



EUROPEAN URBAN RESILIENCE FORUM

2021 REPORT

INTRODUCTION

On October 20th and 21st 2021, over 130 participants from cities and local authorities, research institutions, and other public and private stakeholders gathered in Malmö (Sweden) for the 8th edition of the European Urban Resilience Forum.

The forum has been co-organised by ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability and the European Environment Agency since 2013. For the first time in hybrid format, the forum combined the rich experiences of an in-person event with the outreach and convenience of a virtual one, with more than 700 additional participants joining through an online platform.

This year, the EU adaptation strategy was in the spotlight, untangled through a mixture of plenary discussions, parallel breakout sessions, tailor-made training workshops, and a vibrant marketplace, which facilitated informal knowledge exchange and networking. The participants were encouraged to share experiences on diverse topics, tackling existing challenges on closing the gap between planning and implementation in delivering effective and inclusive climate action, while exploring potential solutions and opportunities for future collaboration.

EURESFO21 IN NUMBERS

11 sessions and **2** workshops

3 site visits to key resilience places in Malmö

130+ on-site participants +

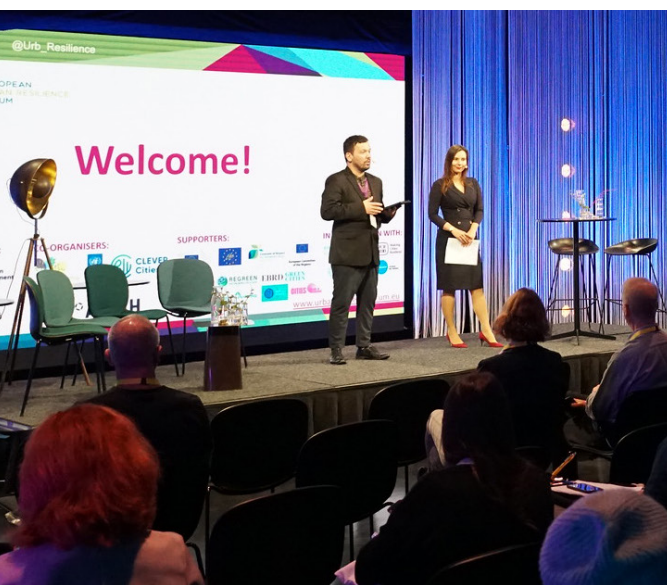
700+ online participants from 46 countries around the world

75 speakers, moderators, and trainers

10 international stands in the EURESFO marketplace

7 networking opportunities

23 organising and supporting partners



ADAPTING TO EXTREME EVENTS AND PLANNING FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

A high-level discussion between urban resilience and climate adaptation experts representing the international and local arena opened the 8th edition of the European Urban Resilience Forum (EURESFO) in Malmö.

The new EU Adaptation Strategy, launched in February 2021 by the European Commission, set up the discussion, putting on the table a few important needs for adaptation action: as the Head of Unit in DG CLIMA reminded us, “adaptation is not only a local business anymore”. What does it mean to make Europe resilient by 2050? It means getting smarter, in order to better collect climate data and monitor local action and its effects; getting swifter, by localising resilience capacities and decision-making and thus contributing to bridge the gap between adaptation planning and implementation; and making adaptation more systemic, by maintaining and further developing the existing climate adaptation infrastructure. The driving force of adaptation is not centered only on local businesses anymore. Rather, it is to make Europe resilient by 2050, and it means to be prepared for the unavoidable climate change.

The strategy and these three points particularly highlight the opportunity to come out of the climate crisis stronger and more prepared for future emergencies. To make this possible, speakers highlighted how cooperation is key at different levels. On the one hand, European, national, regional and local authorities must be in close collaboration to ensure that specific needs and demands are fulfilled, but also that funding opportunities are accessible and best exploited. On the other hand, different sectors of the society must enter the adaptation process, including citizens, the academia, and also financial actors. In this framework, knowledge sharing within the European context is a powerful tool to replicate successful experiences and accelerate the action.

Nature-based solutions represent an important tool to invest on and to mainstream in order to step up European adaptation. And even if there is still a long way to go, the rise of good

“[The EU adaptation strategy] lifts the challenges of adaptation to the same level as mitigation. [...] For years it was a no-no talking about mitigation, and now we have a strong recognition: the EU has put it as a priority for 2050.”

Margareta Wahlström

Expert in Disaster Risk Reduction (former
UNDRR Head and Swedish Red Cross Head)

practices of green and blue infrastructure in Europe show the interest of local and regional governments to replicate this model. Yet, the growing knowledge on nature-based solutions demonstrates that many barriers to implementation exist, such as the costs for development and maintenance or the need for social acceptance in order for NBS projects to become successful and adopted following a H2020 funded pilot or other EU funding streams. Thus, investments at different levels and from different stakeholders are key: the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have, for this reason, recently developed programmes to mainstream nature-based solutions into local adaptation and resilience plans, such as the EBRD Green Cities programme, the EIB Climate Adaptation Plan and the EU Resilience and Recovery Facility.

To conclude, the discussion highlighted how, as demonstrated by this period of pandemic, cities are in the frontline to fight climate change and other occurring emergencies. For this reason, they should be technically and financially empowered in order to plan and implement complex adaptation strategies, involving multiple stakeholders and mainstreaming nature-based solutions as a tool for urban resilience. In this process, the identification of European “resilience hubs” that show the way forward – thus promoting replication – is key to reach the new adaptation strategy objective of a resilient Europe by 2050. The Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative provides such a function and invites cities to become “resilience hubs” starting from now and until 2030, to engage in peer-to-peer activities, and to accelerate action to build resilience at the local, regional and national level.

KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ The new EU adaptation strategy puts resilience and climate adaptation action as a priority to be tackled throughout the Union.
- ▶ Cities are at the forefront in the fight of climate change, but they need capacities and resources.
- ▶ Nature-based solutions are a key tool for climate adaptation and should be mainstreamed in local resilience plans.
- ▶ Identifying key European cities as “resilience hubs” is important to encourage replication and reach the resilient Europe objective by 2050.

Find out more:

[New EU Adaptation Strategy](#)
[EBRD Green cities programme](#)
[The EIB Climate Adaptation Plan](#)
[EU Resilience and Recovery Facility](#)
[MCR2030 Resilience Hubs](#)
[Adapting to Climate Change in EU Cities - CoM](#)

STREAM A: IMPROVING GOVERNANCE FOR INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE CLIMATE ACTION



The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged local governments and their established governance models. New needs and demands required the rethinking of urban spaces and administrative priorities. Citizens groups and movements brought the climate discussion on the table, putting the need for adaptation on the spot. In such dynamic context, this stream aims to present and analyse urgent climate matters that cities throughout Europe are putting on the table in this challenging period.

Towards a resilient recovery

Cities learn from crisis moments and the EURESFO21 is the perfect occasion for the Resilient Cities Network to draw conclusions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on urban resilience.

London, Athens and Tel Aviv, as well as experts from UNDP and UFZ all agree: the emergency period served to put local governments and citizens at the centre of the discussion on climate change and recovery towards a new normality. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that the innovative and organising capacity of cities allows for them to play a key role prior, during, and post emergencies.

"There is a need for new instruments and for them to be aligned to the green deal goals in order to reboot society towards a new world. We cannot afford failure on this."

Reimund Schwarze
UFZ, Germany

Building resilient communities - by enhancing a transparent and data-driven communication as well as the quality of public space - has a key role in making cities safer places when a disaster occurs. To this end, a green and just transition needs to be built through social and environmental vulnerability analyses and on green and people-centred investments. Democracy, transparency and participation are fundamental in this process, but to really build a resilient Europe¹ they need to be mainstreamed throughout the whole European area, going beyond the Union's boundaries.

More comprehensive local planning can be built by understanding the needs of citizens and urban spaces to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of the changing climate. Local authorities and strong communities will be the engine of a resilient recovery.

Place-based action for more equitable climate resilience

Cities learn from crisis moments and the EURESFO21 is the perfect occasion for the Resilient Cities Network to draw conclusions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on urban resilience.

Climate adaptation is a local matter that involves all local communities and the places they live in; thus, cities have to take care that voice is also given to people who are not often heard. ICLEI, CMCC and ETC/CCA brought to EURESFO21 a space for discussion about climate justice and equality.

"The role of creative practitioners - even online - has been very helpful in terms of [...] thinking about what 'Climate Ready Places' look like with communities and how we would get there."

Ruth Wolstenholme
Sniffer

The Climate Ready Clyde was presented to the audience: a partnership to develop an adaptation strategy for the Glasgow city region involving public, private and community sectors. The strategy was built in co-creation with cultural organizations, the public, private and the third sector, for creating a shared vision to build on for better planning and implementation of climate actions and a resilient and just regional transition.

¹ As requested by the new EU Adaptation Strategy

If working with communities means leaving no one behind, the stories from Zagreb and Thessaloniki show how vulnerable groups can be engaged. Representatives from both cities illustrated how nature-based solutions are used in Zagreb to regenerate post-industrial urban areas. A therapeutic garden, created in collaboration with NGOs working with communities of people with physical and mental disabilities has become a success story showing how to respond to needs of a specific group of the population through a sustainable and climate-friendly strategy.

On a different note, the story coming from Thessaloniki puts the focus on children as important stakeholders, often overlooked in urban planning, and how “the climate crisis is also a children’s rights crisis”- highlighting the importance of including children’s perspective in the design of climate plans, as they are significantly affected by the impacts of climate change. In the Greek city, a co-design experience with children who were able to shed lights on important safety aspects that are often ignored by adults. This initiative succeeded in translating the vision of the youngest population into inputs for public authorities and planners.

WORKSHOP: Adaptation planning for smaller and medium-sized cities

Small municipalities are highly present in Europe, but adaptation planning is far less developed than in bigger and middle-size cities. For this reason, the Nordic Urban Resilience Institute, CMCC and Birgit Georgi’s Strong Cities in a Changing Climate organised a workshop for small-sized cities as part of this year’s programme. Speakers from Sweden and Italy and participants reflected on the needs

and actionable measures to foster climate adaptation in these contexts.

Small municipalities face both specific opportunities and challenges for adaptation. On the side of opportunities, cross-sectoral work and realization of co-benefits may be easier to realize as distances are shorter and often the same people cover different functions, yet on the other side, they depend, more than bigger cities, on other governance levels and further away authorities for essential activities. They often lack access to specific knowledge, available resources, time to access these resources or do not find tailored information for smaller cities. Trainings for municipal staff would be helpful to bridge knowledge gaps, for instance when dealing with complex climate scenarios or in accessing European funding for adaptation. Such support could be provided by external facilitator, e.g., regional authorities. Inter-municipal aggregations could create the necessary synergies and homogeneities for tackling spatially overarching problems. Therefore, a better understanding of the interdependencies between neighbouring towns is a key step to promote a coordinated climate action.

The workshop shed light on the importance of internal and external communication in scarcely populated contexts. On the one hand, the promotion of international experiences through shared platforms can help in defining local strategies and to act accordingly. On another level, in small municipalities perhaps more than in bigger ones, raising citizens’ awareness on adaptation is key to building stronger and more resilient communities. Dealing with management of extreme events can be a helpful trigger for interacting with citizens and raising awareness for the need of action.

STREAM A: KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the innovative and organising capacity of cities which allows them to play a key role prior, during, and post emergencies. Thus, there is a need to mainstream climate adaptation in the EU resilience plans.
- ▶ New governance and financing models that bring communities into decision-making processes are needed in order to avoid that the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect the most vulnerable.
- ▶ Smaller municipalities need access to tailored knowledge and resources in order to enhance their adaptation capacity.

Find out more:

R. Schwarze, O. Suschchenko (2021)
[“A green and resilient recovery for Europe”](#)
 Glasgow city region’s [“Climate Ready Clyde”](#)
[Zagreb’s Living Lab](#) activities
[Child-friendly Thessaloniki action plans](#)
[Interreg AdriaAdapt](#)



STREAM B: NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR URBAN RESILIENCE: PUTTING THEM INTO PRACTICE



Nature-based solutions are a promising vehicle for ecosystem restoration and for strengthening resilience to climate change impacts. Yet, to achieve the desired results, coordinated action and planning across scales and sectors are required. There is a need for collective environmental awareness, political commitment, well defined guidelines, and a clear vision of what climate resilience is. Sessions within this stream discussed urban and regional approaches of successfully embedding biodiversity and climate action in policy and practice.

Stepping up integrated action on ecosystem services

City practitioners from Malmö (Sweden) and Lisbon (Portugal) teamed up with representatives of the business and community sector to shed light on cross-sectoral approaches towards nature-positive design, challenges and solutions, to chart out ways to systematically integrate nature into planning.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new “green wave” and showed us the importance of green spaces. It has recognized a wider acceptance, as well as a higher demand, of nature in cities. It is then crucial to work on nature-based solutions in a more integrated manner: by looking at them as a network throughout the whole city (not as isolated interventions in specific patches like parking lots or protected areas), NBS can also play a key role in making the city more attractive (outdoor gyms, bird watching) and provide a reason for more residents to stay, thus avoiding unhealthy urbanization of rural areas.

“Maybe it should be a human right to have a tree for everyone instead of a parking slot.”

Per-Arne Nilsson
City of Malmö (Sweden)

Effective NBS implementation requires raising environmental awareness - through multi-stakeholder involvement processes with clear guidelines - as well as leveraging investments from the private sector. Co-finance and blended finance mechanisms are becoming stronger. However, due to a lack of well-prepared bankable projects, there is an urgent need to deal with institutional and sectorial silos as well as to tackle co-governance issues.

Boosting the Impact of Nature-Based Solutions for Resilient Cities and Ecosystems

Connecting local perspectives to the EU policy context, the European Environment Agency discussed the role of NBS in delivering on the EU Adaptation Strategy, by introducing its flagship products and reflecting on the interlinkages between climate, environment and health.

“The participation of citizens and co-creation process is a right ...not a debate if they should be there or not.”

Luis Tejero
City of Madrid (Spain)

Experiences from Glasgow showed how the use of data is key to foster NBS implementation: building on knowledge gained from the Connecting Nature project, the city uses a place-based approach with a nature-based solutions lens, by developing a tool to measure and quantify the quality and accessibility of the various open spaces across the city, so that they can be used to their full potential. Data is used not just to plan and deliver, but to inform and involve locals on how such places should be used.

Effective co-design processes are also being carried out in London for the urban regeneration of the Thamesmead area. Through the CLEVER Cities project – in collaboration with the housing association Peabody trust - they are working with the community to stitch together different parts of the neighborhood using a landscape-based approach. The city of Madrid, also through CLEVER Cities, worked with different bubbles of the municipality, which are not used to working so much together, to build a green corridor and connect, through a walkable itinerary, a network of public green spaces.

In line with the need to connect people with nature, Sarajevo municipality, within the Connecting Nature project, worked on linking natural spaces to emotions, by transforming individual memory into collective memory.

STREAM B: KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Natural-based solutions are a key enabler of socio-economic development.
- ▶ Collecting and co-creating data indicators by ensuring community participation is key throughout the process of designing and implementing nature-based solutions.

Find out more:

[European Climate and Health Observatory](#)

[EEA 2021 report on NBS](#)

[NBS indicator handbook](#)

[Place standard tool in Glasgow \(Scotland\)](#)



STREAM C: FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH AN INTEGRATED APPROACH: MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE MITIGATION IN ADAPTATION STRATEGIES



The changing climate and unforeseen shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic urgently call for holistic solutions to achieve both climate change mitigation and adaptation. More discussion and communication are needed among different levels of planning to reach consensus and to facilitate collaboration as well as sharing information and experience. It is crucial for cities to get access to reliable sources of data that could better inform their decision-making process. Sessions from this stream bring together a range of perspectives to inspire further thinking and action on the subject, exploring both challenges and potential ways to overcome them.

A holistic approach towards climate neutrality: integrating climate change mitigation & adaptation

As two sides of the same coin, climate change mitigation and adaptation are key components of effective climate policy. While cities' practitioners from all around Europe agree that it makes sense to consider these streams of action together – not only to exploit synergies but also to avoid lock-in to counterproductive measures – such an integrated approach is not always so easy to reach. Within a city administration, one major obstacle to overcome is that responsibilities for mitigation and adaptation are likely to belong to staff in different departments. This means that disciplinary silos need to be bridged, which may demand changes to inter-departmental dynamics and working processes. At the same time, interactions between measures with potential for both mitigation and adaptation continue to be under-explored.

Significant efforts are being placed in the city of Cork and the city of Riga, where specific interdisciplinary committees have been mainstreamed into the existing governance structures, to respond to the need of a cross-sectoral implementation. Rotterdam, in its attempt to face not only water management challenges but also sustainable clean energy, is exploring a set of solutions – such as solar panels, real time monitoring, water squares and green roofs - to maximise the multiple co-benefits resulting from a synergistic approach.

It can be difficult to make a stronger argument for adaptation when mitigation has clearer short-term benefits and payoffs - as in many municipalities that are already engaged with climate change mitigation policy, much of their internal capacity is already tied up. Examples from the LIFE project 'Evolving Regions' show how building on existing networks currently dealing with mitigation is a good starting point towards efficient ways of addressing both policy objectives in a combined manner.

The revolution of data in integrated climate strategies

Data is increasingly being used to accelerate the development of innovative climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives worldwide. Local and regional governments, civil society, private sector and research organisations have been working to use and explore the different sources of data to plan and execute integrated climate action strategies, improving environmental quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancing local climate resilience.

"Data for data's sake do not solve a problem, the key is utilising the data in the correct and targeted way to create solutions."

Lina Liakou

Global Resilient Cities Network

Can we inform investment decisions with reliable data? In this session, cities and key stakeholders tried to answer this question by sharing their experiences in using data-based models and decision support techniques to reach a more comprehensive understanding of complex urban challenges. ICLEI and Google had the chance to present how data from the Google Environmental Insights Explorer (EIE) tool could support integrated climate action based on a deep dive assessment conducted in nine European cities. An idealistic data platform tool to support city planning will be integrated with smart devices, ensure privacy, provide meta data, and generate revenue. The ultimate goal is to support close collaboration with the private sector and to provide democratisation of the process.

But, are we using data correctly or not? Panellists moved forward by discussing ways to make data more accessible - and actionable: in order to, for example, measure, plan and track emissions, to enable the modelling of traffic flows throughout days in cities, or to be able to detect where trees are located and where to plant new ones to reach greatest benefits. The city of Warsaw expressed specific obstacles in the data collection as well as in translating them in a way

that will be used to inform the planning instruments. Speakers agreed on the urgent need to solve the issue of the credibility of data and its sources, and the importance of connecting them with climate objectives and visions of cities.

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasised the urgency for data-driven models, but even with the most accurate data produced, if it is not accessible, it is definitely not useful.

STREAM C: KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Effective climate action is only possible if integrated and cross-sectoral approaches take place and co-benefits are revealed.
- ▶ In order to make data usable and actionable, sources of data need to be linked to cities' climate adaptation visions.
- ▶ Significant efforts still need to be placed on addressing the issues of data transparency, data governance and data democratisation.

Find out more:

[Google Environmental Insights Explorer \(EIE\)](#)

[Technical Assessment of Transportation Data from Google EIE](#)

[EIE Transport Assessment Overview for European Policymakers](#)



FOCUS STREAMS: INNOVATIVE FINANCING SOLUTIONS FOR GREEN AND RESILIENT CITIES

In order to meet the European Union climate and energy targets for 2030 and reach the objectives of the European Green Deal, the European Union advises cities and regions to direct investments towards sustainable projects and activities. The current COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need to redirect money towards sustainable projects in order to make economies and societies more resilient against climate, environmental and human-induced shocks.

Despite these efforts, cities and regions face severe lack of financial resources due to business model barriers or ongoing capacity issues. In Thessaloniki, revenues mainly depend on national governmental grants and subsidies, since EU fundings most of the time stop at regional level, leaving smaller municipalities having no direct opportunities to access them. For the same reason, Greater Manchester is working to secure its finances and reinvesting it, with the aim to go beyond pilot projects in need of being upscaled.

To respond to the need to diversify the investments, numerous schemes take shape in the form of direct subsidies, climate bonds or co-funding options. To better understand what options exist for cities that want to invest in adaptation, the session explored a series of programs available and relevant financing opportunities for adaptive cities and regions.

"It is the role of the institutions to support the operation of the public-private partnerships, especially on the public sector side."

Lin O'Grady
EBRD Green Cities

EBRD Green Cities is a cross spectrum and all-encompassing 3 billion program that supports cities identifying, prioritising and connecting environmental challenges with sustainable infrastructure investments and policy measures. The program achieves this through strategy delivery and policy support, building capacity of city administrators and key stakeholders, and supporting access to green finance.

The **LIFE program** is a major implementation tool of the flagship European Green Deal, aiming to reach out to cities and towns, in implementing small scale projects (on an average of 5 million size). A number of funding programs, such as the Next Generation EU, are integrated within LIFE.

The **Natural Capital Financing Facility**, from the European Investment Bank, details a series of criteria projects should meet to get funded: bottom-up innovation with a strong and well-connected team on the ground that is able to bring

together the necessary stakeholders, clear link of the project to the city adaptation strategy, and secure funding from own sources, grant, philanthropic financing, etc.

Among these, one prerequisite that is of particular relevance is that resilience components must also be found in other projects/initiatives carried out by the city. Having adaptation mainstreamed will also help bring together many smaller projects into one so that they will then be able to apply for funding, in case the minimum financing amount to reach is too high for one single project.

Looking at ways to effectively engage with private financing, it is important to identify the options and potential revenues. Private financing can complement, but cannot fund the whole project. The best projects, according to the speakers, are the one where such programs only fund a slice.

With the aim to close the gap between SMEs and government institutions, organizations such as INTUGREEN and Greencubator support sustainable entrepreneurship, low-carbon innovations and green economy development. For green startups, social enterprises and sustainable innovators, Greencubator opens business development, networking and investment opportunities as well as energy and sustainability awareness with young professionals and children.

KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Access to financing for appropriate climate change response strategies and actions can be complicated and cities may need to seek combination of funding programmes and streams.
- ▶ One solution, especially for small municipalities to access financing can be to regroup many initiatives together.
- ▶ The EU Recovery and Resilience Facility and also programmes such as the EBRD Green Cities, can not only effectively assist the most vulnerable populations and systems in coping with the impacts of climate change, but also in implementing a post COVID-19 green recovery.

Find out more:

[EBRD Green cities](#)

[Life program](#)

[Natural Capital Financing Facility – European Investment Bank](#)

[Greencubator](#)

FUTURE-PROOFING EUROPE'S BUILDING STOCK: CLIMATE, SOCIAL & MATERIAL RESILIENCE

This session brought together local and regional government representatives from across Europe, to take a deep dive into the resilience of our built environment. Panelists recognized that urgent action was necessary to ensure that homes as well as places of work, production, commerce and leisure are future-proofed. Discussions centered on climate, social as well as material resilience, showcasing innovative projects and initiatives with high replication potential. The session revealed that resilience considerations pertaining to the built environment must be embedded in overarching strategies to drive change. Moreover, expert contributions underlined that efforts to enhance the resilience of our buildings must address renovation as well as new construction. Lastly, the discussion revealed that future-proofing our cities clearly goes beyond the individual building level. To buffer external system-level shocks, local policy and action must be cross-sectoral and address the neighbourhood-level as well as public space and services, amongst others.

The discussion round on social resilience revealed that subnational governments are highly sensitised to the importance of improving not only the energy efficiency, but also the affordability, healthiness and inclusivity of homes and neighbourhoods. Examples from the City of Helsinki revealed that innovative approaches, such as the regeneration of the Meri-Rastila or Karviaistie neighbourhoods, already seek to address these dimensions. Such good practice cases were understood to have significant replication potential, with fora such as EURESFO playing an important role in disseminating these. Further expanding upon the topic of social resilience, the example of the City of Athens' Green Toolkit underlined the importance of supporting local businesses as they are central to the economic vibrancy of, and employment in, neighbourhoods.

In relation to the climate resilience of buildings, the discussion drew attention to the cross-sectoral nature and broad spatial scale of impacts and needed countermeasures. Experiences shared by the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona helped to put some of the key challenges into focus, noting that responses to excessive heat and pollution events were needed and periods of too little or extreme rainfall posed a grave challenge to sustainable water management. In extension, it was also noted that these worrying trends were also impacting local food production and integrated solutions would therefore be required. Examining the topic from the perspective of renovating building stock, the intervention by the Flemish Energy and Climate Agency highlighted the importance of replicating and scaling up approaches by working across subnational governments. Moreover, it was emphasised that experiences of cities such as Antwerp, could provide inspiration (e.g. district heating) and awareness of shared challenges for renovation programmes (e.g. complex ownership structures) to catalyse the future-proofing of buildings.

In relation to the emphasised vulnerabilities to external shocks and question about material supply chains, panelists were invited to share their thoughts on how cities can and should tackle the resilience in construction material supply. Whilst the panel discussion overall suggested that climate mitigation arguably remained a greater priority than adaptation and that subnational governments may have somewhat limited leverage in relation to supply chain issues, speakers were able to offer insightful and actionable advice on the subject. The general consensus was to go local, focus on renovation rather than construction, and promote the adoption of circular principles and whole lifecycle approaches in the built environment.

KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Urgent measures must be taken to ensure that residential buildings, as well as places of work, production, consumption, and leisure, are prepared for the future.
- ▶ Decision makers across Europe need to ensure that transformation projects do not trigger gentrification or exclude certain social groups.

Find out more:

[The Carbon Neutral Helsinki 2035 Action Plan](#)

[Athens Business Green Toolkit](#)

[Sustainability Plan \(PSAMB\) - Barcelona Metropolitan Area](#)

[TripleA Reno project](#)



DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: THINKING ABOUT PRESENT AND DREAMING ABOUT FUTURE

UNDP Ukraine organised a session to discuss the most recent climate events that ravaged Europe between 2020 and 2021. Participants had the chance to bring reflections and personal experiences regarding the wildfires, floods, and heat waves that reached historical records in the last couple of years.

Financing disaster risk reduction: public-private investments and green solutions

Panelists discussed how natural disasters can impact urban sustainability and how disaster risk reduction should be enhanced at the local level, focusing on disaster preparedness and climate adaptation. To enable disaster risk reduction plans though, it must become a financial priority for countries, which are still the major investor in this sector, to provide economic capacity to cities and regions. In fact, local governments are in the first line of disaster response until the central government mobilises. For this reason, the financial aspect is key to kick-start any local resilience planning or action, thus investments from both the public and private sectors should be encouraged. In particular, the distribution of resources must reach and be weighted based on local needs: small cities should be included in the climate adaptation process as they are widespread in Europe.

“Post-disaster recovery needs to be better integrated into preparedness, and this is where local governments have a very strong position.”

Ephrat Yovel
CounterPoint

The experience of speakers demonstrated that cities have a big potential in triggering investments in this field. For example, by committing to a green city action plan, as done in Lviv, Ukraine, which managed to attract funding from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to implement its Green Actions Plan. By investing in nature based-solution, cities can increase their adaptation capacity to the changing climate and be more resilient to disasters. Looking at international experiences, China has been developing waterproof playgrounds that become ponds when flooding occurs.

Cooperating for disaster preparedness

In order to reduce the risk of disasters, cooperation is key and must be enhanced at different levels. On the one hand, local governments must build a net of collaboration with NGOs, local services and citizen organisations, considering that cities cannot rely on the full functionality of services that might themselves be affected by an extreme climate event. In particular, local administration can highly benefit from engaging with the legal infrastructure to create integrated climate adaptation strategies that have shown to be highly sustainable in the long-term.

On a different level, successful stories of globalisation teach how international – and even global – initiatives help in increasing knowledge and prompting replication in disaster response management. Local government can enhance their resilience understanding by taking part in city-to-city peer learning – e.g. through twinning focused on disaster response. International partnership, involving public and private sectors, NGOs, universities and communities should be kick-started by partners with more grounded foundation in cities in order to assess their disaster resilience and build on that. A successful model developed by UNDRR is the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) initiative, which aims at creating city hubs where the political and technical commitment pushes action to address climate and disaster response. ICLEI Europe is a key partner and co-chair of the initiative for 2021-2022 in Europe and Central Asia.

KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Central governments need to invest more and grant more responsibility and resources to local governments for disaster response.
- ▶ Long term planning and investment will greatly reduce immediate burden in disaster response.
- ▶ Disaster recovery is a much longer process than expected.
- ▶ Legal protection will be essential for climate change adaptation strategies in order to overcome political instability.

Find out more:

[Making Cities Resilient 2030 \(MCR2030\) initiative](#)
[AskNature portal](#)
[Lviv's Green Actions Plan](#) – funded by the EBRD

ARCH - SAVING CULTURAL HERITAGE - WORKSHOP: BUILDING RESILIENCE IN HISTORIC AREAS - A DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

As one of the co-organisers of this edition of the forum, the European-funded project ARCH² gave EURESFO's participants a space to reflect on the resilience of cultural heritage through an interactive board game session.

How does one gamify resilience strategies?

The workshop introduced some brand-new ARCH tools, the ARCH Resilience Assessment Dashboard (RAD) and the Resilience Measures Inventory (RMI). Project partners created a game that combined role playing and a fictional city setting called ARCHtopia to model how the two tools can help communities to assess and find appropriate approaches to boosting resilience in historic areas.

Assessing Resilience in ARCHtopia

The first part of the game showed how the ARCH Resilience Assessment Dashboard helps communities to gauge the resilience of their historic areas using a series of targeted questions. Participants were given a fictional scenario in ARCHtopia, elaborated with a set of climate change-exacerbated risks in the historic areas of the city. Each player then used this information as they played an assigned role in ARCHtopia, whether that of a heritage conservation manager, a professor with experience in disaster risk management, or a local business owner with a storefront in the historic district (among others). These various (and sometimes conflicting) roles meant that all players had different values and priorities as well as unique knowledge that they had to share with other participants – which made the process of evaluating ARCHtopia's level of resilience all the more realistic (and fun)! The exercise demonstrated how the ARCH Resilience Assessment Dashboard helps users to perform resilience self-assessments for historic areas. In a real-world context, using the dashboard will be a guided process that leads users to further recommendations for the use of other ARCH tools and methods.

Making an Action Plan for ARCHtopia

After players assessed how ARCHtopia had handled its resilience thus far, players were invited to fill any gaps they saw by negotiating a new Action Plan for the city. This part of the game was modelled on the Resilience Measures Inventory, which helps users to find appropriate measures to boost resilience. Players can choose from a wide array of structural, institutional, and social measures. With possibilities that ranged from awareness-raising efforts to surface water storage, this part of the game led to a spirited debate among

participants, and allowed them to get a feel for the types of information the Resilience Measures Inventory has to offer real communities.

The workshop demonstrated how these two tools complement each other, in that the ARCH Resilience Assessment Dashboard helps to identify potential gaps and areas for improvement and that the ARCH Resilience Measures Inventory helps to identify practical methods to make the improvement possible.



KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Both resilience assessment and resilience planning require the participation of different urban stakeholders in order to include structural, economic, social and environmental reflections into the process.
- ▶ Local stakeholders have different interests and objectives and a compromise involving all parties is necessary to encounter the best resilience solution for all inhabitants.
- ▶ Gamification is a powerful tool to learn about multi-stakeholders dynamics in resilience decision-making.

Find out more:

[ARCH project](#)

Fraunhofer's "[Resilience Assessment Dashboard](#)" (RAD) (the final version of the tool will be available soon)

Tecnalia's "[Resilience Measures Inventory](#)" (RMI) (the final version of the tool will be available soon)



² ARCH – Advancing Resilience of historic areas against Climate-related and other Hazards. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 820999.

THE WAY AHEAD: ACCELERATING ACTION FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Climate resilient in 2050. Can we afford that?

The European Urban Resilience Forum 2021 closing plenary summarised, after two days of discussions: exchanges and interactive workshops, what were the learnings, which challenges were raised by cities, regions and their stakeholders, and what are the ways forward in research, policy and practice to deliver on the current adaptation and resilience needs.

Following up on the opening panel, speakers discussed on ways to pave the road to effective adaptation, which should be **smarter** - improving knowledge and helping to manage the uncertainties, **more systemic** - in terms of support to policy development, and **faster**.

Panellists agreed that one of the most pressing topics to be addressed are how to make resourcing and financing

adaptation less complex for cities and how to overcome the 'adaptation-gap'. As a central issue in more than one session, it became clear how especially small municipalities need to have support and a better and more integrated coordination with the regional level.

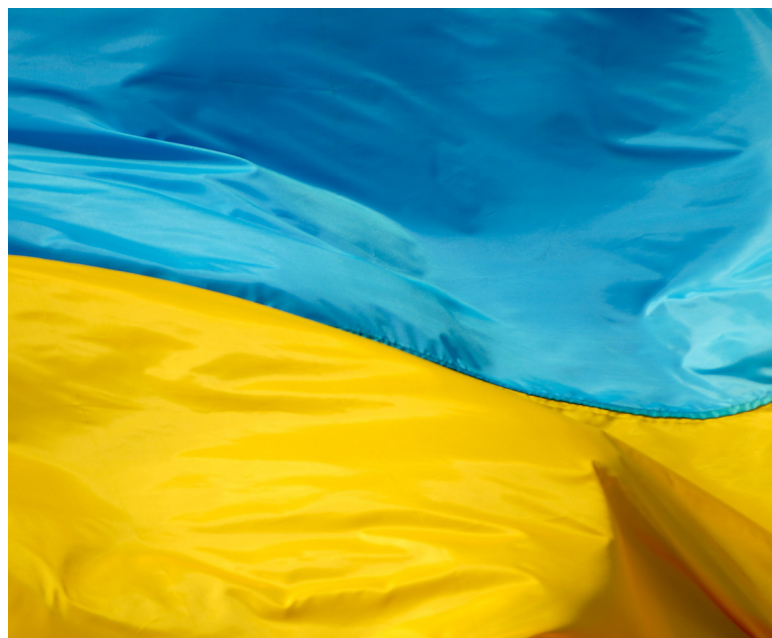
Now that cities and regions are looking further than the current global COVID-19 pandemic crisis – which revealed the urgent call for cross-sectoral and cross-scale approaches – they recognise that it is key to look at resilience as a competence not as an end state.

In the closing statements, speakers highlighted what this event has confirmed once again: the strength of people coming together, generating an enormous speed of learning, and sharing information and knowledge. Thus, initiating another small step towards a more resilient, more sustainable, and more inclusive future.

EURESFO ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE

All the partners of the European Urban Resilience Forum 2021 express their solidarity and support for all the cities and communities affected by the Russia's invasion in Ukraine, but in particular innocent families and children suffering the most severe losses. Our support also goes to the many people in Russia who are standing up against the war course of the Russian leadership at great personal risk.

Wars and armed conflicts not only lead to unnecessary loss of human lives, but also hinder our societies from addressing the global challenges to be faced in fighting climate change, prevent ecosystem crisis and securing livelihoods for future generations.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The European Urban Resilience Forum 2021 is a jointly initiative by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the European Environment Agency and the City of Malmö, co-organised with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Clever Cities, ARCH, Connecting Nature and Network Nature. The EURESFO21 was organized in cooperation with the Resilient Cities Network, the Nordic Urban Resilience Institute, Birgit Georgi's Strong cities in a changing climate and the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) initiative of the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Office (UNDRR). It was supported by the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the LIFE programme, the Covenant of Mayors – Europe Office, the European Committee of the Regions, the Cities Race to Resilience programme and from the REGREEN, Excess, Triple A-Reno and Save the Homes projects.

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