



FEMACT-Cities 1st Quarterly Report

January – March 2024

Starting our journey to more equality

URBACT



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1. The FEMACT-Cities Network

Gender equality has been enshrined in EU law for nearly 25 years, however, implementation on a local level remains uneven. The role of gender equality as a cross-cutting topic which is vital to all policy areas remains poorly understood and work on gender equality implementation on a local level continues to be hampered by knowledge and data gaps, lack of dedicated personnel, lack of awareness, lack of political support and both active and passive resistance.

The FEMACT-Cities network is therefore focusing on the **implementation gap** in gender equality policy across a wide range of topics. The network's goal is twofold: to **improve the implementation of gender equality on a local level** and to **increase innovation and knowledge sharing in gender equality** in topics shared by the partners.

To do this, the bespoke network curriculum focuses on both factors which help and hinder implementation, from plans to data to political support, and sharing knowledge from best practices outside the network and between the network partners. The goal is to empower the partners and a wider audience not only in the “what” but also the “how” of gender equality on a local level.

The FEMACT-Cities partners are

- Clermont Auvergne Métropole (FR) (Lead Partner)
- Länsstyrelsen Skåne (SE)
- Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região de Coimbra (PT)
- Municipality of Kraków (PL)
- City of Turin (IT)
- Municipality of Postojna (SI)
- Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association (RO)
- Szabolcs 05 Regional Development Association of Municipalities (HU)



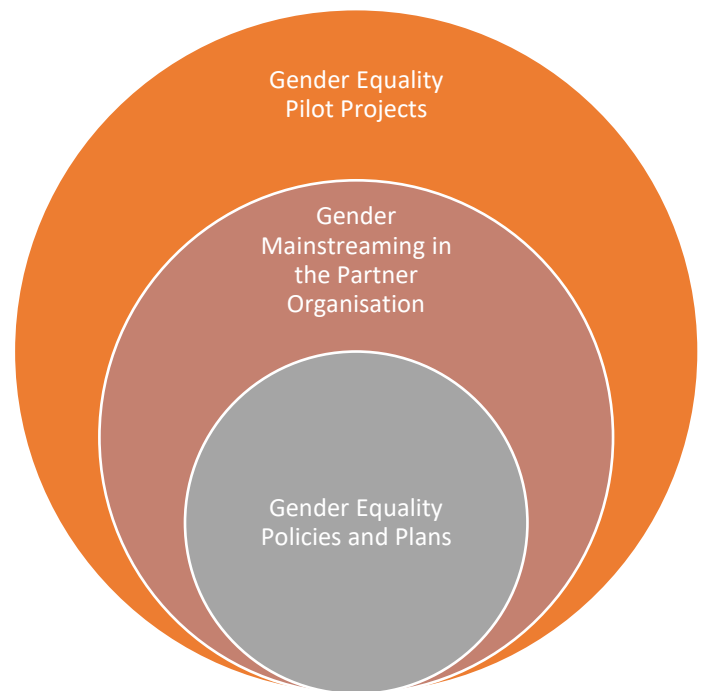
Our Vision

The FEMACT-Cities vision is to tangibly improve the implementation of gender equality on a local level. The work in the network seeks to make a real difference in the lives of the residents in the eight partner cities and intermunicipal agencies on three levels: through gender equality policies and plans, gender mainstreaming within the partner organisations and pilot actions on the partners' topics.

These topics are interrelated and create **virtuous cycles**. The results of pilot projects can help to improve existing plans, for example, and increasing diversity in municipal and intermunicipal administrations can mean more eyes on a problem, which leads to better and more diverse solutions.

Our Topics

Working on gender equality always means working on both the “what” and the “how” at the same time. So, in order to tackle women’s participation in the labour market, for example, you also need to address the collection of data, the prioritisation of gender equality in terms of funding and personnel, and how your targets are integrated into wider strategic planning documents.



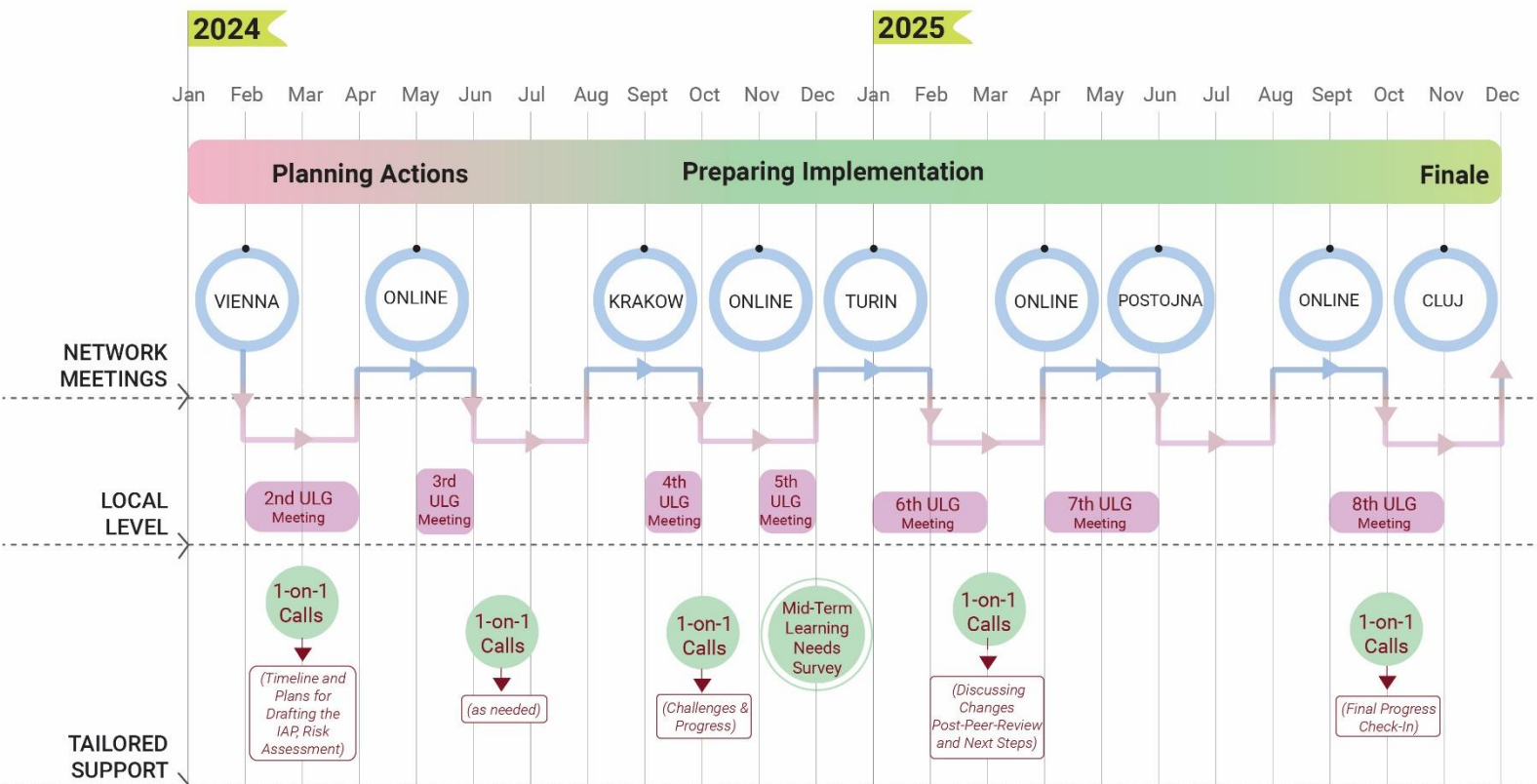


Each partner in the network will write an overarching gender equality plan and also link its implementation to specific topical focuses. These shared topics fall into four broad clusters:

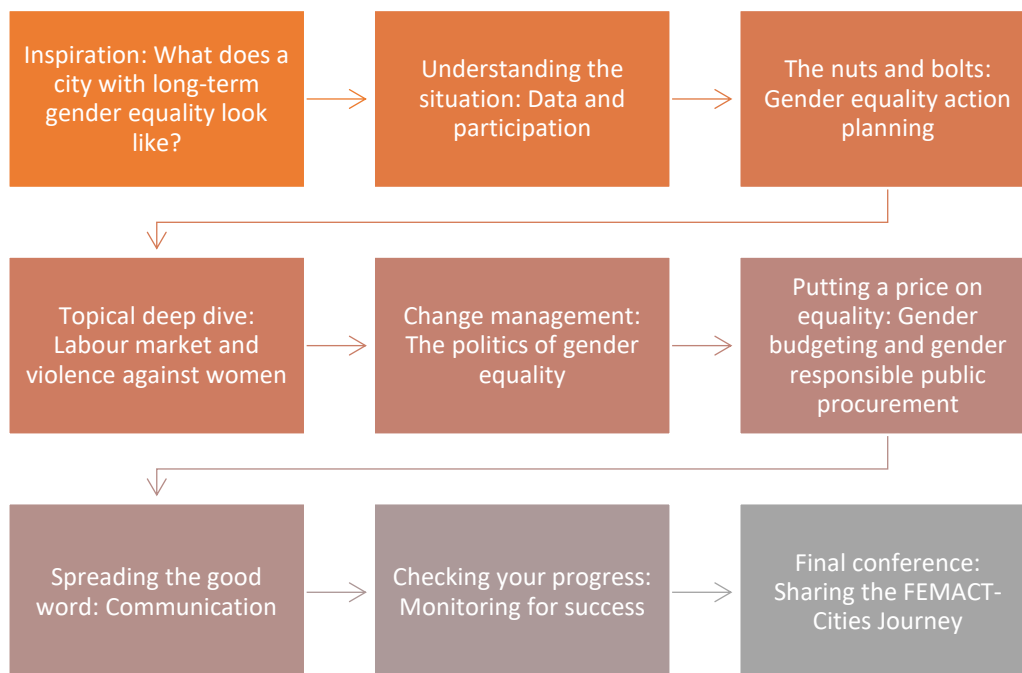
1. **Urban development** (public space, accessibility, mobility and public transport, fear and safety in public space, parks and playgrounds, and public buildings and amenities)
2. **Labour market and training** (entrepreneurship, labour market segregation & participation, care work, and education & training)
3. **Health and safety** (violence against women, mental health, and reproductive health)
4. **Internal and structural gender mainstreaming** (an umbrella term addressing all measures which have to do with organisational change, including gender mainstreaming, gender equality action plans, internal training for municipal employees, gender budgeting, and awareness raising)

Shared Topics	Partner	Structure and Population	Policy Focus
● ● ● ●	Clermont Auvergne Métropole (France)	Regional authority 21 municipalities 290,000 people	Development of a multi-sectoral gender equality action plan which integrates gender equality into all the territory's policies and projects
●	Länsstyrelsen Skåne (Sweden)	Regional authority 33 municipalities 1.4 million people	Female entrepreneurship (across sectors and in both urban and rural areas) and investment capital
● ●	Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região de Coimbra (Portugal)	Region 19 municipalities 440,000 people	Development and implementation of a regional gender mainstreaming plan across the whole organisation
● ●	Municipality of Kraków (Poland)	City 805,000 people	Urban planning / mobility and gender mainstreaming within Kraków municipality
● ●	City of Turin (Italy)	City 850,000 people	Gender mainstreaming within Torino municipality and violence against women
● ●	Municipality of Postojna (Slovenia)	City 16,700 people	Create a first municipal action plan for gender equality
● ● ●	Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association (Romania)	Intercommunity development assoc. 20 municipalities 410,000 people	Developing a gender policy framework at a metropolitan level, Safety in public space, Focus on vulnerable groups
● ● ●	Szabolcs 05 Regional Development Association of Municipalities (Hungary)	Voluntary development assoc. 6 towns, 38 villages 88,000 people	Young Roma women who experience teen pregnancy and low labour market participation, Ageing & solitude, Feeling safe in public spaces

2. The FEMACT Cities Journey – A Path to More Equality



Over the course of the two-year network journey, the partners will meet at nine transnational meetings, which will give them the topical inputs, peer learning and exchange, and methodological tools to be able to move towards the network vision in their local context. The bespoke network methodology will cover both the topics in the four topical clusters and the “how” of gender equality plans.



3. Where did we leave off in December 2023?

We wrapped up our work in 2023 with the “Ready for Action” meeting in Coimbra, Portugal. Thank you so much to the Portuguese partner, Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região de Coimbra, for the warm hospitality and for making it a wonderful experience.



4. What is going on in our URBACT Local Groups?



Clermont Auvergne Métropole (France)

The French partner has taken up work in the ULG and created four thematic subgroups: integrity, autonomy, mobility, and emancipation. Even though the ULG is already quite large (over 40 members), the local coordinators are currently looking at who might still be missing in the journey to a holistic gender equality plan.



Länsstyrelsen Skåne (Sweden)

In Sweden, the work has also commenced. The biggest realisation out of the last Swedish local group meeting was that the biggest difference between male and female entrepreneurs is their perception of and appetite for risk. The group is now looking at good examples from Europe and aspects which can be transferred to the Swedish context.



Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região de Coimbra (Portugal)

In Portugal, the partners are looking at data and communications in the first phase of their work on a local level. Their goal: an intermunicipal gender plan. In the first instance, they want to do a training for urban designers and planners to sensitise them about gender issues.



Municipality of Kraków (Poland)

The Polish partner has kicked off their work on a local level by contracting out research to an architecture office based in Warsaw specialised in gender and urban development. In March, they also used a night walk to sensitise ULG members about how the city feels different at night. Their next topic is to look at how teenage girls and boys use public space.



City of Turin (Italy)

The Italian partner is looking into communication and involving men in the process on their way to a Gender Equality Plan. They want to look at how gender mainstreaming and other instruments can be used in their plan, and how these instruments can connect to existing initiatives and strategies in the city.



Municipality of Postojna (Slovenia)

In Slovenia, the process of creating a ULG is one which goes through personal channels – not uncommon in a city of 16,700 inhabitants. The city has kicked off their work of creating the first ever gender equality plan by conducting thorough research about gender equality in Slovenia and gender-disaggregated data.



Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association (Romania)

In Romania, the partner has identified that a lack of data and research, especially regarding the rural area around Cluj-Napoca, is a major gap. They are now focusing on filling this gap through participation with target groups such as Ukrainian refugees and female riders in public transportation.



Szabolcs 05 Regional Development Association of Municipalities (Hungary)

In Hungary, the ULG met before the winter holidays to discuss the outcome of the baselining process and the results of the SWOT analysis. The local group has begun to formulate the first steps towards a gender equality plan focusing on young Roma girls and women's safety.

5. Our Second Transnational Meeting: Vienna

Vienna is definitely always worth a visit if you want to look into the future through the lens of gender-friendly urban development. The first FEMACT-Cities network meeting, the first step in our two-year journey together, was a significant event that brought together experts and interested parties from all over Europe to talk about gender-responsive urban development. This meeting served as a platform for exchanging knowledge, experiences, and best practices in order to jointly address challenges across the EU.

An integrated approach to urban development

The meeting in Vienna was characterized by an integrated approach that combined gender equality, climate protection and citizen participation. This was reflected in the lectures and discussions held by experts from various areas:

Julia Girardi-Hoog presented her work as the new gender planning and target area manager at the building department of the city of Vienna. She highlighted the importance of gender-sensitive planning and how this is implemented in Vienna to promote more inclusive urban design.

Katharina Schwarzfurtner-Lutnik, project manager at the Vienna Climate Team, shared her experiences on integrating diversity and participation into the city's climate protection initiatives. Her remarks emphasized the role of climate protection in gender-equitable urban development.

Ricarda Götz-Preisner, the adviser for international affairs and fundamental questions, gave insights into international efforts and the internal processes of gender equality work, especially in Vienna. Her perspective highlighted the global dimension of gender equality challenges and solutions.





A key highlight: Excursion through Sonnenwendviertel with Eva Kail

Our walk through the Sonnenwendviertel led by Eva Kail was an unforgettable experience for all participants. Kail, recognized as an icon of gender planning in Vienna, shared her extensive knowledge and experiences from decades of work. This walk offered vivid examples of the successful implementation of gender-sensitive planning principles and served as inspiration for everyone present.

Networking and exchange

Another core part of the meeting was the opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and begin to move from learning to implementation. The discussion round in fishbowl format enabled a lively and interactive exchange between the speakers and the participants, which further promoted dialogue and collaboration.

Resumée

Our FEMACT-Cities network meeting in Vienna was a groundbreaking event that not only highlighted the importance of gender-responsive urban development but also Vienna's role as a pioneer in this area. The speakers' contributions and the interactive format of the meeting provided valuable insights and strengthened the participants' determination to implement the acquired knowledge in their own cities and communities. This meeting marks an important step forward in the mission to make our cities more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable.





6. Key Learnings from Vienna

1. Change takes **time**

From where we are standing today, Vienna looks very far along on the path towards equality. But of course, their journey started more than 35 years ago (and it wasn't all easy!). The example of Vienna shows us that real change takes time and patience, and iterative working that constantly explores impact and effectiveness.

2. Change takes **champions**

The example of Vienna also shows us that real change takes champions, people who are dedicated to the change they want to see in the city (and the world) and who are prepared to work for it every day, even though it takes time and effort. At the same time, these champions need resources and recognition for the work they do and the successes they achieve.

3. Change takes **communications**

The Viennese model uses pilot projects to test new spatial theories and then clever communication strategies to gain support within the city administration and normalise gender approaches for a wider public. The city of Vienna has been very successful in using communication to tell their colleagues, their residents, their politicians, and the world about the great work they are doing. It is, after all, one reason it was such a "no brainer" to host our inspiration meeting here.

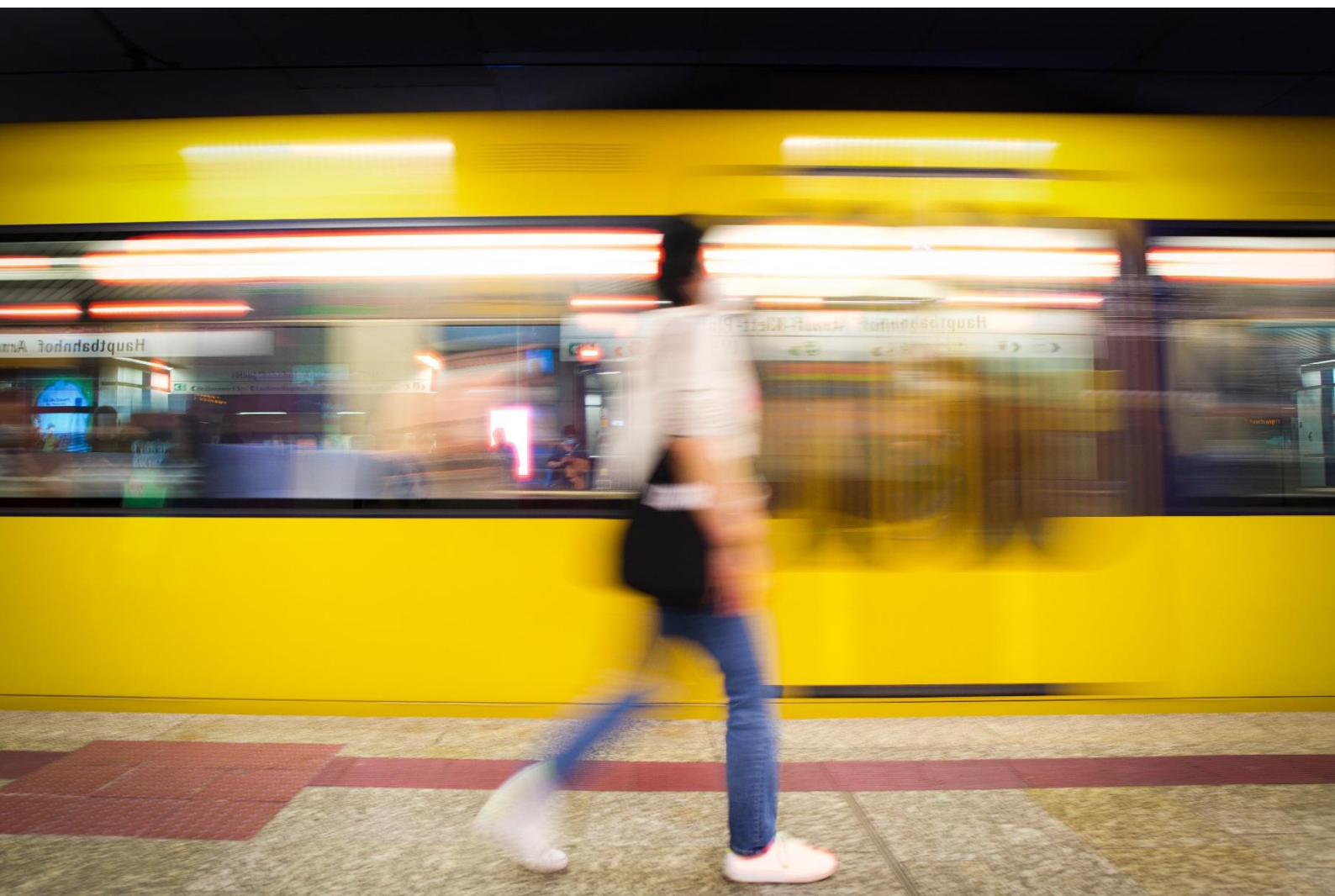
4. Change takes **courage**

Finally, Vienna showed us that real change takes courage: the courage to take the first step, but also to continue when the political or publicity winds change. It takes the courage of commitment to stick with it, and to remember why you are doing what you are doing.

7. Where do we go next?

In the next quarter, the network will dive into the action planning process with an online transnational meeting on data and participation. Those new to gender equality plans will get plenty of inspiration at the opening panel, which features special guests Umeå Kommun, Communauté d'agglomération de La Rochelle and Frankfurt am Main.

Before the summer, partners will get to sink their teeth into their own action plans and start to formulate actions together with their URBACT Local Groups – more about that in the next report! Stay tuned!





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