

PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT 14 June 2019

Digital Solutions in Cities will be Explored by the Finland's Presidency of the Council of the EU

What kind of innovations based on the opportunities of digitalization can increase the quality of life and sustainable development in cities, while accelerating economic growth? This is a key question that the Finnish Presidency wants to find answers to under the second half of 2019. Cities encompass a broad range of future-looking opportunities, which may boost sustainable development, urban mobility, circular economy and energy-smart living as some examples.

The Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU) promotes these themes, all in all 14 themes related to sustainable urban development, and brings together cities, Member States and the European Commission to a collaboration. Finnish Presidency will support a successful implementation of the Urban Agenda. In the spirit of the Urban Agenda, Presidency will work in partnership between the three levels, engaging European cities and European institutions to build shared ideas on digital innovation, as well as linking different themes of the Agenda to each other.

Many activities driven by digitalization have been carried out through different vehicles, such as European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities, Horizon 2020, the Green Digital Charter and the Digital Cities Challenge. Attention to the future evolution of related initiatives is important.

In parallel, co-operation on Territorial Cohesion will be continued by facilitating a renewal of the Territorial Agenda of the EU, based on the Roadmap created by the previous Presidencies. Potential of digitalization in connecting regions will also be viewed.

The Finnish Presidency joins forces with cities and different networks connected to cities and digitalization. The Finnish cities of Helsinki and Oulu will host major Side Events of the Presidency addressing urban development and digitalization. Partnered European networks are EUROCITIES, Open & Agile Smart Cities (OASC) and Digital Transition Partnership of the UAEU, among others.

The following Official Presidency Events have been scheduled for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion:

Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP) 11 September and **Urban Development Group (UDG)** 12 September 2019 in Helsinki. The meetings invite Member States and stakeholders to discuss on the Territorial Agenda and the Urban Agenda, among other themes.

Directors General Meeting on Cohesion Policy and Territorial Cohesion, 16 October and **Directors General Meeting on Urban Matters**, 17 October 2019 in Helsinki. The meetings invite Member States and stakeholders to discuss and provide guidelines for the Territorial Agenda and the Urban Agenda, among other themes.

ESPON Seminar, 27-28 November 2019 in Helsinki. In the event, State of the European Territory report will be launched and digitalization theme discussed.

The following Side Events of the Presidency have been scheduled:

Helsinki Impact Conference: European conference organized by the City of Helsinki in collaboration with European city networks addresses to the following idea: "The EU is as strong as its cities and neighborhoods". The conference calls together European leaders, experts and academia on cohesive urban policy and urban planning, to share insights on how cities act as global change-makers. The event takes place on 9-10 October 2019 in Helsinki in parallel to the European Week of Regions and Cities, celebrating the European week and the Finnish Presidency.

Oulu Boost Event: Upscaling Digital Solutions in Cities: European conference highlighting the potential of digital solutions in cities. The conference is addressed to cities as well as EU and national stakeholders across Europe. The event will be organized by the City of Oulu and European partners and takes place on 10-11 December 2019 in Oulu.

Further information:

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