News

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Southeast European (SEE) Regional Network continues exchange on recovery methods and practices

Review of Network Events held under Covid-19 Program in November and December of 2021 in SEE

A total of up to 100 urban practitioners and experts participated in the Network Events held on behalf of Connective Cities international network initiative and Covid-19 Program. Two separate events held on 12th of November and 13th of December 2021, served as final big get-togethers of the year 2021 for the SEE Network members, leaving them with some food for thought and the floor for exchanges widely open for an upcoming year.

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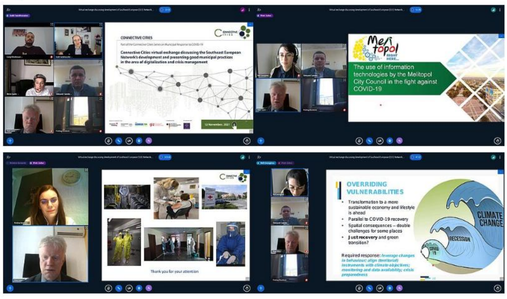
First Event on November 12, 2021 - **"Connective Cities virtual exchange discussing the Southeast European Network's development and presenting good municipal practices in the area of digitalization and crisis management" -** was devoted to supporting peer-to-peer exchange and gathering municipal representatives, as well as field experts, to discuss crisis management and digitalization experiences, existing challenges, and to explore how scale-up strategies could be enhanced to meet crisis-induced demands. To cover these topics, the event was divided into three parts ensuring representation of all types of interaction as well as exchange. The web-seminar featured a Keynote speaker, who focused on COVID-19 and long-term challenges for territorial policies, followed by 3 case-study presentations on municipal responses to COVID-19 in terms of digitalization and crisis management from Melitopol (Ukraine), Tbilisi (Georgia) and Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – these examples demonstrated diverse practices taken up by each municipality during recent times. A panel discussion about the importance of digitalization for efficient crisis management at local governance level amid COVID-19 served as a closing ground of the event, ensuring an all-encompassing discussion on challenges, visions and possible peer-to-peer exchanges in the regards of topics discussed all throughout the day.

Recording and resources of the first session can be found on Connective Cities Platform here.

Impressions



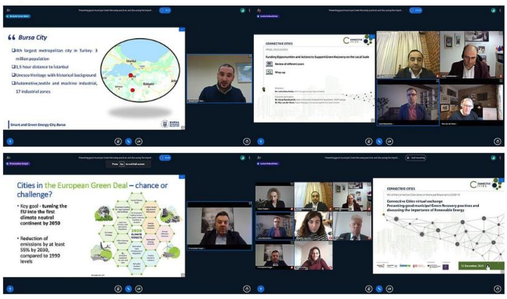
Second Event held 13th of December 2021, **"Connective Cities virtual exchange presenting good municipal Green Recovery practices and discussing the importance of Renewable Energy",** explored the crisis management mechanisms that cities employed and ways in which they envision green recovery especially on the bases of introducing the use of renewable energy. The pandemic tested the robustness and effectiveness of most municipal services, from transportation and waste management to governance and development. Pandemic-centered protocols set new behavioral patterns - many of which were quite stressful for urban economies. On the contrary, others - such as raised environmental awareness - made both city leaders and citizens rethink the status-quo regarding sustainability, resilience and in overall - stressed the importance of accelerating previous commitments and striving for even more. A similar structural pattern of the event to the last one, gave basis for a smooth and interesting flow of the session. During the event case of municipal responses to COVID-19 of Bursa (Turkey) was shared as a good example of a smart and green energy city transition. Special attention was paid to the use and importance of renewable energy, specifically – solar power, that proved to be successful for the city. Following the presentation an interactive panel, tackling the funding opportunities and alternative actions to support green recovery on the local scale took the stage and delved deep into exchange of views on challenges, visions, and possible scenarios of regional development.

The second event, serving as the last big event of the year, featured a distinct intervention from the Regional Network leads, presenting renewed SEE Regional Charter and Timeline of the Network and plan of its transition into self-sustaining platform. Additionally, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the SEE Network and a Slovenian organization, symbolizing an ever-growing potential and scope of the Network itself.

Recording and resources of the second session can be found on Connective Cities Platform here.

As of last, we can say that these events served as a good summary of diverse but cross-cutting activities taking place in the SEE Region during past year of 2021. When it comes to recovering from major disruptions and changes caused by Covid-19 we need to act on multilateral and transnational levels to achieve faster stabilization of the development pattern towards a sustainable and greener future. In this process Connective Cities and in particular the SEE Regional Network will always try supporting urban practitioners and experts to find their way to either one another or to good practices available all around the world.

Impressions



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Categories: COVID-19, Climate neutral urban development, Crisis Management, Digitalisation & Communication, Integrated urban development, Energy efficiency and renewable energy, Cities and climate change

Region: Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, Virtual expert exchange

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