

OVERVIEW OF SPEAKERS & WORKSHOP INFOS

Input-Session: Best Practices from across Europe Berlin Urban Nature Pact

Berlin Urban Nature Pact

SPEAKER: Rebecca Noebel, Senate Department for Mobility, Transport, Climate Protection and the Environment Berlin

Rebecca Noebel works at the Senate Administration for Mobility, Transport, Climate and Environment on the implementation of the Berlin Strategy for Biodiversity as well as of the Berlin Urban Nature Pact. In this context she is in contact with many actors in the city to drive a eco- and climate-friendly future. By training, she is a geo-ecologist with prior experiences in science and policy work at national institutions, university and an environmental policy think tank.

Designing Cities for All

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Designing Cities for All (DCFA) was a research and presentation programme, approach, and manifesto for the multitude of ways in which our local, national, and global communities can live better through design. Over four years (2021-2024), we have explored inclusivity and design from different perspectives and how they can stand meaningfully together to shape better cities. After the first two years of the DCFA programme, we rebooted in 2023 with the new subtheme of Regeneration. As part of these project we have published three Essay Books.

SPEAKER: Faezeh Mohammadi, Programme Lead, Pakhuis de Zwijger

Faezeh is an urbanist with a background in urban innovation, program coordination, and currently busy exploring and making programs on inclusive tech/AI. She works at the intersection of urban planning, social justice, and tech that benefit everyone, with a passion for creating inclusive and sustainable cities through transformative approaches. In her current role at Pakhuis de Zwijger she curates impactful programs and moderate discussions. She has contributed to numerous EU projects, collaborating with interdisciplinary teams across Europe and coordinating cross-border initiatives.

Best Practices from Piraeus | Climate Action & Urban Innovation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The presentation will focus on the main climate issues that the Municipality of Piraeus is working to address through its participation in various EU projects, such as air pollution, hot island effect, energy poverty and others. The focus will be on HORIZON, LIFE, and URBACT.

SPEAKER: Electra Nisidou, EU Programmes Consultant of the Municipality of Piraeus

Electra Nisidou is currently serving as a European Programmes Advisor at the Municipality of Piraeus, Greece. With a background in EU affairs, she focuses on the design, coordination, and implementation of European-funded projects that support sustainable urban development, social innovation, and environmental transition. She actively represents the Municipality of Piraeus in international partnerships and EU initiatives, contributing to its strategic positioning within European networks.

WORKSHOP INFOS

Workshop 1 | Future visions: What will sustainable cities look like in 2050?

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

In this workshop, we will explore four distinct future scenarios for tourism, each shaped by a different driving force: escalating geopolitical tensions, the pursuit of harmony in cities under stress, the rise of green growth, and a world where technology takes over. Each scenario presents its own set of challenges, opportunities, and realities. Participants will be invited to reflect on which scenario they find most desirable and why—and to consider which policies they would recommend in response to the specific dynamics of that future.

SPEAKER: Thijs Koster, Policy Advisor Visitors Economy, City of Amsterdam

Thijs Koster is a Policy Advisor on the visitor economy for the City of Amsterdam. There he navigates a complex landscape of residents, visitors, businesses, and government. His role involves balancing diverse interests where each decision can significantly impact multiple stakeholders. He is also the co-founder of *My Treats*, a platform that helps conscious consumers discover sustainable restaurants that match their dietary and environmental values. In addition, he serves on the Board of Advisors for *Room for Change*, an initiative focused on the socio-economic reintegration of the economic homeless. Through a six-month hotel-based program in collaboration with social partners, the initiative supports individuals in rebuilding their social and financial stability.

Workshop 2 | Climate adaptation in municipalities: Experiences and challenges

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION:

Climate mitigation and adaptation are cross-cutting issues for cities and administrations, requiring strong collaboration across sectors, departments, and various partners. Additionally, access to and

integration of reliable climate data remain key challenges for planning, prioritizing actions, and monitoring results. In this session, we will explore how to better use existing data, close data gaps, and foster multi-stakeholder collaboration through concrete examples from Berlin's inner-city district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg.

SPEAKER: Leonie Laug; Zoe Hoffmann; Birte Dohlen, Klimateam Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg

Leonie Laug the climate adaptation manager, along with Zoe Hoffmann und Birte Dohlen, who are both climate mitigation managers, form the climate team at the department of climate and international affairs in Berlin Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. They bring diverse expertise from urban planning, social sciences, environmental management, and natural sciences. While collaborating, they develop strategies and measures to systematically advance climate mitigation and adaptation in a densely populated inner-city district. Their work spans strategic data management, cross- departmental coordination, and the implementation of specific projects in mobility, energy, green and blue infrastructure, and circular economy.

Workshop 3 | Empowering Territories Together: Fostering Energy Communities through Culture, Policy, and Public Trust

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION:

The workshop will explore how energy communities can drive the energy transition in local contexts (both urban and rural). Through a multidisciplinary approach, the workshop identifies three main challenges that territories must face to boost the creation or development of Energy Communities:

- Cultural challenge related to citizen engagement, the need to train administrative staff, and the broader issue of capacity building.
- Legal and regulatory challenge related to the complexity of the legal and regulatory framework.
- Communication challenge, particularly regarding the need to clearly show the benefits led by Energy Communities and to overcome information gaps among citizens and stakeholders.

Key questions: How can we promote shared energy cultures and empower local identities in the energy transition? What skills and knowledge are needed to support the growth of new Energy Communities? How can we improve public information, transparency in energy community development for citizens and stakeholder?

SPEAKER: Chiara Tisat, EU Office Bergamo; Lucio Brignoli, President Fondazione SINERGIA; Marco Donadoni, CEO HServizi SPA

Chiara Tisat coordinates the Province of Bergamo's EU Office. She manages the design, implementation and reporting of EU-funded and territorial projects. She serves as Project Manager for multiple initiatives, overseeing technical and administrative processes, partnership management and project monitoring.

Lucio Brignoli is an expert in local public services, sustainability governance, and territorial energy planning. He serves as President of Fondazione SINERGIA, promoting renewable energy communities and social inclusion.

Marco Donadoni holds a degree in philosophy and is an expert in environmental and energy issues. For over twelve years, he has served as President and CEO of HServizi S.p.A., a public company that founded the Sinergia Foundation last year. In addition to his executive role, he is actively involved in scientific, historical, and philosophical dissemination and public outreach.

Workshop 4 | Sustainable Territorial Innovation: Experiences from the Municipality of Fundão, Portugal

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION:

The session will present Fundão's long-term approach to innovation-lead territorial development, highlighting key milestones, enablers and lessons learned from over a decade of action. The discussion will focus on the following questions:

- How can small and medium- sized municipalities position themselves as innovation territories?
- What conditions are necessary to drive sustainable transformation in rural and low-destiny areas?

SPEAKER: Mariana Salvado, Municipality of Fundão

Mariana Salvado is a Project Manager at the Municipality of Fundão (Portugal), working at the intersection of innovation, sustainability, and territorial development. With a background in Management, she has experience in policy design, securing funding and developing proposals, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. She coordinates a diverse portfolio of over 20 EU-funded innovation projects, particularly under Horizon Europe, across areas such as green transition, digitalisation, creative industries, mobility, and smart cities. Mariana also oversees the strategic management of international partnerships and networks (e.g. OASC, ENoLL), supporting high-level engagement and promoting inclusive, locally rooted approaches to innovation in rural territories.

Deep Dive Sessions

Session 1 | Financing sustainable urban projects at the European level

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

Session will present: The financing of investment projects in cities is facing (new) challenges. Municipalities often lack not only money and personnel, but the regulatory framework for borrowing is also changing. The workshop therefore explores the specific challenges municipalities are facing and which instruments are available to enable them to make sustainable investments as effectively and impact-oriented as possible. Among other things, the concept of the "sustainability budget" will be presented.

SPEAKER: Dr. Henrik Scheller; Marie Munzert, German Institute of Urban Affairs

Marie Munzert (M.Sc.) is a research associate at the German Institute of Urban Affairs in the research area of Infrastructure, Economy, Finance, and Sustainability Indicators. Since June 2024, her work has focused on municipal sustainability management, sustainable finance, the circular economy, and the participatory development of digital solutions for municipalities. She specialises in qualitative empirical research and agile development methods. Marie has conducted international qualitative research projects on water governance in Costa Rica and, as a Carlo-Schmid Fellow at Cities Alliance, explored the impacts of urban heat in the MENA region. In this role, she worked at the intersection of climate and gender issues, with a particular emphasis on inclusive climate adaptation in cities—for example, through heritage-based climate solutions.

Dr. Henrik Scheller has been head of the team "Economy, Finance and Sustainability Indicators" since 2015 and deputy head of the research division "Infrastructure, Economy and Finance" at the German Institute of Urban Affairs (Difu). He studied political science and earned his doctorate in 2004 at the Free University of Berlin with a dissertation on the reform of the federal-state fiscal equalization system. At Difu, he is responsible for a wide range of interdisciplinary projects related to municipal finance and budgeting – mostly in connection with issues of public investment and infrastructure planning.

Session 2 | Your City, Your Space: How to use top-down approaches to endorse bottom-up participation in urban planning

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

The workshop will introduce Your City, Your Space, a two-year project supported by a grant from the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research. The project takes the form of a travelling participatory game that explores playful and innovative approaches to engaging citizens in public space and encouraging their involvement in urban planning processes. During the workshop, participants will learn more about the project's objectives and outcomes, reflect on ways to foster civic participation within institutional frameworks, and try out selected interactive methods for participatory data collection.

SPEAKER: Aneta Soukopová; Eva Němečková; Andrea Midlochová, Prague Institute of Planning and Development

Mgr. Aneta Soukopová works as a sociologist and social anthropologist in the Participation Office team, where she focuses on research methodology. She is also a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. Her research explores the role of civic participation in urban planning processes, using the redevelopment of the Bubny-Zátory area as a case study. She primarily examines the structure of actors involved, employing both qualitative and quantitative network analysis.

Eva Němečková MSc. is a long-term collaborator of the Participation Office at IPR Prague, focusing on civic tech and public sector innovation. She holds a master's degree in interdisciplinary urban studies from VUB and ULB in Brussels, where her research explored nighttime economies and the long-term impacts of temporary use projects.

Mgr. Andrea Midlochová has been working as a participation specialist at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development. She also has a long-standing background in education and currently teaches geography part-time at a secondary school. Her professional focus includes designing participatory processes for large-scale development projects across Prague. However, her greatest passion lies in

education and exploring innovative methods to foster civic participation and engagement across all age groups.

Session 3 | The value of a Regenerative Approach to Tourism for European cities

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

After a short introduction into the impact of urban tourism in European cities and the positive opportunities of regenerative placemaking, we look for small pockets of change we already witness. Is tourism potentially an activator of livable cities? Imagine what a future city might look like: what principles and values would tourism play in it? Can you identify real-world examples where parts of this future system are already in place today?

SPEAKER: Esther Bouw, ULT-Lab (Urban Leisure and Tourism Lab) Amsterdam

Esther Bouw is a dedicated learning coach and researcher at the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab in Amsterdam-Noord, affiliated with Hogeschool Inholland. With a background in Television and Leisure & Events Management, she specializes in visual storytelling, design thinking and placemaking. Esther is recognized for her innovative approach to higher education, guiding students and professionals in co-creating vibrant, inclusive, and future-proof urban environments. Esther has played a key role in developing the "Place Exploration & Sense Making" tool, used across Europe to better understand and activate urban spaces for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. Passionate about collaboration, Esther brings together diverse stakeholders—from local communities to policymakers—to shape cities that are not just sustainable but aims for regeneration and socially cohesive.

Session 4 | Talking Climate, Building Change: Strategies Against Misinformation and Inaction

SPEAKER: Martin Baumgarten, klimafakten

Martin Baumgarten is born Berliner, geographer by training (M.Sc.), and a trainer in the Klimafakten communications network. His passion is using communication to bring the problems and solutions of our current climate crisis closer to other people and to meet them where they are right now. His various workshops, such as Climate Fresk, 2tonnes, and other topic-related workshop formats, focus on knowledge, empathy, and how we can take action together. At the Berlin City Link Conference, he will be speaking about disinformation and discourses of climate delay in relation to cities. Feel free to come along and let's discuss this together.
