



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

tellUs 2022-2023

Coordinators

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April 2023

College of Europe
Bruges campus

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Acknowledgments

The *TellUs* activity is organised by the Department of European Political and Governance Studies of the College of Europe, Bruges campus. This year, it benefits from the support of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (RTD) of the European Commission, although the final report only reflects the views of the students involved in this extracurricular activity. The 2022-2023 edition of the programme was conducted through online meetings and a face-to-face meeting at DG RTD's offices in Brussels.

We would like to thank all the experts and the Commission officials, from DG RTD and from other Directorate-Generals – Clara DE LA TORRE, Philippe TULKENS, Thomas ARNOLD, François WAKENHUT, Wiebke PANKAUKE, Aleksandra OLEJNIK, Bettina SCHMIDBAUER-MOGENSEN, John RYAN, Barbara KERSTIENS, and Tim VAN HOORENBEKE – who took the time to meet with us, answer our questions and share with us their views on the different EU missions: Climate change, Smart Cities, and Health (Cancer).

We would also like to thank Joanna DRAKE, Deputy Director-General for Implementation, Impact & Sustainable Investment Strategies at DG RTD, for her support, her moderation of our meetings, and without whom this project would not have been possible. In addition, we would also like to give a special mention to Marc LEMAÎTRE, Director General of DG RTD, who met us in person during our visit to DG RTD's offices on 15 March 2023. Thank you for the exchange on the DG's missions and future projects.

Finally, we are extremely grateful to Pablo VILLATORO HARILLO and Thijs VANDENBUSSCHE, both Academic Assistants at the College of Europe and coordinators of the *tellUs* extra-curricular activity this year.

Executive Summary

The **first chapter** outlines the challenges for the EU's climate adaptation strategy. It covers the need to provide citizens with economic benefits to balance financial losses from climate change. It draws attention to the need of addressing the challenges which present themselves in the implementation of the climate adaptation strategy, as well as calling for a reinforcement of climate commitments. Secondly, this chapter provides an overview of how the EU should work on its internal and external actions - by promoting the exchange of best practices through transnational networks or by including climate policies in trade deals with third countries. Lastly, this chapter outlines the importance for companies and low-income social groups to be supported during the transition to a low-carbon economy and lifestyle. The EU should ensure respect for its environmental standards in its value chain for raw materials, namely in the value chain of materials needed to produce green technologies, while supporting the green transition of partner countries.

The **second chapter** highlights several areas for improvement within the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities mission, notably citizen participation and ownership, data availability, secure financing flows, and institutional and policy coherence. It puts forward several recommendations to address identified shortcomings, ranging from stakeholder engagement and the implementation of data-driven and other digital solutions to the promotion of private investment and the optimization of EU funds, as well as strengthening the voice of cities within EU institutions.

The **third chapter** includes proposals that seek to address cancer at the EU level. From the understanding, prevention, early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer to the quality of life for cancer patients and their families — objectives of the EU Cancer Mission —, tackling cancer needs a holistic approach. Up-to-date information and data for researchers and further research activities are a prerequisite to understanding and preventing cancer as much as possible. Putting the emphasis on preventing what is preventable should also be the way forward, notably through vaccination. Improving access to cancer treatment everywhere within the EU, regardless of your national citizenship, and raising awareness on the stigmas that cancer patients and survivors suffer from, are issues that need to be addressed as well.



CHAPTER 1

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

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Chapter 1: Climate change adaptation

Introduction

The European Union has promised to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2030. The questions we are asking ourselves are whether we are going in the right direction and what the narrative behind this objective is.

“Adaptation to Climate Change” is the EU’s mission contributing to the “Climate Adaptation Strategy” for a smarter, faster, and more systemic adaptation. Its overall objective is to support at least 150 European regions and communities in becoming climate resilient by 2030. The specific goals foreseen by this mission can be summarized as follows: 1) prepare Europe to deal with climate disruptions; 2) accelerate the transition to a healthy and prosperous future within safe planetary boundaries; 3) scale up solutions for resilience that will trigger transformations in society.¹

The first objective consists in ensuring support to European regions and communities to enable them to better comprehend, plan and cope with climate risks and opportunities.²

The second target requires the collaboration with at least 150 regions to speed up their evolution for a climate resilient future, assisting them in the formulation of innovative pathways and in experimenting with solutions.³ It necessitates the mobilisation of support and engagement, the formulation of a vision and transformative pathways to climate resilience, innovation, and testing of transformative solutions.

The EU will foster cooperation for international climate resilience and preparedness by, for instance, promoting reinforced global engagement with strategic partners on adaptation measures.⁴ China and India are considered to be the upcoming markets: with Beijing being crucial to work on carbon pricing systems on a technical level, while with New Delhi the adaptation issue is at stake due to the floods impacting the country. The global competition on green technology is an important aspect to take into consideration for the near future. Several climate challenges are impacting countries such as Portugal, Spain, and Germany: droughts and water scarcity, extreme weather events, as well as forest fires and desertification. The EU promotes types of innovation that should be supported for climate adaptation, from social, to financial, policy and cultural innovation. There are still blind spots to be covered: what does the green transition mean for third countries? What about the social dimension?

¹ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change*, COM (2021) 82 final, February 24, 2021. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:82:FIN>

² European Commission, *Horizon Europe – Work Programme 2023-2024 Missions*, European Commission Decision C (2022)7550 of December 6, 2022, p. 8. https://sciencebusiness.net/sites/default/files/inline-files/wp-12-missions_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf

³ *Ibid*, loc.cit

⁴ European Commission, *EU Adaptation Strategy*, European Commission, n.d. https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/eu-adaptation-strategy_en

More research can delay the needed action, and the EU must focus on the opportunities the transition presents in delivering a greener and better future for all of us.

I. How to convince sceptics

Climate change is no longer a contested issue, and its effects are being felt more and more everywhere in the world. Adaptation measures need to be accelerated through combined efforts. How can we do this? How much effort does this entail? Who should be involved? To facilitate the adoption of adaptation measures, the public sector should provide incentives such as:

- **Economic benefits:** encourage tax reductions or impose taxes for non-compliance with climate adaptation targets;
- **European Green Capital Award:** increase its benefits;
- **Tourism:** countries affected by climate change, especially touristic areas, are seeing their tourism reduced due to the reduction of coastal area, and less enjoyable conditions;
- **Reputation:** Adopting climate-resilient measures can improve the reputation and branding of a city or region, demonstrating its commitment to sustainability and attracting businesses and tourists who value climate action.

II. Towards concrete objectives

The EU Adaptation Mission plans to stimulate investment and implement selected projects through the Implementation Platform. However, it seems challenging to see this objective being met without setting legally binding targets and measures. When there are commitments to 'establish' and 'develop' tools these are remarkably vague and contain no deadlines or further details as to how they will be achieved. Concrete and legally binding measures are necessary to ensure that climate adaptation is recognized as a political priority and is implemented across the EU and across sectors. Some of the measures the EU could implement are:

1. Set **binding and measurable targets**, reflecting an increase in ambition and that progress on the objectives of the 2013 Adaptation Strategy has been insufficient;
2. Establish a strong **monitoring and review process** with clear assessment indicators, informed by science, to ensure the proper implementation of the Strategy;
3. Focus on nature-based solutions, especially synergies with targets in the **EU Biodiversity Strategy**, including on nature protection and restoration for biodiversity and climate;
4. Achieve **climate-resilient, sustainable use and management of water** by improving water allocation as well as the enforcement of the Water Framework Directive (WFD);

5. Recognize climate adaptation as a priority for the post Covid-19 green recovery, make EU funding available for climate adaptation and reform **subsidies** to support adaptation measures;
6. Require **better mainstreaming** of adaptation across all sectors and policies, especially agriculture, water, forestry, fisheries, building sector, renovation and spatial planning.

III. Internal and external aspects of the European Green Deal

- Available internal policy tools for climate governance in the EU

Climate governance in the EU is framed, under the Environment chapter of the TFEU, as a shared competence and implemented through measures affecting energy sources and use in the Member-States. EU climate policies can be regarded as not being sufficient to achieve the 1.5°C target, and modelled pathways show how the EU risks failing to meet its objectives of reducing its emissions by 55% by 2030.⁵

To stay on track, the available and foreseen EU policy tools should consider five criteria: **effectiveness** towards achieving the desired objective; **efficiency** based on a cost-benefit analysis; political and administrative **feasibility**; to what extent can the policy be adapted - **flexibility** - to different contexts/regions/Member-states and if the policy is **compatible** with existing EU and national frameworks, and in line with current beliefs and ideas. Combining these criteria highlights the role of **regulatory** or **market-based** policy tools, as they provide for the most effective and efficient policy-action. The use of framework directives, defining only essential principles, gives Member States the implementation flexibility needed to adjust the policy to national and regional contexts. However, there is here a risk of **backlog** that may jeopardise the achievement of climate goals. To avoid this, the EU should continue to promote and further foster the **exchange of best-practices**, through transnational networks or the Covenant of Mayors, between Member-States. In addition, regulatory frameworks should be assessed to reinforce investments in non-polluting technologies and innovation – namely in **non-ETS tracks** like **railway transport** -, instead of further promoting schemes where to pay to pollute is more appealing than to avoid polluting.⁶

Furthermore, **consumer empowerment** should be promoted. This could be supported by an EU-wide platform similar to the Australian platform “Good On You”. The Proposal for a **Directive on Green Claims** is strongly supported and encouraged.

⁵ Country overview – EU. In Climate Action Tracker. Available online: <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/eu/policies-action/>

⁶ Kulovesi K., Oberthür S. “Assessing the EU’s 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework: Incremental change toward radical transformation?” in *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law*, 29(2), 2020, 151-166.

- International climate negotiations and the role of the EU

The EU's green **leadership** in international forums and with bilateral relations is increasingly visible⁷. Yet, its green leadership is still not consolidated in forums like the G20, that gathers the world's biggest polluters and where climate and environmental discussions are still not at the top of the agenda. The EU likewise holds the exclusive competence to sign international deals, including trade deals. These two elements should be mirrored in the **external aspect of EU climate and environmental policies**.

To undertake the objectives of the EGD, the EU needs its partners to also engage in climate action. This should reflect in **strong environmental and climate provisions and language** when negotiating trade deals. At the same time, the accomplishment of the EGD should not be done at the expense of third parties. **Negative externalities and impacts in the supply chains of the EU** should be taken into consideration when assessing the progress on delivering the EGD climate goals.

IV. How to transform European societies and economies to be resilient and adaptive to climate change

The transformation to a zero-carbon society can always be seen as a personal journey of change. This change might include, but is not limited to: the use of more public transport, car sharing, bikes; accept longer travel times implied in some carbon neutral transportation (trains compared to airplanes); (if financially possible) invest more in climate-neutral transport/climate resilient housing/renewable and energy-efficient technology; sustainable holidays (transport CO₂ vs. time spent). Besides the individual level, EU companies should equally be part of the transformation, given their core role in the European economic system. A greater openness for alternative models of work will be needed, including for instance: more time between meetings to allow travel via train; investment in climate-neutral buildings; more flexibility in working hours/teleworking in periods of extreme heat or cold.

Indeed, the personal behavioural and economic shift required for a sustainable future should be accompanied and facilitated by the EU and its member states' policies. Hence, these policies should especially consider economic burdens and health issues linked to the social and ethnic background of European citizens, to enable a truly just green transition for everyone.

A just transformation of housing: housing will need to adapt to deal with higher temperatures and possible extreme weather events. Both of those fields are greatly related to the social status and economic resources of citizens. While more advantaged social groups will be able to fund the adaptation of housing towards more sustainable and resilient models - through the installation of, for example, electric fans or other types of heat blocking - disadvantaged social groups will not have the financial resources to implement such changes.

⁷ Delbeke, Jos, and Peter Vis, eds. *Eu Climate Policy Explained*. London: Routledge, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2834/656859>.

Therefore, EU MS subsidies should prioritize supporting the green transformation of social housing / lower-income social groups. Moreover, EU social cohesion funds might increasingly support projects dealing with a just transition of housing and other aspects, as well as include them as priority in their programming.

Moreover, cars are a major emitter of CO₂ in the EU. Thus, investing in a green transition in public transport should be on the agenda of the EU/MS/regions/cities. Possibilities to transform transport might be the creation of affordable tickets for local (climate-neutral) transport (cf. 49€ tickets in Germany). Moreover, there will be a need to build new train/bus/bike infrastructure. Many cities have great potential for being rebuilt in an ecological way, for instance, integrating bike lanes in the city infrastructure (cf. Grenoble as former EU Green capital). Lastly, it might be indispensable to try once more to implement taxes on CO₂ intensive transport while at the same time lowering prices for climate-neutral transport. Indeed, the additional taxes could be used by MS to invest in green transport infrastructure or to lower prices for trains.

Lastly, more research and resources should be spent on developing measures for a just economic transition protecting health: workers from disadvantaged social groups often tend to be physically exposed to heat and other forms of extreme weather during their working hours (e.g., construction workers). It will be important to think about how to safeguard the health of these workers via new models of working hours, including hardship allowances if work needs to be shifted to late or early hours on the day and protection measures against weather events, among others.

V. Blind spots in current EU policies and EGD

- In the EU

The social dimension: EU funding for climate projects (cf. Interreg) might only be granted with a strategy on how to support a socially just transition; the acceleration of specific R&I on the needs for climate adaptation and resilience of 'vulnerable' groups (including the development of a definition of vulnerability); increasing research on the different health effects of climate change depending on social group/employment and how to build up resilience / protect these people.

A European climate resilience: R&I on how to construct an EU electricity grid which is resistant to climate change and natural disasters, hence the diversification of energy carriers (if one region experiences a natural disaster, another region provides energy); Similar to the EU energy cooperation, it might equally be necessary to implement an intra-European support system for water supply and other fundamental issues: it would include creating a cooperation that exceeds knowledge exchange and combines regional climate risk tools with practical support cooperation / infrastructure building (-> Combination of EU programs?)

- Globally

Fostering a Global Green Transition: to successfully manage a European Green Transition, critical raw materials (CRM) from third countries are needed for green technology. The CRM are mostly found in developing countries and require mining procedures that themselves are a risk for the local environment and society. Therefore, EU policies should ensure the respect of broader environmental standards (including soil, water, and air pollution) and address social inequalities through, for instance, extending the Sustainable Due Diligence Directive to the mentioned environmental impacts and the Conflict Minerals Regulation to other critical raw materials such as cobalt.

Supporting third countries' Green Transition: next to addressing environmental and social impacts of CRM, the EU could support countries vital to their green transition. Hence, a possibility would be the inclusion of third countries/regions outside of the Europe in Horizon with priority on countries supporting the EU's green transition through supply of CRM/green energy (similar to the new intl. Interreg partnerships); Moreover, to boost local development, a further path might be to partially enable the local processing of extracted raw materials and local use of produced renewable energies/hydrogen.

Green Hydrogen partnerships: many of the EU's new Green Hydrogen partnerships are with neighbouring Mediterranean countries. Here, an integration of Mediterranean partners in the EU energy grid (long-term) and in Horizon Europe's R&I on climate adaptation and resilience might be a way to support the EU's and their green transition via enhanced green energy security.

Conclusion

The climate change adaption part of the paper has outlined specific challenges for the climate adaptation strategy.

First, to ensure the acceptance of climate policies and balance the losses from climate change, the EU must provide some economic benefits to citizens.

Second, the implementation platform faces challenges as it does not include legally binding targets. The commitments to climate adaption should be binding, detailed, and monitored. They could also focus on nature-based solutions and review the allocation of water resources. The mainstreaming of adaptation across all policy sectors should be a priority too.

Third, to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal, the EU should work both on its internal and external action. In other to avoid the risk of a backlog, the EU should promote the exchange of best-practices through trans-national networks. Additionally, regulatory frameworks should be favoured in areas not covered by the ETS. The creation of platforms and recommendations to empower citizens in making 'greener' choices should also be encouraged. Internationally, the EU should also try to include climate and environmental policy dimensions in its trade deals with third countries.

Four, making the EU the first climate neutral continent implies that society must undergo changes. Individual changes are necessary, but companies should also heavily contribute to the transformation by supporting citizens in their changes as well as by undertaking changes themselves. To leave no one behind in the transition, European subsidies should favour low-income social groups. This would improve the affordability of low-emission products for these groups.

Lastly, as the EU will require specific raw materials to create green technologies, mainly coming from third countries, it should ensure that its environmental standards are respected along the value chain. The EU could also support third countries essential for the EU's green transition in their own transition pathways.

CHAPTER 2

CLIMATE-NEUTRAL AND SMART CITIES

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Chapter 2: Climate-neutral and smart cities

Introduction

The Horizon Europe Mission: Climate-neutral and Smart Cities is a crucial initiative aimed at addressing the challenges posed by urbanization and climate change. With 74% of EU citizens living in cities⁸, urban areas are responsible for a significant proportion of greenhouse gas emissions, making them a key focus in the fight against climate change. At the same time, cities face a range of other environmental, socioeconomic, and technological challenges, from air pollution and congestion to housing shortages and inequality.

The aim of the mission is to deliver 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030, as well as to ensure that these cities act as experimentation and innovation hubs to enable all European cities to follow suit by 2050. This will involve supporting research and innovation to develop new solutions for sustainable and livable urban environments.

Accordingly, in this part of the report we propose recommendations for improving urban citizen participation and ownership on the one hand, and for strengthening urban multi-level governance on the other.

I. Involving the Citizens in the Cities mission: How to address citizens' participation and ownership?

Achieving the ambitious aim of 100 climate-neutral and smart cities in the European Union by 2030 requires a large set of actions. The engagement of citizens is especially important in that regard, both to ensure that those most directly affected by the transition of their city are favourable towards the goal of transforming it into a showcase of sustainability and climate neutrality, and to keep up to the promise of the European Green Deal that 'no one is left behind'. This section outlines the main ideas of the TellUs participants on how to address citizens' participation and ownership on the local level.

Enhancing participation

The Cities mission is already pursuing a participatory approach to ensure citizens' voices are heard in making the 100 chosen cities climate-neutral and smart by 2030. We propose to strengthen the participatory aspect of the mission even further as this will help to ensure the overall success of the mission but is also likely to produce co-benefits in other areas. These co-

⁸ Eurostat. "Urban Europe: Statistics on cities, towns and suburbs. Executive Summary." 3 December 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Urban_Europe_-_statistics_on_cities,_towns_and_suburbs_-_executive_summary#City_and_urban_developments

benefits can incentivize other cities to join their chosen peers on the path toward climate neutrality.

Specifically, we propose:

- **Engage all relevant communities in your city in the mission:** To overcome possible (and probable) resistance, cities should start by mapping out all relevant local and stakeholder communities within their cities to ensure that all groups of the local society are aware of the objective to become climate-neutral and can be committed to contributing their part to this objective. Representatives of each of these communities should be involved in the deliberations and function as an interface to their respective communities, feeding their ideas into the discussions on the city level and reporting back to their communities about the progress towards climate neutrality. This need for involvement applies particularly to the drawing up of the Climate City Contracts but is also highly relevant for the other aspects of the mission. In engaging all their communities, cities can also create positive momentum for their ambition up to the point where initially reluctant groups will join the efforts for reaching climate neutrality.
- **Let citizens experiment:** The Cities mission follows a “demand-led approach”⁹ Taking this seriously entails not only allowing citizens to participate in the discussions on how to make their city climate-neutral by 2030 with their proposals but also providing them with the opportunity to implement these proposals. This implementation can – depending on the proposal – happen in the first pilot phase on a very confined geographical unit, such as a single city district. The citizens should (with the help of experts) be the ones in charge of implementation and should also provide feedback. In case this feedback is positive, the proposal should be scaled up to the level of the entire city. By consequently pursuing such a participatory approach, the cities themselves profit while simultaneously testing “a new model of city governance”¹⁰, something the Mission Board has called for.

Ensuring ownership

The participation of citizens in developing ideas for realizing climate neutrality is only the first step to ensuring their meaningful involvement in the Cities mission. It is at least equally important to make sure that their proposals are seized on, and follow-up measures are taken. In that regard, the role of the European Commission as facilitator and coordinator is crucial.

⁹ European Commission. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on European Missions*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021, p. 6.

¹⁰ European Commission. *Proposed Mission: 100 Climate-neutral Cities by 2030—by and for the Citizens*. Report of the Mission Board for climate-neutral and smart cities. Independent Expert Report. Brussels: European Commission, 2020, p. 5.

Specifically, we propose:

- **Make citizens ambassadors for climate-neutral cities:** As the Commission Communication states, the 100 chosen cities should “inspire remaining cities in Europe and beyond to become climate neutral”¹¹. Who would be better suited to play that inspiring role than the very own inhabitants of our cities? Cooperation formats already in place can be used to support the sharing of best practices. Via the mission platform and the Global Knowledge Exchange Centre for Urban Climate Neutrality¹², cities and, potentially, the future citizen ambassadors for climate-neutral cities can exchange best practices, share their experiences and find solutions that are working in other cities and that they might want to adopt. Cities should also use their existing networks of twinned cities for that purpose.
- **Connect citizens’ ideas to the European level:** Besides the exchange on an inter-local level between cities, citizens should also see that their ideas and actions have an impact on the European level. To achieve that, the European Commission should use its existing tools to involve citizens more directly. The mission platform could be opened for the proposed citizens’ ambassadors for climate neutrality as well. By doing that, these ambassadors could exchange not only on implementing individual proposals for achieving climate neutrality but also on how to best ensure meaningful citizen participation along that process. That would also allow the European Commission to engage in a direct dialogue with these ambassadors and thereby to strengthen its coordinating role.

II. From the EU to the city-level: How do we make multilevel governance succeed?

The transition towards climate-neutral and smart cities requires action as well as coordination and cooperation between all levels of government, from the European Commission to national governments and local authorities. Effective multi-level governance also stems from the active involvement of all stakeholders in local policymaking, including businesses, civil society organizations, and citizens of urban areas. This section outlines the main ideas of the TellUs participants on how to reinforce multilevel governance on the local level in three main areas: digitalisation and data usage, funding, and institutional and policy coherence.

Digitalisation and data usage

In order to deliver smart cities, policymaking has to address the current and the potentially upcoming digital challenges. Additionally, it has to improve data availability, data collection, and the use of data and digital tools in urban solutions.

¹¹ European Commission, Communication (op. cit.), p. 12.

¹² Cf. <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101095976>, retrieved 5 April 2023.

Specifically, we propose:

- **Wider deployment of digital solutions in local policymaking.** ICT applications could be used to fix urban problems through a holistic approach, involving technical, organizational and behavioral levels. Existing urban data in the form of real-time information from cameras and sensors and ICT connectivity and interoperability could be used to make cities more efficient. For instance, innovative digital solutions could be used in building energy efficiency, transport and traffic management, and water and waste management.
- **Better use and sharing of urban mobility data.** Data and digital tools can be used to make urban mobility sustainable and smart by enabling more efficient and effective transportation systems, reducing congestion, improving safety, and promoting sustainable modes of transport. For instance, digital tools such as sensors and cameras can be used not only to monitor traffic flow in real-time but also to manage parking more efficiently, which can help to reduce congestion. Furthermore, MaaS platforms can use data from different modes of transportation to provide users with a seamless, integrated transportation experience. For this, we propose to develop open data platforms to enable the sharing of transportation data between different stakeholders, such as city officials, researchers, and private sector partners.
- **Develop anticipatory responses to the disruptive forces of the digital transition.** The digital transition has the potential to disrupt existing systems and practices in cities, which may lead to job displacement and changes in the nature of work or may raise concerns about data privacy and security. Therefore, we propose developing frameworks for assessing the potential impacts of digital technologies on cities, as well as establishing mechanisms for monitoring and responding to any emerging risks. Moreover, we encourage investment in building capacity and digital skills of urban governments and stakeholders to effectively manage the digital transition. Finally, we suggest the development of ethical guidelines and principles for the use of technologies.

Securing private and public funding

Encouraging and securing private and public funding in sustainable and smart solutions can be challenging, but it is critical to achieving the mission's objectives.

Specifically, we propose:

- **Conditional funding.** Following the recommendation of the European Court of Auditors¹³, we also suggest that the European Commission should condition access to

¹³ European Court of Auditors. "Special report 06/2020: Sustainable Urban Mobility in the EU: No substantial improvement is possible without Member States' commitment." 3 April 2020.
<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=53246>

funding to the existence of robust sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMP) at the Member States level.

- **Encourage public-private partnerships.** The Commission could encourage the formation of public-private partnerships to finance sustainable and smart solutions for EU cities. Some examples could be: (1) energy efficiency projects for public buildings between public authorities and energy service companies; (2) sustainable transport initiatives with private mobility companies, such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure, bike-sharing programs, and low-emission public transport; (3) circular economy projects for waste reduction and recycling initiatives; and (4) smart cities technologies projects, such as smart lighting, smart waste management, and smart building systems.
- **Provide technical assistance.** Very often the use of European funds is not optimised due to a lack of knowledge among local authorities and stakeholders on how to access these funds. Therefore, the Commission could provide technical assistance to local authorities in project development, proposal writing, and project management. in order to help them access public funding.
- **Promote tax incentives.** The European Commission could promote tax incentives to encourage private sector investment in sustainable and smart solutions for EU cities. For example, this could include tax breaks for companies investing in renewable energy infrastructure or tax credits for individuals purchasing electric vehicles.

Reinforcing institutional and policy coherence

Achieving climate neutrality alongside other environmental and social goals at a city level requires coherence between a wide range of policy areas: transport, housing, environment, and education, to name just a few. This goes hand-in-hand with ensuring coherence among and within the different levels of institutions which are responsible for the design and implementation of these policies.

Specifically, we propose:

- **Strengthen the Committee of the Regions (CoR), and in particular the role of cities within the CoR:** As many of the members of the CoR already represent the city level, we recommend creating a city sub-group within the CoR which is not grouped by party affiliation but rather by a set of city characteristics. These city characteristics could include size, median per capita income, geographic location, or other factors affecting the transition path of cities to ensure a needs-based policy evaluation beyond party lines. This sub-group could develop a separate set of recommendations alongside those developed by the CoR as a whole, with a specific focus on the city level and the requirements arising from the specific city characteristics. This format would likewise serve as an informal forum for exchange between the representatives of the different cities to facilitate the passing on of good practice examples. Finally, the Commission

could set out guidelines to further encourage the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, and the Commission itself to consult the CoR for topics beyond those for which there is a legal requirement to do so.

- **Create a Cities Officer/Adviser position within each relevant Directorate-General (DG) of the Commission:** These Cities Officers would have the triple role of ensuring policy coherence within their DG, across DGs, and between the Commission and cities. First, by ensuring the city level and their transition is taken into consideration in the work within the different units of their DG. Second, by meeting regularly with the other Cities Officers within the Commission to ensure policy coherence between the different policy areas. And third, they could have monthly meetings with the city-level city advisers to ensure that EU-level action is aligned with the needs of cities and to learn from the innovative ideas implemented by other cities. This knowledge would be carried back into the DGs and directly feed into their policymaking processes.
- **Ensure coherence between green (and other) city initiatives and make them accessible to citizens:** Many citizens are not aware of initiatives such as the European Green Capital and Leaf Awards, the Green City Accord, the Covenant of Mayors, and the many other (green) city initiatives, including the Mission Cities. To address this, an overarching framework should be created which groups all of these initiatives under one title and on one webpage. On this page the different contributions of each of these initiatives and their relationship with each other should be highlighted and a search function could allow users to search for their city in order to find out whether it is part of one (or more) of these programs. Creating cross-references between this page and local initiatives could raise awareness of EU-level programs at local level and allow citizens to use this tool to find local initiatives, thereby further showcasing the interlinkages between the different governance levels.
- **Align (green) city initiatives with just transition considerations by specifically targeting the most vulnerable (cities) first.** In line with the Just Transition Fund Regulation's aim to 'leave no one behind', existing and future initiatives targeting the city level should not only go beyond frontrunner cities as has been done with the Mission Cities but even explicitly target cities which display vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities can either be linked to the sustainable transition (e.g., economic dependence on emissions-heavy industries) or exist independently (e.g., low income and/or employment profile). Especially initiatives linked to funding should ensure that this funding first and foremost goes towards transition projects which address structural inequalities by providing disproportionate advantages to disadvantaged groups in society. Similarly, cities should be required to include these considerations in their climate plans, or any other plans they draw up within the framework of the green city initiatives supported by the EU. If these external vulnerabilities and inequalities are

not addressed, “it is likely that those already furthest behind will be marginalized even further”¹⁴.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted several shortcomings in the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities mission and has attempted to propose practical solutions to address them.

First, **citizen participation and ownership** are essential to ensure that those most directly affected by the transformation of their cities are involved in it. To that end, we have proposed stakeholder engagement initiatives in both the design and the implementation phases, as well as an ambassador’s program that can promote inter-city dialogue and strengthen citizen engagement with the EU institutions.

Second, regarding the promotion of **data-driven and other digital tools**, we propose a wider deployment of digital solutions in local policymaking, an effective use of mobility data to enhance the sustainability and efficiency of public transport systems, and the development of measures to prevent potential negative effects of the digital transformation of cities.

Moreover, securing **private and public funding** has been identified as a key challenge. To that end, we propose conditioning EU funding on the existence of solid sustainable urban mobility plans, providing technical assistance to cities to optimize the use of funds, promoting public-private partnerships, and implementing tax incentives.

Lastly, to ensure **institutional and policy coherence** in a project that includes many intersecting policy areas, we propose strengthening the Committee of the Regions, including the creation of a city sub-group therein, establishing a Cities Officer position within relevant Commission Directorate-Generals, aligning the mission with other green city initiatives, and incorporating just transition considerations.

¹⁴ Simo Sarkki et al., “Embracing Policy Paradoxes: EU’s Just Transition Fund and the Aim ‘to Leave No One Behind,’” *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 22, no. 4 (December 16, 2022): 761–92, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-022-09584-5>, p. 773.



CHAPTER 3

**PREVENTION, CURE,
AND CARE – WHAT CAN
THE EU DO FOR PEOPLE
FIGHTING CANCER AND
THEIR COMMUNITIES?**

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Chapter 3: Prevention, cure, and care - What can the EU do for people fighting cancer and their communities?

Introduction

Cancer is an increasingly pressing societal challenge, diagnosed in 2.7 million people and taking 1.3 million lives yearly in the EU ¹⁵. If nothing is done to address diverse factors such as aging populations, unhealthy lifestyles, unfavorable health determinants, environmental and working conditions, cancer-related deaths in the EU are set to increase by more than 24% by 2035 ¹⁶.

Tackling cancer has been a priority for the European Commission since a first programme on the matter, the Europe Against Cancer Plan, was adopted in 1986. ¹⁷ Since then, fighting cancer has become a key aspect of the nascent 'European Health Union'. ¹⁸ A holistic policy approach to cancer is currently being taken, addressing prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment as well as improving the quality of life of cancer patients and survivors. This is being done among others by Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, which was unveiled in 2021 and outlines substantive actions to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer care as well as support structural improvements for a more sustainable cancer pathway. ¹⁹ There are many synergies between Europe's beating Cancer Plan and Horizon Europe's mission on cancer, both programs being designed to complement each other. Horizon Europe's cancer mission in particular aims to improve the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030, through prevention, cure and for those affected by cancer including their families, allowing them to live longer and better. The specific objectives of the mission include: Understand; Prevent what is preventable; Optimise diagnostics and treatment; Support quality of life; Ensure equitable access.

Based on the European Commission's holistic policy approach, the policy recommendations developed below are in line with the four core objectives of the EU Cancer Mission.

¹⁵ European Commission. "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council." Brussels, 3 February 2021, page 4.

¹⁶ "Tomorrow's lifestyles and cancer trends." International Agency for Research on Cancer. Accessed March 19, 2023. <https://gco.iarc.fr/tomorrow/en/>.

¹⁷ European Communities. Europe's Plan Against Cancer: First Programme of Action 1986-1990. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1986.

¹⁸ European Commission. "European Health Union." Priorities 2019-2024. Accessed March 19, 2023. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/european-health-union_en.

¹⁹ European Commission. "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan." Brussels, 3 February 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/default/files/non_communicable_diseases/docs/2021_cancer_plan_en.pdf.

Objective 1: Understanding of cancer

I. Empower the work of the ECIS – European Cancer Information System

The ECIS is an EU initiative that enables the analysis of incidence, mortality, and survival data for major types of cancer across Europe, offering the most up-to-date information on indicators that quantify the burden of cancer. Through this resource, scientists, researchers, innovators and practitioners can examine geographical patterns and temporal trends. It is a useful pan-European initiative to support broader understanding of cancer. The ECIS is managed by the JRC of the European Commission. Broader collaboration between the JRC and Horizon Europe (DG RTD) can be useful to further evolve this useful tool for researchers in medicine and public health in the domain of cancer.

We propose the **elaboration of a new database on elderly cancer** like the one already in the ECIS for childhood cancer. It is important to remember that in the EU, a majority of new cancer cases (over 60%) and cancer deaths (over 70%) affect individuals aged 65 and older.²⁰ As the population of the EU continues to age, this proportion is likely to increase, posing a significant challenge for healthcare systems. Research on specific elderly cancers can be different than the current mainstream research stream in the matter, due to differences in metabolism and neurodevelopment's, among others. Therefore, more well-researched and specific information for this type of cancer is a necessary tool for this project.

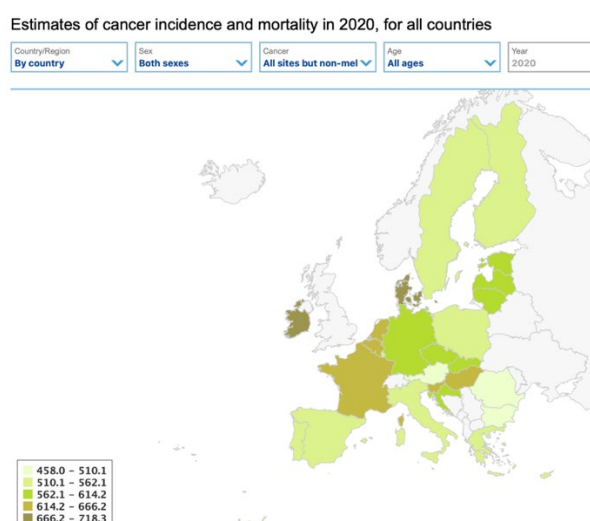


Figure 1: Screenshot of the ECIS tool (<https://ecis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>)

²⁰ European Parliament. "European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2022 on strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer – towards a comprehensive and coordinated strategy". Brussels, 3 April 2023. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0038_EN.html

Objective 2: Prevention and early detection

II. More research projects towards a 'zero tobacco' generation

The aim of achieving a 'tobacco-free generation' as outlined in the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan aims to reduce tobacco use to less than 5% of the population by 2040. With this objective in mind and a clear intention to prevent cancer, **we recommend the development of further research activities with regards to the use of tobacco and the drugs or treatments used to reduce consumption.** Specifically, electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products, and novel tobacco products should be considered as well. Projects funded by the Commission could include a complete evaluation of the risks of using these products compared to other tobacco products. Additionally, a list of substances contained in and emitted by these products should be established at the European level. While electronic cigarettes could potentially aid smokers in quitting, it is also important to ensure that they are not appealing to non-smokers (including minors). To this end, the Commission is called to fund projects that evaluate, among others, which flavors in e-cigarettes are particularly attractive to minors and propose a ban on these flavors within the framework of the Tobacco Products Directive. The Commission should also propose a ban on all characteristic flavors in heated tobacco products and novel tobacco products. More resources on the development and timely supervision of new quit smoking products can also be promoted at the European level.

III. Emphasis on vaccines to 'prevent what is preventable'

At a time when vaccine hesitancy is on the rise, **it is more important than ever to inform the wider population of some easily available shots which prevent cancer.** The general public does not necessarily equate cancer prevention with vaccination, which represents a missed opportunity in the fight against cancer. HPV vaccination could prevent more than 90% of cancers caused by HPV (cervical cancer, oropharyngeal cancer, anal cancer, vulvar and vaginal cancer as well as penile cancer) from ever developing²¹. The hepatitis B vaccine can prevent infection with the hepatitis B virus, thereby reducing the risk of developing liver cancer. Another example is the pneumococcal vaccine, which can reduce the risk of developing certain types of infections, including pneumonia and meningitis, which in turn can increase the risk of developing some cancers.

Overall and while vaccines are not (yet?) a cure for cancer, they can be combined with other preventive measures such as healthy lifestyle choices and regular cancer screenings, to help lower the overall burden of cancer. As part of the Horizon Europe cancer mission, the prevention of cancer could be prioritized through a comprehensive information and vaccination campaign. This campaign could focus on the benefits of vaccines such as the HPV

²¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Protecting Your Patients from HPV." Last reviewed August 31, 2020. Accessed March 14, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/hcp/protecting-patients.html>.

vaccine and target a wide audience, including young people, parents, healthcare professionals, and policymakers. It should emphasize the importance of early vaccination and regular screenings to prevent cancer.

While vaccines are not a cure for cancer, they can significantly reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer. Vaccination, combined with other preventive measures such as regular and early cancer screenings, can help to lower the overall burden of cancer. A holistic approach to prevention, encompassing cancer but also other factors e.g., environmental pollution, would thus constitute an adequate strategy to "prevent what is preventable".

Objective 3: Diagnosis and treatment

IV. Access to cancer treatment anywhere in Europe, regardless of EU country of origin

As many cancer patients face difficulties in receiving appropriate treatment (e.g., language barrier, bureaucracy, lack of availability) in the Member State where they are working or temporarily residing when this is not their EU country of origin, it seems necessary to take measures to address this issue, which could be the following:

- Conduct a Europe-wide study on the propensity of cancer patients working or temporarily residing in an EU member state to return to their country of origin for treatment and on the main reasons for this care migration.
- **Develop guidelines for health care providers to facilitate the implementation of EU rules regarding the European Health Insurance Card**, particularly in the case of cancer diagnosis or treatment for persons working or temporarily residing in a Member State other than that of their origin.²² This could lead to a better understanding of the concepts of "temporary stay" and "necessary care" for health care providers, as well as for cancer patients. By extension, it may facilitate access to necessary care by providing more information to cancer patients on their rights and legislation.

²² European Parliament and Council of the European Union, « Regulation (EC) No 631/2004 of 31 March 2004 amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to members of their families moving within the Community, and Council Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71, in respect of the alignment of rights and the simplification of procedures », *OJ L 100*, 6.4.2004. ; *Council of the European Union*, "Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 of 14 June 1971 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons and their families moving within the Community", *OJ L 149*, 5.7.1971. ; European Commission, "Decision No S1 of 12 June 2009 concerning the European Health Insurance Card, *OJ C 106*, 24.4.2010. ; European Commission, "Decision No S3 of 12 June 2009 defining the benefits covered by Articles 19(1) and 27(1) of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 25(A)(3) of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council », *OJ C 106*, 24.4.2010.

Objective 4: Quality of life for patients and their families

V. Training patient advocates for policymaking

Patient advocates represent the interests and needs of cancer patients and their families in the development of cancer policies, research, and care. They are individuals who have a personal experience of cancer, either as a patient, caregiver, or family member, and who have developed the skills and knowledge to effectively represent the patient and family perspectives. They play a crucial role in ensuring that cancer policies, research, and care are patient-centered and address the needs and concerns of said patients.

In the EU, patient advocates are organized into patient organizations, which are independent, non-profit organizations that provide support and information to cancer patients and their families, advocate for policies that benefit patients, and collaborate with healthcare providers and researchers to improve cancer care.

It is therefore crucial that these patient advocates are able to intervene at different stages of the policymaking process. One central action could be tackled by the EU in the form of a **policymaking training program** that could be offered to all new representatives, in order to provide them with the best possible support in their advocacy.

By prioritizing the training of patient advocates, the Horizon Europe mission for Cancer can ensure that the patient's perspective is effectively integrated into all stages of research and treatment, leading to better outcomes for patients and their families.

VI. Fighting the stigmatization of patients and survivors

The stigmatization of patients and survivors has a direct negative impact on their careers but also on their access to specialized services (e.g., obtaining health insurance or a mortgage).²³ Two complementary actions could be proposed and are as follows:

- 1) Encourage the extension of the “Right to be forgotten” in all Member States and set up a comparative tool for financial service providers

Cancer survivors in long-term remission often experience unfair treatment in accessing financial services, such as prohibitively high premiums for loans. As such, what patient organizations refer to the “Right to be forgotten” has entered the legislation of some countries (e.g., Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Romania). It implies that people who have recovered from cancer no longer have to mention their former condition after a certain period of time when applying for a loan for instance. Bearing in mind the

²³ European Commission, “Mission on Cancer”, Implementation plan, Internal working document, September 2021.

European Parliament's call for the introduction of the "Right to be forgotten" in all the Member States by 2025 and for it to be embedded into EU legislation, the European Commission should engage with the Member States in this regard.²⁴ This could also complement the Commission's proposal under the EU's Beating Cancer Plan of developing a code of conduct "to ensure that cancer treatment developments and their improved effectiveness are reflected in the business practices of financial services providers" by a **benchmarking tool**.²⁵ While the regulatory approach seems difficult given the lack of EU competence in the health field, a code of conduct with a benchmarking tool for financial service providers seems to be the way forward. The addition of the benchmarking tool will give better visibility to cancer survivors on where to make their request while acting as 'naming & shaming' for financial service providers.

2) Develop an awareness-raising communication strategy for the general public

With the support of the Member States to reach the widest possible audience (e.g., public display, relay in national public services) –, the European Union should elaborate a communication strategy for citizens to raise awareness of the stigmas and real-life cases of difficulties and discrimination faced by patients and survivors. It should be noted that cancer patients and survivors should be included in the development of such a communication strategy. The communication campaign launched by "Working with Cancer", with the publication of the #workingwithcancer Pledge, is one example among many that the European Union could use to develop its own campaign.²⁶

Conclusion

Cancer is a growing public health concern in the EU, with aging populations, unhealthy lifestyles, and environmental and working conditions among the factors contributing to the increasing number of cancer cases and deaths. The European Commission has prioritized the fight against cancer through various initiatives, including the Europe Against Cancer Plan, the European Health Union, and the Beating Cancer Plan. The Horizon Europe mission on cancer complements these initiatives, aiming to improve the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030. The policy recommendations proposed align with the four core objectives of the EU Cancer Mission: (1) understanding cancer, (2) prevention and early detection, (3) optimizing diagnosis and treatment, and (4) supporting quality of life and equitable access. The recommendations include, among others, the development of a new database on elderly

²⁴ European Parliament, "Strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer", European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2022 on strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer – towards a comprehensive and coordinated strategy ([2020/2267\(INI\)](#)), para. 125.

²⁵ European Commission, "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan", Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, p. 20.

²⁶ "The Working with Cancer Pledge", Working with Cancer. Accessed 2 April, 2023. <https://www.workingwithcancerpledge.com>. / Here is one of the video examples of the communication campaign: <https://youtu.be/Tgn1onW7fV8>

cancer, more research projects towards a 'zero tobacco' generation, and an emphasis on vaccines to 'prevent what is preventable'. The implementation of these policies could help address the challenges posed by cancer and improve the quality of life of those affected by it.

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