

Annexes

URBACT Harvesting Report on the INTERREG consultation 2024 on the future Cohesion policy (post 2027)

December 2024

URBACT



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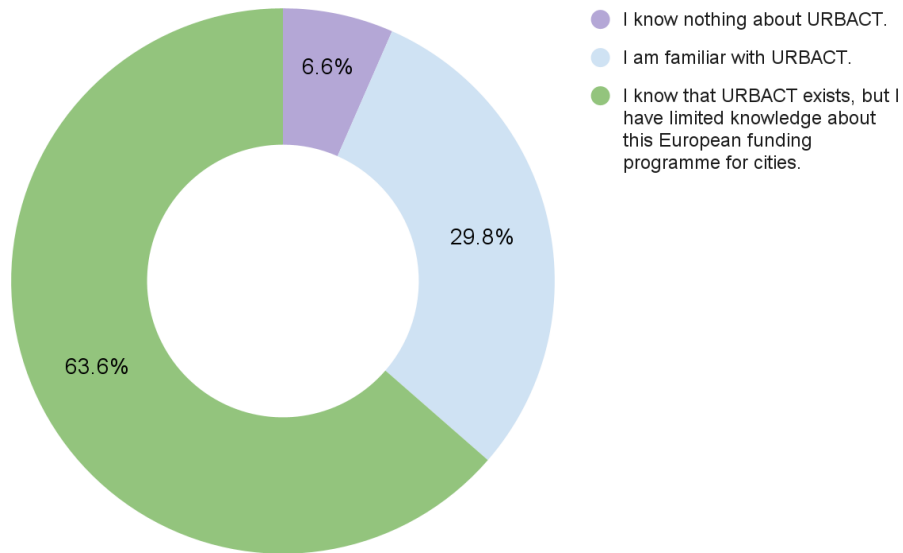
The team of experts: Irina-Alexandra Panait, Hyekyung Imottesjo, Jaan-Henrik Kain

ANNEX 1

Overview of the URBACT online survey respondents

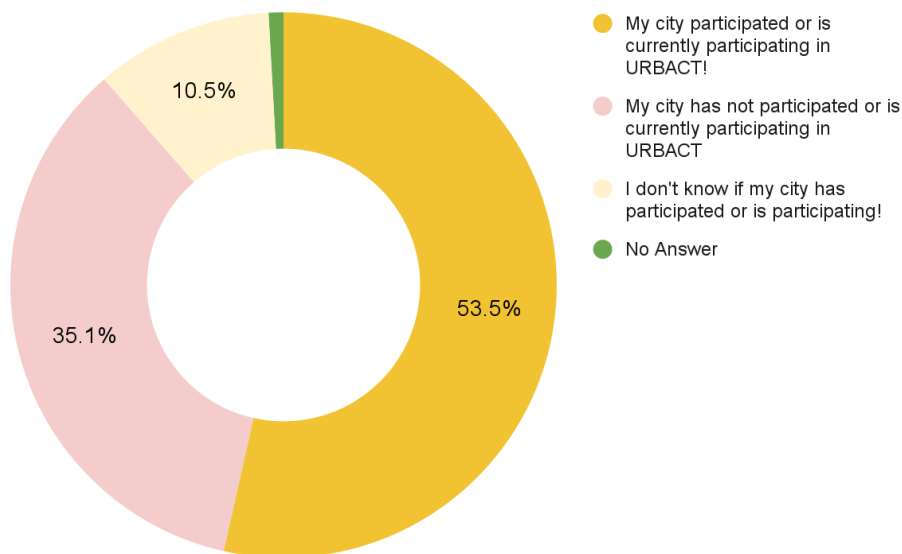
In addition to section 1.1 in the main report, this annex provides more detailed information regarding the respondents to the open online survey.

1. Level of knowledge of URBACT of the respondents



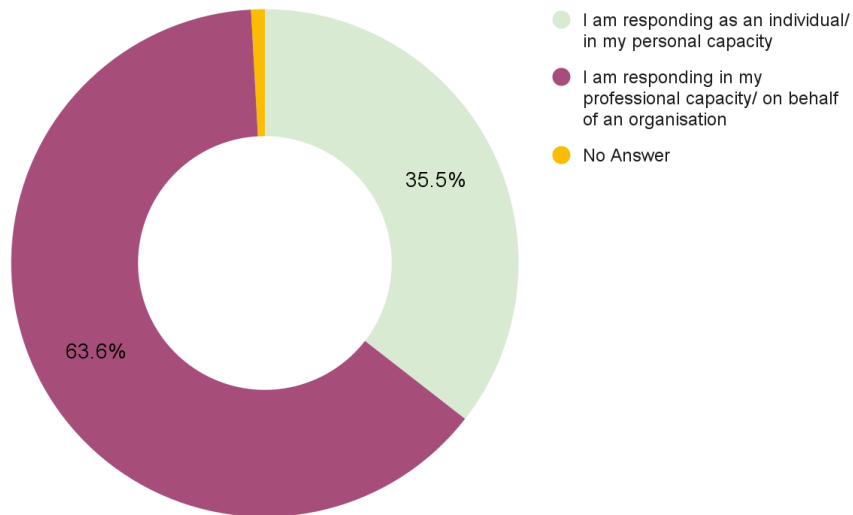
As can be seen in the chart above, most of the respondents had some knowledge about URBACT, although less than a third of them were familiar with URBACT in a more extensive manner.

2. Previous or ongoing participation in URBACT



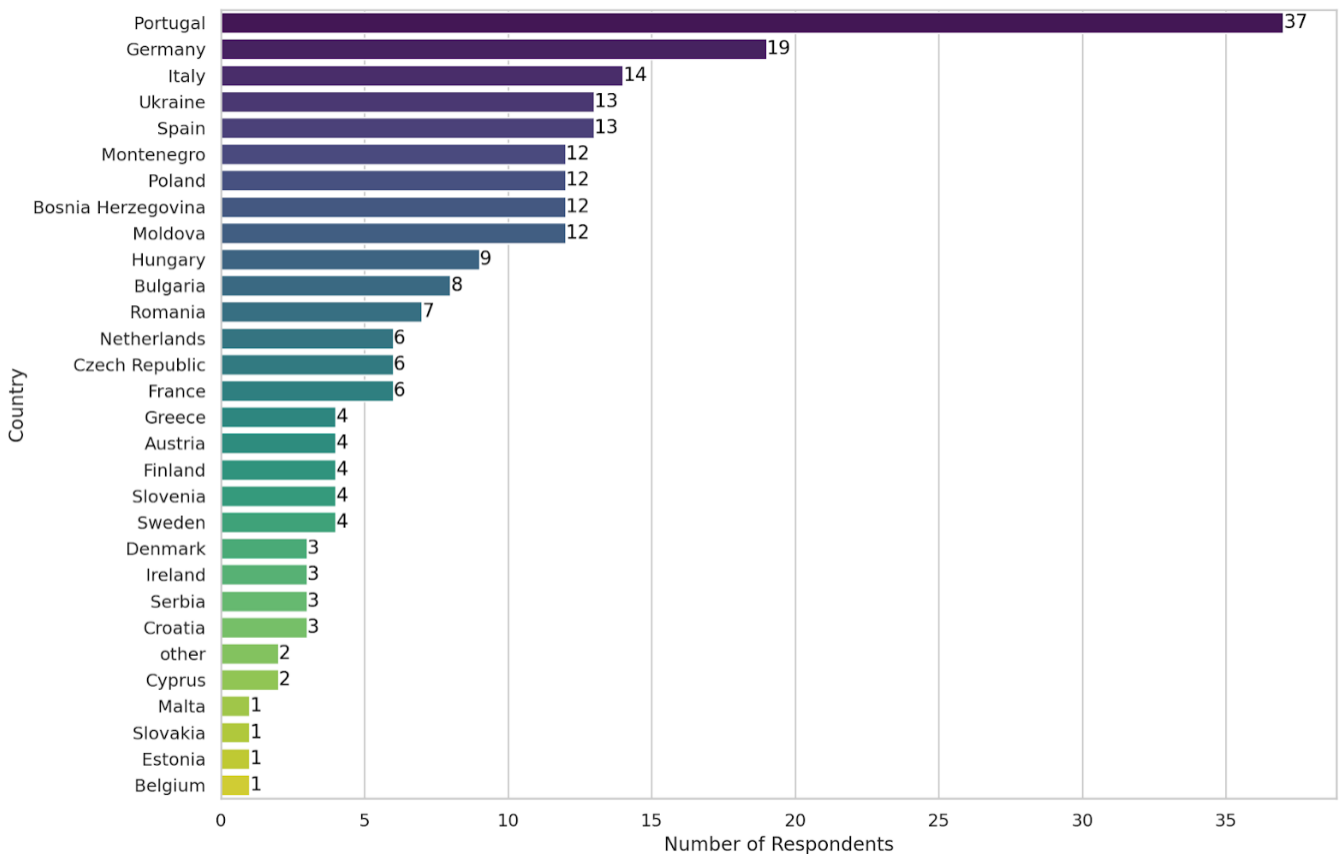
More than half of the respondents came from cities with current or previous URBACT engagement. Even so, Chart 1 seem to indicate that some of them still felt uninformed regarding how URBACT works

3. The capacity of the respondents



Almost two thirds of the respondents filled in the survey as professionals. Still, from the data it is clear that of the remaining third – although ticking the box for responding in their personal capacity – most were still urban professionals with extensive insights into their city.

4. Distribution of survey respondents by country



It should be noted that there was an uneven distribution of respondents across Europe, where some countries had many entries and other had few. However, this does not necessarily correspond to number of networks represented, since multiple entries may be linked to a single network.

ANNEX 2

List of online stakeholder survey questions by URBACT¹

1. What do you know about URBACT?
2. Your city participated or is currently participating in URBACT
3. **Do you think it is important that your city is working together with other cities from all over Europe to make cities better? (Q1)** Why? Examples: no, I do not see the need or any benefit; yes, it is important to learn from other European cities and to share good practices and knowledge, it is an opportunity to exchange with people from other European cities who face similar problems, to gain new insights and ideas, because it helps thinking outside of the box, because it gives my city more visibility, etc.

This question is asked particularly to the URBACT stakeholders. Overwhelming majority of the respondents, 226 out of 228 agrees that the cooperation is crucial in overcoming shared challenges, fostering innovation, and improving urban environment and quality of lives. Some respondents also highlight the importance of cooperation and knowledge sharing for smaller towns, municipalities, and communities for the cohesion at a neighbourhood level.

4. **What are the hot topics in your city on which you would like to exchange and share knowledge with other European cities? (Qa)** Examples: energy efficiency and affordable housing, integration, local heating and cooling plans, digital solutions for urban services, circular economy, urban green, young people, water management, civic tech, demographic changes, health, food, digital inclusion, public transport, social and physical resilience, youth work, inter-generational solidarity, homelessness, etc.
5. **Where do you see the biggest potential in your city to increase know-how and improve actions by exchanging knowledge and good practices with other European cities? (Q2)** Examples: new methods and tools for sustainable urban development, developing skills on citizens' participation towards co-creation, empowering women and young people, integrated and strategic planning, localising SDGs, setting up local development processes, driving change through stakeholder cooperation, cooperation with other levels of governance, etc.
6. **What does currently work well in your city's cooperation with other European cities and should be preserved or reinforced? (Q3)** Examples: we learn from and with our European partner cities most effectively through joint workshops, our local community (e.g. URBACT Local Group) / civil society is profiting from the European cooperation as well, we have time and a safe space to discuss openly and develop ideas together, we learn about new funding possibilities and how to approach them better, with the expert support, we get to know new tools and improve our skills, due to the national and international visibility local politicians are involved and engaged, etc.
7. **What does currently not work well in your city's cooperation with other European cities (in relation with the partners / other levels) and should be improved? (Q4)** Examples: it is difficult to transfer ideas from others to my city, our partners are too diverse and have different levels of knowledge or ambition, it would be easier to collaborate with more similar types of cities that have a comparable administration, we have too little resources (time/money) to really work together, our partners have not the same interests or are at a different stage, we do not get enough support from the URBACT Secretariat/the national level/the experts/the controllers, etc.
8. **What are the major obstacles for a good European cooperation within your city? (Q5)** Examples: we do not have the necessary language skills in our city, we have too little staff for European projects, my management thinks that European cooperation is out of scope, I have no support from my hierarchy,

¹ The question number that corresponds (e.g. Q1) or not (e.g. Qa) with the sequence of required key questions from the [European Commission's toolkit](#) is shown in brackets after each question.

local politicians think that European cooperation is a waste of time/money, I need more expert/administrative support at local level to participate successfully in a European cooperation project, etc.

9. **Are there things you would like to do with URBACT but cannot? Why? (Q6)** Examples: I would like to do activities, workshops, events for..., test concrete actions on a larger scale, exchange more with other levels (regional, national, European, international), involve guest cities or experts more flexibly, there is not enough budget for..., there is no continuity after the end of the project, there is no support for transition and implementation, there is no possibility to leverage on a successful URBACT participation (e.g. through incentives like a bonus or a certificate for the skills and capacities achieved), etc.
10. **What is the most important novelty that you would like to see in the future URBACT? (Q7)** Examples: simpler procedures, less or simplified reporting requirements, more beneficiaries, more networks, more innovative projects, more exchange between networks, more support for matchmaking, more support for implementation, simplified reimbursements (e.g. to project partners directly), more direct incentives for participation, more diverse types of networks/calls, joint investments, larger/smaller/other type of projects (what type?), etc.
11. **Is there a need for follow-up funding or for funding for implementation? What type of funding is needed and what could be potential funding sources? (Q8)** Examples: no, we have what we need; yes, we would like to implement some infrastructure projects (e.g. for the conversion of buildings or public spaces), to pool funding and do joint investments (e.g. in digital solutions), to bridge the gap between planning and implementing actions, possibility of cascade funding, funding to implement best project outputs/ideas, funding from European, national or regional sources, etc.
12. **What should be done to facilitate the work with your partners in other countries (governance)? (Q9)** Examples: we need more support and guidance from the URBACT Secretariat for..., more help from the regional/national authorities with..., more flexibility to align the activities with the cities' needs, more incentives to value good cooperation, more exchange and cooperation with the regional, national or European level on..., we want to be heard and that our suggestions are actually taken on board, we need more advocacy for cities' needs and capacities (e.g. visibility towards other programmes and policy initiatives), we need more exchange across networks, more visibility at national level, etc.
13. **What was your most valuable experience in cooperating with other European cities? (Qb)** Examples: I met colleagues from other cities who face the same challenges and learned a lot from my peers, I appreciated the support and interest in my work and this made me stronger, I learned how cooperation can work in practice and applied the tools and methods successfully with my local stakeholder group (what was the benefit?), URBACT was a spring board for my city to get visibility at the international stage/to receive other funding, URBACT created links and opportunities that lasted way beyond the project duration (how?), etc.
14. **What would be the cooperation project of your dreams? (Q10)**
15. **Do you want to add something or make a proposal?**

You are replying ...

16. ... from which type of organisation / sector?
17. ... from which city / municipality / metropolitan area?
18. ... of what size of city?
19. ... from which country?

ANNEX 3

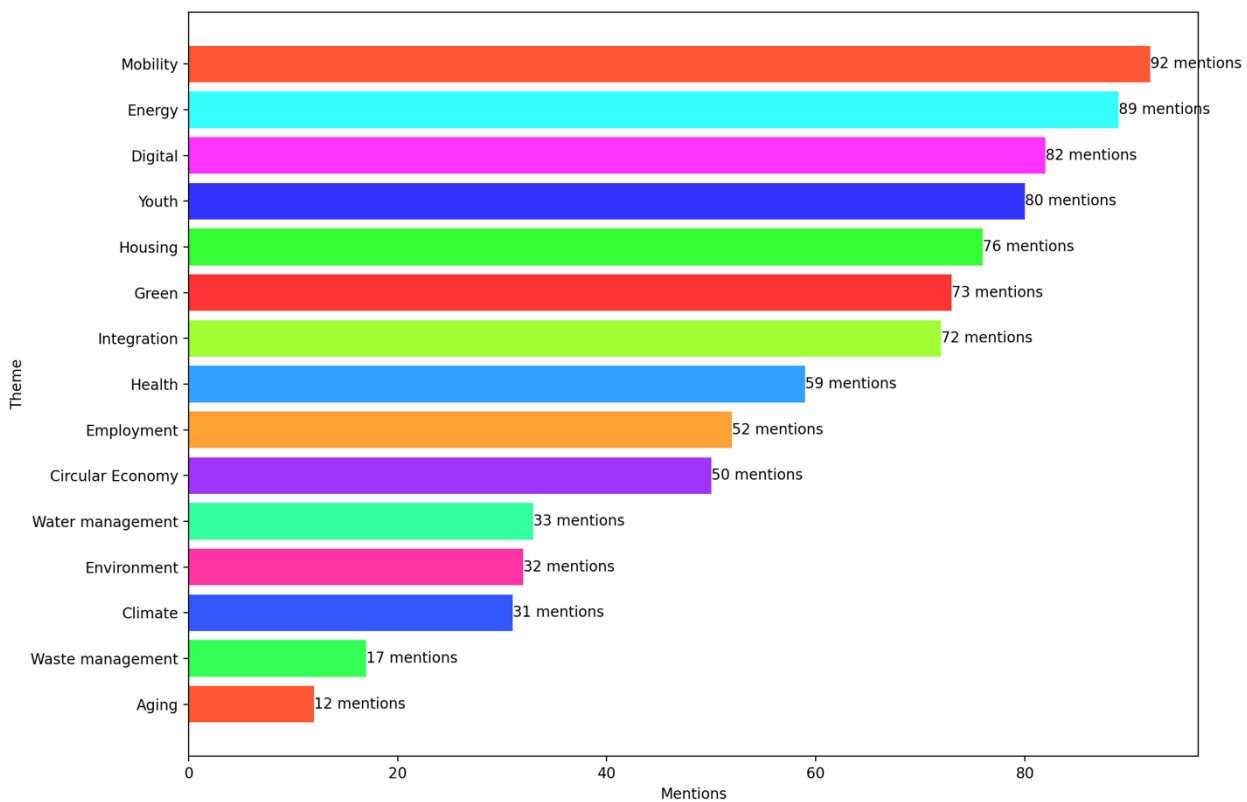
Urban Hot Topics by the URBACT online survey respondents

3.1. Number of mentions of urban hot topics by the respondents

The first insights regarding the hot topics based on the AI analysis tool were manually confirmed by ranking the topics by counting the number of mentions in the responses on the question “**What are the hot topics in your city on which you would like to exchange and share knowledge with other European cities?**”. The related concepts were manually searched and added to the identified hot topics. For instance, the word ‘home’ is searched and added to the number of mentions for the topic of housing, and ‘heating & cooling’ were manually searched, counted and added to the topic of energy.

- **Mobility** 92 mentions ex., Sustainable mobility, Micro mobility, Public transport
- **Energy** 89 mentions ex., Efficient energy, Energy transition, Heating & cooling
- **Digital** 82 mentions ex., Digital services, Digital inclusion, Digitalisation, Civic tech
- **Youth** 80 mentions ex., Youth engagement, Youth employment
- **Housing** 76 mentions ex., Affordable housing, Homelessness
- **Green** 73 mentions ex., Urban green, Green structure

Themes and their corresponding mentions



3.2. The priority of the hot topics based on the city sizes

The terminologies of hot topic themes were searched through word count in the responses for the online survey question: “What are the hot topics in your city on which you would like to exchange and share knowledge with other European cities?” The number of mentions for each terminology was counted based on the city clusters based on the sizes. The graph below shows the percentage of each term mentioned among the top 15 hot topics (thematic) identified in 3.1 in each city cluster. Take note of the different methodologies used between 3.1 and 3.2.

For 3.1, the word search and count method were applied by analysing the related terminologies for a specific thematic concept. For ‘Mobility’, the search was made on related terms, set of words, e.g., public transport, walkability, sustainable transportation, micro-mobility. The method was applied to the entire online survey responses. In contrast, for 3.2, word search and count method were applied by searching only the specific terminology that describes the concept, i.e., Mobility without deeper analysis of related terms. This method was applied to each city cluster based on the city sizes.

Below diagram shows the high-ranking hot topics concept mentioned by the different city size clusters.



3.4. Complex network of thematic concepts

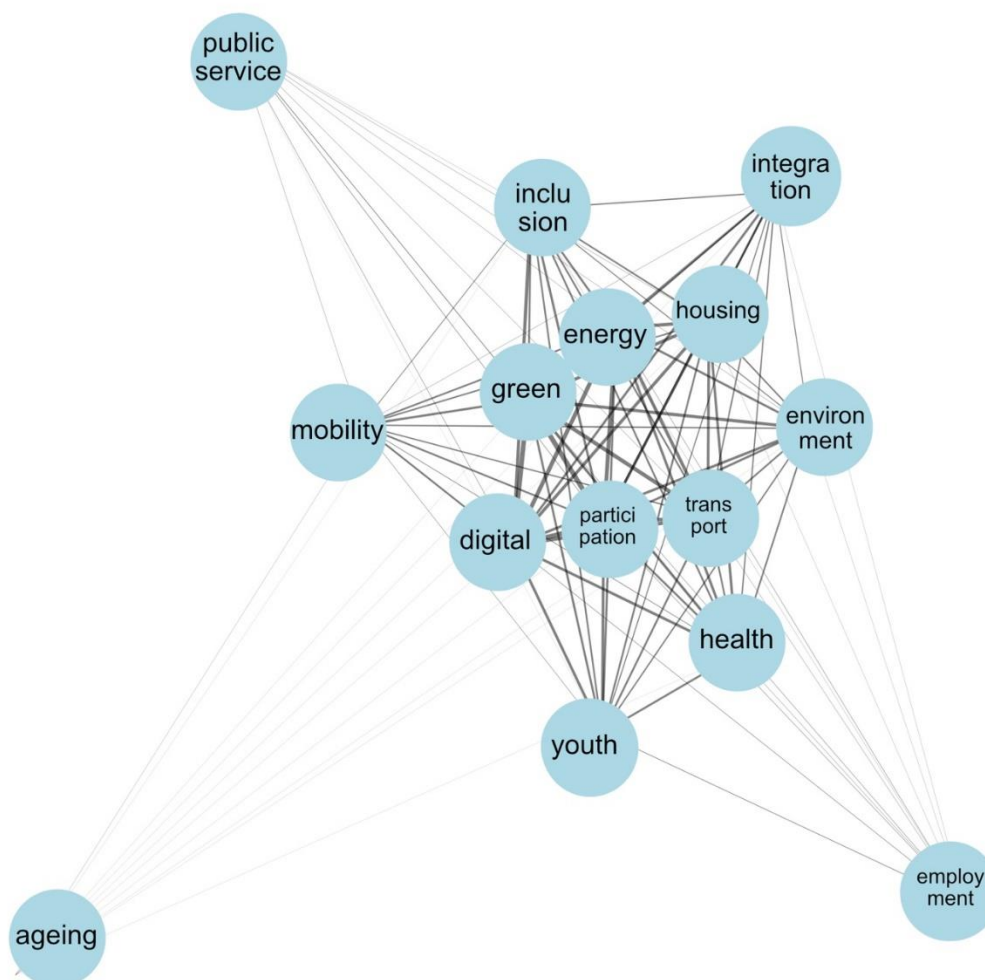
As the urban topics and key concepts by the respondents are interlinked with each other, meaning that one topic can be related to multiple other key concepts, chosen key concepts were analysed through an AI data analytical tool.

The diagram shows the interlinked-ness of key concepts, and the strength of the relationship between the concepts. The centrality of each thematic concept and the thickness of the connecting lines are determined by the degree of relatedness to each other thematic concepts. As each concept is linked to higher number of other concepts, it appears more centrally, and as the mentions of related concepts increase, the line appears thicker.

For instance, public service is often associated with concepts like digital, or online, and in some cases in conjunction to elderly, or youth. Energy and housing are interlinked through the topic of energy efficiency for collective housing, heating systems to warm homes, etc.

The manual validation was made in searching for the linked key concepts delineated by the AI tool; however, the frequency of linkage has not been manually counted.

Thematic network diagram



ANNEX 4

Insights from the URBACT consultation workshops

Workshop with urban financing officials hosted by Eurocities (Brussels)

Expert/Moderator(s) name(s): Kristijan RADOJČIĆ, URBACT Secretariat

Name of event: EUROCITIES funding officers meeting

Format of event: In-person meeting

Date: 25/26 April 2024

Place: Brussels, Belgium

Target audience: Funding officers in European departments of notably bigger European cities (EUROCITIES members), aprox. 60 participants.

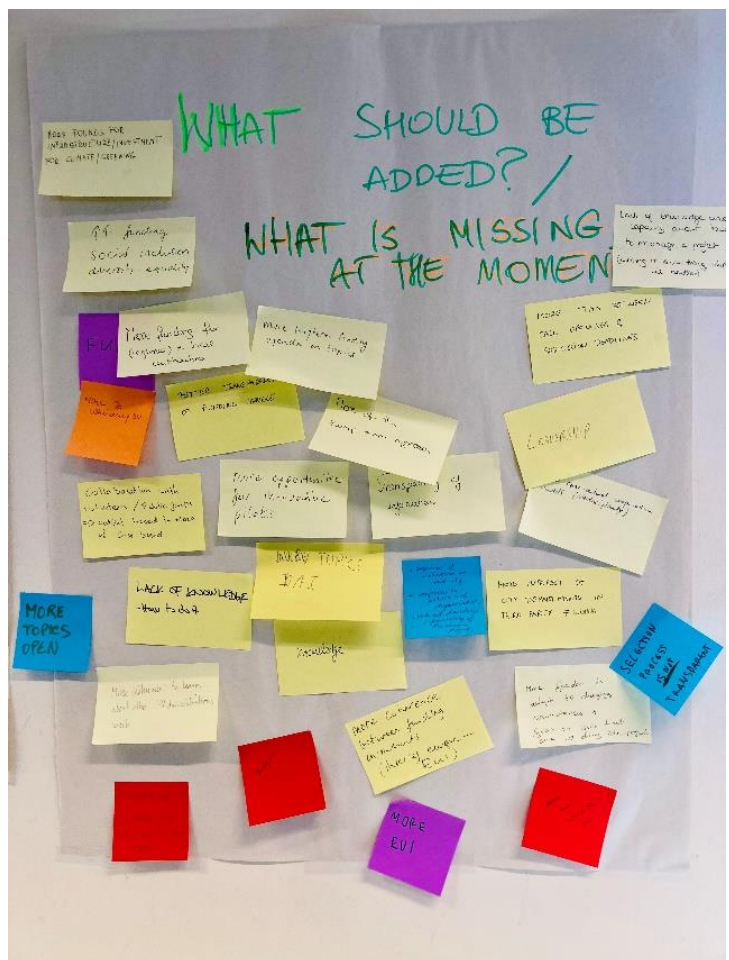
Insights:

1. The need for *more coherence between funding instruments* (INTERREG Europe and EU); more *opportunities for innovative pilot actions*.

2. During both the EUROCITIES and URBACT Secretariat consultations, there was a *desire for more cross-border cooperation projects* to tackle shared challenges and *enhance regional development*. *Long-term internships* in other municipalities to share knowledge and exchange skills among city officials was desired by the EUROCITIES stakeholders.

3. EUROCITIES workshop identifies *output oriented and lump sum-based approaches* might facilitate cooperation compared to the current cost-based approach.

4. *Balance between quick-wins and long-term sustainability* by connecting different programmes, initiatives, and funds as well as cooperating between programmes.



Workshop with Lead Partners and Lead Experts (Paris)

Moderator(s) name(s): Margit TÜNNEMANN, Kristijan RADOJČIĆ , Ana Francisca JIJÓN; URBACT Secretariat

Name of event: URBACT Lead Partner Lead Expert (LP-LE) meeting

Type of event (e.g. URBACT network event, national event, local city festival, etc.): URBACT programme event

Format of event: 2 in-presence conference days

Date: 15/16 May, 2024

Place (city, country): Paris, France

Target audience: The participants included 30 URBACT lead partners and experts, such as urban professionals, city representatives, urban researchers, academics, and practitioners. All were well-acquainted with the URBACT programme, as they were actively involved in URBACT projects.

Insights:

1. A strong benefit of cooperation is *building EU identity*. Other groups (senior, less representative) get the *opportunity to travel and exchange with other* EU city representatives to strengthen EU identity (like “ERASMUS” for professionals); citizens could/should be included as well.



2. It *strengthens feeling of community and empathy among European countries* and “distracts the idea of war”.

3. The *lack of sustained political backing and thus discontinuity of projects* were noted as barriers during the consultation events with National URBACT Points, Lead partners and lead experts, with changes in government disrupting ongoing initiatives.

Workshop with the National URBACT Points (Utrecht)

Expert/Moderator(s) name(s): Margit TÜNNEMANN, Ana Francisca JIJÓN; URBACT Secretariat

Name of event: URBACT NUP (National URBACT Points) meeting

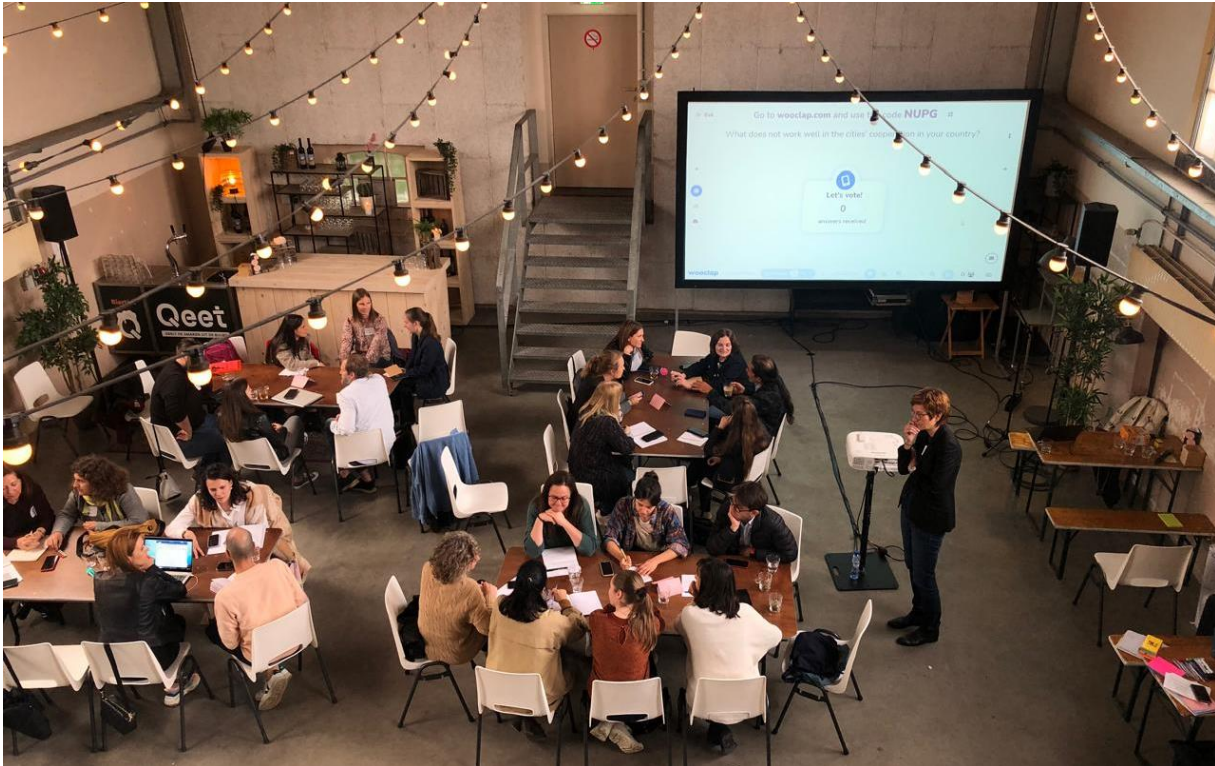
Type of event (e.g. URBACT network event, national event, local city festival, etc.): Programme level meeting

Format of event: In person, interactive discussion with NUP representatives using Wooclap

Date: 12/13 June 2024

Place: Utrecht, The Netherlands

Target audience (type/approx. number of participants): URBACT NUPs and trainers; 38 participants.



Insights:

1. *Validation of ideas* seen in successful projects brings recognition of good ideas seen in other projects, helps *to convince local partners and policy makers* ("it worked there, why shouldn't we try it as well?!").
2. The National URBACT Point and Monitoring Committee stakeholder consultation highlighted *the benefit of building an EU identity through cooperation*, contributing to cohesion and strengthening the sense of community and empathy among European countries.
3. The National URBACT Point consultation discussed the *lack of trust between municipalities and national governments* and the Monitoring Committee further highlighted the scepticism for change among local politicians and stakeholders as a critical challenge.
4. The National URBACT POINT shares insights into the benefits of *investing in human capital*, the people behind cities' cooperation, which would ensure the sustainability of knowledge. With similar motivations, they also highlight importance of *capitalising on the soft skills* acquired through the cooperation experiences to secure the continuity of the support.

Expert/Moderator(s) name(s): Karamarkos KONSTANTINOS, URBACT Lead expert

Name of event (English): TechDiversity Network Transnational Meeting – Session on Cohesion policy (post 2027)

Type of event: During an URBACT network meeting

Format of event: Workshop – Group discussion

Date: 13 June 2024

Place: Bucharest, Romania

Target audience (type/approx. number of participants): TechDiversity Project partners (city representatives and URBACT Local Group coordinators); 20 participants.

Insights:

Experience of cooperation AREZZO

What is the biggest benefit of cooperation with other cities?

Strengthen EU identity and influence EU cohesion policies through a bottom-up approach and cooperation.

What works well in cooperation (facilitator)?

Sharing experience, knowledge and best practice through several physical events and maintaining continuity in the cities' relationship.

What is not working well in cooperation (obstacle)?

~~Low commitment of stakeholders' participation.~~ ^{Testing} ~~Low commitment of stakeholders' participation.~~ ^{to make} the cooperation more effective.

Provide a recommendation for URBACT program

Introduce a new call ~~area~~ ^{Transnational} "URBACT Pilot Action Planning & Development" (outcome: Joint ~~Act~~ ^{Pilot Action})

What is the most important novelty that you would like to see in the future URBACT

A higher funding rate for all categories of regions.
A much higher budget dedicated to the URBACT programme.

What would be your cooperation project of your dreams

A Joint Pilot Action, such as a festival or a common ~~task~~ challenge held in parallel in all city partners of a network with the final goal to become a URBACT CITY FESTIVAL recurrent every year in the participating cities.

1. One of the biggest benefits of cooperation with other cities is "strengthening EU identity and influencing *EU cohesion policies through bottom-up approaches*".

2. *Strong and structured involvement of local groups* was highlighted at the TechDiversity stakeholder consultation workshop as a success factor. In addition, physical meetings, such as *face to face interactions with the partner cities and stakeholders* were highly valued in city to city cooperation.

3. At their consultation workshop, TechDiversity stakeholders suggested *testing activities between Networks with similar policy objectives* to enhance collaboration and learning.



4. The same stakeholders indicated the *potential for adapting the content of calls to meet the needs of micro communities* (municipalities) to facilitate their participation.

5. An *URBACT city festival for a joint pilot action* call to showcase successful initiatives and encourage creative and technologically innovative projects through 'creative cities' and 'tech city' concepts were also mentioned as a desired novelty.

Workshop with the URBACT Monitoring Committee members (Ghent)

Expert/Moderator(s) name(s): Hyekyung Imottesjo, URBACT expert

Name of event: URBACT IV Monitoring Committee meeting – Consultation workshop

Date: 27 June 2024

Place: Ghent, Belgium

Target audience (type/approx. number of participants): URBACT IV Monitoring Committee members; 52 participants. The workshop was organised with the aim of integrating as many angles as possible and addressed the URBACT Monitoring Committee members as interlocutors of cities and URBACT beneficiaries, but also as individual citizens.

Insights:

1. The *URBACT framework* offers a well-established and formal method that facilitates and legitimises city cooperation. It provides clear benefits, such as access to experts and dedicated budgets. The framework also sets "clear expectations from the beginning," offering *strong guidance* for cities.

2. In addition to *political alignment and support* being important for the successful outcome of city cooperation, the Monitoring Committee also stated that *lack of proactivity from the cities* themselves might hinder cooperation, which calls for a *more self-reflective approach by the cities*.

3. During consultations, the Monitoring Committee also highlighted the importance of political alignment and support for successful cooperation to gain traction. Yet another concern was the *potential power dynamics between larger and smaller cities*, where larger cities may dominate discussions and decision-making processes, marginalizing smaller partners.

4. *The lack of trust between the national governments and the cities, and lack of consideration* of national governments by the cities were considered as challenges and barriers to successful cooperation.

5. Even though the lack of trust was seen to be a challenge, the *cooperation was valued as trust builder* between the cities, countries, local and national governments, and institutions by opening the communication channels and building relationships.



Workshop with the URBACT Secretariat (Paris)

Moderator(s) name(s): Margit TÜNNEMANN (host), URBACT Secretariat; Irina Panait, Hyekyung Imottesjo, Jaan-Henrik Kain, URBACT experts

Name of event: URBACT Secretariat workshop meeting

Type of event (e.g. URBACT network event, national event, local city festival, etc.): URBACT programme event

Format of event: In-presence workshop day

Date: 9 September 2024

Place (city, country): Paris, France

Target audience: The URBACT Secretariat, which includes urban professionals, experts in the field of urban studies like urban researchers, academics and urban practitioners, all very familiar with the URBACT programme as they all participate in the implementation of the URBACT programme. There were 16 participants. The workshop was organised with the aim of integrating as many angles as possible and addressed the URBACT Secretariat staff as interlocutors of cities and URBACT beneficiaries, but also as individual citizens.

Insights:

1. Expertise for cooperation projects should also be from outside the borders of the programme and with a *complex expertise and experience merging different skills*, not just a thematic focus. The need for *allowing for a light-footed flexibility in the implementation of the networks* due both to the complexity of urban issues and multitude of involved stakeholders over time and to the sometimes-rapid change of circumstances among participating cities.



2. The URBACT Secretariat emphasized the *importance of involving citizens actively in the planning and implementation* of projects to ensure that their voices are heard and their needs are met.

The workshop asked the Secretariat to develop their dream project of cooperation. Four dream projects were developed as group work and through role-playing in the following session, two of the projects were further formulated from the perspectives of the city representatives regarding opportunities and challenges.

The Dream Projects:

Project 1: *"Post-Olympics Cities' Growth"* – The aim of the project was to see what happens after the Olympic games close and how sustainable the investment was for the city.

Project 2: *"European Cohesion Young Artificial Limits and Borders"* – The idea being that the cross-border areas are representing some weak points in the overall continuity of the territory, so indirectly continuity of the services and of the cohesion.

Project 3: *"That's R.A.Y.T"* – The project was about a small city from the south of Italy with a population of a little less than 50,000 people, that lost in the last 10 years around 10,000 people, one of the biggest problems being unemployment. Therefore, the aim was to retain and attract young talents.

Project 4: *"School transport & School buses"* – The aim of the project was to plan for an efficient system of transportation of school buses and learning from best practices from outside. "If you think about school buses, you first think about the US!".

Workshop with national urban stakeholders (Heidelberg)

Moderator(s) name(s): Margit TÜNNEMANN, URBACT Secretariat; Barbara CROME, URBACT Monitoring Committee member (Germany); Lilian KRISCHER, National URBACT Point (Germany)

Name of event: 17th Federal Congress for National Urban Development Policy: “Cooperation in Urban Development – Alliances for the Common Good” – URBACT workshop on the future of European cities cooperation

Type of event: National event organised by the German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building

Format of event: National Congress with plenary sessions, break-out sessions, exhibitions, stands, side events, etc.

Date: 17/18 September 2024

Place (city, country): Heidelberg, Germany

Target audience: National and international urban stakeholders (especially city representatives) from the general Congress audience, high participation of students/youth representatives; ca. 50 participants.

Duration: 45 minutes

Insights:



1. The Heidelberg workshop highlighted the *benefits of grassroots engagement and involvement of local communities* in urban development and cooperation. Civil society organisations exchange, district level cooperation and activities, and co-creative toolboxes that could be implemented at local level were suggested.

2. *Learning especially innovative methods from other cities* how to engage citizens were pointed out as beneficial in city-to-city exchange. Even if you are good at what you are doing, there is always something valuable to learn from other cities.

3. Some of the success factors for smaller municipalities were to engage politically and *to leverage their participation as a springboard* to gain support and resources, ultimately benefiting their local contexts. But smaller cities may need extra support.

4. Youth participants voiced their opinions and interest in peer-to-peer student exchange, co-creating local solutions, and more *opportunities to engage through cooperative platforms*, such as Urban Lab Teams.

5. As brought up both in the online survey and at other workshops, *peer-to-peer exchange* between cooperating cities was discussed as an important opportunity.



Workshop with strategic development specialists in cities (Tallin)

Expert/Moderator(s) name(s): Ingmar PASTAK, National URBACT Point (Estonia)

Name of event: Meeting for strategic development specialists in cities

Type of event: National event organised by the Estonian Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture

Format of event: On-site/hybrid event (half of the day was streamed online)

Date : 27 September 2024

Place : Tallin, Estonia

Target audience: Target audience: strategic development specialists in cities (some with previous URBACT experience, some without); 8 participants.

Duration: 1,5 hours

Insights:

1. Cooperation challenges for smaller cities often include lack of resources and personnel and multiple suggestions were made *how to overcome these barriers for participation*, such as:

- a. Engage universities or private partners to project manage and provide funds for outsourcing.
- b. Provide seed funding for smaller cities to work on ideas and to develop applications to URBACT.
- c. Associations of local governments that share similar urban issues should be eligible to join as a partner, and act as lead partner.



2. In addition, *simplifying the billing procedure* was suggested as a potential competitive edge for URBACT.

3. Further suggestions for facilitation for cooperation included a *local idea hackathon* arranged by NUPS to collectively create new ideas for innovations. Cooperation between local governments and universities was emphasized to address this type of facilitation.

Workshop with representatives of cities involved in URBACT networks (Krakow)

Expert/Moderator(s) name(s): Aldo VARGAS-TETMAJER, National URBACT Point (Poland)

Name of event: National Congress of Urban and Regional Policy – URBACT workshop on the future Cohesion policy

Type of event: National level event of the type of National Urban Forum

Format of event: Two days Congress

Date: 10 October 2024

Place: Krakow, Poland

Target audience: Mostly representatives of cities participating in URBACT networks; 17 participants.

Duration: 2 hours

Insights:

1. The need for *capacity building for the city administration* was underlined (including the URBACT summer university), including training on URBACT resources at the second phase of projects as well as English courses.

2. The administrative burden and lack of financing for the staff in comparisons to the actual added workload were highlighted. Due to the unfinanced workload and complicated administrative procedures, *city staff are spending more time in administration than on actual core URBACT activities* of cooperation and urban development.

3. *Better integration with other EU funding and financing* is necessary for the projects to gain traction and relevance at the urban policy level, rather than being treated as 'soft-projects' without further potential for continuation and implementation.

4. *Building transnational personal relationships* between partners through in-person visits, as well as regular online meetings, was seen as a success factor for URBACT cooperation.

5. *The cities' interest in URBACT (and EUI) projects depend on many factors that are out of the programmes' reach.* Political and electoral agendas often affect both their interest and the continuity in the implementation of URBACT projects. Other funding sources of funding may be more relevant and/or important to deal with to achieve specific goals. The ease of access to funding is also important; when there are numerous funding sources, cities engage in many projects, which reduces their interest in lesser programmes (from a financing point of view).

6. Cities in Poland participate in many projects funded by diverse programmes and initiatives, both at national and EU level (e.g., structural funds). Although financially strong, these sectoral programmes often do not include networking activities at the local, regional or national level (not to mention EU level). Here, *URBACT plays an important role in providing networking and dissemination activities*, being a PRACTICAL Knowledge HUB possible to extend further through an online format (e.g. webinars).

7. The EU Commission requires cities to promote and improve integrated approaches in their policies, programmes and initiatives. Still, the Commission does not provide the tools to implement this approach and different DG initiatives dedicated to cities are not coordinated to merge into a common approach. Responding to this stringent need, *URBACT could 'easily' play a key role* (i.e., without large funding) organise more online webinars, based on the URBACT Knowledge HUB, open especially to cities that are currently (or were in the past) engaged in projects, financed by other national or EU initiatives but related to their URBACT networks (e.g. in the form of topics, partners, actions).



Moderator(s) name(s): Nina PLEVNIK, National UACT Point (Slovenia)

Name of event: European Youth Event – EYE Brežice 2024

Type of event: European Youth Event, organised by the European Parliament

Format of event: 4 days in person of different events, discussions, activities, etc

Date: 24 May 2024

Place (city, country): Brežice, Slovenia

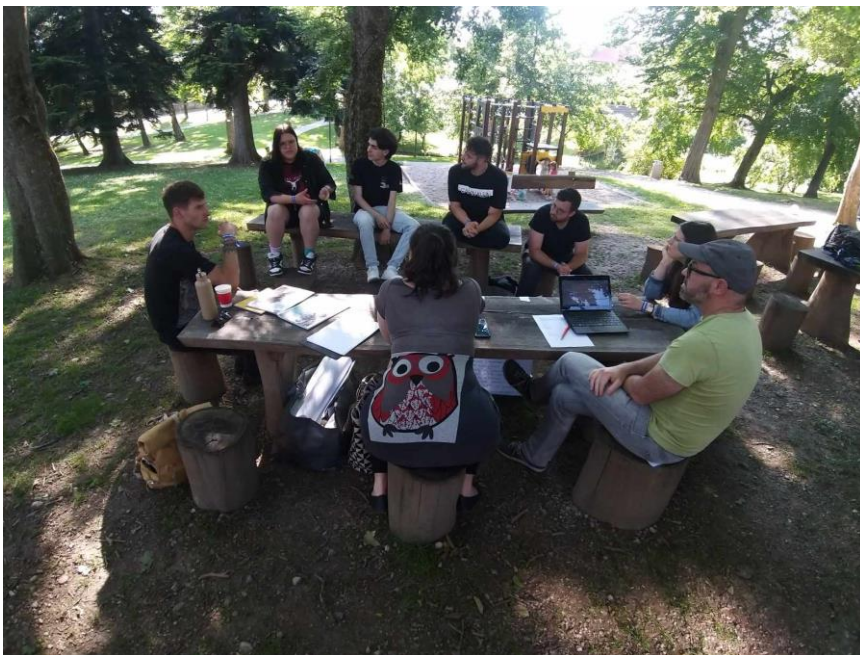
Target audience: 5 young enthusiasts (4 from Slovenia, 1 from Italy)

Duration: 30 minutes

Insights:

Context: Brežice EYE 2024 was a four-day European Youth event, including diverse activities and discussions with an expected 200 daily participants. One of the speakers' corners was dedicated to the URBACT youth consultation and was situated in an informal outdoor setting.

Questions aimed to understand the participants' ideas of travelling to another city: why they would go there and what would it be interesting to see.



« Vilnius has a big city centre where things are accessible by foot and a lot of activities in the old city center: how do they keep the centre alive? »

« Smaller towns in the Netherlands have not given in under the pressure of car dominance over the last few decades and kept the focus of pedestrians and cyclists. »

Conclusions:

1. The youths had diverse interests in urban topics and *the young participants were very knowledgeable in urban issues*, such as transportation and liveability including root causes and potential solutions.
2. The youth consultation corroborated one of the ideas from the targeted stakeholder consultation with the National URBACT Points regarding how to highlight and strengthen the way in which certain places and cities *provide positive examples regarding how to engage with certain topics* that are identified as crucial at EU level.

Youth consultation workshop 'Imagine ta ville' (Paris)

Moderator(s) name(s): Ana-Francisca Jijón, Margit Tünnemann, URBACT Secretariat; Elea Boucherak, Nadia Yamaren ANCT

Name of event: "Imagine ta ville" (*Imagine your city*)

Format of event: Interactive workshop

Date: 30/09/2024

Place (city, country): Paris, France

Target audience: **23 young people** (age group 16-25) from the City of Paris and Sarcelle (one of the more disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the north of Paris, a so called "quartier prioritaire"), **8 representatives** from the accompanying/facilitating **youth associations/organisations** (Sol Culture and Anacej) and the youth departments of the City of Paris and the Prefectures of Paris, Île-de-France and Val d'Oise.

Duration: 2 hours

Insights:

Context: The interactive workshop was organised by the URBACT Secretariat in collaboration with the neighbouring unit "Social links and images of neighbourhoods programme" within the French National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) as a result of an INTERREG Volunteer Youth experience at the URBACT Secretariat, to engage young people living in and around Paris in the INTERREG consultation 2024. The participants (age between 16-25) were coming from diverse neighbourhoods including disadvantaged communities and Paris Central districts. They were approached through three associations:

- Anacej – an association that promotes youth participation,
- Sol culture – an association that promotes initiatives by residents, and
- Parisian Youth Council - an association dedicated to youth, established in 2003.

Approach: The selected youth organisations were involved to consult and co-create the workshop scenario and the concrete consultation questions along the general lines of the URBACT consultation, but targeted and adapted to the audience of youth. To that end, the idea of exchanging and cooperating between cities was introduced through the topic of travelling to other cities (be it near in the immediate neighbourhood, or far, in other countries or even other continents). A number of related questions were put to the young people during the workshop. The questionnaire had been sent to the youth organisations in advance, so that the youth workers could raise the young people's awareness of the subject.

Conclusions and observations:

1. The **youth were aware of the value of insights gained through exchange and cooperation**, especially how to learn and expand their horizons from such experiences to improve their future potential.
2. The participants indicated **a need for better communication** regarding opportunities for exchange and participation through European schemes for young people, such as ERASMUS +.





3. The youth were generally **keen on urban topics related to mobility, safety, inclusive public spaces for culture, and access to nature.**
4. Discussing the general ideas of cooperation and cohesion can be challenging. However, when these concepts are illustrated through relatable, concrete examples, young people clearly recognize the **benefits of exchanging ideas, learning from, and connecting with other groups and cultures.** There is a need for better communication and **outreach directed at youth to explain what territorial cohesion and cooperation mean** and to reveal their advantages together.
5. **Joint travel and exchange experiences, combined with recreational initiatives at the local level,** such as sport or music, help **to increase the social cohesion also within a city** (within and between neighbourhoods).
6. At the international level, exchanges and learning help to **recognize the differences, but also the similarities between diverse cultures,** helping to form a feeling of solidarity and a **“European identity”**, contributing to the overall territorial cohesion.



« Working together means I can learn about others, but also about myself. I can see that the situation is different elsewhere, and that it is worth engaging to change it here. »

« The city should offer more access to nature (e.g. make the Seine a more accessible for pedestrians) and make this access to nature safe for everybody. »

« There should be more communication on opportunities and support for cities, more on social media and with testimonials by young people themselves. Often communication is only for +18. There needs to be more targeted information for the -18 group. »

