

Intelligent Cities Challenge

COVID-19 webinar

Post-Pandemic Recovery Plans in Cities: Turning the Crisis into an Opportunity –
Rethinking Growth

14th May 2020

Summary Report

Intelligent Cities Challenge – COVID-19 Webinar

Summary report of COVID-19 Webinar, 15th April 2020

1. Agenda

ICC COVID-19 Webinar – “Post-Pandemic Recovery Plans in Cities: Turning the Crisis into an Opportunity - Rethinking Growth”

Time	Item	Speaker
11:00-11:15	Overview of the Commission response	Ulla Engelmann , Head of Unit for Social Economy, European Commission, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
11:15-12:25	<p>Role of cities in shaping the post-pandemic world with a focus on people, localising supply chains, mobility, technologies, digital platforms and data commons</p> <p>Latest developments on sustainable urban food systems</p> <p>Use of smart technologies in Singapore to keep its densely populated city liveable, sustainable, healthy and agile to respond to disruptions</p> <p>Milan's recovery plan</p> <p>Q&As</p>	<p>Damiano Cerrone, Consultant on Urban Transformation, DemosHelsinki</p> <p>Prof. Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Co-chair on International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems</p> <p>Dr. Limin Hee, Director of the Singapore Centre for Liveable Cities</p> <p>Piero Pelizzaro, Chief Resilience Officer of Milan</p>
12:25-12:30	Closing remarks	Dana Eleftheriadou , Head of Advanced Technologies Team, European Commission, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

2. Summary of presentations

Introduction

Dana Eleftheriadou (European Commission, DG GROW)

Dana Eleftheriadou presented the Intelligent Cities Challenge (ICC) and the objectives of the webinar, namely, to:

- Provide an overview of the European Commission response to the COVID-19 crisis so far;
- Explore effective city plans and the role of cities in localising food and supply chains, sustainable urban food systems, local green and digital recovery plans, the use of technologies, digital platforms and data commons, as enablers of de-containment, but also resilience and new growth.

The webinar is part of a webinar series organised by the Intelligent Cities Challenge to help cities navigate the current crisis and implement appropriate responses as well as to exchange best practices, with a focus on short-, medium- and long-term responses, including post-COVID-19 recovery measures.

It was mentioned that the ICC's expression of interest for new EU cities to take part is open until the 29th of May.

Overview of the Commission response

Ulla Engelmann (European Commission, DG GROW)

Ulla Engelmann provided an overview of the European Commission responses to the COVID-19 crisis. Resolute action is taken to reinforce public health sectors and mitigate the socio-economic impact throughout the European Union. For more information please refer to this link:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en.

Examples of initiatives include research on vaccines, the application of the full [flexibility of the EU fiscal rules](#), the revision of its [State Aid rules](#) and the work done on European standards for medical supplies, which are made freely available to facilitate production activities at the European-level.

On the 2nd of April, the European Commission [launched](#) a new initiative designed to protect jobs and workers affected by the COVID-19 outbreak - the temporary [Support mitigating Unemployment Risks in Emergency \(SURE\) initiative](#). The SURE initiative will provide financial assistance of up to €100 billion in total to EU Member States in the form of loans granted on favourable terms. For more information please refer to:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_582

On 4 May, the European Commission launched a [Coronavirus Global Response](#) through a pledging event and raised €7.4 billion worldwide to ensure the collaborative development and universal deployment of diagnostics, treatments and vaccines against coronavirus.

On 13 May, the Commission took action specifically addressing the tourism sector. The importance of this sector relates not only to its economic significance (contributing to 10% of the EU's GDP), but also to the large number of people employed in this sector. The Commission presented [a set of guidelines and recommendations for tourists, travellers and businesses](#). The package includes an [overall strategy](#), a [common approach to restore free movement](#), a framework to [support transportation](#), a recommendation on [travel vouchers](#), and [criteria for restoring tourism](#). The flexible approach which [allows tourism to continue](#) is based on: epidemiological criteria, the application of containment measures, and economic and social distancing considerations.

A [European Roadmap to lifting coronavirus containment measures](#) was also recently adopted.

The European Commission has also published [European solidarity in action](#), which offers a snapshot of the range of solidarity actions undertaken by EU Member States.

We are now approaching a new phase, which is the recovery phase: there is a need to push for funding and investments and to strengthen the economy. For this purpose, the EU's multiannual financial framework will be used, which is currently being reviewed and revised in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

Lastly, the European Commission's recovery package will be published in the upcoming weeks.

The 7th Transformation – Navigating and shaping the post-COVID world

Damiano Cerrone, consultant on urban transformation from the DemosHelsinki think tank

Damiano Cerrone discussed the role of cities in shaping the post-pandemic world, focusing on people, localizing supply chains, mobility, technology, digital platforms and data commons. He presented a history of series of urban transformations, concluding we are currently in the 7th.

The actions of citizens are reactions to external events. To build a thriving system there is a need for a cognitive decision and a long-term plan to build on. An important distinction should be made between resilience and adaptation: while resilience is considered as restoring the situation to a

previous stage (therefore bouncing back to the past), adaptation resonates to a system of crucial actions or plans against a current or unprecedented event.

Cities are now facing a new transformation, which require a rethink of cities by clearly restructuring space, human activities and values. Such a transformation is achieved through the following means:

- Adaptation: ensuring social distancing by opening bike lanes and widening side-walks;
- Experimentation: deploying new, temporary uses and activities (Tactical Urbanism);
- Retention: cities adopting grassroot and bottom-up activities, optimizing from the human perspective rather than the system perspective.
- Vision: providing a new vision for the city, which should be shared and brought up together.

Numerous concrete examples were presented by cities all over the world, on how cities co-design a better future and new green deals putting people in the centre.

It is also crucial to understand how cities, private companies and citizens can work together. Cities play an important role for the implementation of the SDGs. The private sector is valuable for investors but also for developing new sustainable markets. People play a crucial role in shaping cities.

Global hunger – Urban food policies

Prof. Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Co-chair on International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems

Prof. Oliver De Shutter presented the latest developments on sustainable urban food systems, where the COVID-19 crisis has introduced the need to rethink urban food systems. For many countries, the entry point for rethinking food policies has been different in the past.

- A relevant example is the city of **Bristol** (United Kingdom) that developed its Good Food Plan, initially to tackle the issue of food poverty. The idea behind the plan was to develop a local food supply chain based on a comprehensive food system planning process and with a focus on sustainability.
- Another example is the city of **Malmo** (Sweden) which, in 2010, decided to contribute to reducing GHG emissions. This was achieved by reducing meat in meals served in public collectivities and by replacing it with plant-based food.
- In 2010, the city of **Toronto** introduced its Food Strategy providing recommendations to citizens on healthy eating and on the resilience of the food system; Toronto started several initiatives to promote local food production, such as the introduction of local mobile food markets and provided incentives for grocery stores to provide fresh food.
- Lastly, the city of **Milan** introduced the Urban Food Policy Pact, establishing local food systems at the city level: the plan adopted multiple commitments and more than 200 cities joined.

There are a series of influential tools to build resilient, diverse, sustainable food systems. One is the use of Public Procurement (e.g. for meals in schools, public institutions, etc.) in order to support local producers and to strengthen the links between cities and local farmers.

Nevertheless, many cities have pointed out that the available regulatory frameworks are not sufficiently promoting these endeavours.

Other tools include teaching cooking skills in schools, collective cooking and food sharing. Another mechanism to increase the connection between people and local farmers is the development of short food supply chains, such as Community Supported Agriculture. When it comes to reducing food waste, several apps have been developed, including the Too Good To Go app.

The role of cities in this context is crucial. 60% of the SDG targets can be implemented at the local level, with food playing a significant role. There are several benefits associated with urban food policy, including health and well-being, the support for the local economy reducing food poverty, and environmental benefits that comes with it. In addition to these, during the COVID-19 crisis, a key benefit is resilience, which implies diversity, consuming more of what is produced locally, and depending less on global supply chains.

There are four challenges in moving towards urban food policies where cities need to:

- adopt a credible action plan, with ambitious but achievable targets and indicators to measure progress;
- ensure a multi-year deployment of strategies;
- ensure effective implication by the population;
- build on citizens-led social innovation.

It was highlighted that a plan for urban food policy can benefit from the involvement of city dwellers in its development, as well as entrepreneurs and the whole local ecosystem.

Technology and the Liveable, Sustainable, Healthy City: Sharing ideas from Singapore

Dr Limin Hee, Director of the Singapore Centre for Liveable Cities

Dr Limin Hee introduced the role of smart technologies to help Singapore keep its densely populated city liveable, sustainable, healthy and agile to respond to disruptions.

Singapore is a unique case when it comes to how challenges are faced taken into account that it is a very densely populated island city. It was highlighted that it necessitates good planning and governance for a smart city to function. Singapore follows a Liveability Framework to balance the outcomes for a sustainable environment, a competitive economy and a high quality of life. The Liveability Ranking positions Singapore as a highly liveable city in this context.

Dr Limin Hee presented some concrete examples of how technology and innovative solutions are applied in Singapore:

- **Planning in a data informed way:** examples include ePlanner and the Geospatial Urban planning Portal as well as flood monitoring tools, such as water level sensors and the delivery of timely updates to the public;
- **Planning for public housing towns with sustainability in mind:** an example is the [Smart HDB Town Framework](#);
- **Designing and creating smarter towns:** examples are the use of energy and water consumption monitoring for smarter living in intelligent homes;

- **Smart urban mobility:** examples include the use of electronic road pricing to discourage drivers from going into the city during high congestion periods. A new version of this systems is under development and will be based on distance travelled through real time information.

Cities are only smart and can recover well when technologies meet the citizens' needs. Therefore, there is a need to facilitate a network of **public-private-people partnerships during the COVID-19 crisis**. Examples of **relevant apps** that have been developed in the city include:

- TraceTogether: a community driven contact tracing app;
- OneService app: for citizens to report any non-compliance of the COVID safety measures;
- SpaceOut app: to determine if malls are too crowded;
- Safe distance @parks: to determine if parks are too crowded.

Dr Limin Hee concluded her presentation with a number of considerations required for adaptation to disruptions, namely long-term planning, integrated planning and development, a whole-of-government approach, building sound institutions, working with industry, and involving the community.

Milano 2020 Adaptation Plan

Piero Pelizzaro, Chief Resilience Officer of Milan

Piero Pelizzaro outlined the post-Covid recovery plan of the city of Milan, namely the strategy "Phase 2", which will not only require a radical change in citizens' lifestyles, but also at the level of the city organisation. Given that the development of a recovery plan in this context is something new, it was decided to emphasise public participation for its development.

A number of essential conditions and needs were identified for the recovery: mapping, territory, lockdown, screening, sanitization and immunity. The plan requires taking into account the different population targets (e.g. people with or without pathologies, old or young, active or inactive, etc).

While "Phase 2" is needed to bring the city back to normality, it poses the question of whether the intention is to go back to where the city was prior the crisis or if it instead is feasible to take a leap forward to improve the city and the quality of life (i.e. provide new "benefit" for citizens). The intention of the Adaptation Plan is to go in the direction of a new way that necessitates new sharing processes.

The mission is to support the productive system of the city, to protect the people most in need, to reduce bureaucracy, maintain smart working, re-organise city timetables and to re-discover the neighbourhood dimension.

In summary, the recovery is structured in five main areas:

1. **Governance rights and inclusion:** to grant the participation of all of those that are part of the fabric of society through digital tools.
2. **Economy, resources and values:** to support companies engaged in the digitalisation of services, production and distribution, to restart the building sector, support social innovation and economic collaboration.



3. **Labour:** to start a job market reintroduction plan, strengthen smart working, and facilitated the adoption of extraordinary security measures.
4. **Sustainability:** to set the direction of the recovery towards pursuing goals connected to the environmental transition
5. **Timing, spaces and services:** to rethink the rhythm of the city and adapt infrastructures.