

# Cities as actors of open innovation: Accelerating Transition towards Sustainable and Low-carbon Societies

## Session at the European Week of Regions and Cities

(URB11A41, Tuesday, 11th of October 14:30 to 17:00)

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 0C, Brussels

### Schedule:

14:30 to 14:45

**Welcome**

*“Towards Habitat III: The Role of EU Research and Innovation”*

*Ugo Guarnacci, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission*

14:45 to 15:30

**Theatre Session I: Impacts and dynamics of urban community-based initiatives**

**Moderators:**

**Ugo Guarnacci, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission**

**Dr. Niki Frantzeskaki, DRIFT, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands**

### Talks:

**From seeding to accelerating low-carbon transitions in cities – What are the key mechanisms?**

*Dr. Florian Kern, SPRU, Sussex University, United Kingdom*

This talk will present findings from the ARTS project which analyzed acceleration dynamics of transitions towards low carbon, sustainable city-regions in Europe. The presentation will reflect on some of the key findings from the project and provide some illustrations on the basis of the case study of Brighton&Hove in the United Kingdom.

**Community-based initiatives as drivers of low-carbon innovation? Quantifying the Climate change mitigation potential of community-based initiatives across Europe**

*Dr. Anne Holsten, PIK, Germany*

We have quantified the avoided greenhouse gas emissions of over 50 community-based initiatives across Europe. The presentation summarizes the results for a broad range of activities (food, energy, transport and waste) and gives a brief insight into an online tool developed.

**Conscious food pathways in the urban context: transparent and community driven food systems from imagination to implementation**

*Logan Strenchock, Central European University Budapest, Hungary*

The content of this talk will focus on the trajectory of citizen-driven conscious food supply chains which in recent years have impacted the sustainable food consumption paradigm in Budapest, Hungary. Citing the development and transition pathways of a number of local case studies, the presentation will reinforce the importance of creating supportive structures for community food networks, and the acceleration and upscaling potential of such models in urban food supply systems Central Europe.

15:30-15:45 *Break*

15:45-16:30 *Theatre Session II: New approaches of research on urban transition pathways*

**Moderators:** **Ugo Guarnacci, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission**  
**Joshua Msika, James Hutton Institute, UK**

## Talks:

### **Activating urban transition pathways for low-carbon futures – from scenario analysis to initiative-based learning.**

*Dr. Holger Berg, Wuppertal Institute, Germany*

The presentation shows how different scientific perspectives can lead to improved understanding and new insights for urban transformation. It will therein address several fields that are crucial for the emergence of new urban concepts, e.g. in heat and building.

### **Sharing experience within and beyond existing networks: ECOLISE and the European Day of Sustainable Communities**

*Eamon O'Hara, ECOLISE, Brussels, Belgium*

The aim of ECOLISE will be explained, elaborating on the sharing of ideas and experience in community-led action on climate change and sustainability in Europe, and the replication or scaling-up of such action (up-scaling is more of a desire/aspiration at present). A key initiative in this regard is the European Day of Sustainable Communities, which is being launched across Europe in October and aims to become a showcase for community-led action.

### **Going from informing to social learning - new approaches for research on urban transitions**

*Ania Rok, ICLEI, Germany*

What we experimented with in ARTS was different forms of sharing and co-producing results with the participation of arts and culture community, citizen bloggers and organisation of bridge-building events. In this presentation we will elaborate on these experiences, especially on how to go beyond one-way communication and considering official representatives as the only voice of the “city.”

### **EU Research & Innovation actions for Innovating Cities**

*Birgit de Boissezon, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission*

16:30 to 17:00 *Wrap-up*

Moderators wrap up the session with summarizing the questions and highlights from the session.

