



## 'SMART Czechia': an integrated approach towards smart cities

Key findings from the webinar and recommendations for the Czech Ministry of Regional Development

The webinar '*SMART Czechia: an integrated approach towards smart cities*' was held on 28 July 2020. It was the first activity in the Thinking beyond the crisis series organised by the EUKN to explore the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on cities. The series aim to identify how short-term solutions implemented in response to the pandemic could inspire long-term national strategies in the field of sustainable urban development.

The focus of this webinar was the 'SMART Czechia' concept: a strategy drafted by the Czech Ministry for Regional Development promoting the use of innovative solutions to improve the well-being of Czech citizens and their economic prosperity going forward and in response to the pandemic.

The event featured a balanced composition of European and Czech experts who shared their experiences on smart cities and commented upon the 'SMART Czechia' concept note. Building upon the experts' contributions, the EUKN Secretariat has formulated seven recommendations for the Czech Ministry of Regional Development on how to support cities in designing and implementing smart solutions.

### SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Focus on the societal dimension of smart solutions

Public authorities should balance technical and social innovation, while putting upfront the well-being of their citizens and looking beyond the direct interest of tech-oriented companies. Smart solutions can and should be used to enhance social inclusion and ensure high liveability standards for all citizens. Moreover, strengthening the social fabric, in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, contributes to a fair and sustainable economy.

#### 2. Create a national innovation platform

National government should provide an operational framework, including guidelines for the future orientation of cities, and an adequate platform of exchange between local and national governments. This platform should support the national government to monitor the innovation process and to check if innovation strategies respond to the needs and concerns of towns and cities.

#### 3. Create an ecosystem of inclusive innovation



Public authorities must cooperate with private partners, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), local stakeholders, academia, citizens to create an ecosystem of innovation. As experienced by the cities of Vienna and Nice, this requires a tailor-made methodology to compensate for possible market failures.

#### **4. Use the territory as an open 'living lab'**

The territory should be transformed into a testbed for new technical solutions to accelerate innovation, to boost competition and to increase the attractiveness of innovative businesses. Public authorities should open their data and infrastructures to support experimentation.

#### **5. Promote public-private partnerships**

Public-private partnerships and joint ventures between the public sector, private partners and knowledge institutions is the key to innovation. Public authorities need smart solutions to tackle complex societal challenges and tech companies need citizens and cities to test and market their products. To safeguard innovation for the common good and to guarantee win-win situations, public authorities must be able to rely on adequate legal support to define mutually cooperative frameworks and contracts.

#### **6. Promote public ownership and centralized management of data**

The success of smart cities is largely due to the public ownership of their data, as the experience of Vienna testifies. Territorial data are a patrimonial asset, fuelling local innovation. Cities should secure from the onset ownership of 'their' local data to implement smart solutions. The path to reconquer data is long, complex and costly, albeit necessary (see the experience in Nice).

#### **7. Educate 'smart' local governments and invest in capacity building**

The national government should invest in capacity building of local authorities. This requires a nation-wide smart cities strategy to be shared among all civil servants involved in SMART Czechia. Creating smart local governments can be part of a process of devolution, key to increased efficiency and innovation.