CITIES

COMMUNITY of PRACTICE

NEWSLETTER

Foreword

Dear Members of the Community of Practice on Cities,

We hope this message finds you well and that you are able to deal with the consequences of the Coronavirus that is affecting the lives of us all. The European Commission is coordinating a common **European response** to the coronavirus outbreak. Resolute actions are being taken to reinforce our public health sectors and mitigate the socio-economic impact in the European Union. All means are being mobilised to help Member States coordinate their national responses and objective information provided about the spread of the virus and effective efforts to contain it.

At the same time, it is impressive to see how local authorities also take up their responsibilities and are determined to take rigorous action, putting in place policies and implement measures to deal with the situation. More than ever, it is the local level that needs as well to find the most effective approach.

Even given these current difficult circumstances, we are looking at how we could, in some manner, continue our work on and with cities, as well as with you. Notably, we will make use of the digital possibilities to convene meetings and have decided to launch a **bi-monthly newsletter**. The newsletter provides you with latest information, including what cities are doing in response to the pandemic, and keeping you updated on current and forthcoming activities related to both the overall Community of Practice on Cities and the City Science Initiative. The Newsletter can, of course, be used for other purposes too. For example, you could use it as a basis for discussion and to raise questions.

I hope you appreciate this first edition and please do share with us your concrete suggestions on how we can use the newsletter for other purposes via the **Community of Practice coordinator**.

Charlina VITCHEVA

Deputy General-Director, Joint Research Centre

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New Global City Definition

To facilitate international comparisons, a coalition of six international organisations developed a new global definition of cities, towns and semi-dense areas, and rural areas. On 5th March, the UN Statistical Commission endorsed the Degree of Urbanisation as a recommended method for international comparisons. The Degree of Urbanisation allows a consistent definition and comparison of urbanisation at a global scale. Based on this new definition, the world is already much more urbanised than previously thought. While, for 2015, the UN reports that 54% of the global population lived in urban areas, this new definition leads to an estimate of 76.5% - i.e. some 5.6 billion people.

COVID-19

Cities are facing serious challenges in coping with the coronavirus crisis and its consequences. As a first step in responding to this, we have put together a repository of the many valuable actions, initiatives, practices and webinars already organised by European and Global partners.

JRC activities focused on COVID-19 are available at this link

More information on EC response to coronavirus is available at:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en

CoP-CITIES Briefs

As a follow-up to the successful collaborations leading to the publication of the **Future of Cities Report** last year, we are currently working on setting up a more systematic publication of briefs, similar in format to the chapters of the report. The focus will be on identifying emerging trends and challenges cities are faced with, and highlighting both opportunities for cities to act, and examples where they are taking action.

Please share your comments and suggestions through the short survey linked below. The results of the survey and the first topics to be addressed will be shared in the next newsletter.

CoP-Cities Briefs Topics Survey

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C O M M U N I T Y of P R A C T I C E

City Science Initiative

In this section of the newsletter we will keep you up-to-date on developments specific to the City Science Initiative (CSI). Under the leadership of 5 cities across EU, the CSI is currently tackling 5 topics (air quality, circular economy, mental health, sustainable mobility, tech and the city), and you will be requested to contribute in developing research questions and finding effective answers and policy actions.

Cities are in the front line in responding to the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic. The relation between science and policy plays a significant role in this response. In this situation, the CSI can bring together information on the policies that are being designed and the measures that are being taken; the CSI will collect from all its stakeholders the effective tools that are being applied and it will show case concrete examples of city science that show effectiveness.

The launch of this newsletter can serve as a source of information, inspiration, discussion and reflection. It will help stimulating participation in the challenges, make new connections and keep on sharing stories about what we see happening now and how things might develop.

CSI WEBSITE: Being a collaborative platform, the CSI website shows key information and documents addressing both science and policy developments of hot topics at urban level. Similarly, the CSI website offers the possibility to register and interact with a community of more than 100 stakeholders. Please use these guidelines and register here.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/en/community/city-science-initiative

KNOWLEDGE DOSSIERS: In the following weeks, the knowledge dossiers will be updated with latest

Air quality

Lead city: Paris

www.paris.fr

@Paris

Together with several stakeholders, the city of Paris has identified the following working lines:

1) How to integrate emerging questions into regulatory air quality monitoring? Emerging pollutants/impacts on human health or environment: which tools and at which cost?

2) Forecasting and measuring the impact of air pollution reduction actions: how can new tools and methods contribute? multisectoral approach (mobility, urbanism, wood heaters and fuel, maritime, …)

3) How to involve citizens through engagement, education and communication

Are you interested in taking part? Please contact Marie MONJAUZE and Anne-Sophie HOLLSTEIN

City Science Initiative

Tech and the City

Lead city: Reggio Emilia

www.comune.re.it

🐦 @ComuneRE

Colleagues of Reggio-Emilia city and Luiss University are leading the "Tech and the city" process. With inputs and views of several partners along with interesting experiences already developed in Reggio-Emilia, the following working lines have been defined:

1) Co-governance arrangements and city experimentation for open and collaborative digital infrastructure
2) The role of social-digital tools participate to inclusive sustainable socio-economic urban development
3) Democratic participation and civic collaboration in digital contexts

Are you interested in taking part? Please contact Christian IAIONE and Elena DE NICTOLIS.

Sustainable Mobility

Lead city: Cluj Napoca

www.primariaclujnapoca.ro

Colleagues of Cluj-Napoca lead the thematic "Sustainable mobility" process. With inputs and views of several experts and partners Cluj-Napoca is working along these lines:

1) The most effective methods and tools to foster the shift of people to more sustainable transport modes in urban contexts
2) Engaging the citizens in sustainable urban mobility through culture and innovation
3) Digital tools that can make urban mobility more efficient and sustainable

Are you interested in taking part? Please contact Ovidiu CIMPEAN and Dalila CIUCLAN.

CITY SCIENCE INITIATIVE

Circular Economy

Lead city: Hamburg

www.hamburg.com

🐦 @HAMBURG_DE

Hamburg as leading city of this working line has carried out a local workshop with stakeholders helping to identify the following lines:

1) Circular value chains and waste flows optimisation
2) Administrative burden reduction and inter-territorial cooperation for circular economy
3) Digital transformation to improve the effectiveness of circular economy action

Are you interested in taking part? Please contact Stefanie WODRIG and Thomas JAKOB.

Mental Health

Lead city: Thessaloniki

www.thessaloniki.gr/?lang=en

The "Mental Health" process is led by the city of Thessaloniki in collaboration with colleagues of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Together with local experts, they have defined the following working lines :

1) How can we optimise access to mental health and well-being infrastructures in big and small Cities (insufficient access, shortage of staff, shortage of residency slots, ways and levels of financing)
2) Methods, tools and data to properly coordinate the provision of mental health and well-being and psychiatric/social care services in Cities
3) Engagement to maximise resilience of cities? Is there a role for co-creation approaches? What is a human-centred city in terms of mental health and well-being?
4) Mental health and diversity needs in Cities confronting COVID19 or other pandemic. City-wide social campaigns?
5) Effects of social distancing and isolation due to quarantine in cognitive and physical capacity and brain functioning (in vulnerable groups, general public, professionals) and the likely role of assistive technologies

Are you interested in taking part? Please contact Panagiotis BAMIDIS.

Cooperation

Public consultation by JPI Urban Europe

Public consultation on the partnership "Driving Urban Transitions to a Sustainable Future"

JPI Urban Europe is working together with the European Commission on a European Partnership under the next EC framework programme (Horizon Europe). Readers can find a draft of the **proposed partnership** here.

The authors have launched a public consultation about the partnership project. The results of this survey will be shared and discussed in a future event.

City Labs

A number of targeted initiatives are currently being elaborated by the JRC in collaboration with individual cities or groups of cities, such as Amsterdam, Milano, Sofia, Bratislava, Wien and Valencia. These City Labs will address topics of concern to the specific cities involved, and contribute towards the knowledge base of the CoP-CITIES. In this section we will report back on these initiatives.

Early 2019, JRC established a City Lab with the City of Amsterdam on the topic of housing market financialisation, and housing affordability. The collaboration was based on the exchange of data, knowledge, and skills. JRC performed advanced analyses on Amsterdam housing data, to provide insights into the city's price dynamics. Also, two expert workshops have been organised together with the city strategy team, to discuss data availability and research methods, as well as to compare relevant housing market policies in EU cities. The outcomes of both workshops, as well as the findings of the analysis, are presented in a final report published spring 2020. However, collaboration on the topic is ongoing, whereby JRC and the City of Amsterdam continue to exchange, while exploring further avenues for future collaborations.

At present, a collaboration agreement between JRC and the Valencia City Council together with the Universitat Politècnica de València has been established in the framework of the CoP-CITIES framework. Valencia, acting as a City Lab, will explore a number of priority areas such as air quality, pollutants, transport sector and mobility, demography, health, housing, energy, etc. The COVID-19 impacts due to the lockdown of the city will be also analysed, accordingly.

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••••••••••• C O M M U N I T Y of P R A C T I C E •••••••••••

The Joint Research Centre is conducting several activities related to urban matters. In this section, we highlight some of the ongoing projects that are relevant for cities. We would be happy to follow-up on any interest you may have on one or more of the following topics.

Housing – The CiTown project studied the financialisation of housing in a selection of EU cities, conducting case study analyses, and collecting data on institutional investment. Future avenues for research concern market dynamics and socio-economic impacts.

Public transport - use in cities has several mobility, safety and economic benefits. It is the key element of sustainable urban mobility policies in Europe. JRC has been dealing with two research projects related to public transportation in cities: I) metro systems analysis of efficiency and accessibility in European capitals and II) analysis of public transportation accessibility in Europe – a comparison of 180 functional urban areas.

Depopulation - While the total EU population has been continuously growing during the last decades, many regions are facing depopulation not only in rural and remote regions but also in cities. To address this challenge, the JRC is using the most recent spatial and statistical information to assess socioeconomic and demographic impacts, considering the peculiarities and regional differentiation from a territorial perspective. Local initiatives, regional programmes and European Funds are key elements to stem demographic decline while opening the "gate" to new opportunities.

Cities on border regions - The EU internal border regions are generally lagging behind other regions with regard to economic development and access to services. The European integration process could help exploiting further the socio-economic potential of EU cross-border regions, so that they become more attractive to live and work. In this context, the impact of cities on population trends within 2001-2018 in EU cross-border areas by distinct free-flow drive-time zones (0-30, 30-60 and 60-90 minutes from the border) is assessed at fine disaggregation (LAU2) level, as well as the border and cross-border accessibility to health services.

African Cities - Africa is experiencing rapid urbanisation, continuous socio-economic changes and population growth. The JRC is developing the LUISA4Africa land-use model which is able to provide projections on population growth, land-use patterns, as well as changes in urban density, according to various socio-economic scenarios.

Ageing projections for Europe - Demographic trends are a major force of change in Europe, and their impacts vary considerably across the EU's territory even at the very local level. An experimental extension of the LUISA model has been used in 2018 to identify local demographic trends together with OECD. The LUISA team is currently working together with the JRC's Demography, Migration and Governance unit to further improve modelling mechanics and local reference maps for population distribution per age group, in order to obtain reliable local demographic projections across the EU.

Lonely Places - The JRC is developing a project aiming at introducing an original perspective to the study of territorial inequalities. The project combines the characteristics of places, with their locations and connections (either physical or virtual). The project is interdisciplinary and multi-scalar and builds upon both traditional and experimental data.

Urban structure and spatial patterns in cities - To exploit the recent deluge of data produced in cities to improve the understanding of the urban structure and urban phenomena, the JRC is currently employing non-traditional urban data sets containing high-resolution information. Data are processed using up-to-date data science methods, including Machine Learning, to extract spatiotemporal patterns of amenity distribution and human mobility flows in cities

International migrants in Functional Urban Area – The JRC has launched a new exploratory research to look at both challenges and opportunities of international migrants' settlement in specific urban areas. More specifically, the objective is to explore the dynamics of the relationship between migrant integration and local territories, analysing strategies of urban and territorial development which directly or indirectly address migrants.

Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism – This analysis provides estimates of the COVID-19 impact on the regional (at NUTS3 level) tourism expenditure and impact on regional GDP in the EU-27 in 2020. The analysis considers expenditures by origin of tourists (domestic, Intra-EU and extra-EU), for each season (spring, summer, autumn, winter) and for different tourism typologies (cities, urban mixed, coastal, nature + mountain and rural). Three scenarios of National borders closure/opening have been examined.
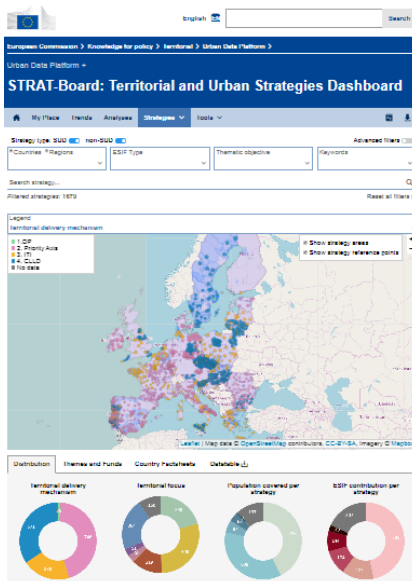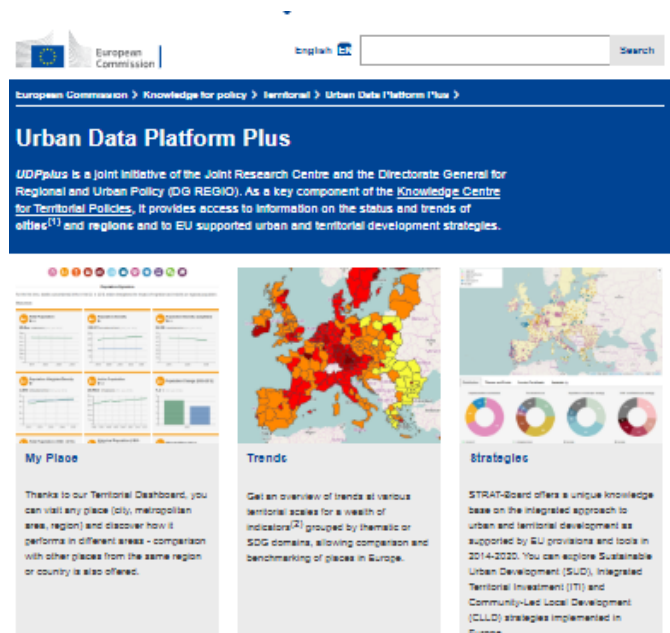
Knowledge Sharing

Useful Tools

The Urban Data Platform Plus (UDPplus) represents a concrete response to the demand for better knowledge on cities in the context of the Urban Agenda for the EU. As a key component of the joint JRC-DG REGIO initiative "Knowledge Centre for Territorial Policies" (KCTP), UDPplus is a main reference for statistical and modelled indicators at urban level in Europe and beyond. Thanks to its compliance with the European Interoperability Framework, it aims at becoming the de facto standard tool for urban and regional data collection, dissemination and visualisation. Each individual municipality or region is invited to contribute to the wealth of information available in UDPplus by sharing locally gathered indicators with the platform.

Link: https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu

STRAT-Board is an interactive mapping tool providing a state of play on how the EU support urban and territorial development under cohesion policy. So far, STRAT-Board has mapped more than 1600 strategies – Sustainable Urban Development (SUD), Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and Community-led Local Development (CLLD) implemented during 2014-2020 across Europe.

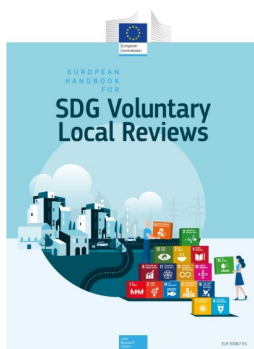Link: https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/strat-board/#/where

Latest Publications and Key Documents

Mission 100 climate neutral cities by 2030

This report summarizes the objectives, approach and roadmap of the mission "100 climate neutral cities by 2030".

[Read more](#)

European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews

At the [World Urban Forum 10](#) in Abu Dhabi, dozens of cities committed to publish Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) on their progress towards the UN SDGs. The JRC set a milestone in the localisation of the SDGs in Europe by publishing this handbook, designed to support European cities in preparing their VLRs as contribution to the UN agenda on sustainable development.

[Read more](#)

Handbook of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies

This handbook provides methodological support to cities, managing authorities and other stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of urban strategies under Cohesion Policy.

[Read more](#)

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

25 May 2020 (14:30 – 16:45)
Circular economy (CSI Initiative)
Participants will discuss the role of science in post-COVID crisis, including challenges such as circular value chains, flows optimisation and digital transformation linked to circular economy policies in cities. Link

26 May 2020 (10:00 – 12:00)
Webinar "Scaling up Smart and Sustainable Cities and Communities"
The event aims at discussing how COP-CITIES and other stakeholders can support cities and communities in becoming smart and sustainable. Link

2-4 June 2020
Training "The EU integrated approach to urban and territorial development. JRC-DG REGIO tools supporting policy-making"
This training will target DG REGIO desk officers giving insights on the Handbook of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies and the webtool STRAT-Board.

4 June 2020 (13:30 – 16:30)
Sustainable Urban Mobility (CSI Initiative)
Participants will discuss the role of science in post-COVID crisis, including challenges such as sustainable transport methods, citizens' engagement in mobility and digital tools. Link

15 June 2020 (14:30 – 16:30)
Air quality (CSI Initiative)
Participants will discuss the role of science in post-COVID crisis, including challenges such as regulatory air quality monitoring, forecasting and measure air pollution and citizens' engagement. Link

22 June 2020 (13:30 – 16:30)
Tech and the city (CSI Initiative)
Participants will discuss the role of science in post-COVID crisis, including challenges such as co-governance arrangements, role of socio-digital tools in socio-economic urban development and civic collaboration in digital contexts. Link

Community of Practice on Cities: https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/en/community/cop-cities

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23 and 24 June 2020
Virtual Expert Group Meeting on Monitoring and reporting of the urban and territorial dimensions of SDGs
JRC continues the collaboration with DG REGIO and UN-HABITAT on the project URBAN 2030. The experts will discuss the indicators on Air quality (SDG 11.6.2) and Public space (SDG 11.7.1).

24 June 2020 (14:30 – 17:30)
Mental Health (CSI Initiative)
Participants will discuss the role of science in post-COVID crisis, including challenges such as mental health and well-being infrastructures, methods and tools, mental health and diversity needs in Cities confronting COVID19, and effects of social distancing and isolation. **Link**

If interested to take part in CSI virtual workshops, please contact the relevant leading city.

Community of Practice on Cities: https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/en/community/cop-cities