

M100 Climate Neutrality Forum

29 - 30 October 2024
Mina Museum | Bucharest



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Event's host: MINA – Museum of Immersive New Art

Mina Immersive Museum provided a space where imagination met reality, inviting participants to envision Romania's future—a future where cities thrive in harmony with nature, and sustainability is not merely a goal, but a tangible reality. Within its walls, the Forum came alive with bold discussions and inspiring exchanges, reflecting the possibilities of urban spaces powered by renewable energy, adorned with green rooftops, and enriched by smart technologies.



Event's host: MINA – Museum of Immersive New Art

Imagine the cities of 2035, when climate neutrality and sustainability have transformed the urban landscape. Picture vibrant streets powered by renewable energy, green rooftops that breathe life into our cityscapes, and smart technologies that make every journey seamless and every community connection stronger. Cities are more than just structures of stone and steel.

Cities are alive with the movement of people, their routines, and their dreams. Yet, their true power lies in our imagination, and in our communities. Even though we rarely experience every corner of our cities, we envision them in our minds as places of possibility, places of potential.

Cities brought us new and incredible opportunities for growth and cooperation. Cities are structures raised primarily in the human imagination, which allowed for the possibility of communities and groups. It is this power of imagination and commitment that we harness today.

Our cities are imaginative spaces where we can dream and create solutions for the challenges we face, including climate change. If we envision our cities as beacons to our models of sustainability, they can become just that. It's not too late, it's just about the time.

Together, we have the power to transform our urban environments and create a sustainable future for all.

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE!

Introduction

The M100 Climate Neutrality Forum 2024 marked a defining moment in the journey toward transforming Romania's cities into global examples of climate neutrality and sustainable innovation. Held in the vibrant setting of Bucharest, this landmark event brought together an extraordinary assembly of stakeholders—visionary political leaders, proactive mayors, committed civil society organizations, influential consultants, passionate enthusiasts, and distinguished international experts and international partners.

This convergence of expertise and determination underscored a shared commitment: shaping the future of urban life in Romania and beyond. With a focus on collaboration and action, the Forum stood as a pillar of the power of collective effort in tackling the urgent challenges posed by climate change.

At the heart of the event was the long-anticipated announcement of the 10 winning cities chosen to join the Romanian Mission—M100 Mirror Mission. These cities represent the forefront of Romania's ambition, poised to lead the way in the transition to climate-neutral urban ecosystems. Their journey begins now, but it is not theirs alone. From this moment forward, their success will depend not just on their individual efforts but also on the strength of the partnerships and networks that support them.

The M100 Climate Neutrality Forum was more than a gathering; it was a catalyst. The Forum inspired bold ideas, sparked meaningful conversations, and set in motion actionable strategies. Together, we reaffirmed a vital truth: the journey to climate neutrality is as much about empowering cities as it is about building a community that shares knowledge, resources, and a united vision for the future.

This Forum was a celebration of progress and a call to action. It marked the beginning of a transformative chapter—not just for the 10 selected cities but for every individual and organization committed to creating a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban future. With hope, ambition, and collective resolve, the M100 Climate Neutrality Forum set the stage for what comes next: building the cities of tomorrow, today.

Sensitive Data Installations at the M100 Forum

As part of the M100 Climate Neutrality Forum, participants had the opportunity to experience a selection of immersive art installations from the Sensitive Data series. These installations align closely with the forum's themes, exploring issues such as climate neutrality, environmental quality, air pollution, mobility, and housing. By combining data, technology, and sensory experiences, the installations aim to engage visitors in a deeper reflection on urban life and its challenges. Here are the three shortlisted installations, each offering a unique perspective on critical urban issues:

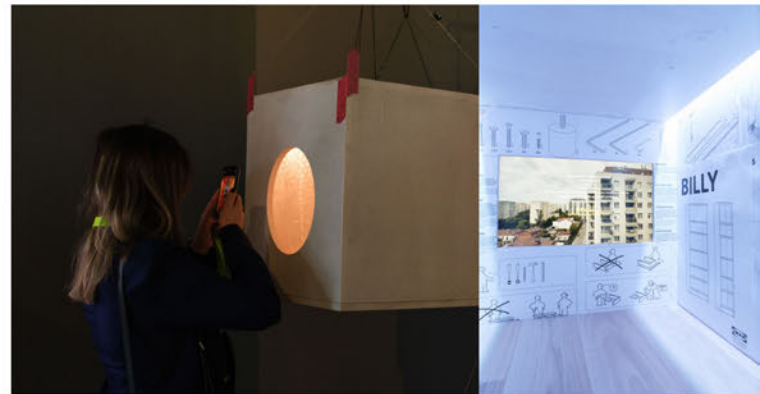
COLOURS WE BREATHE

This dynamic light installation visualizes air quality in Bucharest using data from Ecopolis' platform, aerlive.ro. Each illuminated line represents the average air quality for a month in 2023, while each rotation corresponds to a single day. Through its elegant and interactive design, the installation provides a visceral understanding of pollution levels in the city, inviting viewers to reflect on the health impacts of air quality and the urgent need for sustainable interventions.



ESTIMATED ARRIVAL TIME (ETA)

Focused on the theme of mobility, this installation examines transportation experiences in Bucharest by monitoring three travel modes: cycling, private car, and public transit. It presents three key commuting scenarios—neighborhood-to-work, neighborhood-to-center, and neighborhood-to-park—from the perspective of each city sector. By juxtaposing data on travel times, accessibility, and convenience, the installation reveals insights into the inequalities and inefficiencies in urban mobility, sparking conversations about how to create a more inclusive and efficient transportation system.



HOME SWEET HOME

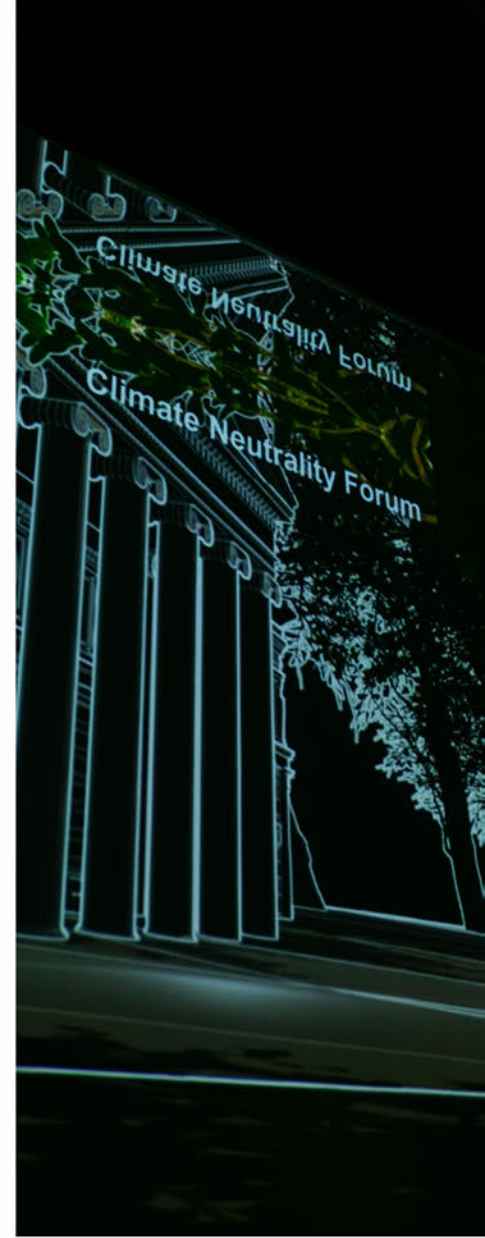
This installation offers a comparative analysis of living experiences across different housing typologies in Bucharest. By reconstructing familiar elements of various residential spaces—such as an interwar home in the city center, a communist-era apartment block, a newly built development, and a suburban house—it explores how urban planning, housing quality, and demographic trends shape the way we live. Visitors are invited to reflect on what makes a house a home and how urban housing can adapt to meet the needs of future generations.

Agenda highlights

The **M100 Climate Neutrality Forum 2024** served as a dynamic platform for dialogue, innovation, and collaboration, bringing together a diverse array of voices to advance Romania's climate neutrality ambitions. Over two days of impactful discussions, participants explored actionable pathways for transforming urban landscapes into thriving, sustainable ecosystems.

Official Speeches set the tone, with political leaders emphasizing the importance of aligning Romania's efforts with European and global climate commitments. They highlighted the pivotal role of cities as engines of innovation and emphasized the urgency of creating climate-resilient urban environments.

The announcement of the **10 selected cities** marked a momentous milestone. These cities were recognized for their vision, determination, and innovative approaches to achieving climate neutrality. Their selection signifies the beginning of an ambitious journey, where these urban pioneers will drive systemic change through comprehensive climate action and investment plans.



Panel discussions brought depth and diversity to the conversation:

- The **Romania-Norway-Iceland Cities Panel** showcased cross-border collaboration, where Norwegian and Icelandic cities shared their expertise in green transitions, fostering inspiration and practical insights for their Romanian counterparts.
- The **Selected Cities Panel** offered a platform for the newly selected cities to share their strategies, ambitions, and challenges, creating a roadmap for others to follow.
- The **National Platforms Panel** underscored the importance of multi-level governance, highlighting how national frameworks can empower cities to deliver on their climate objectives.
- The **Global Finance Panel** brought international financial institutions into the conversation, presenting innovative funding mechanisms and emphasizing the role of public-private partnerships in scaling climate action.

Agenda highlights

Keynotes, including the inspiring presentation on the “15-Minute City” concept by Carlos Moreno, transformed perspectives on urban living, prioritizing accessibility, sustainability, and community well-being. The discussions further explored the transformative potential of Urban Labs, where participatory innovation empowers citizens to co-create climate-neutral solutions.

A standout feature of the Forum was the **launch of the M100 Coalition**, a collaborative framework aimed at building ecosystems of support for the selected cities, ensuring they have the resources, expertise, and partnerships to achieve their goals.

The Forum concluded with a unified message: **climate neutrality is not just a target—it is a shared responsibility**. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity, the M100 Climate Neutrality Forum laid the groundwork for meaningful progress, reaffirming its role as a cornerstone of Romania’s sustainable urban transformation.



Opening speeches



Alexandra Bocșe
State Adviser, Department of
Climate and Sustainability
Presidential Administration



Sorin Cîmpeanu
Vicepresident of the
Senate of Romania



Ligia Deca
Minister of Education,
M100 Committee



Sebastian Burduja
Minister, Ministry of Energy,
M100 Committee



Ovidiu Cîmpean
State Secretary, Ministry
of Investments and
European Projects, M100
Coordinator



Marin Toile
State Secretary, Ministry of
Development, Public Works, and
Administration



Borgar Thor Einarsson
Deputy Managing Director,
Financial Mechanism Office for
EEA and Norway Grants



HE Massimo Baggi
Ambassador of the
Swiss Confederation in
Romania



Patrick Child
Deputy Director General, DG
Environment, European
Commission



Paul Moldovan
Public Administrator, District 6,
Bucharest



Adrian Curaj
General Director, UEFISCDI
– Executive Secretariat of
M100 Hub

Alexandra Bocșe

State Adviser, Department of Climate and Sustainability Presidential Administration

Alexandra Bocșe, a dedicated advocate for sustainability and urban resilience, set the stage for the M100 Climate Neutrality Forum with an inspiring message of commitment and collaboration. She emphasized the critical role of cities in addressing the challenges posed by climate change. Her speech celebrated the Forum's role as a platform for generating innovative solutions and strengthening partnerships to pave the way for a sustainable urban future.



Key Messages:

Urbanization and its Challenges:

Urban areas are rapidly expanding, with projections showing 60% of the global population living in cities by 2030 and 70% by 2050. This trend necessitates a focused approach to decarbonizing urban environments.

Vulnerability to Climate Change:

Cities and their residents face increased risks from extreme weather events like storms, flooding, and heatwaves. Addressing these vulnerabilities is essential for long-term urban resilience.

Decarbonization Strategies:

Key solutions include sustainable urban transport, low-emission heating systems, energy-efficient buildings, and reducing the carbon footprint of public institutions.

Green Spaces and Community Well-Being:

Protecting and expanding green spaces, such as urban parks, is vital for air quality, climate adaptation, and the overall health and well-being of communities.

The Power of Collaboration:

Events like the M100 Forum serve as catalysts for dialogue and partnership-building, providing the foundation for effective climate solutions. The path to climate neutrality is both a shared responsibility and an opportunity to create thriving, future-ready cities.



Sorin Cimpeanu

Vice President of the Senate of Romania

Sorin Cimpeanu, Vice President of the Senate of Romania, delivered a compelling address highlighting the country's pivotal role in the global fight against climate change. Representing the President of the Romanian Senate, Nicolae Ciuca, he underscored the importance of urban centers as frontline arenas in achieving climate neutrality. Drawing on his decades of experience in environmental science, he connected Romania's past efforts to its ambitious future, setting a tone of urgency, collaboration, and innovation for the Forum.

Key Messages:

Romania's Commitment to Climate Action:

Climate change is a critical issue globally, and Romania is dedicated to combating it through its alignment with the European Union goals and collaboration with Norway and other partners.

Urban Centers as Climate Action Leaders:

Major cities like Bucharest are central to the country's climate neutrality strategy. Initiatives such as expanding green spaces, and revitalizing the Dâmbovița River banks are vital steps forward.

Modernizing Urban Infrastructure:

Investments in centralized thermal energy systems, energy-efficient buildings, and high-standard new constructions are essential to achieving sustainable energy solutions.

Sustainable Transportation:

Projects like the Metropolitan train, electric public transportation, and expanded bicycle lanes will reduce urban pollution and bring Romanian cities closer to climate neutrality.

Green Belts and Agricultural Resilience:

Expanding green belts around cities and reforesting 60,000 hectares under Romania's Recovery and Resilience Plan will combat desertification and increase carbon absorption. Concurrently, improving irrigation infrastructure will enhance agricultural resilience to climate risks.

Sebastian Burduja

Minister of Energy, Member of the M100 Committee

Sebastian Burduja, Minister of Energy and a committed advocate for Romania's climate neutrality agenda, delivered an empowering speech that highlighted the transformative potential of cities in driving economic growth and innovation. Reflecting on visionary leadership and bold investments, he underscored the critical role of urban centers as engines of both economic development and climate transition. His address inspired optimism and urgency, calling for action and collaboration to turn ambitious visions into tangible progress.



Key Messages:

The Creation of the M100 Mirror Mission:

The idea for the M100 Mirror Mission originated from a shared dream of transforming Romanian cities into leaders of climate neutrality. Burduja recognized and appreciated the efforts and contributions of Adrian Curaj and the M100 dedicated team in successfully turning this vision into a reality.

Significant Investments for Urban Development:

A bold investment program of over €800 million was announced, including €350 million dedicated to the M100 cities and €500 million for centralized district heating systems. These investments will drive sustainable urban infrastructure projects.

Cities as Engines of Growth:

Cities are pivotal in Romania's development, serving as the engines of economic progress and innovation. The focus on urban development reflects a recognition of their role in the national and global climate transition.

Economic Theory and Urban Focus:

Concerns about uneven regional development were addressed, emphasizing that thriving cities naturally drive broader economic growth. Stakeholders were urged to embrace this urban-centered approach for climate and economic advancements.

A Call to Action:

By placing cities at the forefront of Romania's climate transition, Burduja inspired confidence in their ability to lead transformative change and urged continued collaboration to achieve shared goals.



Ligia Deca

Minister of Education, Member of the M100 Committee

Ligia Deca, the Minister of Education, delivered a heartfelt and thought-provoking speech emphasizing the deep connections between climate action, education, and the future of Romania's youth. Her message celebrated the importance of collaboration across sectors to combat climate change while highlighting the transformative role of education in shaping a sustainable future. By reflecting on personal experiences and the urgent challenges faced by Romanian schools and students, she inspired action and optimism among all participants.

Key Messages:

Climate Change as an Educational and Societal Challenge:

Extreme weather events like floods and heatwaves have directly impacted Romanian schools and students, underlining the immediate need for climate-resilient policies and infrastructure.

Role of Education in Climate Action:

Education is essential in raising awareness and fostering sustainability competences in young people. Initiatives such as Green Week and funding for hands-on environmental activities are shaping the next generation of climate-conscious citizens.

Green Schools Network:

A €225 million investment aims to develop schools that are energy producers and models of sustainability. This includes reimagined pedagogy focused on environmental protection and climate action.

Incorporating Sustainability into Curricula:

Environmental protection and climate change themes are now mandatory in the Romanian high school curricula, reflecting a shift toward prioritizing sustainability education.

Young People as Climate Advocates:

Romanian youth are deeply aware of and concerned about climate change. Surveys show that 9 out of 10 students expect authorities to take decisive action to protect the environment.

Ovidiu Cîmpean

State Secretary, Minister of Investments and European Projects, M100 Hub Coordinator

Ovidiu Cîmpean, a driving force behind the M100 Hub, shared an inspiring vision for Romania's path toward climate neutrality. Reflecting on the collaborative efforts that brought the initiative to life, he highlighted the M100 Hub as a historic milestone in advancing greener, smarter, and more sustainable cities. Cîmpeanu emphasized the importance of systemic approaches, substantial investments, and strong international partnerships to ensure the success of the selected cities and their transformative impact on urban development across Romania.



Key Messages:

Historic Moment for Climate Neutrality:

The M100 Hub marks a transformative point for Romanian cities, helping them become greener, smarter, and more sustainable. This initiative represents Romania's commitment to align with the European climate goals.

Collaborative Efforts for the M100 Mission:

The M100 initiative is the result of coordinated efforts between six ministries, European partners, and local stakeholders. The Hub was publically launched in December 2023, in Cluj Napoca, initiating its first projects with funding from EA and Norway grants, totaling €3 million.

A Systemic Approach to Urban Development:

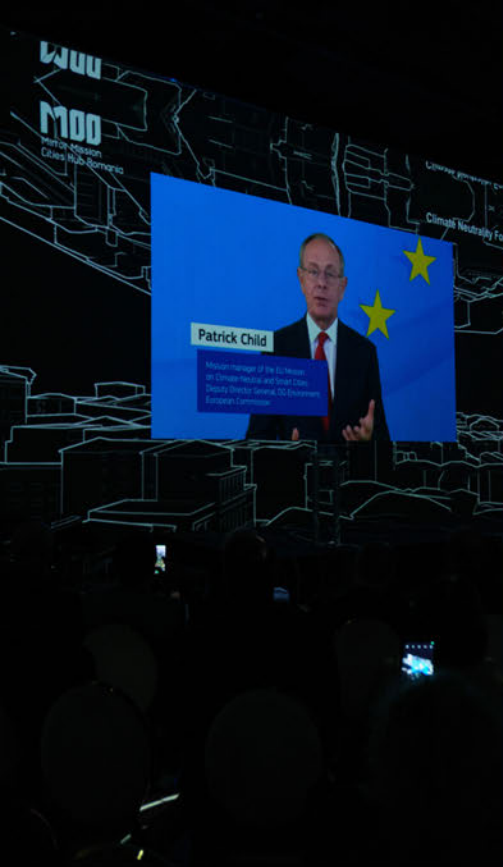
The selected cities will adopt a systemic approach by developing climate action and investment plans aligned with the European Commission's standards, ensuring high-quality, sustainable projects.

Significant Funding and Programs:

Sebastian Burduja, the Minister of Energy, announced €300 million for the M100 platform, with additional efforts underway to secure another €300 million through partnerships with EA and Norway for the Green Cities program.

Prioritizing Community-Centered Development:

The initiative emphasizes projects built on New European Bauhaus principles: sustainability, community collaboration, and beauty. These principles aim to create resilient cities that enhance the quality of life for their citizens while adapting to climate challenges.



Patrick Child – video message

Deputy Director General for Environment, European Commission

In a heartfelt video message, Patrick Child, Deputy Director General for Environment at the European Commission, expressed his unwavering support for the M100 Mirror Mission and its transformative vision for Romanian cities. He commended the collaborative spirit of the initiative, highlighting its alignment with the European Green Deal and its role in inspiring innovative climate solutions. Child celebrated the integration of M100 into the broader EU Cities Mission, emphasizing the potential of Romanian cities to lead by example in the fight against climate change.

Key Messages:

Strong Support for the M100 Mirror Mission:

The European Commission fully backs the M100 initiative, recognizing it as a significant step in aligning Romanian cities with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal.

Innovative Governance Model:

The collaborative approach of the six national ministries supporting M100 is a model that inspires other Member States in implementing effective climate action.

Integration with the EU Cities Mission:

The 10 cities joining M100 are now part of the broader Cities Mission family, set to benefit from improved air quality, energy-efficient housing, accessible green spaces, and healthier communities.

Recognition of Romanian Achievements:

The three Romanian cities awarded the Mission Label (Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest District 2, and Suceava) exemplify innovation and ambition, showcasing Romania's leading role in climate-neutrality efforts.

Global Collaboration and Learning:

The M100 initiative highlights how cities from Romania, Norway, and Iceland can learn from each other, demonstrating the strength of international collaboration enabled by the European Economic Area and Norway grants.

Borgar Thor Einarsson

Deputy Managing Director, Financial Mechanism Office for EEA and Norway Grants

Borgar Thor Einarsson, representing the Financial Mechanism Office for EEA and Norway Grants, delivered an inspiring speech emphasizing the profound impact of bilateral cooperation between Romania, Norway, and Iceland. He highlighted the significance of the M100 initiative in supporting Romanian cities to achieve climate neutrality while showcasing the role of political determination and expertise in driving successful projects. His message celebrated the power of collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and long-term partnerships in creating a sustainable future.



Key Messages:

Bilateral Cooperation as a Cornerstone of Success:

The partnership between Romania, Norway, and Iceland has been instrumental in advancing climate-neutral initiatives, enabling the exchange of expertise and innovative solutions to urban sustainability challenges.

Financial Contributions and Impact:

The EEA and Norway Grants have provided €500 million to Romania across 12 programs, including the M100 initiative, which supports the transition to greener cities through the Fund for Bilateral Relations.

Expanding Climate Support to 10 New Cities:

Building on the success of initial support for Cluj – Napoca, Bucharest District 2, and Suceava – the cities labeled with the EU Mission Label, the grants will now extend assistance to 10 additional Romanian cities to develop and implement climate action plans.

Showcasing Best Practices:

Drawing from successful projects like those in Reykjavik, Norway and Iceland bring decades of expertise in green energy and climate solutions, offering valuable lessons for Romanian cities embarking on their sustainability journeys.

Creating Sustainable and Replicable Models:

The M100 initiative aligns with the EU Green Deal and aims to establish ecosystems of sustainable practices in Romanian cities, positioning the country as a leader in urban sustainability and green innovation.



His Excellency Massimo Baggi

Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation in Romania

His Excellency, Massimo Baggi, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation in Romania, delivered a compelling speech underscoring Switzerland's commitment to bilateral cooperation with Romania. Highlighting Switzerland's experience in decentralized governance and energy efficiency, Ambassador Baggi expressed confidence in the transformative potential of the M100 initiative. His address emphasized the importance of shared expertise, investment, and a people-centered approach in advancing Romania's energy and sustainability goals.

Key Messages:

Decentralized Governance as a Catalyst for Change:

Drawing from Switzerland's decentralized governance model, Ambassador Baggi emphasized the power of municipalities to drive impactful change through energy efficiency and sustainable investments.

Bilateral Cooperation with Romania:

Switzerland has committed €220 million to its latest cooperation program with Romania, building on a successful €120 million program concluded in 2019.

Significant Investments in Energy Efficiency:

The largest bilateral program focuses on energy efficiency, with €65 million allocated, plus an additional 15% from Romania. This funding aims to enhance infrastructure and strengthen local authorities' capacity for sustainable development.

Capacity Building for Local Authorities:

Lessons learned from previous collaborations emphasize the need to invest not only in infrastructure but also in the skills and capacity of local governments to implement and sustain transformative projects.

Commitment to M100 and Green Transition:

Switzerland pledged continued collaboration with Norwegian and Romanian partners to maximize bilateral efforts supporting the M100 initiative, fostering long-term benefits for Romanian municipalities and citizens.

Marin Tole

State Secretary, Ministry of Development, Public Works, and Administration

Marin Tole, State Secretary at the Ministry of Development, Public Works, and Administration, delivered a compelling address highlighting the vital role of inter-institutional collaboration in driving Romania's urban green transition. Emphasizing the transformative power of cities as engines of the economy, he outlined the country's strategic vision for sustainable urban development. Tole's remarks celebrated the achievements of the 10 cities selected for the M100 mission and reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to supporting their journey toward climate neutrality.



Key Messages:

Strategic Vision for Urban Development:

The National Strategy for Integrated Urban Development for Resilient, Green, Inclusive and Competitive Cities (2022–2035), Romania's first urban policy, provides a comprehensive framework for resilient, green, and competitive cities. This strategy aligns with European urban principles established in the New Leipzig Charter.

Core Principles for Green Transition:

The Ministry emphasizes the development of green-blue infrastructure, nature-based solutions, increased energy efficiency, improved air quality, and sustainable urban mobility to combat climate change and enhance urban resilience.

Commitment to Participative Governance:

Transparency, partnership, and inclusive governance are key values underpinning the Ministry's efforts, ensuring that all urban actors are involved in identifying and implementing sustainable solutions. Marin Tole's speech underscored the importance of collective action and strategic planning in creating livable, intelligent, and climate-resilient cities. His words served as both an acknowledgment of progress made and a call to action for continued efforts toward a sustainable urban future.

Support for Implementation:

The Ministry is committed to providing full support for the operationalization of urban policies and action plans, ensuring that resources are concentrated on achieving sustainable urban development aligned with European and international standards.



Paul Moldovan

Public Administrator, District 6, Bucharest

Paul Moldovan, Public Administrator of District 6 of Bucharest, provided an insightful perspective on the challenges and opportunities faced by Romania's capital city in the journey toward climate neutrality. He highlighted the structural gaps in infrastructure and services within Bucharest and the ambitious steps District 6 has already undertaken to address these issues. Moldovan's speech underscored the importance of collaboration, planning, and economic sustainability in achieving the city's green transition goals.

Key Messages:

Bucharest's Challenges in the Climate Transition:

Despite being a major economic hub with 10% of Romania's population and 20% of its GDP, Bucharest lags in infrastructure and services, with significant deficits in green spaces, heating systems, and transport.

District 6's Progress Toward Climate Neutrality:

Since 2020, District 6 has focused on refurbishing schools and kindergartens to meet NZ standards, transforming brownfields into parks, and upgrading public and private buildings for energy efficiency.

The Need for Resources and Strategic Planning:

While significant progress has been made, many challenges remain, requiring substantial resources, effective planning, and sustained efforts to meet EU climate standards.

Balancing Climate Action with Economic Sustainability:

Moldovan emphasized the importance of ensuring that climate neutrality efforts are economically sustainable, cautioning against policies that might harm competitiveness or overburden the economy.

Inspiration from Peers and Collaboration:

Inspired by the initiatives of District 2, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, and Suceava, District 6 has joined the M100 mission to tackle its challenges collaboratively and contribute to Romania's green transformation.

Adrian Curaj

General Director, UEFISCDI – Executive Secretariat of M100 Hub

Adrian Curaj, a visionary leader and General Director of UEFISCDI, delivered an inspiring address highlighting the innovative foundation and transformative vision of the M100 initiative. By reflecting on UEFISCDI's long-standing role in fostering public sector innovation and entrepreneurship, Curaj underscored how M100 was born from a commitment to drive meaningful change. His speech celebrated collaboration, foresight, and the collective effort required to transition Romanian cities toward climate neutrality.



Key Messages:

Public Sector Innovation as a Catalyst:

UEFISCDI has championed innovation for over two decades, leading transformative projects in higher education, foresight, and innovation ecosystems. M100 reflects this legacy, embodying a game-changing approach to public sector innovation.

The Genesis of M100:

Inspired by the success of the three Romanian cities selected for the EU Cities Mission, M100 began as a “mirror mission” to replicate and scale innovation locally, transforming the dream of climate-neutral cities into a tangible reality.

Collaborative Foundations:

M100's success is rooted in the alignment of administrative and political will, including support from ministries, international funding agencies, and local governments. This multi-level collaboration has been instrumental in launching and sustaining the initiative.

Science and Innovation as Pillars:

Innovation and research are integral to M100's mission. Universities and research agencies play a critical role in driving urban transformation, enabling Romanian cities to generate innovative solutions for climate challenges.

Walking the Talk:

M100 exemplifies the principle of turning vision into action. By clustering resources, fostering partnerships, and leveraging international expertise, M100 is creating a platform for meaningful urban transformation and delivering impactful results.

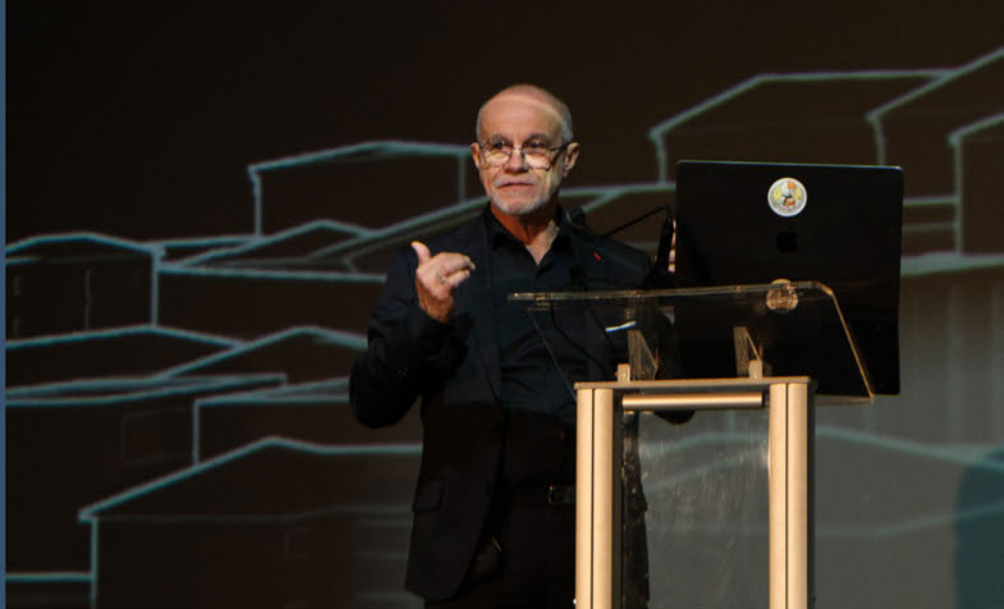
Carlos Moreno

Keynote speaker – The “15-Minute City” Concept

Professor Carlos Moreno, an esteemed researcher from Sorbonne University, captivated the audience with his revolutionary vision of the “15-Minute City.” This groundbreaking concept, rooted in proximity and sustainability, challenges traditional urban planning paradigms by prioritizing decentralized, human-centered city design.

Through his keynote, Moreno emphasized the urgency of reimagining cities as spaces of resilience, inclusivity, and ecological harmony to combat the realities of climate change and urban inequalities.

By embracing proximity, inclusivity, and ecological balance, this model offers a pathway to resilient, livable cities that prioritize human well-being and environmental stewardship.



Takeaways from the Keynote:

The True Essence of the “15-Minute City”: The focus is not on the “15-minute” metric but on creating decentralized, sustainable, and vibrant neighborhoods that prioritize local services, social interactions, and ecological harmony.

A Departure from Car-Centric Urbanism: Moreno called for a break from 20th-century urban planning, dominated by car dependency and single-function zones, advocating for mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods.

The Six Essential Functions: The “15-Minute City” framework integrates six functions—living, supplying, caring, educating, working, and enjoying—into compact, interconnected neighborhoods.

Proximity as Resilience (“Proxiliance”): Proximity strengthens resilience against climate-related disruptions, enabling neighborhoods to thrive even amid economic and environmental challenges.

A Shift in Mindset: Urban transformation requires a cultural and psychological shift among citizens, policymakers, and businesses, moving toward sustainability and collective well-being.

Global Applicability and Flexibility: The concept adapts to diverse urban and rural contexts worldwide, demonstrating success in cities like Paris, Melbourne, and Buenos Aires, and rural towns in Poland and Scotland.

Social and Economic Benefits: Proximity fosters local economies, reduces poverty and exclusion, and strengthens community ties, addressing not just ecological but also social challenges.

The Role of Governance and Collaboration: Transformative change requires multilevel governance, inclusive decision-making, and collaboration across sectors to align policies with urban realities.

Cities Panel: Cities in the Driver's Seat of Climate Neutrality

The "Cities in the Driver's Seat of Climate Neutrality" panel brought together distinguished representatives from Romanian and international cities, alongside government officials and European Commission representatives. Moderated by Bjarne Uldal of Nordic Edge, the panel highlighted collaborative strategies, citizen engagement, and innovative methodologies aimed at achieving climate neutrality. The discussions shed light on the challenges, opportunities, and shared responsibilities of urban centers in navigating a sustainable future.



Takeaways

Laszlo Borbely (Head of the Department for Sustainable Development, Central Government)

Collaboration across ministries and local governments is crucial. Borbely emphasized Romania's institutionalized approach with sustainable development hubs and experts at national and local levels to support sustainability goals. | Professional skills and knowledge are essential. Training 2,000 sustainability experts by 2025 highlights the government's commitment to capacity-building and fostering a sustainable mindset in public administration.

Irina Nicolescu (Representative, Suceava)

Smaller cities can adapt and learn from the strategies of larger cities, leveraging their resources and expertise to tailor solutions for local contexts. | Collaboration and shared goals can streamline the transition toward climate neutrality, emphasizing teamwork and inspiration from best practices in larger emission cities.

Ovidiu Cîmpean (Representative, Cluj-Napoca)

Engaging citizens in urban projects fosters higher ambitions for climate goals, as demonstrated by Cluj's commitment to public consultation and ecosystem partnerships. | Partnership with universities and open dialogue with citizens has been the backbone of Cluj's progress, driving innovative solutions and community support for climate neutrality.

Cities Panel: Cities in the Driver's Seat of Climate Neutrality

The panel emphasized the power of collaboration, innovation, and citizen engagement in achieving climate neutrality. With actionable insights and shared experiences, the discussions underscored the importance of aligning local, national, and international efforts to foster a sustainable and inclusive urban future.



Takeaways

Laura Hetel (European Commission)

Climate city contracts offer an innovative framework for urban transformation, combining political commitment, cross-sector action plans, and investment strategies. | European cities must embrace collaboration and knowledge-sharing, leveraging support from national platforms, mission families, and international partners to meet climate goals.

Hrönn Hrafnisdóttir (Representative, Reykjavik)

Reykjavik's reliance on geothermal and hydro energy makes it nearly carbon-neutral in heating and electricity, with the main challenge being transport emissions. | Encouraging behavioral change in citizens and businesses is key to reducing car dependency and fostering a culture of sustainable mobility.

Øyvind S. Tanum (Representative, Trondheim Kommune)

Citizen engagement is a cornerstone for Trondheim's climate strategy, with initiatives like the "Grandparents Climate Initiative" showcasing the value of listening to grassroots efforts. | Collaborative governance models help streamline actions across local and national levels, ensuring alignment of climate initiatives with citizen needs and policy objectives.

Eline Vigre (Representative, Stavanger)

Stavanger's climate budgeting approach integrates emissions tracking with financial planning, enabling actionable insights and funding for sustainability measures. | The city's multilevel governance model, including regional partnerships and mobility agreements, has been instrumental in achieving significant reductions in emissions.

M100 Jury Moment

The “M100 Jury Moment” brought together a distinguished panel of international experts from diverse fields, including academia, urban policy, and sustainability, to evaluate applications from Romanian cities aspiring to lead the climate neutrality movement. Each jury member shared their reflections on the evaluation process, highlighting innovative solutions, collaborative governance, and cultural integration as standout aspects of the applications. Their insights provide a glimpse into how Romanian cities are emerging as role models for climate action and urban transformation.



Takeaways

Johanna Leissner (Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft)

Cultural heritage must be integral to climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Romanian cities showcased inspiring efforts to preserve historic monuments while addressing climate challenges. | Cultural heritage can drive economic development, combining traditional craftsmanship with modern nature-based solutions to foster sustainable growth.

Oliver Weigel (Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) Metropolregion München)

Romania's horizontal integration of six ministries into the M100 project sets a benchmark for effective intergovernmental collaboration. | The diversity and political commitment evident in the applications are exemplary, with cities demonstrating innovative and ambitious measures rarely seen elsewhere.

Thomas Osdoba (NetZeroCities)

Romanian cities' readiness to lead and model climate neutrality for others highlights their proactive and aspirational mindset. | The commitment of the Romanian government and international partners ensures that these initiatives transcend rhetorical leadership, driving tangible outcomes.

The reflections of the jury members underscore the innovative spirit, collaborative ethos, and cultural integration that characterize Romanian cities' climate neutrality initiatives. These efforts, backed by robust national and international support, set an inspiring precedent for urban transformation across Europe and beyond.



Takeaways

Maria Vassilakou (Vienna Solutions)

The collaboration between Romanian cities and the national government is a rare and commendable example of synergistic governance. | Cities excel in retrofitting buildings and decarbonizing public transport, laying a strong foundation for achieving climate goals.

Olga Kordas (Viable Cities, KTH)

Romanian cities stand out for their maturity in addressing energy efficiency, mobility, and citizen engagement, leveraging innovative mechanisms like energy communities. | Involving the younger generation is a notable strategy, with participatory approaches fostering long-term commitment to climate goals.

Julio Lumbreras (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid)

Collaborative governance is deeply embedded in Romanian cities, with strong multi-stakeholder partnerships driving transformative urban agendas. | Encouraging cities to transition from competition to collaboration will unlock greater collective progress and shared learning.

Chrysses Nicolaides (EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities)

The quality and ambition of Romanian cities' proposals rival those of the EU's original 100 Climate-Neutral Cities cohort. | Strong government support, particularly from the Ministry of Education, positions Romanian cities for successful implementation of climate city contracts.

Announcement of the 10 Selected Cities

The announcement of the 10 selected M100 Mirror Mission cities represents a monumental step for Romania in advancing climate neutrality and sustainability. These cities were carefully chosen through a rigorous evaluation process led by a panel of renowned international jurors, emphasizing innovation, commitment, and a readiness to transform urban spaces into models of climate action. Backed by a robust framework of funding and partnerships—including €1 billion in planned investments—these cities now stand at the forefront of Romania’s green transition, paving the way for significant environmental, economic, and social benefits.



The 10 Selected Cities

Alba Iulia

Mayor Gabriel Pleșa emphasized the city’s commitment to sustainability, citing electric public transport, intelligent public lighting, and interconnected bicycle lanes as key projects. He stated, “Everything that happens with the climate and the weather in the last years makes us think and tells us that there is no time to lose.”

Bistrița

Liliana Coseriu, Director of Sustainable Development Direction 2030, praised the teamwork behind the city’s initiatives, saying, “I want to thank my colleagues with whom I worked on this application and all the projects that Bistrița prepares and implements.”

Brașov

Mayor George Scripcaru highlighted Brașov’s unique environmental features and its plans for sustainable urban development. He remarked, “We will create a pleasant environment, as natural as possible, for the citizens of Brașov and those who visit the city every time.”

Buzău

Mayor Constantin Toma reflected on the challenges of implementing sustainability measures, saying, “This fight with the citizen is very complicated, because you have to convince them that this is the right way forward. But we believe in this path for a better future.”

Announcement of the 10 Selected Cities

Bucharest – Multi-Sector Partnership

Representatives of Bucharest's sectors applauded the collaborative nature of their application. A sector representative remarked, "For the first time in 35 years, we had a common application of mayors, regardless of political color, for an ambitious common goal: climate neutrality."

Constanța

The city's representative emphasized urban regeneration and sustainable transport. He noted, "We want to prioritize green transformation and shift transport in the municipality at the detriment of cars."



Iași

Deputy Mayor Daniel Juravle underscored the importance of collaboration, stating, "We work extremely well with everything that means the ministries of Bucharest, signing contracts worth millions for green projects like photovoltaic parks."

Oradea

Mayor Florin Birta highlighted the role of funding in the city's success, saying, "Without funding, we would not have succeeded. We were able to achieve so much because of our teams and our citizens' understanding."

Reșița

The city representative spoke about Reșița's vision for a green future, highlighting its plans for urban revitalization and innovation. "We are dedicated to implementing impactful projects that benefit both the environment and our community, showcasing Reșița as a model for sustainable growth."

Timișoara

Dan Reșițnec, head of the mayor's cabinet, celebrated the city's efforts in sustainability, stating, "This recognition represents the projects and results we've achieved in areas like heating, green transport, and urban regeneration."

Panel Discussion: The 10 Selected Cities in Dialogue – Plans and Strategies for Climate Neutrality

The panel discussion brought together the 10 selected cities to share their visions, strategies, and immediate priorities for achieving climate neutrality. Moderated by Marius Cristea, Urban Development Consultant, the conversation highlighted the diverse challenges faced by the cities and their innovative solutions. With a combined commitment to reducing 11 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions by 2035—equivalent to the annual emissions of a small European country like Estonia—the cities demonstrated both ambition and collaborative spirit. Below, we outline the main challenges identified and feature key statements from each city's representative.

10 Key Challenges Overview

Public Engagement: Encouraging citizen participation and overcoming resistance to sustainable policies.

Energy Transition: Developing energy-efficient systems and reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

Mobility and Accessibility: Balancing urban growth with the need for efficient, eco-friendly transport systems.

Urban Regeneration: Transforming degraded areas into vibrant, sustainable spaces.

Green and Blue Infrastructure: Incorporating nature into urban planning to enhance resilience and quality of life.

Centralized Heating Systems: Addressing inefficiencies and high costs in legacy systems.

Metropolitan Collaboration: Coordinating efforts across cities and regions for cohesive development.

Funding and Investment: Securing resources for large-scale, impactful projects.

Behavioral Change: Shifting societal habits towards more sustainable practices.

Administrative Barriers: Navigating procedural and legislative challenges to accelerate implementation.



Panel Discussion: The 10 Selected Cities in Dialogue – Plans and Strategies for Climate Neutrality

The panel underscored the shared determination of the selected cities to lead Romania's climate neutrality efforts, showcasing a mix of bold visions, practical solutions, and a commitment to collaboration. Each city is now preparing detailed climate action plans, laying the groundwork for transformative change in the years ahead.

Alba Iulia – Gabriel Pleșa, Mayor: "Creating an energy community is our top priority. It will address energy poverty and promote green energy, building a stronger sense of community and shared responsibility."

Bistrița – Liliana Coseriu, Representative: "We aim to focus on two pillars: thermal rehabilitation of buildings and sustainable mobility. Additionally, we will develop a green-blue infrastructure project to reconnect the city with nature."

Brașov – George Scripcaru, Mayor: "Mobility and accessibility are our immediate priorities. We need to ensure efficient transportation for our growing population while maintaining the city's natural beauty and historical value."

Bucharest – Multi-Sector Partnership Technical Coordinator: "By 2035, we envision a reconfigured city with pedestrianized streets, low-emission zones, and a green-blue corridor along the Dâmbovița River. Collaboration between the municipality and sectors has been key to this transformation."

Buzău – Constantin Toma, Mayor: "Buzău aims to become the center of the national circular economy. Our innovative irrigation project, using wastewater, exemplifies how we can turn challenges into opportunities."



Constanța – Adrian Crăciun, Representative: "We are focused on reforming the centralized heating system to eliminate subsidies and free up resources for investments in sustainable development."

Iași – Daniel Juravle, Deputy Mayor: "The creation of a functional metropolitan area is critical for our future. Integrated transport systems and collaboration with the private sector are key to this vision."

Oradea – Florin Birta, Mayor: "We aspire to be an urban sustainability model, leveraging strategic investments in heating systems, green spaces, and metropolitan collaboration to achieve climate neutrality."

Reșița – Ioan Popa, Mayor: "Our focus is on transforming abandoned industrial areas into productive spaces. We are also prioritizing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy for public services."

Timișoara – Dan Reșitnec, Representative: "Urban revitalization and geothermal energy development are our main goals. We are working towards creating interconnected green and blue infrastructure in the metropolitan area."



Panel Discussion: National Platforms for Climate Neutrality and Adaptation

This panel brought together experts and leaders from various European national platforms to discuss their roles in achieving climate neutrality and adaptation goals. Moderated by Michael Creek, the session explored how national platforms such as Viable Cities in Sweden, CitiES in Spain, and M100 in Romania act as essential connectors between local, national, and European levels. The discussion highlighted innovative strategies, political commitment, and the critical need for collaboration to scale up impactful climate action across Europe.



Takeaways

Role of National Platforms: National platforms serve as critical enablers for scaling local actions to a national and European level. They provide safe spaces for cities to collaborate, share resources, and address common challenges.

Collaboration Across Levels: Successful climate action requires a multi-level governance approach, aligning local efforts with national policies and European frameworks.

Scaling and Innovation: Programs like Viable Cities in Sweden and CitiES in Spain show how national platforms can scale solutions by integrating smaller cities and driving systemic innovations.

Capacity Building: A shared challenge across all platforms is the need to build technical and administrative capacities within cities to implement climate policies effectively.

Adaptation is Key: While mitigation remains a priority, the discussion emphasized the growing importance of adaptation to address the immediate impacts of climate change, such as floods and heatwaves.

Panel Discussion: National Platforms for Climate Neutrality and Adaptation

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Takeaways

Laura Hetel - European Commission

"National platforms are vital to bridging the gap between local ambitions and European climate goals. They align policies, share tools, and foster collaboration to make systemic changes possible."

Olga Kordas - Viable Cities, Sweden

"Our mission is not just climate neutrality but ensuring a good life for all within planetary boundaries. We need a holistic, people-centered approach that integrates climate goals with social sustainability."

Julio Lumbreras - CitiES, Spain

"National platforms create 'safe spaces' for cities to collaborate on transformative projects. By working together on challenges like retrofitting one million buildings, we gain scale and attract private sector partnerships."

Ovidiu Cîmpean - M100, Romania

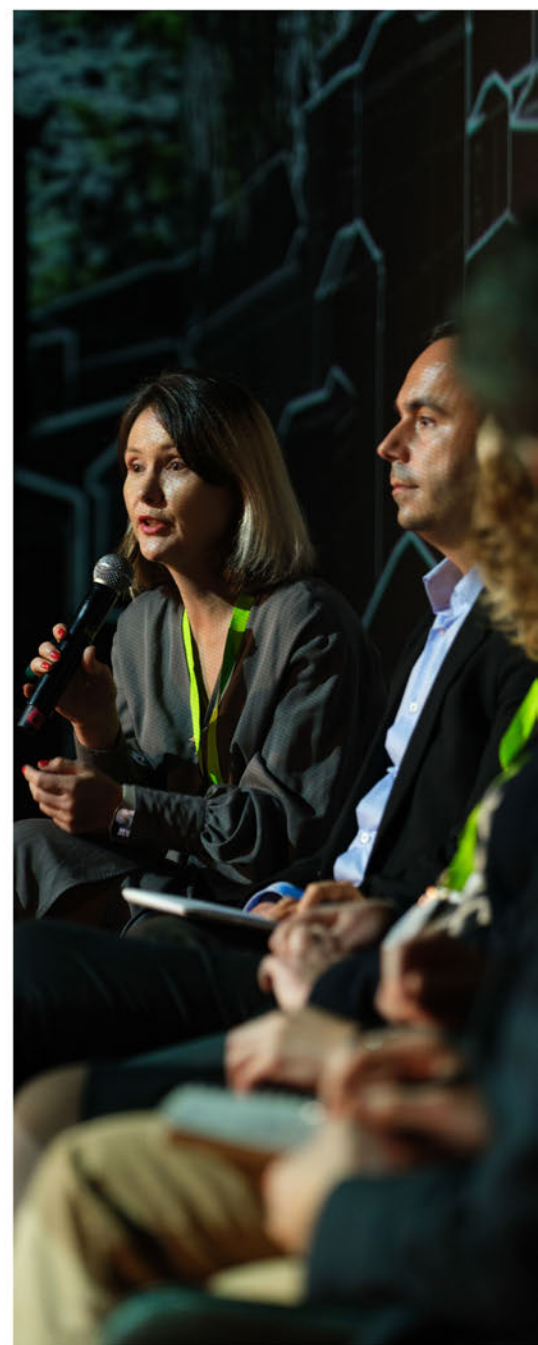
"Strong political commitment and learning from other platforms are key to our success. By 2030, we aim to secure over one billion euros in green investments for Romanian cities."

Elena Simion - CapaCITIES & M100, Romania

"CapaCITIES laid the foundation for M100. It's about building trust and networks to bring together different government levels for a common purpose."

Corina Murafoa - Adaptation to Climate Change Mission

"Europe is warming twice as fast as the global average. Adaptation is no longer optional—it's a necessity to ensure resilience in the face of floods, heatwaves, and economic losses."



Thomas Osdoba NetZeroCities & Georgia Cameron Dark Matter Labs

Keynote Speech: Transforming Cities with Policy Innovation and Systemic Change

This keynote by Thomas Osdoba from NetZeroCities and Georgia Cameron from Dark Matter Labs offered an in-depth look at how systemic approaches and innovative policies can empower cities to address climate challenges effectively. Through examples from cities like Stockholm and Vancouver, the discussion emphasized the importance of aligning policy, capital, and community engagement to drive climate neutrality. The session highlighted the need for a shift from business-as-usual practices to transformative processes, focusing on district-scale models and collaborative policymaking.



Takeaways

Systemic Thinking is Crucial: Achieving climate neutrality requires cities to adopt systemic approaches, connecting economic, environmental, and social objectives. Policies must address interdependent issues such as health, social cohesion, and economic security alongside carbon reduction.

District-Scale Innovation: Cities can use district-scale projects as laboratories for innovation, allowing them to test new governance models, technologies, and policies before scaling successful strategies citywide.

Capital Investment Planning: Climate City Contracts require cities to create capital investment plans that bridge policy commitments with actionable pathways, using innovative financing mechanisms and co-benefit analyses.

Regulatory and Policy Evolution: Cities need flexible policy innovation spaces, such as regulatory sandboxes, to experiment with and refine policies that disrupt the status quo and enable climate action.

Leveraging Co-Benefits: Effective policy and planning should highlight the co-benefits of climate action, such as improved air quality, healthcare savings, and community resilience, making the economic case for ambitious interventions clear.

Panel Discussion: Global Finance and International Stakeholders

The panel on Global Finance and International Stakeholders explored the critical role of financing mechanisms in supporting cities' transitions to climate neutrality. Featuring representatives from major institutions, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Financial Mechanism Office (EEA and Norway Grants), the World Bank, and the Swiss Contribution Office, the discussion emphasized the need for strategic alignment of funding, capacity building, and streamlined processes to overcome administrative burdens. The panel also highlighted the importance of multi-level collaboration to maximize the impact of available resources.



Takeaways

Streamlining Administrative Processes: Cities face significant challenges in navigating diverse funding mechanisms, underscoring the need for better coordination and reduced bureaucratic complexity to enable effective project execution.

Capacity Building for Municipalities: Strengthening local governments' technical and strategic capacities is essential to ensure they can access, manage, and utilize available funds effectively, fostering sustainable development.

Collaboration Across Levels: Multi-level collaboration, involving local, national, and international stakeholders, is vital for aligning funding priorities and maximizing the impact of financial resources on urban climate initiatives.

Panel Discussion: Global Finance and International Stakeholders



Key Messages

Venera Vlad (EBRD): The EBRD Green Cities Program is instrumental in helping cities identify environmental challenges and implement tailored Green City Action Plans, combining investments in infrastructure and stakeholder engagement to accelerate climate neutrality.

Ștefan Acsinte (EIB): The EIB offers not just attractive financing conditions but also advisory services and tailored solutions to support cities in advancing their climate goals, focusing on energy efficiency, circular economy, and integrated urban projects.

Borgar Thor Einarsson (EEA and Norway Grants): Aligning funding sources to reduce the administrative burden on cities is critical, as fragmented financing approaches can hinder project implementation and sustainability.

Marcel Ionescu-Heroiu (World Bank): The M100 initiative stands out as one of the most successful public projects in Romania post-1989, setting a benchmark for urban innovation and alignment with global climate priorities.

Giacomo Solari (Swiss Contribution Office): Building municipal capacity for energy efficiency and climate action is key, with Switzerland contributing expertise in multi-stakeholder collaboration and long-term planning through tools like the European Energy Award.

Participatory Urban Innovation: Citizen-Led Ideas for Future Cities

The Participatory Urban Innovation session showcased the creative solutions developed by the winners of the UrbanLab for Green Cities innovation competition. These projects, presented during the M100 Climate Neutrality Caravan, exemplify citizen-led innovation aimed at transforming urban environments into greener, more sustainable spaces. Each project reflects a unique approach to addressing critical challenges such as urban heat islands, industrial heritage, green space management, and sustainable mobility.

JUNGLE BITS

Jungle Bits proposes implementing intelligent green facades to combat urban heat islands and reduce carbon emissions from buildings. This cost-effective, scalable solution involves installing indirect green facade systems on large industrial and commercial buildings. The project also integrates monitoring sensors to collect data on environmental benefits, creating a replicable model for other cities to address overheating and improve air quality.



ECOFRIENDS

This project aims to rehabilitate the Bahlui River in Iași, turning it into a vibrant green corridor. The solution includes enhancing the blue-green infrastructure, installing green roofs on riverbanks to combat noise pollution, and using innovative filtration modules to clean the water. Additionally, the project emphasizes community engagement through urban furniture design and connecting neighborhoods with permeable walkways, fostering a sustainable and inclusive urban environment.



REZONE

ReZone focuses on revitalizing a former heavy machinery factory in Iași, transforming it into a hub for cultural and social activities while preserving its industrial heritage. The project proposes leveraging the site's proximity to green spaces and train tracks to create a sustainable ecosystem that includes food markets, exhibition spaces, and local shops. By engaging artists and the local community, the initiative seeks to bring life to an underutilized space and set an example for similar projects nationwide.

Participatory Urban Innovation: Citizen-Led Ideas for Future Cities

CopACT

CopACT introduces an app for real-time monitoring and management of urban green spaces. The platform allows citizens and authorities to access a comprehensive map of green spaces, contribute data, and monitor tree health. Features include tree passports, citizen reporting, and educational resources. By fostering citizen engagement and providing actionable insights for local authorities, the app promotes cleaner, safer, and more biodiverse cities.



DEFENSIVE PEDAL

Defensive Pedal is an AI-powered app designed to enhance cycling safety in urban areas. Similar to Waze but for bicycles, the app prioritizes safety over speed when mapping routes, helping cyclists avoid high-risk areas. With a focus on attracting hesitant cyclists, the project has the potential to significantly reduce car dependency, lower urban pollution, and promote sustainable mobility on a global scale.



Collaborative Ecosystems for Climate-Neutral Cities

This session focused on fostering collaboration between diverse stakeholders—NGOs, universities, private sector, professional associations, and public institutions—to build a unified ecosystem for achieving climate neutrality in cities. Hosted by Ovidiu Cîmpean, the discussion emphasized scaling the M100 platform's impact through partnerships, citizen engagement, and innovative funding mechanisms.



Takeaways

Inclusivity in the M100 Coalition

The panelists underscored the need for an inclusive approach, inviting contributions from all sectors, including the private sector, academia, NGOs, and local citizens, to drive climate neutrality efforts.

Creating a National Coalition for Climate Neutrality

Plans were announced for launching a national coalition and a private fund for climate neutrality projects, aiming to finance innovative soft projects alongside infrastructural development.

Capacity Building for Sustainable Change

Panelists highlighted the critical need for capacity building among public authorities, NGOs, and professional organizations to ensure effective project implementation and long-term sustainability.

Youth and Community Engagement

The next generation's active participation was identified as a cornerstone for achieving climate neutrality, emphasizing education and citizen-driven solutions.

Soft Projects and Behavioral Change

Beyond infrastructural investments, soft projects focusing on education, mindset shifts, and community-driven initiatives were deemed vital for achieving the broader goals of climate neutrality.

Collaborative Ecosystems for Climate-Neutral Cities

M100 Call to Action

Join the M100 coalition for climate-neutral cities by visiting the platform's website and registering as a partner. Whether you represent an NGO, university, private company, or are an individual citizen, your involvement can shape sustainable futures. Push the "Be Involved" button and contribute your expertise, ideas, and energy to this transformative initiative. Together, we can empower sustainable cities and create meaningful change.



Takeaways

Mădălina Marcu (Association for Community Relationships – ARC)

Building trust and planning for measurable change, not just activities, is essential for NGOs to contribute effectively to climate neutrality efforts.

Grațian Mihăilescu (UrbanizeHUB)

Youth engagement and collaboration between NGOs and municipalities are critical to fostering innovation and achieving climate neutrality goals.

Ștefan Bâlici (The Romanian Order of Architects)

Professional expertise must be integrated into public and private collaborations to ensure high-quality, sustainable urban designs and investments.

Marius Cristea (Urban Development Consultant)

Private sector involvement is crucial, with ESG funding providing an opportunity for businesses to align their sustainability efforts with national climate goals.

Adrian Curaj (UEFISCDI)

The M100 initiative exemplifies the power of collective action, emphasizing the need for no stakeholder or resource to be left behind in the climate neutrality mission.

M100 Climate Neutrality Forum – Key Messages

The M100 Climate Neutrality Forum served as a dynamic convergence of ideas, expertise, and actionable strategies, bringing together stakeholders from various sectors to accelerate the journey toward climate-neutral cities. Across panels, keynotes, and discussions, participants explored innovative solutions, critical challenges, and collaborative opportunities. These key takeaways distill the essence of the forum, highlighting the most impactful insights and actionable lessons that emerged, providing a roadmap for future efforts in urban sustainability and climate action.



Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration is Crucial

Climate neutrality requires the active involvement of all stakeholders—municipalities, NGOs, universities, private sector, and citizens. The M100 platform demonstrated how diverse groups can align toward shared goals through structured collaboration.

National and Local Synergies Drive Impact

Success stories from cities and national platforms showed that aligning local efforts with national and European strategies maximizes resources and accelerates progress.

Youth and Citizen Engagement are Vital

The involvement of young people and grassroots communities emerged as a key driver for sustainable and innovative solutions, emphasizing the need for education, soft projects, and public participation.

Climate Neutrality Requires Systems Thinking

Panelists emphasized the need to tackle systemic issues such as energy transitions, urban heat islands, and green infrastructure through integrated, data-driven approaches.

Private Sector Funding Can Unlock New Potential

The announcement of a private fund for climate neutrality highlighted the opportunity to leverage ESG-focused investments to complement public funding for soft and hard projects.

Capacity Building is a Long-Term Investment

Both public authorities and professional organizations need enhanced capabilities and training to plan, implement, and monitor effective climate initiatives.

Innovation Through Technology and Design

Ideas like green facades, smart urban apps, and AI-driven cycling safety tools showcased how technology can provide scalable, replicable solutions for urban sustainability.

Soft Projects are as Important as Infrastructure

Behavioral shifts, educational campaigns, and public awareness programs are essential for embedding sustainability into everyday life and fostering community buy-in for large-scale projects.

Inclusivity is a Core Principle

The forum reinforced the commitment to “no city left behind” and “no stakeholder left behind,” aiming to extend the benefits of M100 to all municipalities, not just the selected cities.

A Call for Global Leadership from Romania

The M100 initiative is poised to become a model for other nations, positioning Romania as a leader in climate neutrality through its innovative approaches and collaborative framework.

Conclusion

The M100 Climate Neutrality Forum showcased the power of collaboration, innovation, and multi-stakeholder engagement in advancing climate neutrality in cities. It underscored the importance of harmonizing funding mechanisms, empowering local communities, leveraging private sector contributions, and embedding sustainability into urban planning and governance. The discussions illuminated that while the challenges are significant, the collective will and shared vision of stakeholders from diverse sectors can drive impactful change. The forum leaves us with a sense of optimism and urgency, reminding us that achieving climate neutrality is not just an ambition but an imperative for future generations.

Thoughts for the Future

Strengthen Multi-Level Governance: Develop stronger synergies between local, national, and European levels of governance to ensure consistent policy alignment and effective implementation of climate initiatives.

Empower Local Leadership: Equip cities with the tools, resources, and autonomy needed to innovate and lead climate action, fostering a culture of localized problem-solving and ownership.

Expand Capacity Building: Focus on building institutional, professional, and community capacity through targeted training, knowledge-sharing platforms, and technical assistance programs.

Integrate Soft and Hard Investments: Balance infrastructure projects with soft investments, such as education, community engagement, and behavioral change initiatives, to create holistic and sustainable transformation.

Leverage Private Sector Potential: Encourage private companies to contribute to climate neutrality efforts through strategic partnerships, funding mechanisms, and incentive-based collaborations.

Prioritize Citizen Engagement: Foster deeper connections with communities by involving citizens in decision-making processes, promoting participatory urban planning, and co-creating solutions.

Promote Innovation through Testing Spaces: Establish policy innovation labs and regulatory sandboxes to pilot and refine innovative solutions in real-world contexts.

Strengthen Cross-Border Collaboration: Build on international partnerships and peer-learning opportunities to replicate best practices and scale successful models across regions.

Embed Circular Economy Principles: Promote circular economy practices in urban development, focusing on waste reduction, resource efficiency, and sustainable consumption.

Monitor and Evaluate Impact: Create robust systems to track progress, measure the effectiveness of initiatives, and ensure accountability, using data-driven insights to inform future strategies.

Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway grants



Norway grants

M100

Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania



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Organizer: *uefiscdi*

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