UNRAVELLING THE ‘GREEN’ ACTIONS OF THE URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU

EUKN Support to the Upcoming Slovene Presidency
Report of the Activities for 2020
About the EUKN

The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) EGTC is the only independent EU Member State driven network in the field of urban policy, research and practice. As a strategic knowledge partner, it supports its members through tailor-made services such as Policy Labs on contemporary urban topics. The EUKN has been closely involved in the establishment of the Urban Agenda for the EU and the global New Urban Agenda, and has been actively supporting the further development of these strategic agendas through events, research, and expert analysis. The EUKN Secretariat, located in The Hague, is responsible for the overall coordination and operations of the network.
## Table of Contents

Background...............................................................................................................................................................4

Action Analysis Approach........................................................................................................................................5

Selected ‘Green’ Partnerships and Actions............................................................................................................6

  Circular Economy, Action 1 - ‘Help make waste legislation support the circular economy in cities’ .....7
  Circular Economy, Action 2 - ‘Help make water legislation support the circular economy in cities’ .....9
  Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions, Action 6 - ‘Better regulation to boost NBS at European, national and local levels’ ..............................................................................................................11
  Digital Transition, Action 8 - ‘Data standards supporting citizen participation in urban planning’ ....13
  Urban Mobility, Action 7 - ‘Reducing diversity of Urban Vehicle Access Regulations (UVAR)’ ..........15

Key Findings............................................................................................................................................................17

Annex 1....................................................................................................................................................................18
**Background**

In 2020, the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) EGTC organised a series of activities for its Member Slovenia, represented by the Ministry for the Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP). This publication summarises their results with a view to preparing the next steps towards the Slovenian EU Council Presidency in the second half of 2021.

These activities specifically investigated in what way the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) process can be harvested with a view to Slovenia’s priority themes, namely the ‘green’ actions of the UAEU that call for the involvement of Member States and the EU level.

To do so, the EUKN Secretariat developed an approach for the analysis of these actions, which is based, inter alia, on the action clustering performed by the 2019 Finnish Council Presidency and the Commission’s Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy.

In total, five actions of four different Partnerships were showcased and discussed in two webinars, on 9 June and on 3 November 2020, following this analysis approach. What shows is this: behind each action lies a world of interesting ideas, facts and challenges, which is often not reflected in the published documents. This publication unpacks the ‘becoming’ of those five actions, aiming at a better understanding of their respective contents, status, and outlook.

The ultimate goal of the EUKN’s activities for Slovenia is to translate the findings into useful information for ministers responsible for environmental affairs. This information should entail possible directions on how to follow up on those actions that deal with regulatory obstacles faced by cities when trying to reach environmental goals. In 2021, the EUKN and the MESP will co-organise another Policy Lab, based on which the final conclusions will be drawn up and presented to ministers during the Slovene Presidency.

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**The clustering of actions**

A comprehensive clustering of the actions developed by the UAEU Partnerships can serve as a starting point for more in-depth analysis and a better understanding of the actions.

In 2019, the Finnish Presidency identified the three objectives of the UAEU (Better Regulation, Better Funding, and Better Knowledge) as the main reference points for a first clustering exercise. Annex 1 presents an overview of the Better Regulation strand and its three sub-clusters (better implementation, changes of existing legislation, new legislation to tackle gaps).

This framework has also been used by the Finnish Presidency to identify ten ‘green city’ related actions that call for the involvement of Member States. Out of these ten actions, the EUKN Secretariat and the Slovenian Ministry for the Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) selected five actions to analyse in depth for the webinars held in June and November 2020.
Action Analysis Approach

Step 1 Desk Research

Analyse the actions through available material (Action Plans, Monitoring Table, delivered outputs) in order to identify the current implementation status and the delivered outputs.

Outputs
For each action, an overview is given that draws from the following sources:

- The Partnerships’ Action Plans, mostly dating from 2018 and providing the ‘original’ descriptions of the actions;
- The January and September 2020 versions of the Monitoring Table of Actions published by the UAEU Technical Secretariat and providing updated information on the actions, including their category, involved partners, and outputs;
- Delivered outputs per action in cases when additional information on the actions was needed and available.

Step 2 Interviews

Engage Action Leaders in interviews to discuss the actions’ content, status, and outlook in order to check the available desk research material against recent developments regarding action implementation, possibly resulting in new ways of presenting the actions; explore the role of the EU and Member State levels in the further implementation of the selected actions.

Outputs
The Action Leaders were asked to provide answers to three specific questions to discuss the actions’ contents, status, and outlook:

1. What is missing or outdated in these overviews?
2. How do you foresee the further implementation of the Action?
3. Are there any other issues that should be discussed?

Step 3 Webinars

Showcase and bring further the outcomes in a joint discussion in order to make the selected actions better understood for the participants of the webinar; engage in a discussion on the proposed analysis approach as well as on its application to the two actions presented during the webinar - thus identifying concrete ways to support their delivery.

Outputs
This publication serves as the main output of the last step. It summarises - next to steps 1 and 2 - Action Leaders’ presentations and findings stemming from the discussions given during the two webinars.
## Selected ‘Green’ Partnerships and Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Selected Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circular Economy Action Plan</strong></td>
<td>The Partnership envisions a city where urban stakeholders ‘do not think in terms of waste, but in terms of resources’ and where ‘European legislation entices local authorities, companies and investors to make the most of all types of waste.’</td>
<td>Finland, Greece, Poland, Slovenia; Oslo (Coordinator), Flanders Region, The Hague, Kaunas, Porto, Prato; ACR+, CEMR, EIB, EUROCITIES, URBACT; DG REGIO, DG CLIMA, DG ENV, DG GROW, DG RTD</td>
<td>1. Help make waste legislation support the circular economy in cities 2. Help make water legislation support the circular economy in cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-based Solutions Action Plan</strong></td>
<td>The Partnership is envisaged as a response to the growing need for better urban management in the context of scarce land resources and the potential benefits of using nature to address the challenges of cities’ thus focusing on the quality of life for city inhabitants and sustainable urban development.</td>
<td>Poland (Coordinator), Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia; Bologna (Coordinator), Antwerp, Cork, Métropole Européenne de Lille, Stavanger, Verband Region Stuttgart, Zagreb; EEA, EIB, EUKN, EUROCITIES, ICLEI, INCASÔL, ISOCARP; URBACT; DG REGIO, DG ENV, DG JRC, DG RTD</td>
<td>6. Better regulation to boost NBS at European, national and local levels</td>
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<td><strong>Urban Mobility Action Plan</strong></td>
<td>Using a wide range of interconnected measures and strategies, the challenge is to deal with the increased demand for mobility whilst developing a resilient mobility system which can meet future challenges.</td>
<td>Czech Republic (Coordinator), Cyprus, Finland, Romania, Slovenia; Karlsruhe (Coordinator), Bari, Bielefeld, Burgas, Gdynia, Malmö, Nijmegen, Skåne Region, Torres Vedras, Wallonia Region; CEMR, EIB, EUROCITIES, European Cyclists Federation, POLIS, UITP, Walk21; URBACT; DG REGIO, DG ENV, DG MOVE</td>
<td>7. Reducing diversity of Urban Vehicle Access Regulations (UVAR)</td>
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<td><strong>Digital Transition Action Plan</strong></td>
<td>The Partnership proposes initiatives on the topics where digitalisation can have the most profound effect in transforming urban governance, quality and fulfilment of life of its citizens, and the most advantageous business and growth opportunities.</td>
<td>Croatia, Estonia (Coordinator), Germany, Hungary, Romania, Eindhoven, Hamburg, Helsingborg, Lyon Métropole, Rome, Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia, Oulu (Coordinator), Sofia (Coordinator), DG REGIO, DG CNECT; Committee of the Regions, CoR, CEMR, EUROCITIES, Flemish Government, URBACT</td>
<td>8. Data standards supporting citizen participation in urban planning</td>
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**Circular Economy, Action 1**

‘Help make waste legislation support the circular economy in cities’

**Partners**
City of The Hague (lead), City of Oslo, City of Prato, Poland, CEMR, EUROCITIES; Europa decentraal as external experts supporting the partners in the development of this action

**What is the specific problem?**
The Partnership has identified several barriers and bottlenecks regarding the use of secondary raw materials (recycling) or products (re-use) originating from waste streams. […] These regulations make it difficult, if not impossible, to redirect waste fractions back into the economic cycle for re-use or recycling. The removal of these barriers is important to facilitate the circular economy and to stimulate the uptake of the use of secondary raw materials.

**What action is needed?**

**Action category**
Modification to existing EU legislation

**Implementation status**
Finalised

‘Using the criteria of the Monitoring Table of Actions, we can state that the Action is finalised, as all the promised deliverables have been produced. However, within the Partnership, it was clear from the beginning that some of the actions require a follow-up. This is especially true for the Better Regulation actions as the implementation of legislative arrangements usually takes several years.’

‘The next step will be to test and prototype our recommendations [optimisation of existing end-of-waste procedures and enhancing the effectiveness of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes as drivers for product innovation]. We will need two to three years to develop ‘Proofs of Concept’ from practice. This should be done in close cooperation with Member States and the European Commission.’

‘Starting with the shared recognition that some of the actions of the Partnership need an implementation follow-up, it is especially important that Member States and the European Commission extend their commitment and ownership […] And in doing so, together we will successfully contribute to the goals and targets of the European Green Deal and the new Circular Economy Action Plan.’

**Jan Harko Post**, Action Leader, Municipality of The Hague

**Outputs to consult online**
- Questionnaire on EU waste legislation
- Annex I: Analysis of the changes in the new waste framework directive
- Booklet: Better regulation for a Circular Economy
Presentation & Discussions
Webinar June 2020

Jan Harko Post
Action Leader,
Municipality of The Hague

The current legislative framework is the main reason we do not recognise waste as a resource. Legislation focuses on protecting public health and the environment, but it also prevents waste from being channelled back into the economy.

In order to adapt and complement the current framework, this Action aims at narrowing the path to disposal and widening the path to reuse and recycling, opening up more possibilities for the re-use of resources (waste) in the local economy (see figures on the right).

In this context, the Partnership delivered recommendations for the short, medium and long term. The short-term recommendations are: to optimise the current system and legal framework, to change current end-of-waste procedures, and to enhance Extended Producer Responsibility schemes as drivers for innovation. The long-term recommendations are: to get rid of inbuilt obsolescence, to make repairability an intrinsic part of product design, for Member States and the EU to provide legal, financial and economic incentives.

Mr Post concluded highlighting the key role that Member States and the European Commission could and should play in this context. To ensure an effective implementation of Circular Economy schemes and regulations, they should support prototyping in local and regional contexts by making sufficient legal room or by providing funding and resources.

During the discussion, Igor Kos (City of Maribor, Wcycle institute) supported this last point and reported the need for legislation to be more open to experimentation. This could allow cities to find solutions that are both healthy for the population and facilitating new, circular, processes and business models.
Circular Economy, Action 2
‘Help make water legislation support the circular economy in cities’

Partners
City of Prato (lead), City of Maribor, Flanders region, City of Oslo, EUROCITIES; Europa decentraal as external experts supporting the partners in the development of this action

What is the specific problem?
The Partnership calls for robust and comprehensive EU legislation to create an environment where cities, as water operators, will develop and implement solutions for water re-use as a part of a strategy for better water management and a transition towards a circular economy. […] Due to risks for human health and the environment, the re-use of water has strong limitations in the existing EU, national and regional regulations on water and wastewater. A more efficient re-use of water, however, is essential in the transition towards a circular economy.

What action is needed?
The shift in European policy towards the principles of the circular economy requires better management and re-use of water - and a recognition of the role of all levels (EU, national, regional, local) in European policymaking. Together with relevant stakeholders, the Partnership wants to identify and influence the on-going revision of policy and regulations.

Action category
Policy recommendations

Implementation status
Finalised

Outputs to consult online
• Position Paper to the European Parliament

‘The Action progressed in parallel with the EU legislative review process. During the preparation of the position paper, we had the opportunity to invite Member of the European Parliament Simona Bonafè, rapporteur of the proposal for the revision of legislation on water re-use, to visit the water re-use plant in Prato. She was open for a discussion about technical parameters and good practices.’

‘The European Parliament voted on the legislative proposal in February 2019. The adopted text met the main suggestions provided by our position paper. […] The Partnership will keep going to monitor how the new legislation will impact Member States, starting within the ones of the Partnership itself (Finland, Poland, Slovenia and Greece).’

‘The COVID-19 emergency pushes us to reflect about possible future changes at urban level. Together with the municipality of Prato we are thinking, among other things, about how water re-use solutions could benefit urban agriculture and local food supply chains. This is a broad reflection that we will carry out at city level in the next months.’

Leonardo Borsacchi,
Action Leader,
University of Florence
By looking at the framework for clean water and sanitation, the Partnership identified the linkages between the EU legislation defining wastewater and the barriers hindering its use.

This Action suggests a revision of the EU wastewater legislation in order to promote the use of treated and industrial waste waters for civic purposes (e.g. urban green gardens, peri-urban agriculture, and green areas).

In 2018, an EU legislative proposal was put forward with minimum requirements for irrigation and water sanitation. The Partnership worked on this Action in parallel to the EU legislative process in order to integrate it into the policy-making cycle. The timeline of the process is presented below.

The position paper, delivered by the Partnership in 2019, provided inputs and suggestions about important requirements: extending the new legislation to also cover water use for civic purposes; the necessity to implement risk management according to internationally recognised standards; the importance of collaboration between treatment plant operators and end-users in order to create symbiosis. The amended text for the new legislative proposal adopted by the European Parliament was in line with the position paper.

An important matter highlighted by Mr Borsacchi was the issue of awareness. Water quality of sewage water, for instance, already fulfils the health and safety criteria needed to irrigate crops, but the awareness about it is insufficient. ‘This is an issue of Better Knowledge’, Mr Borsacchi concluded.

During the discussion, David Schutrups (Europa decentraal) stressed that, while working on Better Regulation, it is key to carefully design your strategy around the legislative cycle. This can support in identifying the best moments to provide inputs and assess whether expectations can be met along the process.
Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions, Action 6
‘Better regulation to boost NBS at European, national and local levels’

**Partners**
City of Bologna (lead), EU Commission (DG ENV, DG REGIO), Ministry of Economic Development of Poland, City of Stavanger, the Netherlands. INCASOL, Government of Catalonia, Cyprus, Cork, Antwerp and Lille as observers.

**What is the specific problem?**
Although the multifaceted concept of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) has been intensively included in the funding priority of the Commission in terms of research and investments (Horizon 2020 and LIFE) and in EIB funding instruments, it has not been comprehensively integrated in current EU legislation. Even though Member States, regions and cities are starting to include NBS in their strategies and urban planning laws and instruments, the concept remains fuzzy and a more concrete implementation is needed.

**What action is needed?**
- Review EU instruments and legislation available such as the Flood Directive, the EU Strategy for Adaptation on Climate Change, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the EU Green Public Procurement criteria;
- Investigate how the ‘urban environment’ could be integrated in the relevant directives;
- Provide an overview of relevant directives and regulations also in the socio-economic field, where the impact of NBS can have great relevance too.

**Action category**
Guidance documents and handbooks

**Implementation status**
Finalised

**Outputs to consult online**
- Analysis of the EU policies relevant for NBS
- Method to assess NBS and Ecosystem Services into local policies and plans and the case study of Bologna

‘There is a mismatch between the real implementation process and how it is described in the Action Plan. The Action has not been implemented as consistently at the European and national levels compared to the local level. Besides, the review of local strategies (where NBS plays or could play an important role) was carried out only for the city of Bologna and not for all the different partner cities as it was supposed to be.’

‘Our recommendations are now in the process of being integrated into the new master plan of the city of Bologna. It would be interesting to better understand national priorities on the topic and how the Member States could embed our recommendations in their national strategies. Also, it would be interesting to better understand how these topics will be included in the European Green Deal and how much Europe intends to boost NBS in the forthcoming period.’

‘The need to share the ‘load’ of the Action in a more equilibrated way between the Partners and the overall Urban Agenda process. It was a great experience, but leaving everything at cities’ own expenses and voluntary bases made it difficult at times.’

**Sources:** Overviews (Step 1), Interview (Step 2)

Claudia de Luca, 
Action Leader, 
University of Bologna
An in-depth analysis was carried out for the city of Bologna which, experienced in integrating green and urban policies, developed its new masterplan incorporating the learnings emerging from this Action. A concrete example is Bologna’s new strategy of the urban eco-network (see figure below), which uses soil and green areas for ecosystem services they provide.

The objective of the Action is to review current strategies and regulations and understand to what extent they are embedding Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) and ecosystem services.

In the first phase, the Partnership analysed more than 20 European policies and selected those three with the largest room for improvement, namely the Climate Adaptation Strategy, the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive, and the Flood Directive. With the support of external experts, the Partnership developed a set of recommendations for the European Commission on how to better integrate NBS into the three selected strategies.

In the second phase, municipal-level strategies as well as local planning tools and regulations became the main focus. The Partnership produced an overview of existing strategies - related for instance to urban planning and building codes - in the cities of Bologna, Stavanger and Zagreb.

A few key elements emerged from the discussion on NBS and Action 6:

- The need to ‘green’ existing national and EU laws/directives without creating new ones. This would allow cities to integrate those concepts in their plans more easily.
- The difficulty of retrieving NBS-related strategies produced in Europe at local and national levels and thus the need for an EU-level platform collecting documents and regulations on NBS.
Digital Transition, Action 8
‘Data standards supporting citizen participation in urban planning’

Sources: Overviews (Step1), Interview (Step 2)

Partners
Hamburg (Lead), Helsingborg (Lead)

What is the specific problem?
Current legislation does not guarantee free access by public authorities to data generated in the cities if not agreed in advance in specific contractual rules. Public authorities, citizens and local businesses must have access to data collected in public spaces where this would improve the functioning of cities.

What action is needed?
The objectives of Part I, related to the implementation of the EU INSPIRE Directive, are:
1. To analyse the Planned Land Use (PLU) data and other standardising endeavours in the EU countries to see if the INSPIRE PLU data model is suited for providing standardised spatial planning data in the European context;
2. To analyse if the PLU data model meets all the requirements as a component of the needed infrastructure for building up a participatory platform in the urban planning process;
3. Try to define the preconditions and a set of necessary standardised data for the establishment of an online participatory platform.

Based on the results of Part I, the objectives of Part II, related to participatory urban planning, are:
1. To develop a transferable model for the establishment of participatory urban planning platforms based on the experience from the DIPAS project in Hamburg and other potential examples;
2. To define a guideline for providing standardised spatial planning data in the participatory urban planning process.

Action category
Modification to existing EU legislation

Implementation status
Finalised

‘In the beginning, we were very ambitious and defined two parts of the Action. Part II on digital citizen participation was easier to approach and thus became our main focus. Part I on the analysis of the INSPIRE Directive was more difficult to implement due to a lack of time and expertise in our Partnership.’

‘I am not sure if the Action is well-categorised under ‘Better Regulation’. One could argue, though, that the Action was originally about achieving better EU regulation (INSPIRE Directive) or that it could help using citizen participation data for lower-level regulatory purposes.’

‘It would be helpful if we could establish contact with the stakeholders involved in the INSPIRE Directive at EU level as well as with Member States’ representatives working on this, for an exchange of experience.’

‘The support of external experts is crucial when approaching an analysis of EU regulation. The experts should be identified and involved from the initial stage of the implementation process.’

Xinxin Duan,
Action Leader,
Land of Hamburg
Presentation & Discussions
Webinar November 2020

Xinxin Duan
Action Leader,
Land of Hamburg

Traditional, analogue, citizen participation processes use sticky notes to collect suggestions and those have to be typed into a computer. This equals a loss of data through ‘media discontinuity’. Data collection via digital tools offers a solution.

The Action aims at integrating online and on-site methodologies in (informal) citizen participation as well as standardising the collected data – in order to optimise the entire urban planning and building process.

Originally, the Action consisted of two interdependent working packages: one part was about analysing the INSPIRE Directive, specifically the Planned Land Use (PLU) data theme, and the standardisation of data in EU countries. This part of the Action is still relevant, but would require the support of adequate experts.

Eventually, the focus shifted to the second part of the Action on participatory urban planning. This was also reflected in a change to the Action’s name. In implementing this second part, participatory data from different projects was analysed. Then, an information model was created (Participatory Data Specification, PDS) for developing an e-participation platform. This model was implemented using the existing DIPAS (Digital Participation System; dipas.org) project in Hamburg.

Such digital tools should be seen as a complement to analogue on-site workshops. The pandemic, however, resulting in fewer on-site events, offers a possibility to foster digital participation. A study carried out in the DIPAS project showed that also elderly people are participating online.

Xinxin Duan closed with a call on relevant stakeholders from Member States or cities to collaborate with Hamburg on the topic of INSPIRE and data standardisation.

During the discussion, Jernej Stritih (panellist, Stritih Sustainable Development) commented that there is a general need to show that participatory planning can provide much better quality of plans and does not need to be a blockage. Asked about the issue of ownership, Xinxin Duan stated that even though all levels should be involved in the UAEU Partnerships, clear ownership is absolutely needed to get the job done for a specific action. ‘Her’ Action 8 is a case in point: it turned into a purely locally-led action, which posed some difficulties regarding implementation.
Urban Mobility, Action 7
‘Reducing diversity of Urban Vehicle Access Regulations (UVAR)’

Partners
European Commission (Lead); Eurocities, POLIS, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

What is the specific problem?
The European Commission has received many inquiries concerning the diversity of urban access regulation schemes in the EU and their lack of harmonisation; fragmentation of approaches leads to inefficiencies. This suggests there may be a need to examine the various schemes to see if any actions could be taken at the relevant level to address such concerns. Finally, the effectiveness of existing schemes is not systematically assessed and communicated.

What action is needed?
1. Increase transparency of the schemes and make relevant information available to the public easier, more effectively and increasingly digitally, by using the existing tool (www.urbanaccessregulations.eu) as a starting point.
2. Address fragmentation and patchwork of the schemes while respecting the subsidiarity principle by providing recommendations and best practices that can support local administrators in designing and implementing urban vehicle access restrictions.

Action category
Toolkit

Implementation status
Finalised

Outputs to consult online
• Brochure: ‘Reducing diversity of UVARs’
• Updated website: www.urbanaccessregulations.eu

‘The Action was basically about populating the UVAR website and publishing the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) UVAR guidance, which was done. Any further EU-level action on reducing diversity of Urban Vehicle Access Regulations is work in progress.’

‘There is a lack of an EU-level mechanism for vehicle registration for better exchange of data on vehicles and their owners. In the case of a lack of bilateral agreements between countries, cross-border offenders cannot be prosecuted. This is a possible area to explore further at the EU level.’

‘As for the UVAR website, we invite Member States and cities to proactively inform us about any required changes or updates. This communication is already happening, but we want to encourage it further as a follow-up action in the future.’

‘Now, with the pandemic and related lockdown measures, it became clear that there is not enough public space devoted to walking and cycling. Some of the measures taken by cities right now can be categorised as UVAR.’

Piotr Rapacz,
Action Leader,
European Commission
Urban Vehicle Access Regulations (UVAR) are measures to regulate vehicular access to urban infrastructure. Their aim is to improve urban accessibility and reduce costs, emissions, accidents, and to optimise use of existing infrastructure. The growing number of UVAR schemes may create confusion for citizens and businesses and pose a risk of market fragmentation impeding the smooth functioning of the internal market.

The Action aims at increasing transparency and, where possible, support the effectiveness of existing approaches to UVAR.

Its deliverables have been a brochure, updated UVAR information on a website, and a guidance document. As follow-up activities, it is recommended:

- For Member States to make real-time traffic information available via National Access Points (in line with the ITS Directive and its Delegated Regulation 2015/962) and to implement the Single Data Gateway Regulation in relation to UVAR;
- For cities, Member States, and the Commission to collect evidence on existing schemes and assess their effectiveness;
- For the Commission to study the possibility of explicitly adding UVAR-related data to the revision of Delegated Regulation 2015/962; the need for minimum harmonisation of some UVAR elements based on the results of the 2013 Urban Mobility Package’s evaluation (4Q2020); a new Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (4Q2020); and data to be gathered in a fact-finding study (2Q2021).

Nearly all European citizens living in cities are still exposed to air pollution levels that exceed the World Health Organisation’s guidelines and numerous Member States are in breach of the EU air quality legislation. At the same time, awareness (‘Dieselgate’) and the number of UVAR is rising, and the pandemic has demonstrated the need for better managing vehicular access to give sufficient space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Jernej Stritih (Stritih Sustainable Development) cited a study delivered for a Slovene Ministry that found a possibly increased demand for personal travel with enhanced e-mobility, leading to the challenge on how to prevent congestion in cities due to electric cars. Electric scooters are being discussed as part of this perspective already. This needs to be regulated in a forward-looking fashion, and with a focus on strengthening public transport. Polona Demšar Mitrovič (Slovene Ministry of Infrastructure) agreed and called for a focus on active mobility and (electrified) public transport. In the broader sense of the word, UVAR has been addressed in Slovenia for ten years already, as in limiting access to streets or places during certain times via signage. Only a comprehensive approach to Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (SUMP) can have the desired effects, also regarding UVAR. Social issues, for instance, should be considered: it is a problem if only well-off people can afford to access the city with less polluting cars.
Key Findings

The two Policy Labs for Slovenia held in 2020 have revealed interesting findings at different analytical levels. Behind each action lies a world of interesting ideas, facts and challenges, which is often not reflected in the published documents. Those findings are categorised in the three groups presented below and they will be used as a steppingstone to inform the further preparations to the Slovenian Presidency in 2021.

1. Individual Actions

The Partnerships identified gaps and bottlenecks in the existing regulatory framework and delivered concrete recommendations to improve it. Moreover, Action Leaders mentioned several planned or recommended follow-up activities they would find helpful. These include the further investigation of the opportunities provided by the European Green Deal to foster Nature-based Solutions, an in-depth analysis of the INSPIRE Directive and exchange with interested ‘INSPIRE stakeholders’, as well as several recommendations regarding Urban Vehicle Access Regulations at Member State, European, and local levels.

The exchanges with Action Leaders and the Policy Lab discussions yielded several suggestions to increase ownership and strengthen the implementation of actions. These suggestions include:

- **Provide the assistance of experts for a timely and comprehensive analysis of the relevant legal and policy framework** - Especially when it comes to carrying out such analyses to inform future EU law- and policy-making, Partnerships experience timing and expertise issues during the action implementation phase. The timely availability of adequate (external) expertise seems a critical factor in this regard.

- **Share the ‘load’ of action implementation among partners/stakeholders** - Partnerships report a lack of time and, sometimes, targeted expertise in implementing their actions. The current setup often relies on partly voluntary work of the partners. Partnerships also emphasise that implementation - especially of Better Regulation actions - does not end with the duration of the Partnership, but requires sustained follow-up support from EU and Member State levels.

2. The UAEU process as a whole

The exchanges with Action Leaders and the Policy Lab discussions yielded several suggestions to increase ownership and strengthen the implementation of actions. These suggestions include:

- **Broaden the focus of Better Regulation actions to account for people’s perceptions** - In the case of wastewater regulation, awareness should be raised to address fears of a possible contamination of crops irrigated with reclaimed water. For the Circular Economy as a whole, a change in the perception of waste is crucial in order to move from a risk-based to a value-based approach.

- **Foster prototyping and testing to achieve the Circular Economy** - Member States and the Commission should provide sufficient legal room and the necessary financial incentives to support municipalities in prototyping and testing, thus overcoming the current ‘linear’ market reality and the legal framework.

- **Create a European platform collecting translated legislation and projects on NBS from different Member States** - This will allow policymakers to find strategic documents that other countries have produced on this issue, allowing for a better mapping of practices and a better exchange of knowledge.

- **‘Green’ existing strategies and regulations without creating new ones** - A key challenge is to understand how to integrate NBS into existing strategies and regulations. This would facilitate municipalities to implement NBS solutions without developing new tools.

3. Addressed Themes

The Circular Economy and Nature-based Solutions are not only focus topics of the first Policy Lab, but also of the broader European agenda and policy debate. Participants and panellists discussed how to give both concepts the required push, and gave the following general recommendations:

- **Broaden the focus of Better Regulation actions to account for people’s perceptions** - In the case of wastewater regulation, awareness should be raised to address fears of a possible contamination of crops irrigated with reclaimed water. For the Circular Economy as a whole, a change in the perception of waste is crucial in order to move from a risk-based to a value-based approach.

- **Foster prototyping and testing to achieve the Circular Economy** - Member States and the Commission should provide sufficient legal room and the necessary financial incentives to support municipalities in prototyping and testing, thus overcoming the current ‘linear’ market reality and the legal framework.

- **Create a European platform collecting translated legislation and projects on NBS from different Member States** - This will allow policymakers to find strategic documents that other countries have produced on this issue, allowing for a better mapping of practices and a better exchange of knowledge.

- **‘Green’ existing strategies and regulations without creating new ones** - A key challenge is to understand how to integrate NBS into existing strategies and regulations. This would facilitate municipalities to implement NBS solutions without developing new tools.
### Strand 1. Better Regulation

#### Cluster 1.1: Better implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action 1</th>
<th>Action 2</th>
<th>Action 3</th>
<th>Action 4</th>
<th>Action 5</th>
<th>Action 6</th>
<th>Action 7</th>
<th>Action 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Air Quality</strong></td>
<td>Identification of gaps in regulation and implementation on air pollutant emission sources</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Circular Economy</strong></td>
<td>Analyse of the regulatory obstacles and drivers for boosting an urban circular bioeconomy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Climate Adaptation</strong></td>
<td>Analysis of national multilevel urban development and planning regulations with focus on climate adaptation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Digital Transition</strong></td>
<td>Specify and monitoring of standardised Planned Land Use data for formal and informal urban planning participation processes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Energy Transition</strong></td>
<td>Maximising use of waste heat in cities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guidance on energy masterplanning for cities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>Guidance on EU regulation and public support for housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity building for the application of state aid rules in the affordable housing sector at a city level</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees</strong></td>
<td>Recommendations on the protection of unaccompanied minors (Better EU policies and implementation of regulation &amp; knowledge)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Use Of Land And Nature-Based Solutions</strong></td>
<td>Better regulation to boost NBS at European, national and local levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Better financing on nature-based solutions (better regulation &amp; funding)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Mobility</strong></td>
<td>Scaling up innovative clean buses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reducing diversity of Urban Vehicle Access Regulations (UVAR)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Poverty</strong></td>
<td>Progress towards a directive on investing in children based on the Recommendation ‘Investing in Children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage’</td>
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<td>Cohesion policy post 2020: Local pact for the regeneration of urban deprived areas and neighbourhoods (UDAN)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ending homelessness by 2030 through the reform of social inclusion strategies at national level</td>
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**Legend:**
- ‘Green city’ related actions that call for the involvement of the Member States (Finnish Council Presidency clustering)
- ✓ ‘Green city’ related actions selected for the webinar on 9 June 2020 by the EUKN Secretariat and the MESP
- ✓ ‘Green city’ related actions selected for the webinar on 3 November 2020 by the EUKN Secretariat and the MESP
### Strand 1. Better Regulation

#### Cluster 1.2: Changes of existing legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Air Quality</strong></th>
<th><strong>Jobs And Skills</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 1: Identification of gaps in regulation and implementation on air pollutant emission sources</td>
<td>Action 4: RIS3 2.0 (Better regulation, better funding, better knowledge)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Circular Economy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sustainable Use Of Land And Nature-Based Solutions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 1: Help make waste legislation support the circular economy in cities ✓</td>
<td>Action 1: Including land take and soil properties in impact assessment procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2: Help make water legislation support the circular economy in cities ✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th><strong>Energy Transition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Urban Mobility</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 5: Closer co-operation with EU bodies to promote energy transition funding</td>
<td>Action 9: Setting up a European framework for fostering urban mobility innovation</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
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<th><strong>Urban Poverty</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Action 3: Revision of the SGEI decision with regard to the narrow target group of social housing</td>
<td>Action 4: Adoption of a European Child Guarantee</td>
</tr>
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<th><strong>Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees</strong></th>
<th><strong>Cluster 1.3: New legislation to tackle gaps</strong></th>
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<td>Action 2: Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for cities and SMEs</td>
<td><strong>Digital Transition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 3: Further reinforce the role of Microfinance, for instance through blending</td>
<td>Action 6: Build a data taxonomy at a European level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 4: Improving access for cities to EU Integration funding (Better regulation &amp; Better funding)</td>
<td>Action 7: Access and reuse of private sector data of general interest by the public authorities</td>
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<td>Action 7: Funding deprived areas</td>
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<td>Action 7: Access and reuse of private sector data of general interest by the public authorities</td>
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<td>Action 14: Development of 5G regulation to enable local micro-operators in cities</td>
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</table>