engaging with NetZeroCities. For the purposes of this analysis, Mission-minded cities are classified as *network-active* if they are signatories of the Covenant of Mayors or members of major city networks such as ICLEI or Eurocities, and as *network-inactive* otherwise.

⁸ The definitions of the engagement patterns are provided in Annex 1

Overall, **less than half of Mission-minded cities analysed are network-active(48%), while the remaining ones engaged with NetZeroCities without participation in the other initiatives or networks** considered (Figure 4).

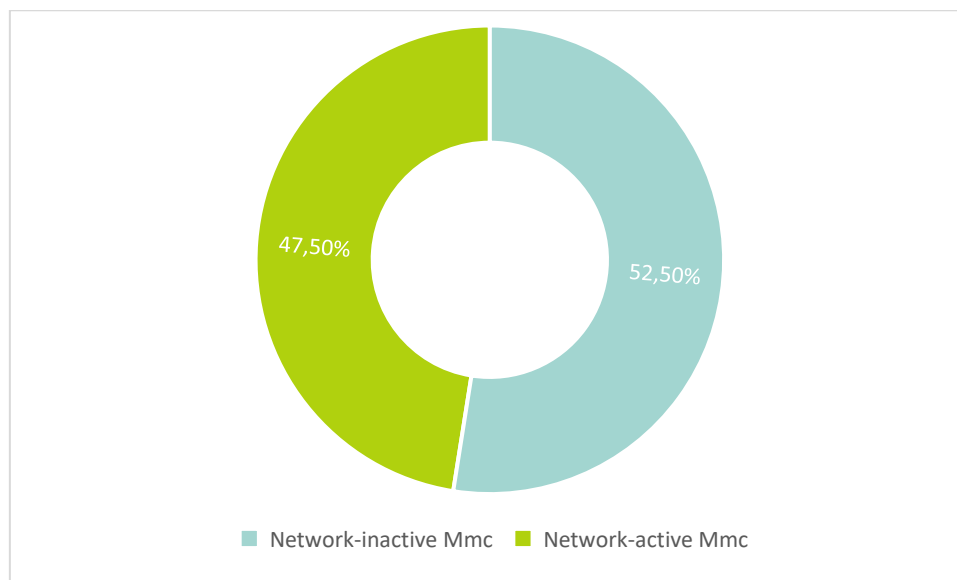


Figure 44. Share of network-active and network-inactive Mission-minded cities

The overall intensity of prior engagement is low: 92% of Mission-minded cities are either not active at all or active in only one initiative or network. More precisely, 39% of Mission-minded cities participate in only one initiative or network, 6% in two, and just 2% in three (Table 18, Figure 5). It should be noted that a high share of network-active cities is driven by participation in the Covenant of Mayors. In total, 42% of Mission-minded cities are also Covenant of Mayors signatories.

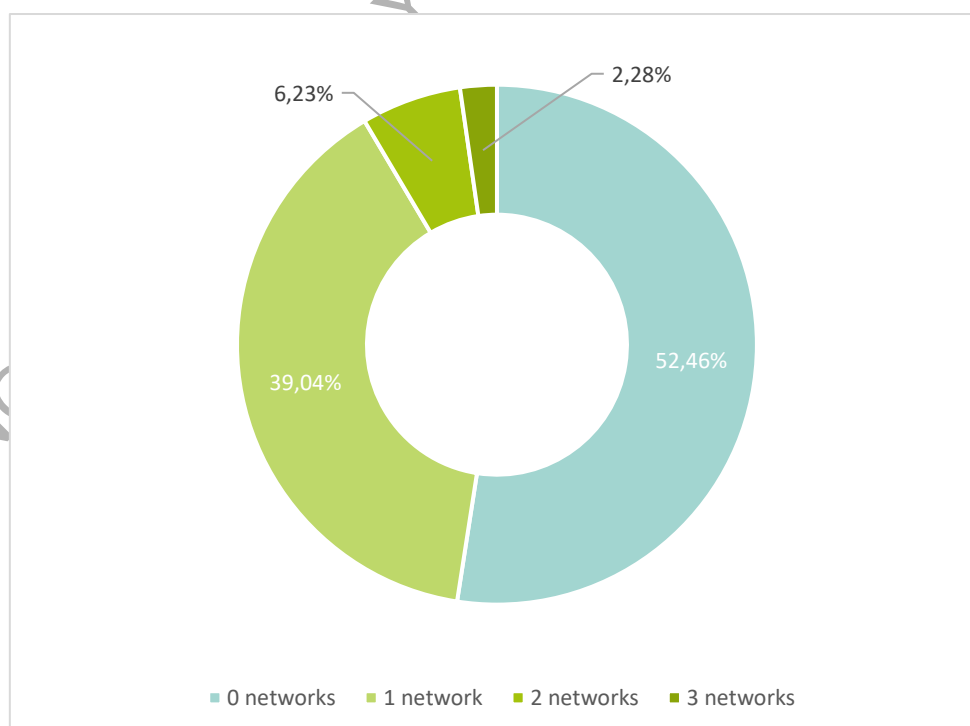


Figure 55. Number of networks joined by Mission-minded cities

At regional level, patterns of network activity differ (Table 19). Southern Europe displays the highest share of network-active Mission-minded cities (66%), while Eastern, Northern, and Western Europe show more moderate and relatively similar shares, ranging between 45% and 48%.

However, aggregation at regional level masks substantial variation between countries (Table 20). Among countries with a high number of Mission-minded cities, network-activity profiles differ markedly. A high prevalence of network-active cities is observed in Italy (56 active out of 64 MMC), Spain (42 out of 57), Portugal (27 out of 46), Greece (26 out of 41), and Belgium (14 out of 16). By contrast, Germany (20 active vs. 24 inactive) and France (15 vs. 30) display more balanced distributions, while Lithuania (3 active vs. 24 inactive), Estonia (2 vs. 11), Poland (7 vs. 25), and Malta (7 vs. 15) are characterised by a predominance of network-inactive Mission-minded cities.

Network-active Mission-minded cities are observed in both EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. In several Associated Countries, a substantial share of Mission-minded cities participate in EU initiatives or city networks, including the United Kingdom (17 active out of 25 MMC), Ukraine (12 out of 21), Norway (7 out of 10), Moldova (4 out of 5), and Montenegro (2 out of 2). In contrast, other Associated Countries, including Iceland, Israel, Tunisia, New Zealand, and Kosovo, do not include any network-active Mission-minded cities in the analysed initiatives. Türkiye combines a large absolute number of Mission-minded cities (139) with a predominantly network-inactive profile (107 network-inactive and 32 network-active). This distribution reflects, in part, differences in how local and sub-national entities are classified as “Mission-minded cities” in the dataset, which affects the comparability of network-activity patterns across countries (see Annex 2).

The population profile of network-active Mission-minded cities broadly resembles that of the overall Mission-minded cities sample, but some differences emerge across population categories (Table 21). In particular, **small urban areas and medium-sized cities are relatively more represented among network-active cities, while cities below 50,000 inhabitants are comparatively less represented.**

Small urban areas account for 39.4% of all Mission-minded cities but represent a higher share of network-active cities (44.9%). By contrast, cities below 50,000 inhabitants account for 31.8% of the overall sample but only 23.3% of network-active cities. Together, these two categories represent 71.2% of all Mission-minded cities and 68.2% of network-active Mission-minded cities.

Medium-sized cities (50,000–200,000 inhabitants) account for 16.9% of the Mission-minded cities sample but represent a larger share of network-active cities (21.5%), indicating a higher relative presence of this population category among network-active cities. Metropolitan and large metropolitan areas together account for 9.1% of all Mission-minded cities and 9.8% of network-active cities, remaining numerically limited in both distributions.

1.5 NetZeroCities and Covenant of Mayors: an outreach gap analysis

The analysis above examined the types of cities that are engaging with NetZeroCities services. The analysis of population coverage assessed the territorial reach of this engagement. Using the whole database of signatories of the Covenant of Mayors⁹ as a comparative baseline, the following section

⁹ As the analysis is considering only Mission-minded cities in European Member States and in Horizon Europe Associated Countries, when analysing the signatories of the Covenant of Mayors, only cities in these countries have been considered.

investigates NetZeroCities outreach gaps and identifies potential city groups to be considered in the future.

Within the sample of Mission-minded cities, a substantial share of cities (42%) are also signatories of the Covenant of Mayors. However, when considering the full database of Covenant of Mayors signatories, **Mission-minded cities represent only 3% of all Covenant of Mayors signatories** (Figure 66). Out of 11,970 Covenant of Mayors Europe signatories, only 367 cities are also Mission-minded cities. This indicates that Mission-minded cities constitute a small and selective subset of the Covenant of Mayors Europe sample.

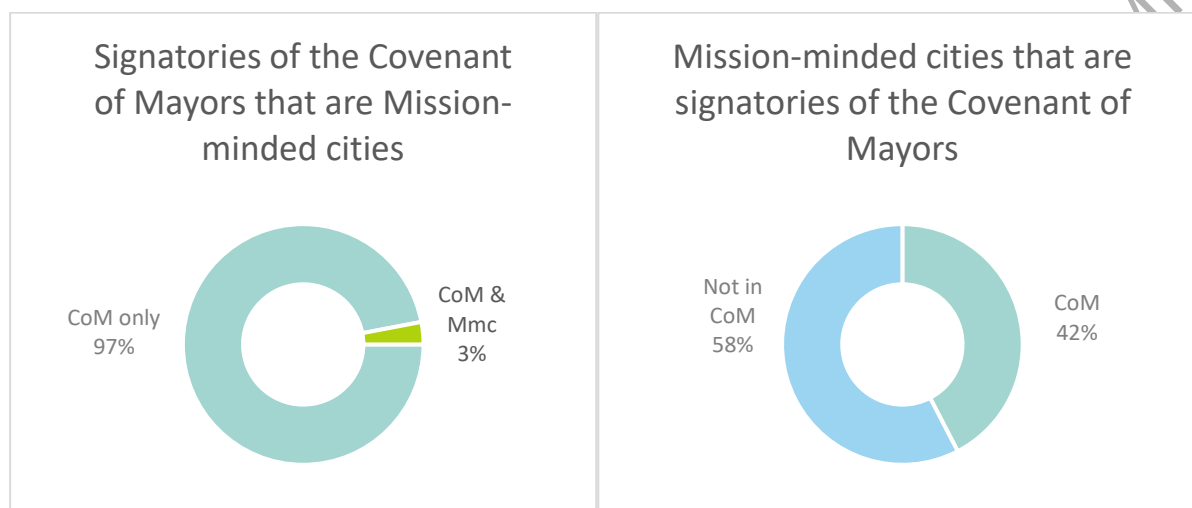


Figure 66. Comparison between signatories of the Covenant of Mayors that are Mission-minded cities and vice-versa

The degree of overlap between Covenant of Mayors Europe and Mission-minded cities varies widely across countries (Table 23). In most countries, less than 5% of Covenant of Mayors cities are also Mission-minded cities, as observed for example in Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Czech Republic. Higher levels of overlap are observed in a limited number of countries, including Türkiye (33%), Finland (33%), Norway (27%), North Macedonia (43%), Estonia (25%), and the United Kingdom (19%).

At regional level, the overlap between Covenant of Mayors Europe and Mission-minded cities is lowest in Southern Europe (2.2%), Western Europe (6.3%), and Eastern Europe (3.3%). Higher levels of overlap are observed in Western Asia (27.7%) and Northern Europe (17.1%) (Table 24).

The likelihood of Covenant of Mayors Europe signatories also being Mission-minded increases with city size (Table 25). Among Covenant of Mayors cities with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants, only 0.8% are Mission-minded cities. This share rises to 21.7% for small urban areas, 31.2% for medium-sized urban areas, 25.0% for metropolitan areas, and 33.3% for large metropolitan areas. While small municipalities account for the majority of Covenant of Mayors signatories in absolute terms, Mission-minded cities are disproportionately represented among larger population classes within the Covenant of Mayors sample.

Almost all CoM signatories with a population above 1 million inhabitant is engaged with NetZeroCities either as a Mission or a Mission-minded city. The other cities are concentrated almost exclusively in Türkiye. These include Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, Antalya, Diyarbakir, Samsun Metropolitan Municipality, Denizli Metropolitan Municipality, and Sakarya Metropolitan Municipality.

Recommendation for clustering and adapting services

In order to inform possible future outreach strategic directions for NetZeroCities services, the matrix in Table 5 clusters countries according to¹⁰:

- **level of NetZeroCities engagement** (number of Mission-minded cities and national population coverage), and
- **outreach potential**, measured by the absolute number of Covenant of Mayors signatories not engaged as Mission-minded cities.

The clustering exercise highlights distinct possible strategic pathways, including:

- **Scaling opportunities**: Countries where NetZeroCities already has significant traction but large Covenant of Mayors communities remain unengaged (e.g. Italy, Spain, France);
- **High-return expansion opportunities**: Countries with moderate NetZeroCities engagement but very large pools of potential cities (e.g. Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania);
- **Consolidation contexts**: Countries where additional Covenant of Mayors outreach potential is limited (e.g. Türkiye);
- **Targeted or selective engagement contexts**: Countries where both engagement and outreach potential are limited, likely requiring differentiated outreach approaches (e.g. Malta, Cyprus).

NetZeroCities engagement ↓ / CoM outreach potential →	High CoM potential (≥200 non-MMC CoM cities)	Medium CoM potential (50–199)	Low CoM potential (<50)
High NetZeroCities engagement	Italy (5,085) Spain (3,008) France (187)	Portugal (165) Greece (207)	Türkiye (54)
Medium NetZeroCities engagement	Poland (81)* Romania (179) Hungary (347)	Germany (75) Belgium (554) Netherlands (31)*	Sweden (60)*
Low NetZeroCities engagement	Czech Republic (297) Croatia (195)	Denmark (40) Austria (28) Ireland (21)	Finland (12) Malta (29) Cyprus (27)

Table 5 Country typology based on NetZeroCities engagement and CoM outreach potential

1.6 Conclusions and recommendations

- Two years into the project, **835 Mission-minded cities** have engaged with at least one NetZeroCities service.

¹⁰ See Annex 1 for more details on the indicators used to build the categories

- Mission-minded cities are distributed across **59 countries**. Engagement is geographically uneven across regions and highly concentrated in a limited number of countries, notably **Türkiye (132 cities), Italy (64), and Spain (56)**.
- Engagement of Mission-minded cities is **not driven by the presence of Mission Cities** at national level. Mission-minded cities are present in non-EU countries and in several Horizon Europe Associated Countries without Mission Cities.
- Mission-minded cities include **the full spectrum of urban sizes**, from very small municipalities (below 1,000 inhabitants) to large metropolis. Engagement in EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, however, is **skewed towards small towns and medium-sized cities**, while large and metropolitan cities are comparatively underrepresented.
- At regional level, Mission-minded cities typically correspond to **approximately 15–20% population coverage**. At national level, population coverage varies widely, ranging from very low levels (e.g. **Denmark 4%, Iceland 5%**) to very high levels (e.g. **Türkiye 75%**).
- Similar levels of population coverage are achieved through **different engagement patterns**. In other words, population coverage and the number of Mission-minded cities **do not move in parallel**. In some countries, coverage is mainly associated with the participation of metropolitan and large metropolitan cities. For instance, in Türkiye, there are 18 Mission-minded cities with more than one million inhabitants. Whereas, in other countries, comparable coverage results from the aggregation of many small and medium-sized municipalities (e.g. Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal).
- Approximately **half of Mission-minded cities are network-active**, meaning they are signatories of the Covenant of Mayors or members of at least one of the analysed city networks. This demonstrates the NetZeroCities' capacity to reach cities that are not active in initiatives and projects at European Level.
- At the same time, Mission-minded cities represent only a **small fraction (3%) of Covenant of Mayors signatories**. The degree of overlap between Covenant of Mayors signatories and Mission-minded cities varies by country and population size. In many countries, fewer than 5% of Covenant of Mayors cities are Mission-minded, while higher overlaps are observed in a limited number of countries, often Horizon Europe Associated Countries (e.g. **Türkiye, Norway, North Macedonia, and the United Kingdom**).
- By population size, the likelihood that a Covenant of Mayors signatory is also Mission-minded **increases with city size**, from **0.8% among cities below 50,000 inhabitants to 33.3% among large metropolitan areas**. Among Covenant of Mayors signatories with more than one million inhabitants, excluding Mission Cities, the remaining non-Mission-minded cases identified are concentrated almost exclusively in **Türkiye**.

Recommendations:

1. Strengthen understanding of engagement patterns through further research. Investigate country-specific drivers of engagement. The analysis reveals substantial variation in engagement across countries, which cannot be explained by a single factor. Further research is needed to better understand these differences, particularly with regard to:
 - **Population coverage.** National population coverage by Mission-minded cities varies widely, from very low levels (e.g. Denmark) to very high levels (e.g. Türkiye). The network-active versus network-inactive analysis suggests that cities in some Horizon Europe Associated Countries may be relatively more engaged, but the underlying drivers remain unclear. Future analysis could explore whether these differences are shaped by exogenous factors (such as degree of European integration, access to EU

funding, or national policy frameworks) or by endogenous factors within NetZeroCities (such as the type of offered support and services).

- **Population size and engagement patterns.** Countries with similar levels of population coverage often display very different engagement profiles by city size. In some cases, coverage is driven primarily by engagement of metropolitan areas (Türkiye, Moldova), while in others it results from the aggregation of many small and medium-sized municipalities (Estonia, Lithuania, Malta). The presence of Mission Cities does not appear to systematically explain these differences, nor does the type of NetZeroCities services accessed, as the analysis shows that NetZeroCities services are used by a wide range of city sizes. Further investigation is therefore needed to understand what drives these contrasting engagement patterns.

2. Considerations for planning and tailoring the NetZeroCities offer to increase outreach

- **Prioritise country-level outreach strategies over regional approaches.** Apparent regional patterns largely reflect national-level compositions. Outreach planning should therefore be designed primarily at country level, taking into account factors such as national urban structures, the readiness of cities to engage, and prior experience with EU initiatives and programmes.
- **Improve communication on the target audience of NetZeroCities services, or adapt targeting to national and subnational administrative structures.** The analysis shows that in some countries (e.g. Türkiye) interest in the NetZeroCities offer is not limited to municipalities, but also includes districts, unions of municipalities, and provinces (see Annex 2). Outreach strategies and service design should therefore take into account national differences in administrative and territorial structures, and clarify, where relevant, whether and how such entities are within scope of the NetZeroCities support offer. Engaging with different levels of government would be beneficial for NetZeroCities and its National Support Services in regards to the Cities Mission specific objective of strengthening multi-level governance (European Commission, 2021; Specific Objective 7)
- **Acknowledge heterogeneous entry levels among Mission-minded cities.** The analysis shows that Mission-minded cities are evenly split between those already active in European climate initiatives (primarily through the Covenant of Mayors) and those with no prior participation in the analysed EU initiatives or city networks. These two groups likely differ in terms of familiarity with EU processes, climate governance maturity, and readiness to engage with complex support offers. For cities already active in initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors, communication can build on existing knowledge of climate targets, reporting, and EU programmes. For cities without prior engagement, clearer entry-level messaging, simplified explanations of the Mission logic, and explicit positioning of NetZeroCities services as accessible starting points may be required.
- **Clarify strategic focus between deepening and widening outreach.** NetZeroCities may consider whether to prioritise further expansion in countries where engagement is already strong or to direct additional efforts towards countries with limited current engagement. Chapter 1.5 and Table 5 provide an analytical basis to inform this choice. By combining indicators of existing NetZeroCities engagement (number of Mission-minded cities and population coverage) with outreach potential derived from the Covenant of Mayors database (number of CoM signatories not yet engaged with NZC), the analysis identifies distinct country clusters and corresponding outreach opportunities. This can support differentiated targeting strategies at national level, balancing consolidation in well-engaged contexts with expansion into underrepresented ones.

- **Balance continued support to small and medium-sized cities with targeted outreach to large cities.** Small towns and medium-sized cities constitute the core of current Mission-minded city engagement and should remain a key focus of the NetZeroCities offer. Outreach formats and support services should continue to be accessible and relevant to these city sizes. At the same time, large and metropolitan cities are numerically underrepresented but account for a significant share of population coverage in several countries. Targeted outreach strategies could be explored to engage additional large cities, particularly in contexts where population coverage is currently driven by small urban centres.

AWAITING APPROVAL BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

2 Mission-minded cities engagement

Following the analysis of which types of cities engage with NetZeroCities services, this chapter examines how Mission-minded cities engage with the NetZeroCities service portfolio (Table 6). Using the Mission-minded cities database (Annex 1), it addresses the second set of research questions:

WHICH NETZEROCITIES SERVICES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH BROADER REACH AND DEEPER MULTI-SERVICE ENGAGEMENT BY MISSION-MINDED CITIES? HOW IS ENGAGEMENT WITH NETZEROCITIES SERVICES DISTRIBUTED ACROSS MISSION-MINDED CITIES IN TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT FREQUENCY?

The chapter does not assess the quality or intensity of individual interactions. Instead, it analyses engagement patterns using two complementary perspectives: engagement across services and engagement across cities (for a qualitative assessment of service satisfaction see D1.23 - forthcoming).

Engagement across services is examined through a breadth-and-depth framework. Breadth refers to the number of Mission-minded cities reached by a given NetZeroCities service. Depth refers to the extent to which engagement with a specific service is associated with engagement in additional services, measured as the average number of other services used by participating cities. A normalised depth indicator (decimal values between 0 and 1) is used to support comparison across services (Annex 1).

Frequency engagement is analysed by examining how many NetZeroCities services individual Mission-minded cities engage with and how engagement frequency is distributed among cities. This perspective allows patterns of single- and multi-service engagement to be described and related to selected city characteristics, including geographic distribution and population size.

Together, these analyses provide a structured overview of how the NetZeroCities service portfolio is accessed and combined by Mission-minded cities, and how engagement patterns vary across different types of cities.

Mission-minded cities services	Short description and timeframe
MMC Newsletter	Bi-monthly newsletter targeting MMC
NetZeroCities Portal	Online platform providing access to NetZeroCities resources and services
National Support Services	Country-level coordination and engagement services
Helpdesk – 1-to-1	Ad-hoc one-to-one support meetings organised upon request by Mission-minded cities
Helpdesk Orientation Phase	Quarterly online orientation sessions for Mission-minded cities
Twinning Programme	Peer-learning programme; three cohorts completed and a fourth cohort launched
Tool Training Series	Series of online webinars introducing and demonstrating NetZeroCities tools
Group Study Visits	Peer-learning study visits
Online Discussion Groups	Facilitated online discussions focused on selected thematic challenges

Online Planning Lab	Structured online live course supporting climate planning processes
---------------------	---

Table 6 NetZeroCities Services

2.1 Breadth and Depth analysis

BREADTH OF ENGAGEMENT ACROSS SERVICES

NetZeroCities services display substantial variation in breadth, measured as the number of Mission-minded cities reached through November 2025 (with various levels of maturity of services by that date). Overall, breadth values range from services engaging more than 400 Mission-minded cities to services engaging fewer than 25 cities, indicating **a wide dispersion in outreach levels across the NetZeroCities service portfolio**.

The highest levels of breadth are observed for services with a broad informational or access-oriented function. The **Mission-minded cities Newsletter** engages 426 cities, while the **NetZeroCities Portal** engages 417 cities. These two services represent the widest-reaching elements of the service portfolio.

A second group of services reaches a more limited but still substantial number of cities. **National Support Services** engage 151 cities, while the **Twinning Programme** engages 139 cities. **Online Discussion Groups** reach 104 cities, and the **Helpdesk Orientation Phase** engages 97 cities. These services display intermediate breadth compared to the high-reach tools.

Other services show comparatively low breadth. The **Tool Training Series** engages 60 cities, the **Online Planning Lab** engages 59 cities, and **Group Study Visits** engage 21 cities. The Helpdesk 1-to-1 service records the lowest breadth, with 6 cities engaged during the reference period.

DEPTH OF ENGAGEMENT ACROSS SERVICES

Depth of engagement, measured as the average number of additional services used by cities engaging with a given service, also varies considerably across the service portfolio.

The highest depth values are observed for **Group Study Visits**, with an average of 4.19 additional services used by participating cities.

Intermediate depth values are observed for the **Twinning Programme** (2.48), the **Online Planning Lab** (3.03), and the **Helpdesk Orientation Phase** (3.24). **Online Discussion Groups** show an average depth of 3.36, while the **Tool Training Series** records an average depth of 3.60. The Helpdesk 1-to-1 service also shows a high depth value of 3.17, despite its limited number of participating cities.

Services with the lowest depth values include the **Mission-minded cities Newsletter**, with an average depth of 1.99 additional services, and the **NetZeroCities Portal**, with an average depth of 1.74. **National Support Services** show a similar depth value of 1.52.

BREADTH-DEPTH MATRIX AND ENGAGEMENT PATTERNS

Considering breadth and depth together highlights important differences in the roles that individual services play within the NetZeroCities ecosystem. While some services function primarily as high-reach entry points, others are associated with more intensive engagement and stronger connections to the wider portfolio, revealing distinct patterns in how cities navigate and combine support opportunities. Services can be grouped based on their relative position along the breadth–depth dimensions (Figure 7. 7).

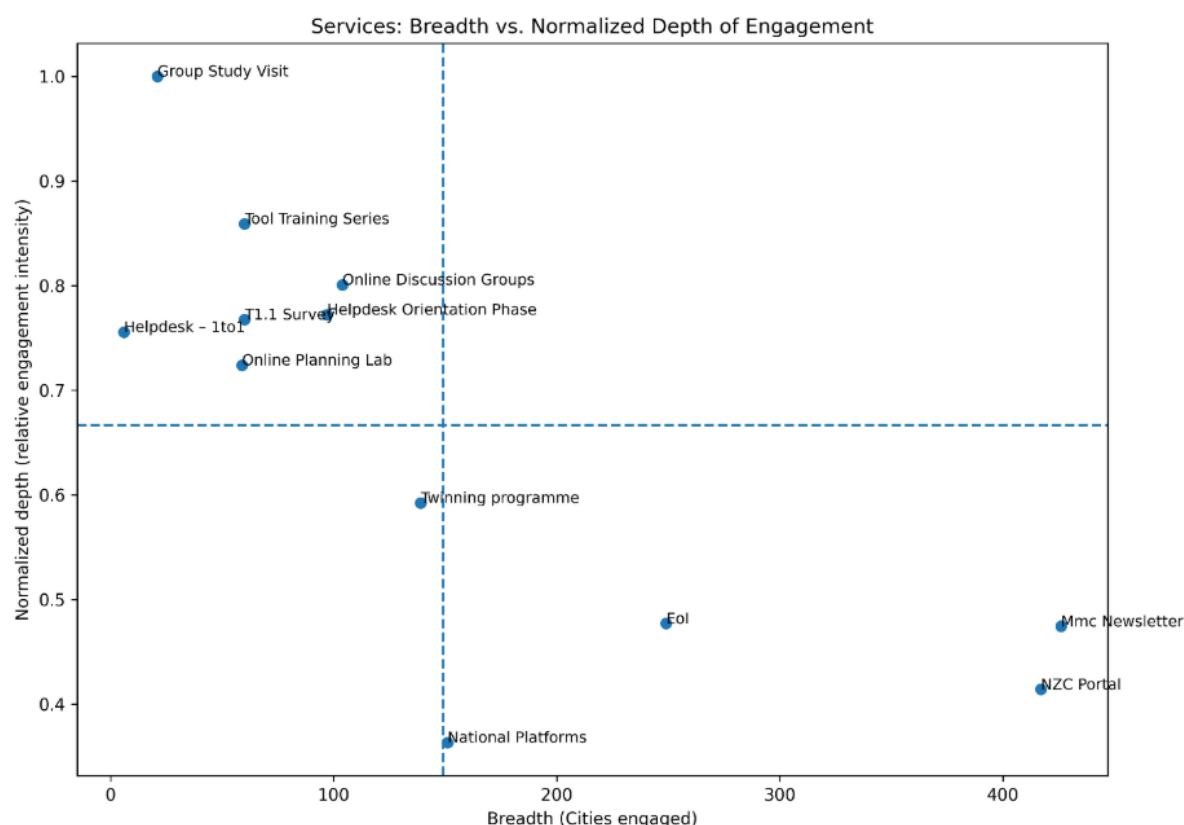


Figure 7. 7NetZeroCities Services - Breadth and Depth Analysis

A first group includes services with high breadth and low depth (bottom-right of the graph). The **Mission-minded Cities Newsletter** and the **NetZeroCities Portal** engage the **largest number of cities but are associated with comparatively low average use of additional services**. These services represent the highest-reach elements of the portfolio.

A second group includes a service with medium breadth and low depth (bottom-medium of the graph). **National Support Services** engage a substantial but more selective group of cities, while being associated with lower average levels of subsequent engagement with other NetZeroCities services. In this sense, these services appear relatively weakly connected to the broader service portfolio. They reach a comparatively high number of cities, but **participating cities do not systematically engage with additional services**. The combination of relatively high reach and limited co-usage with other services likely reflects the distinct nature of this support format, which operates at country level and follows engagement logics that differ from other NetZeroCities services.

A third group consists of services with low-medium breadth and moderate-high depth (medium-top-left of the graph). This group includes the **Twinning Programme**, **Tool Training Series**, **Group Study Visits**, **Online Discussion Groups**, the **Online Planning Lab**, the **Helpdesk Orientation Phase**, and the **Helpdesk 1-to-1 service**. These services engage relatively small numbers of cities but are associated with higher average use of additional services, indicating **strong co-usage patterns within the service portfolio**.

2.2 City-level engagement patterns

This subsection examines engagement patterns from a city-level perspective, focusing on the number of NetZeroCities services individual Mission-minded cities engage with. **Engagement frequency** is

measured as the total number of distinct NetZeroCities services a city has engaged with during the reference period (2 years). Nearly half of Mission-minded cities engage with one service.

The distribution of Mission-minded cities by engagement frequency shows a strong concentration at lower levels of engagement (Figure 88). The largest group consists of cities engaging with a single service (384 cities), representing 46% of the total. A further 221 cities (26%) engage with two services. Together, cities engaging with one or two services account for 605 cities, corresponding to 72% of all Mission-minded cities recorded in the database.

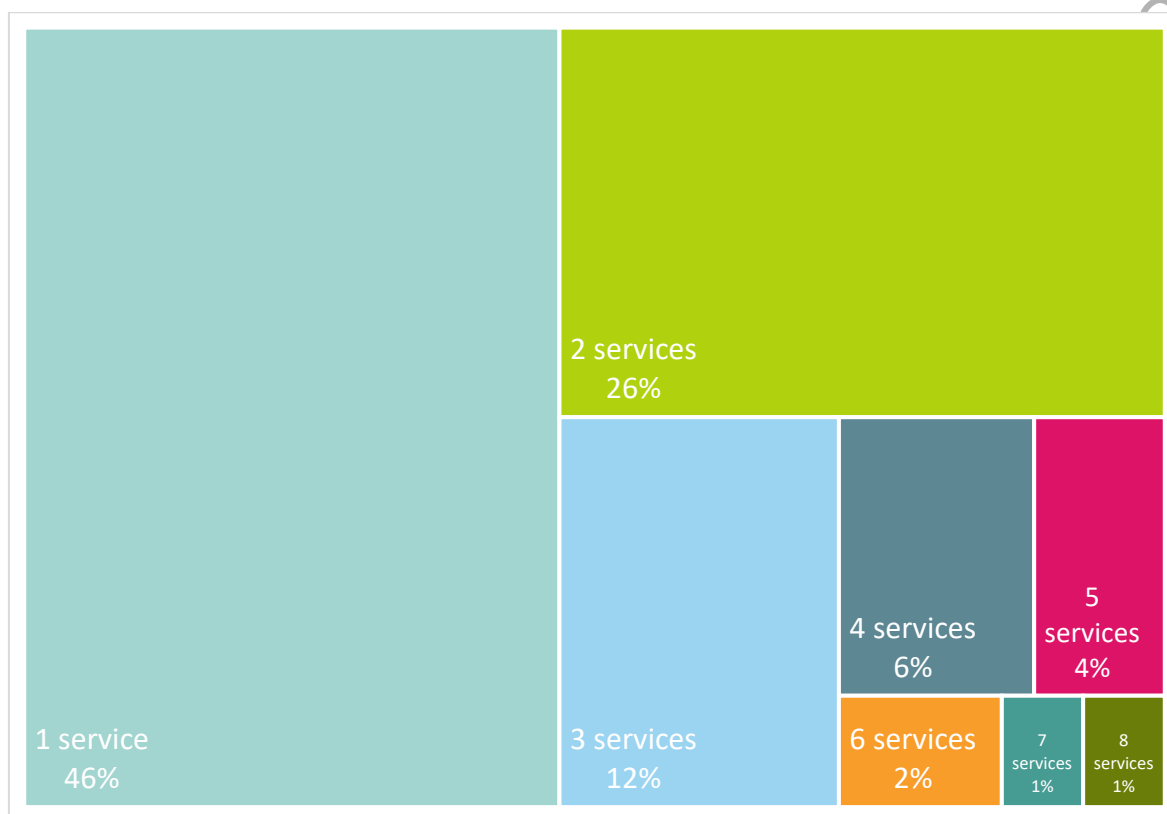


Figure 88. Visual representation of the number of NetZeroCities services engaged by Mission-minded cities

Service frequency	Cities and countries
7 services used	Bruges (Belgium); Debrecen (Hungary); Denizli (Türkiye); Diyarbakır (Türkiye); Gdańsk (Poland); Tallinn (Estonia); Torres Vedras (Portugal); Truşeni (Moldova)
8 services used	Ankara (Türkiye); Balıkesir (Türkiye); Braga (Portugal); Bursa (Türkiye); Gaziantep (Türkiye); L'Aquila (Italy); Mersin (Türkiye); Vaasa (Finland); Vantaa (Finland)
9 services used	No cities
10 services used	Eskişehir (Türkiye); Konya (Türkiye)

Table 7. Mission-minded cities with high engagement frequency (7 or more NetZeroCities services)

Engagement with seven or more NetZeroCities services is observed for 2% of Mission-minded cities¹¹. This upper end of the observed engagement frequency distribution shows a considerable level of commitment, as it covers almost the full NetZeroCities service portfolio for Mission-minded cities. Nine out of the 19 cities engaging with seven or more services are from Türkiye, accounting for nearly half of the cases (see Table 7).

Differences in engagement frequency are not strongly structured by regional location (Table 27). When analysed more systematically, engagement frequency by geographic distribution indicates that regional location has limited influence on how Mission-minded cities engage with NetZeroCities services. Across all geographic regions, engagement with a single service represents the most common pattern.

Higher engagement frequencies are present across all population categories, but their relative incidence increases with city size (Table 26). Cities below 50,000 inhabitants are strongly concentrated in the lowest engagement category, with nearly two-thirds (65.9%) engaging with only one service. Small urban areas show a more balanced distribution between one- and two-service engagement, while medium-sized cities display a higher share of engagement with three or more services. Metropolitan and large metropolitan areas exhibit a flatter distribution across engagement frequencies, with comparatively higher shares of cities engaging with four or more services. Engagement with six or more services is almost exclusively observed among medium-sized, metropolitan, and large metropolitan cities.

Taken together, the city-level distribution indicates that engagement is concentrated at lower frequencies. While a small number of Mission-minded cities engage with a high number of NetZeroCities services, the majority remain concentrated in the lower engagement brackets. When viewed through the lens of geographic distribution, no strong regional pattern emerges – cities from different parts of Europe display similar engagement tendencies. However, when city population size is considered, a clearer gradient appears: smaller cities tend to engage with fewer services, while larger metropolitan areas are more likely to participate in multiple services, likely reflecting differences in capacity and resource availability. This city-level perspective complements the service-level breadth and depth analysis presented in the previous subsections and provides a descriptive overview of how engagement with the NetZeroCities service portfolio is distributed across Mission-minded cities.

2.3 Conclusions and recommendations

- **NetZeroCities services differ in terms of reach.** A small number of services (the Mission-minded Cities Newsletter and the NetZeroCities Portal) reach the largest share of cities, engaging more than half of the Mission-minded cities recorded in the database. Other services engage progressively smaller groups of cities, down to highly selective formats such as Group Study Visits, the Twinning Programme and the Helpdesk 1-to-1 service.
- **Depth of engagement varies systematically across services.** Services with the widest reach are associated with lower average engagement with additional services, while services engaging fewer cities tend to be associated with higher average use of other NetZeroCities services. When breadth and depth are considered jointly, three distinct service profiles emerge:

¹¹ It should be noted that beyond the services listed, this count considers the Expression of Interest launched in 2022 to apply as Mission Cities to the 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission by 2030, and cities that answered to the survey launched in 2024 to inform SGA2-NZC D1.1.

- **High-breadth/low-depth services** – Mission-minded cities Newsletter, NetZeroCities Portal
- **Medium-breadth/low-depth services** – National Support Services
- **Medium-low-breadth/moderate-high-depth services** – Twinning Programme, Tool Training Series, Group Study Visits, Online Discussion Groups, Online Planning Lab, Helpdesk Orientation Phase, Helpdesk 1-to-1 service

These profiles describe different ways in which services are accessed and combined within the overall NetZeroCities portfolio. In the case of National Support Services, the observed medium-breadth combined with relatively low-depth likely reflects the specific nature of this service, which operates primarily at country level and follows engagement logics.

- From a **city-level perspective**, engagement is strongly concentrated at lower frequencies. Nearly three-quarters of Mission-minded cities engage with one or two NetZeroCities services. 2% of cities engage with seven or more services, and only two cities engage with ten services, which represent almost the complete portfolio of NetZeroCities services for Mission-minded cities. These highly engaged cases are geographically dispersed but include a notable concentration in Türkiye.
 - **Geographic location shows limited association with engagement frequency.** Across all regions, single-service engagement is the dominant pattern, and no strong regional gradients emerge when comparing engagement frequencies. This suggests that engagement intensity is not primarily structured by regional location.
 - By contrast, **city size is more clearly associated with engagement frequency.** Smaller cities are strongly concentrated in single-service engagement, while medium-sized, metropolitan, and large metropolitan cities are more frequently represented among cities engaging with multiple services. Engagement with six or more services is observed almost exclusively among medium-sized and larger cities, although such cases remain limited in absolute numbers.

Recommendations

1. Areas for further analysis and research:

- **Understand engagement pathways over time.** The breadth–depth analysis captures co-usage patterns across services but does not assess engagement dynamics over time. It does not reveal the entry points to the NetZeroCities services, and it does not identify the journey of single cities from one service to the other. Further research could examine whether certain services systematically function as entry points, follow-up steps, or consolidation mechanisms within cities' engagement pathways. In addition, future analysis could explore whether cities remain engaged across multiple services over time or whether engagement is episodic and service specific.
- **Further investigate the relationship between city size and engagement frequency.** While higher engagement frequencies are more common among larger cities, highly engaged cases also include small and medium-sized municipalities. Findings from Deliverable *D1.1 Non-mission Cities Needs and Pathways* suggest that administrative capacity may help explain these patterns. However, further research would be needed to test and validate these findings using empirical evidence from the Mission-minded cities engagement data.
- **Examine how service design influences patterns of engagement.** Services with similar formats (e.g. peer-learning, training, advisory support) display markedly different breadth and depth profiles. Further analysis could assess how eligibility criteria, resource requirements, timing, or delivery modes influence the likelihood that cities combine services.

2. Implications for the planning and tailoring of the NetZeroCities offer:

- **Acknowledge differentiated roles within the service portfolio.** The analysis shows that some services function primarily as high-reach dissemination and information elements, while others are associated with deeper multi-service engagement among a smaller group of cities. Planning of the NetZeroCities offer could explicitly recognise these differentiated roles when designing service.
- **Address communication and visibility gaps across services.** Outreach and information-oriented services, such as the NetZeroCities Portal and the Mission-minded Cities Newsletter, currently reach only around half of engaged Mission-minded cities. Given their role in signalling opportunities and entry points to the wider service portfolio, mechanisms to improve contact coverage, data maintenance, and dissemination channels could be further strengthened.
- **Bridging the gap between National Support Services and other NetZeroCities services.** The breadth–depth analysis indicates that National Services reach a relatively large number of Mission-minded cities but are weakly associated with engagement in other NetZeroCities services. This suggests that National Services currently operate with a degree of functional separation within the service portfolio. Future planning could explore how National Services might be more explicitly connected to other service, while preserving their country-specific and context-sensitive role.

Bibliography

Covenant of Mayors. (2026). *Signatories* [Database]. <https://eu-mayors.ec.europa.eu/en/signatories> (Accessed February 2026)

Eurocities. (2026). *Cities* [Database]. <https://eurocities.eu/cities/> (Accessed February 2026)

European Commission. (2021). *Implementation plan: European Missions – 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030*. European Commission.

European Commission. (2026). *Association to Horizon Europe* [Web page]. https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/europe-world/international-cooperation/association-horizon-europe_en (Accessed February 2026)

Eurostat. (2026). *Population on 1 January by age and sex* [Data set]. https://doi.org/10.2908/demo_pjan (Last updated 29 January 2026)

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. (2026). *Our members* [Database]. <https://iclei.org/members/> (Accessed February 2026)

Melica, G., Treville, A., Franco de los Rios, C., Todeschi, V., Baldi, M. G., Bezerra, P., Davide, M., Hernandez Moral, G., Palermo, V., Pittalis, M., Bastos, J., Monforti-Ferrario, F., Barbosa, P., & Bertoldi, P. (2024). *Covenant of Mayors: 2023 assessment*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://doi.org/10.2760/835080>

NetZeroCities. (2026a). *All cities* [Web page]. <https://netzerocities.app/cities> (Accessed February 2026)

NetZeroCities. (2026b). *NetZeroCities barometer* [Web page]. <https://netzerocities.app/barometer> (Accessed February 2026)

NetZeroCities. (2026c). *Scaling up the EU Cities Mission: NetZeroCities services for Mission-minded cities* [Web resource]. NetZeroCities Knowledge Repository. <https://netzerocities.app/resource-4537> (Accessed February 2026)

OECD. (2024). *Urban population by city size* (Indicator). <https://doi.org/10.1787/b4332f92-en>

Palmia, F., McIntosh, J., Mansuti, E., Jusic, I., Soldevila, A., Johansson, H., & Pozzebon, F. (2024). *Non-mission cities needs & pathways: First report*. NetZeroCities. <https://netzerocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/SGA2-NZC-D1.1-Non-Mission-Cities-Needs-and-Pathways-1.pdf>

Publications Office of the European Union. (2023). *EU vocabularies – 7206 Europe concept scheme*. <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-vocabularies/concept-scheme/-/resource?uri=http://eurovoc.europa.eu/100277> (Accessed February 2026)

World Bank. (n.d.). *Population, total* [Data set]. World Development Indicators. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>

Annex 1 The Mission-minded cities database

Data source and scope

The analysis is based on the Mission-minded cities database, developed under SGA2-NZC Task 1.1. The purpose of the database is to systematically track points of engagement between Mission-minded cities and the services offered by NetZeroCities. The reference period covers engagement from the start of the project (SGA2-NZC) until November 2025.

Construction of the Mission-minded cities database

The database was built through a multi-step process:

1. **Data collection.** NetZeroCities partners responsible for service delivery provided structured lists of Mission-minded cities that engaged with each service. An operational definition of engagement for each NetZeroCities service is provided in Table 8.

Mission-minded cities services	Operational definition of engagement
MMC Newsletter	MMC that receive the MMC Newsletter
NetZeroCities Portal	MMC that have a cities page on the portal
National Support Services	MMC that participated to online or in person events organized by NetZeroCities at national level
Helpdesk – 1-to-1	MMC that requested and benefited from an ad-hoc discussion with the NetZeroCities MMC Helpdesk
Helpdesk Orientation Phase	MMC that attended onboarding sessions organised by the NetZeroCities MMC Helpdesk
Twinning Programme	MMC that participated in cohort 1,2,3 of the Twinning Learning Programme and that applied or are participating in cohort 4 of the Twinning Learning Programme
Tool Training Series	MMC that participated in at least one session of the Tool Training Series
Group Study Visits	MMC that took part of cohort 1 of the Group Study Visits
Online Discussion Groups	MMC that participated in at least one session of the Online Discussion Groups
Online Planning Lab	MMC that participated in at least one module of the Online Planning Lab

Table 8 Operational definition of engagement by NetZeroCities service

2. Data integration and cleaning.
 - Service-level datasets were merged to create a city-level dataset.
 - Each entry corresponds to one Mission-minded city.

- For each NetZeroCities service (Table 6), a binary variable (Yes/No) indicates whether the city engaged with that service.
- Duplicate city entries were identified and removed.

The result is a consolidated database in which Mission-minded cities constitute the unit of analysis and NetZeroCities services are recorded as engagement variables.

3. Enrichment with contextual variables. In a second step, additional variables were added to each Mission-minded city:

- **Country.** Added by the partner responsible for each service at the time of data submission.
- **Regional classification.** For cities located in EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, regional location was added. Unlike Deliverables D1.1 and D1.2, which relied on categories defined by the Publication Office of the European Union (2023), the analysis presented in this report applies the **NetZeroCities Barometer** (NetZeroCities, 2026b) **regional classification** to ensure consistency between NetZeroCities outputs. All countries outside the EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries are grouped under a single “non-EU countries” category.
- **Population** Population data were collected as follows:
 - For Mission-minded cities that are signatories of the Covenant of Mayors, population figures were retrieved from the database of Covenant of Mayors signatories database (EU Covenant of Mayors, 2026).
 - For remaining cities, population data were automatically extracted from Wikipedia. For each city, the population reference year and source link were recorded.
- **Population category.** Cities were classified using **OECD (2024) population categories**. As the OECD classification does not include a category for cities below 50,000 inhabitants, an additional category (“Below 50,000”) was introduced.
- **Participation in city networks and initiatives** Binary variables were added to indicate whether each Mission-minded city is:
 - a member of **ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability** (ICLEI, 2026) ;
 - a member of **Eurocities** (Eurocities 2026);
 - a signatory of the **Covenant of Mayors** (EU Covenant of Mayors, 2026).

Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Western Asia	Northern Europe	Western Europe	Other
Bulgaria	Albania	Cyprus	Denmark	Austria	New Zealand
Czech Republic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Israel	Estonia	Belgium	
Hungary	Croatia	Türkiye	Finland	France	
Poland	Greece		Iceland	Germany	
Romania	Italy		Ireland	Luxembourg	
Slovakia	Malta		Latvia	Netherlands	
North Macedonia	Montenegro		Lithuania		

Ukraine	Portugal		Norway		
Serbia	Slovenia		Sweden		
Moldova	Spain		United Kingdom		
Kosovo	Tunisia				

Table 9 Regional classification (based on the NetZeroCities Barometer only including EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries)

Composite analytical variables

In a third step, two composite variables were constructed:

- **Network-active city.** A city is classified as network-active if it is a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors or a member of ICLEI or Eurocities. Cities with no participation in any of the analysed networks or initiatives are classified as network-inactive.
- **Service frequency.** This variable counts the number of distinct NetZeroCities services with which a Mission-minded city has engaged during the reference period.

These variables form the basis for the descriptive analyses of outreach, coverage, network activity, and engagement patterns presented in the deliverable.

Country level and Mission City population data

To assess population coverage at national level, country population reference data were used. For EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, national population figures were retrieved from Eurostat (2025). For countries not covered by Eurostat, national population data were obtained from the World Bank World Development Indicators (n.d.).

Population data for Mission Cities were retrieved from the city profiles available on the NetZeroCities Portal (2026a). These data were used to calculate the share of national population covered by Mission Cities and to enable comparison with the population coverage of Mission-minded cities.

This step enabled the analysis of territorial representativeness, by comparing population coverage achieved through Mission-minded cities engagement with NetZeroCities services against national population totals and against the population coverage of Mission Cities, as presented in Chapter 1.3 and Chapter 1.4.

Comparison with the Covenant of Mayors database

The Mission-minded cities database was systematically cross-checked with the full database of Covenant of Mayors Europe signatories. This comparison was carried out at city level and enabled the identification of Covenant of Mayors signatories that have not engaged with NetZeroCities services.

This comparative analysis forms the empirical basis for the outreach gap assessment presented in Chapter 1.5, allowing NetZeroCities engagement patterns to be examined in relation to one of the largest existing European climate initiatives in terms of participating municipalities.

Derived analytical indicators

In addition to city-level variables, several analytical indicators were constructed for the purposes of the analysis. These indicators are not stored as attributes of individual Mission-minded cities but are calculated through aggregation and transformation of the underlying database to support descriptive and comparative analysis.

- **Breadth of engagement across services.** Breadth is defined as the number of distinct Mission-minded cities engaging with a given NetZeroCities service during the reference period. This indicator is used to assess the relative reach of each service within the Mission-minded cities sample.
- **Depth of engagement across services.** Depth is defined as the average number of additional NetZeroCities services used by cities that engage with a given service. It captures the extent to which engagement with a specific service is associated with subsequent or parallel engagement with other services. To allow comparison across services with different absolute depth values, **a normalised depth indicator** was calculated, rescaling depth values to a 0–1 range. This transformation supports joint analysis of breadth and depth within a common analytical framework.
- **Country-level categorisation of NetZeroCities engagement intensity.** To support the analysis of national outreach patterns and inform the recommendations in Chapter 1, countries were grouped into engagement categories based on **two complementary indicators**:
 - the **number of Mission-minded cities** per country;
 - the **share of national population covered by engaged Mission-minded cities**.

This dual criterion was adopted to avoid relying solely on city counts, which may under- or over-represent engagement in countries characterised by either a few large metropolitan areas or many small municipalities. Engagement categories were defined as follows:

- **High NetZeroCities engagement:** ≥ 25 Mission-minded cities **and/or** $\geq 30\%$ national population coverage by Mission-minded cities
- **Medium NetZeroCities engagement.** 10–24 Mission-minded cities **and/or** 15–29% national population coverage
- **Low NetZeroCities engagement.** < 10 Mission-minded cities **and** $< 15\%$ national population coverage

Countries meeting either of the two thresholds (city count or population coverage) were assigned to the corresponding higher engagement category. This approach allows countries with different urban structures (metropolitan-driven versus small-city-driven engagement) to be compared within a common analytical framework.

- **National outreach potential based on CoM outreach.** In parallel, outreach potential was assessed using the CoM database (EU Covenant of Mayors, 2026). For each country, outreach potential was measured as the absolute number of CoM signatory cities that are not Mission-minded cities. This indicator reflects the size of the existing climate-active city pool that has not yet engaged with NetZeroCities services. Outreach potential categories were defined as:
 - High CoM outreach potential: ≥ 200 non-MMC CoM cities
 - Medium CoM outreach potential: 50–199 non-MMC CoM cities
 - Low CoM outreach potential: < 50 non-MMC CoM cities

These derived indicators underpin the analyses presented in Chapters 1 and 2, including the breadth–depth assessment of the service portfolio, the examination of engagement patterns across cities, and the identification of national-level outreach opportunities.

Annex 2 Reflection on analytical choices and limits

Mission-minded cities database

This section outlines key analytical choices and limitations related to the construction and use of the Mission-minded cities database, which underpin the analyses presented in Chapters 1 and 2.

- **Definition of “Mission-minded city”.** The Mission-minded cities database is built on lists of cities provided by NetZeroCities partners responsible for the delivery of specific NetZeroCities services. These lists reflect how cities self-identified or were identified by service providers at the point of engagement.

As a result, the database includes a heterogeneous set of territorial entities. In addition to municipalities and local authorities, it also contains provinces, districts, metropolitan areas, and unions of municipalities. This is particularly evident in some countries, notably Türkiye, where sub-national administrative units beyond the municipal level engaged with NetZeroCities services.

These entities were intentionally retained in the database. Their inclusion highlights that interest in the NetZeroCities offer is not limited to municipalities narrowly defined, but also extends to other forms of sub-national governance. At the same time, this choice introduces important limitations for specific analyses and affects the comparability of results. In particular, population-based analyses are sensitive to this heterogeneity. When multiple administrative units that partially or fully overlap territorially engage with NetZeroCities (for example, a province and one or more municipalities within that province), population figures may be counted double. This directly affects national population coverage calculations and contributes to inflated coverage values in some cases. Results related to population coverage should therefore be interpreted with caution, especially in countries where overlapping administrative entities are prevalent such as Türkiye.

- **Regional classification.** Regional categories were used to analyse the geographic distribution of Mission-minded cities. The regional grouping applied in this deliverable follows the classification used in the NetZeroCities Barometer (2026b).

This choice implies several limitations. First, the number of countries per regional category is uneven, with some regions including only a small number of countries (Western Asia includes only 3 countries). Second, regional categories were applied only to EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. All other countries were grouped under a single “non-EU countries” category.

As a result, the regional categories used in this analysis are not comprehensive from a geographical perspective. For example, the “Western Asia” category features three countries, while other non-EU countries geographically located in Western Asia are excluded from this category. This affects the interpretability of regional-level results, particularly for population coverage analyses, where small numbers of countries can disproportionately influence aggregated values.

An alternative approach would have been to apply the European regional classification used in Deliverables D1.1 and D1.2 (Publication Office of the European Union, 2023). However, alignment with the NetZeroCities Barometer classification was prioritised to ensure internal coherence across NetZeroCities analytical products. Even the categories used in previous reports, however, would have resulted in disproportionate findings with South Europe being unevenly over-represented. Regional-level findings should therefore be read as indicative patterns rather than comprehensive geographic representations.

Analytical choices

- **Geographic scope of the analysis.** Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the analysis focuses on **Mission-minded cities located in EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries**. This analytical choice was made for two main reasons.

First, as discussed in Chapter 1, Mission-minded cities located outside the EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries differ substantially in terms of **population size and administrative scale**. These cities often include very large metropolitan areas or sub-national entities whose inclusion would distort comparisons with the predominantly small and medium-sized municipalities engaged within the EU context.

Second, while some NetZeroCities services are formally open to cities beyond the EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries (e.g. the NetZeroCities Portal), the **primary target group of the NetZeroCities offer** consists of cities within these countries. Narrowing the analytical scope therefore improves coherence between the service mandate and the empirical analysis. Results should thus be interpreted as representative of engagement patterns within the core geographic scope of the initiative, rather than globally.

- **Use of network membership as a proxy for prior engagement and maturity.** Participation in selected European climate initiatives and city networks was used as a proxy indicator for cities' prior experience with EU-level cooperation and climate-related commitments. Specifically, three initiatives/city networks were considered: the Covenant of Mayors, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and Eurocities. Mission-minded cities participating in at least one of these initiatives or networks were classified as **network-active**, while cities with no participation were classified as **network-inactive**. This proxy approach has several limitations. Membership in ICLEI and Eurocities covers only a **small share of Mission-minded cities** (around 8% for each network). By contrast, the Covenant of Mayors constitutes a much larger comparison group, with **approximately 52% of Mission-minded cities also being CoM signatories**. As a result, observed patterns of network activity are strongly influenced by the structure of the Covenant of Mayors sample itself. The composition of cities part of the Covenant of Mayors is known to be **skewed towards small and medium-sized municipalities** and to show **strong geographic concentration in Southern Europe (Melica et al. 2024)**. Consequently, some findings related to network activity partly reflect these underlying structural biases rather than independent differences in cities' engagement behaviour. Despite these limitations, the network-activity variable provides a useful **comparative lens** to distinguish between cities that were already embedded in European climate governance frameworks and those engaging with NetZeroCities without such prior exposure. As such, it should be interpreted as an **illustrative and exploratory indicator**, rather than a comprehensive measure of institutional capacity or climate ambition, and it helps identify potential directions for future outreach strategies.

Annex 3 Additional results

Country Type	Count of MMC	Share (%)
EU Member States	567	67.9%
Horizon Europe Associated Countries	237	28.4%
Other	31	3.7%

Table 10 N° of MMC by country type

Region (barometer version)	N° of countries in the category	Count of cityt	Share of MMC (%)
Eastern Europe	11	131	16.3%
Northern Europe	10	123	15.3%
Southern Europe	11	265	33.0%
Western Asia	3	153	19.0%
Western Europe	10	130	16.2%
Other (New Zeland)	1	2	0.2%

Table 11 N° and Share (%) of MMC in EU Member States and HE Associated Countries by Region

Country type	Country	Count of MMC by country
EU Member States	Austria	6
	Belgium	16
	Bulgaria	8
	Croatia	11
	Cyprus	8
	Czech Republic	10
	Denmark	5
	Estonia	13

	Finland	12
	France	45
	Germany	40
	Greece	39
	Hungary	18
	Ireland	6
	Italy	64
	Latvia	6
	Lithuania	27
	Luxembourg	5
	Malta	20
	Netherlands	13
	Poland	29
	Portugal	45
	Romania	17
	Slovakia	9
	Slovenia	6
	Spain	56
	Sweden	18
Horizon Europe Associated Countries	Albania	6
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	6
	Iceland	1
	Israel	6
	Kosovo	1
	Moldova	5
	Montenegro	2
	New Zealand	2
	North Macedonia	5
	Norway	10
	Serbia	4

	Tunisia	2
	Türkiye	132
	Ukraine	20
	United Kingdom	23
Other	Argentina	1
	Australia	1
	Bangladesh	1
	Brazil	3
	Colombia	1
	Ethiopia	1
	Ghana	3
	Indonesia	1
	Jordan	2
	Kenya	1
	Mexico	1
	Mongolia	1
	Nepal	2
	Pakistan	2
	Saudi Arabia	1
	Switzerland	2
	Uganda	1
	United States	5

Table 12 N° of MMC by country

Metric	Value for MMC in EU or HE Associated Countries	Value for MMC not in EU or HE Associated Countries
Available datapoints for population	782	30
Unavailable datapoints for population (NA)	22	31
Mean	218,428	3,580,308

Mean excluding max and min	207,471	/
Median	84,102	1,821,334
Minimum	726	2,955
Maximum	8,982,000	35,386,000
Standard deviation	515,401	6,692,112
Standard deviation excluding max and min	409,330	/
25th percentile (Q1)	35,583	313,594
50th percentile (Q2 / median)	84,102	1,821,334
75th percentile (Q3)	207,436	3,960,873

Table 13 Population statistics for EU and HE Associated Countries MMC and for non-EU MMC

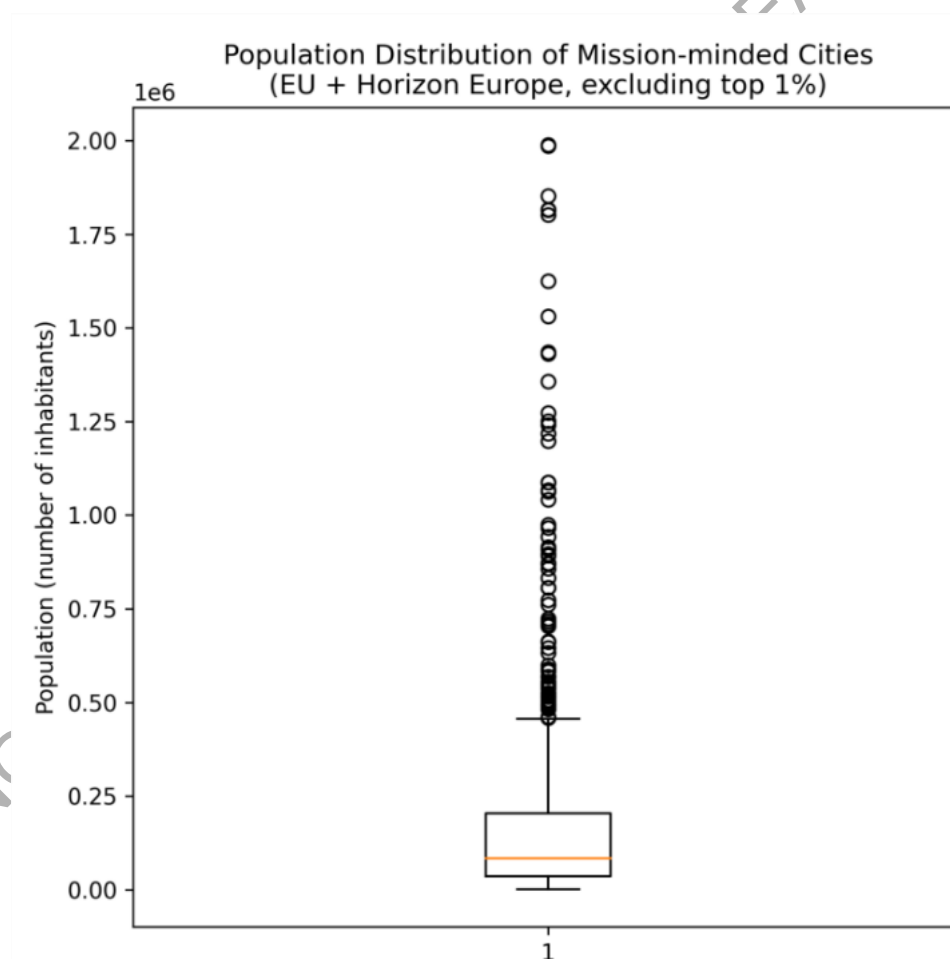


Figure 9.9 Population distribution of MMC in EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries (Boxplot excluding the top 1%)

Population classification	Count	Share (%)
---------------------------	-------	-----------

Below 50,000	256	31.84%
Small urban area	317	39.43%
Medium-size urban area	136	16.92%
Metropolitan area	57	7.09%
Large metropolitan area	16	1.99%
Missing (NA)	22	2.74%

Table 14 Frequency of MMC population categories (only EU and HE Associated Countries MMC)

Region	Population in engaged MMC	Total population of region	Population coverage (%)
Eastern Europe	22,230,610	141,382,728	15.7%
Northern Europe	21,945,485	106,783,230	20.5%
Southern Europe	27,327,107	154,421,111	17.7%
Western Asia	66,397,374	96,619,209	68.7%
Western Europe	31,379,342	192,036,419	16.3%
Other (New Zealand)	1,530,500	5,287,500	28.9%

Table 15 Population coverage of MMC (EU and HE associated countries) by Region

Country	N° MMC	Below 50,000	Small urban area	Medium-size urban area	Metropolitan area	Large metropolitan area	Share (%) of national pop covered by MMC	N° MC	Share (%) of national pop covered by MC
Austria	6	1	2	2		1	30%	1	1%
Belgium	16	3	10	2	1		23%	4	8%
Bulgaria	8	2	3	3			20%	2	20%
Croatia	11	5	6				17%	1	20%
Cyprus	8	3	4				42%	1	16%
Czech Republic	10	5	3	1	1		20%	1	1%
Denmark	5	3	2				4%	3	17%
Estonia	13	11	1	1			50%	1	7%
Finland	12	6	4	2			16%	6	29%
France	45	7	23	10	4		12%	9	9%

Germany	44	2	19	13	7	2	19%	8	5%
Greece	41	13	25	1	1		37%	6	12%
Hungary	18	6	11	1			16%	3	21%
Ireland	6	3	3				6%	2	15%
Italy	64	17	34	7	3		12%	9	11%
Latvia	6	4	2				10%	2	36%
Lithuania	27	19	7	1			49%	2	22%
Luxembourg	5	5					12%	1	4%
Malta	22	21	1				41%	1	6%
Netherlands	14	3	11				8%	6	17%
Poland	32	9	14	7	1		13%	5	12%
Portugal	46	16	20	3	1		39%	3	9%
Romania	17	3	8	6			13%	3	11%
Slovakia	9	6	2	1			9%	2	13%
Slovenia	7	6	1				10%	3	17%
Spain	57	12	25	17	2		19%	7	16%
Sweden	18	6	9	2			16%	7	22%
Albania	7	5	1	1			27%	1	3%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6	1	5				14%	1	8%
Iceland	1	1					5%	1	36%
Israel	6	1		2	1		17%	1	1%
Kosovo	1			1			12%	0	0%
Moldova	5	3	1		1		32%	0	0%
Montenegro	2	1			1		11%	1	30%
New Zealand	2					1	29%	0	0%
North Macedonia	6	2	3		1		49%	0	0%

Norway	10	3	4	1			14%	3	19%
Serbia	4		3		1		22%	0	0%
Tunisia	2	2					0%	0	0%
Türkiye	139	29	37	36	26	10	75%	2	24%
Ukraine	21	10	6	3	1	1	15%	0	0%
United Kingdom	25	1	7	12	4	1	23%	2	2%

Table 16 Population coverage of MMC (EU and HE associated countries) and MC by country

Membership/Participation	N° MMC	% of MMC
CoM	354	42%
ICLEI	67	8%
Eurocities	66	8%
Not in CoM or city networks	438	52%

Table 17 N° and Share (%) of MMC participating in City Networks or EU initiatives

Number of networks joined	Number of cities	Share (%)
0 networks	438	52.46%
1 network	326	39.04%
2 networks	52	6.23%
3 networks	19	2.28%
Total	835	100%

Table 18 N° of City Networks or EU Initiatives MMC are engaged in

Region	Count of MMC per region	Count of Network-Active MMC	Share of Network-Active MMC over regional total
Eastern Europe	131	63	48%
Northern Europe	123	55	45%
Southern Europe	265	175	66%
Western Asia	153	37	24%
Western Europe	130	60	46%

Other (New Zealand)	2	0	0%
---------------------	---	---	----

Table 19 N° and Share (%) of MMC and Network-Active MMC per Region

Country type	Country	Network-inactive MMC	Network-active MMC	Grand Total
EU	Austria	2	4	6
	Belgium	2	14	16
	Bulgaria	2	6	8
	Croatia	5	6	11
	Cyprus	3	5	8
	Czech Republic	3	7	10
	Denmark	1	4	5
	Estonia	11	2	13
	Finland	6	6	12
	France	30	15	45
	Germany	24	20	44
	Greece	15	26	41
	Hungary	8	10	18
	Ireland	4	2	6
	Italy	8	56	64
	Latvia	3	3	6
	Lithuania	24	3	27
	Luxembourg	4	1	5
	Malta	15	7	22
	Netherlands	8	6	14
	Poland	25	7	32
	Portugal	19	27	46
	Romania	5	12	17
	Slovakia	8	1	9
	Slovenia	3	4	7
	Spain	15	42	57
	Sweden	7	11	18
Horizon Europe	Albania	5	2	7
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	3	6
	Iceland	1		1
	Israel	6		6
	Kosovo	1		1
	Moldova	1	4	5
	Montenegro		2	2
	New Zealand	2		2
	North Macedonia	3	3	6
	Norway	3	7	10

	Serbia	3	1	4
	Tunisia	2		2
	Türkiye	107	32	139
	Ukraine	9	12	21
	United Kingdom	8	17	25

Table 20 Network activity by country

Population category	Network-active cities (count)	Share of all network-active cities	Network-inactive cities	Share of all network-inactive cities
Small urban area	175	44.9%	142	34.3%
Medium-size urban area	84	21.5%	165	39.9%
Below 50,000	91	23.3%	52	12.6%
Metropolitan area	31	8.0%	26	6.3%
Large metropolitan area	7	1.8%	9	2.2%
N/A	2	0.5%	20	4.8%
Total	390	100%	414	100%

Table 21 N° and Share (%) of MMC and Network-Active MMC per population category

	Total CoM cities	CoM only	CoM & MMC (overlap)
Global CoM (non-Europe)	60	59	1
CoM Europe	11,970	11,603	367
Global CoM (total)	12,030	11,662	368

Table 22 N° of CoM Europe cities and MMC

Country	CoM Europe only	CoM Europe & MMC	% CoM cities also in MMC	Total CoM Europe	MMC (not in CoM)
Italy	5085	59	1%	5144	9
Spain	3008	46	2%	3054	15
Belgium	554	12	2%	566	6
Hungary	347	10	3%	357	8
Ukraine	334	14	4%	348	10
Czechia	297	5	2%	302	5
Greece	207	27	12%	234	15

Croatia	195	5	3%	200	5
France	187	10	5%	197	33
Portugal	165	26	14%	191	20
Romania	179	11	6%	190	6
Moldova	126	4	3%	130	1
Germany	75	17	18%	92	29
Poland	81	5	6%	86	27
Türkiye	54	26	33%	80	114
Bosnia and Herzegovina	75	3	4%	78	3
Slovenia	67	5	7%	72	3
Sweden	60	10	14%	70	7
United Kingdom	52	12	19%	64	13
Bulgaria	43	6	12%	49	2
Denmark	40	4	9%	44	1
Slovakia	40	1	2%	41	8
Netherlands	31	6	16%	37	9
Malta	29	7	19%	36	15
Georgia	33	0	0%	33	0
Cyprus	27	5	16%	32	3
Armenia	30	0	0%	30	0
Austria	28	2	7%	30	1
Serbia	25	1	4%	26	3
Latvia	21	3	13%	24	3
Ireland	21	2	9%	23	4
Norway	16	6	27%	22	4
Finland	12	6	33%	18	6
Lithuania	15	2	12%	17	25
Luxembourg	12	1	8%	13	4
Montenegro	11	1	8%	12	0
Albania	7	2	22%	9	5

Estonia	6	2	25%	8	11
North Macedonia	4	3	43%	7	3
Kosovo	3	0	0%	3	1
Iceland	1	0	0%	1	1

Table 23 N° of CoM Europe cities also MMC by country

Region	CoM Europe cities (total)	CoM and MMC (overlap)	% of CoM cities also Mission-minded
Southern Europe	9,137	201	2.2%
Western Europe	957	60	6.3%
Eastern Europe	1,772	58	3.3%
Northern Europe	292	50	17.1%
Western Asia	112	31	27.7%
Other (New Zealand)	1	0	0.0%
Total CoM Europe	11,970	367	3.1%

Table 24 N° and Share (%) of CoM Europe cities also MMC by Region

Population class	CoM-only	CoM ∩ MMC	Total CoM	% MMC	% Non-MMC
Below 50,000	10,783	90	10,873	0.83%	99.17%
Small urban area	638	177	815	21.72%	78.28%
Medium-size urban area	148	67	215	31.16%	68.84%
Metropolitan area	75	25	100	25.00%	75.00%
Large metropolitan area	18	9	27	33.33%	66.67%

Table 25 N° and Share (%) of CoM Europe cities also MMC by population category

Service frequency (number of services used)	Below 50,000	Small urban area	Medium-size urban area	Metropolitan area	Large metropolitan area	N/A
1 service used	65.9%	33.6%	37.9%	39.3%	42.5%	65.2 %
2 services used	23.5%	33.3%	23.6%	19.7%	7.5%	30.4 %
3 services used	7.5%	15.3%	18.4%	8.2%	5.0%	4.3%

4 services used	3.1%	8.5%	7.1%	9.8%	7.5%	0.0%
5 services used	1.6%	6.6%	6.4%	1.6%	5.0%	0.0%
6 services used	0.0%	1.6%	2.8%	13.1%	2.5%	0.0%
7 services used	0.4%	0.6%	2.1%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%
8 services used	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	3.3%	7.5%	0.0%
10 services used	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	2.5%	0.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 26 Share (%) of MMC engaged by population category and service frequency

Service frequency (number of services used)	Eastern Europe	Northern Europe	Not-EU Region	Other	Southern Europe	Western Asia	Western Europe
1 service	52.7%	43.1%	83.9%	100.0%	44.5%	47.7%	33.1%
2 services	24.4%	28.5%	12.9%	0.0%	29.1%	17.6%	35.4%
3 services	8.4%	16.3%	0.0%	0.0%	14.0%	7.2%	17.7%
4 services	3.1%	5.7%	3.2%	0.0%	6.0%	10.5%	7.7%
5 services	6.1%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	5.9%	4.6%
6 services	3.1%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	5.2%	0.8%
7 services	2.3%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	1.3%	0.8%
8 services	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	3.3%	0.0%
10 services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 27 Share (%) of MMC engaged by region and service frequency