

Main Conclusions

EWRC 2024 Cities Session

The Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission: From planning and design to implementation

The city of the Hague:

-promotes Public-Private partnerships (e.g. annual 1 billion euro spending budget for sustainable procurement)

- collaboration is key. Many people and groups are active in climate initiatives. For instance, stakeholders' (citizens, small businesses, large companies, government) engagement is ensured through the Climate Deal approach (through 38 local projects, the so called "climate deals") and the Hague Climate Agreement.

To accelerate transition to climate neutrality, it is key to:

-support small and medium enterprises and startups and co-design the transition.

-empower everyone (e.g. citizens, businesses, and governments) in the process and notably city residents should be at the centre of climate transition, including younger generations.

-promote innovation and cooperation among different government levels, including the EU and national governments to ensure alignment of policies.

The city of Kranj:

-Urban planning and design for the city of Kranj includes redeveloping its brownfields (derelict sites and empty buildings) and supporting individual house owners, in particular low-income owners, and elderly, to undertake the energy-efficiency measures. Capacity building (e.g. through training of employees) is important to achieve this target, as there are barriers such as organizational, financial, and cultural, as well as external pressures on municipal governance.

-Comprehensive inventory of emissions reduction (including the AFOLU ones) and analysis of data for city efficient management are of key importance (e.g. through the collaboration with local Institutes, Kranj developed a City Data Platform and an open-loop Smart City Card (with Visa prepaid) for transport.

-It is important to support small pilot City Projects and address efficient flow of funds towards the local level especially for small cities (e.g. from EU to Ministries and Municipalities, difficult for small cities to navigate calls and complex bureaucratic procedures).

-It is important to motivate citizens to invest in green projects, e.g. retrofitting ones for energy saving.

-Data is key for efficient management of the city.

-Need to address the challenge that companies, that are vendors to the City of Kranj, do not want to share data having various excuses (being afraid of a 'big-brother' effect) – finally, the public sector will have access to real data, that will be used for enhancing public services

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City of Aachen:

- Change of lifestyles and individual actions and comprehensive financial strategy, where private investments are integrated into municipal actions could contribute to emission reductions for climate neutrality. Aachen connects both individual and collective responsibility in climate actions.
- For instance, through the pilot project CoLAB focused on the development of tools for inclusion of citizens in the CCC and the development of a local climate agency.
- Including more than 140 local stakeholders (universities, companies of all sizes, initiatives, chambers, cultural and church actors) in the CCC and offering them various forms of commitments (premium, framework, basic-partnerships) and considering Aachen citizens as multipliers of climate actions.
- Stakeholders' engagement in climate actions is supported by municipal funding programmes to motivate private investment.
- Aachen promotes cross sector collaboration, e.g. Municipality and external investors and training and sharing of knowledge.
- Work with Capital Hub is key to facilitate municipal funding measures and citizens' motivation.

European Investment Bank:

- EIB is fully committed to support the implementation of the Mission.
 - EIB is the EU's Climate Bank – it made available a EUR 2 billion lending envelope to labelled cities.
 - EIB offers advisory and technical support to the Mission labelled cities in collaboration with the Mission Capital Hub.
 - EIB contributes to synergies between the Cities Mission and the Adaptation Mission by supporting joint projects.
- Overall conclusion: Work in partnership between public and private sectors, with the local businesses and local community, and with the banks.

Patrick Child:

- Impressive commitment and high-level ambition from cities.
 - Essential role of cities peer learning and sharing of expertise, e.g. through the Mission Platform pilot and twinning calls.
 - Involving actors across sectors and creating synergies between all stakeholders at local, national, regional and EU level and private and public sector.
 - No perfect plan. Need to move to action, monitor what works and improve the plan further.
 - EU Missions will continue with reinforced effort under the new Commission and a stronger focus on competitiveness, Clean Industrial Deal, funding and finance, including synergies with structural funds and National governments.
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