

# CITIES

COMMUNITY of PRACTICE

## INTRODUCING THE URBAN OBSERVATORY

### ON THE FUTURE OF CITIES AND URBAN STRATEGIES

The ensemble of activities of the CoP-CITIES and the tools available from the Knowledge Centre for Territorial Policies provide the backbone for a virtual Urban Observatory. The expert knowledge from CoP-CITIES Members, combined with qualitative (Urban & Territorial strategies) and quantitative (indicators, projections, urban-proofing) evidence from on-line platforms, can be used to monitor emerging urban phenomena. Analogously, progresses towards policy goals can be assessed and reported.

**Scope:** 1.) Evidence-based support to the urban dimension of European Policies  
2.) Contribute to the recovery paths in cities, harmonising sustainable development and economic growth with socially fair principles.

**Mandate:** Act as a sort of 'alert system' to advise policy makers in cities on how to design and implement innovation-led transformative urban strategies for climate-neutrality and increased resilience.

**Coverage:** Cities at EU and global scale (with focus Africa and Mediterranean area).

#### Tools and methods:

- Urban Data Platform Plus
- Strat-board
- LUISA Territorial modelling platform
- Data from emerging sources
- RE OPEN-EU

#### Networks & collaboration:

- Community of Practice (CoP-CITIES)
- City Science Initiative (CSI)
- City-Labs

#### Topics (selected examples)

- Housing, Homelessness
- Digitalisation, Innovation
- Sustainable & Resilient Tourism
- Essential Services and amenities
- Attractiveness, Integration
- Shrinking cities, Urban-rural flows

#### Products and Services

- Policy Briefs
- Urban Foresight
- Impact Assessments
- Interactive dashboards



## **\*\*CALL FOR INTEREST IN POLICY BRIEFS**

The Future of Cities report – published in June 2019 - was a first collaborative effort, benefitting greatly from the collective intelligence of CoP members. The initiative is being continued in the form of short briefs looking at specific issues related to emerging urban phenomena, and relevant to the EC’s priorities. Briefs are currently being finalised on Shrinking Cities, Cities fit for the digital age, and Urban-Rural interactions. An event presenting the findings and recommendations of these briefs will be organised in September (date tbc).

Please let us know if you would like to contribute or lead the drafting of an additional brief on relevant topics for the future of cities and related policy response post-COVID, all suggestions from the community are welcome!

\*Links: [Future of Cities Report](#)

## **TOOLS**

### **LUISA & URBAN DATA PLATFORM PLUS**

The LUISA Territorial Modelling Platform combines land use and population projections up to 2050 with several external data sources to compute a wide range of indicators in support to policy. 75 of these indicators can be visualised and downloaded via the Urban Data Platform at various spatial scales. A dedicated pilot aims to enhance the dissemination and sharing of urban data, by means of a digital interoperability framework.

\*Links: [Urban Data Platform Plus](#)

### **STRATBOARD & SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

StratBoard is a platform for the analysis of sustainable urban development strategies in the framework of the URBADEV project, including the publication of the “Handbook of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies” (now available in 8 EU languages) and new follow-up work.

\*Links: [Stratboard](#); [Handbook of Sustainable Urban Development](#)

### **LOCALISATION OF SDGs: URBAN2030 & SDG VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEWS**

Collaborations are ongoing with partner cities (Bratislava, Helsinki, Oulu, Porto, Reggio Emilia, Seville, Turku, Valencia) wishing to carry out their own SDG Voluntary Local Reviews following on the publication of the “European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews”.

\*Links: [Localising the Sustainable Development Goals](#)

## NETWORKS

### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON CITIES (CoP-CITIES)

The CoP-Cities is an initiative of the European Commission (co-led by the JRC and DG REGIO) started in October 2018. It is open to external stakeholders such as cities and networks of cities, international and intergovernmental organisations and research bodies. The overall aim is knowledge management on urban issues to (1) support and strengthen European policies related to cities, and (2) discuss potential future challenges and opportunities for cities. In doing so, it brings the expertise and on-going work on cities of the JRC and DG REGIO closer to the wider community active at the city level.

\***Newsletter:** A bimonthly newsletter is published to keep members up to date on research developments, collaborations, publications and upcoming activities and events. It is open for inputs from all CoP members and partners.

### CITY SCIENCE INITIATIVE

The City Science Initiative (CSI) was launched by the City of Amsterdam in collaboration with the JRC, DG RTD, and DG REGIO in February 2019 to explore how the science-policy interface operates in light of emergent urban challenges. Five themed work streams and webinars were organised with lead partner cities (Paris, Hamburg, Cluj Napoca, Reggio Emilia and Thessaloniki). A report synthesizing outcome and recommendations was published end of 2020.

\***Links:** [Pilot assessment CSI](#)

### CITY-LABS

A number of targeted initiatives are being elaborated with individual cities or groups of cities including:

- Amsterdam – collaboration on-going on the financialisation of the housing sector
- Valencia – Formal collaboration from 2021, including indicator analysis and data exchange
- Bratislava – data exchange as well as quantitative support for city planning
- Exploratory Research on Migrants in FUAs – case studies (Athens, Malmo, Liege)
- URBAN2030 Pilot studies (ongoing) – Cities working on their SDG Voluntary Local Reviews

\***Links:** [CiTown project](#)

### COLLABORATION

The Urban Observatory is aligned with DG REGIO and major EU projects and priorities such as the New European Bauhaus, the Leipzig Charter, the Horizon Europe R&I Mission on Climate Neutral Cities and the European Urban Initiative. In particular, formal/informal collaboration frameworks have been established with: DG CNECT, CEMR, Eurocities, EUKN, UN-Habitat, OECD, URBACT, Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) and the EEA.

**If interested to know more, or participate in any of these activities, please contact us at:**

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