

CITY 2.0: RETOOLING AND RETHINKING POST-PANDEMIC URBAN LIFE

OUTCOME REPORT

This convening of chief climate and innovation officers from V4 Mayors' offices marks the beginning of GLOBSEC Forum City 2.0, a firm platform for the continuous networking of CEE capitals to share ideas and help operationalize their vision for green transformation and modernisation through targeted public-private dialogue and active citizen outreach.

SUMMARY:

The COVID lockdown has exacerbated the already fragile financial positions of municipalities. Given this reality, the EU needs to rethink its engagement with cities on climate action, particularly in the context of recovery funds and the new budget. The EU is now launching a significant financial recovery package which in combination with the Multiannual Financial Framework will offer a good opportunity for transformation of cities and towns, making them greener, cleaner and more attractive for investment and talent.

While the EU is active in the transportation sector, its role is less defined in supporting nature-based solutions and, most critically, buildings. The best value for money in building renovations can be found in cities, where they will certainly be used over the next 30 years. Recovery funds will be vital not only to catalyse municipality building retrofits in the pipeline but to support real estate ownership expansion that can scale up ambitious new programmes.

At the same time cities need to accelerate their programmes for digitalisation, creating innovation ecosystems and expanding its green infrastructure systems. To achieve these objectives cities will need to scale up their own research programme, cooperation with other cities and best practices and engagement with European institutions. In that way they will make best use of the variety of funding opportunities.

PETRA DZUROVCINOVA, CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, CITY OF BRATISLAVA

- ▶ Cities have to understand and respond to citizens' needs when developing digital solutions, identifying problems first.
- ▶ We are witnessing declining university enrolment but Bratislava is an attractive work destination – cooperation is needed to build a strong brand and offer university students and qualified talent to grow the innovative economy.
- ▶ Focusing on three broad areas
 - ▶ Accelerate deployment of existing technologies for resiliency
 - ▶ City needs to upgrade infrastructure including lighting that could serve as backbone of smart city.
 - ▶ Governance model
 - ▶ We need to work together with universities and businesses in order to link research with innovation and make education more adequate to the needs of the business.
 - ▶ Improving existing infrastructure to increase efficiency

ADA AMON, CHIEF ADVISOR TO THE MAYOR ON CLIMATE AFFAIRS, CITY OF BUDAPEST

- ▶ Air quality is the main health challenge and with 2/3 air pollution from the building sector it is critical to moderate heating and cooling systems and overall reduce energy consumption.
- ▶ Citizens Assembly on climate could help in mobilising community effort and policy change. We need more sophisticated instruments for energy efficiency financing and investments towards a green city concept.

JUSTYNA GLUSMAN, HEAD COORDINATOR FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GREENERY, CITY OF WARSAW

- ▶ Warsaw is aiming at strong expansion of nature-based solutions, we have 44 green street projects in the pipeline. Part of our funding will be spent on acquiring land plots for converting them into parks.
- ▶ We recognize the buildings are the biggest opportunities and we must scale up their retrofit.

PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSE:

- ▶ Teleworking is creating demand for less office space with more flexible contracting and sharing structure.
- ▶ Green public procurement needs to be extended there is a growing demand for it.

CONCLUSION:

V4 cities are facing great near term challenges resulting from extended lockdown periods and social distancing yet the EU recovery package offers a once in a life time funding opportunity for long term transformation. This opportunity needs to be seized quickly, funding must be used efficiently and strategically and EU funds must be blended with other public funding sources, loans, energy performance contracts (EPCs) and other financial instruments and private money. Ultimately public funds should make cities more attractive for new wave of investment in clean technologies and low carbon businesses.

NEXT STEPS:

- ▶ Explore common interests and opportunities for cooperation with other cities and relevant agencies, EU initiatives, business associations, academia.
- ▶ Support development of strategic concepts for rapid modernisations of CEE cities.
- ▶ Expand the group with likeminded senior city representatives.