



VITAL SPACES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNECE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AND LAND MANAGEMENT AND THE WORKING PARTY ON LAND
ADMINISTRATION

YEAR 11

| NEWSLETTER |

October 2018

**Welcome to the Vital Spaces newsletter of the UNECE
Committee on Housing and Land Management!**

For the last several months, the Housing and Land Management Unit, the secretariat to the Committee, was working intensively to prepare the UNECE Urban Week in Geneva. The UNECE Urban Week started on 1 October to celebrate the World Habitat Day with the opening of a photography exhibition at the Palais des Nations titled "Women Without Walls". The main event of the week, the 79th session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management, took place on 4 and 5 October.

Throughout the Urban Week, the main topic of deliberations was how the Committee, national and local governments and other organizations are refocusing their activities to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global and regional agreements.

With over 220 participants for the Urban Week, we hope this week provided participants with new ideas for future activities; facilitated new partnerships and enriched them with new knowledge and useful information.

This newsletter features the latest events and projects of the Committee, its Working Party on Land Administration and the Real Estate Market Advisory Group. The wide scale of topics addressed demonstrates that the Committee, which was established in 1947 and celebrated its 70th anniversary last year, remains to be a key neutral platform in the UNECE Region to promote sustainable housing and urban development through exchange of experiences, knowledge, best practices and fostering partnerships!

Please join us in the Committee's future events (see UNECE 2018-2019 planned events).

Yours,

UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit



UNECE 2018-2019 planned events on housing, urban development and land administration



DAY OF CITIES, 8 April 2019 - SAVE THE DATE! (please see page 2)

2018

Joint Conference of WPLA, FIG and Technical Chamber of Greece "Economy, Society and Climate Change - Current Trends and Solutions for the Built Environment, Construction Industry and Real Estate", 7-9 November 2018, Athens

Energy for Sustainable Development Forum, including Third Meeting of Task Force on energy efficiency in buildings, 12-13 November 2018, Kiev

International workshop "My City, My Home, My Business: Technology, Policy, Regulation and International Experience", 15-16 November 2018, Sofia. Organizers: UNECE, National Real Estate Association in Bulgaria, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria, UN-HABITAT

International conference "European Smart and Sharing Cities", 22-23 November 2018, Prague. Main organizer: Ministry of Regional Development of Czech Republic

Forum on Smart Cities: Improvement of housing stock and enhancement of public real estate assets, 10-14 December 2018, Milano. Main organizers: UNECE REM, Agenzia del Demanio under patronage of the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Italy

Workshop on data collection for evidence-based policies in housing and urban development, 13 December 2018, Brussels. Main organizers: UNECE, UN-Habitat and Committee of the Regions of the European Union

2019

UNECE Working Party on Land Administration 11th session, 27-28 February 2019, Geneva

Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, 21-22 March 2019, International Conference Centre Geneva

2019 ECE Commission session, 9-10 April 2019, Geneva

Workshop on key registers for the implementation of the SDGs, May 2019, Oslo

United for Smart Sustainable Cities Annual Meeting, 6-10 May 2019, Bizerte

Regional training on affordable housing, 20-25 May 2019, Minsk

UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management 80th session and its side events, 1-4 October 2019, Geneva

For more information, please contact Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the Committee on Housing and Land Management at Gulnara.Roll@un.org

DAY OF CITIES

8 APRIL 2019 | PALAIS DES NATIONS | GENEVA



A smart sustainable city is an innovative city that uses ICTs and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects.

- Participation of mayors from cities in the UNECE region
- Knowledge sharing via two roundtables on creating smart sustainable cities of the future
- Exhibition/Fair showcasing success stories, tools and plans to create smart sustainable cities
- KPIs to provide cities with a consistent and standardized method to collect data and measure performance

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will hold its 68th meeting under the theme “Smart sustainable cities: Drivers for Sustainable Development” on 9–10 April 2019 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. To inform the intergovernmental discussions of the 56 UNECE member States, the Commission is preceded by a Day of Cities that brings together Mayors, urban managers and other key municipal practitioners for an exchange of views and knowledge sharing of good practices and successful planning strategies. In two roundtables, participants will discuss approaches on how to create smart sustainable cities, focusing on ways to improve the quality of life of people and on improving efficiency of urban operations, services and competitiveness.

The Day of Cities also provides an opportunity to learn more about UNECE instruments that support sustainable practices and ways to monitor progress on the path towards creating a smart sustainable city.

An exhibition and information fair invites participants to showcase their success stories and present useful tools that help to embrace smart and sustainable practices.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

ROUNDTABLE 1: Improving the Quality of Life of People

- Affordable, decent and healthy housing and basic services for different groups and changing populations
- Increasing urban resilience to natural and man-made disasters and mitigating/adapting to climate changes
- New approaches to reducing the environmental footprint of cities
- Sustainable use of land and green areas and public spaces
- Smart City utilities to improve participation and governance

ROUNDTABLE 2: Improving efficiency of Urban Operations, Services and Competitiveness

- Smart transport/road safety
- Smart technologies to improve urban services
- Smart, sustainable cities as hubs and drivers of innovation, trade, competitiveness and the transition towards a circular economy
- Interoperability of city systems: Harvesting the potential of Blockchain, Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence
- Smart cadastres, e-governance and smart land administration

PLEDGE

During the Day of Cities and the Commission session, participants are invited to showcase to an international audience in the Palais des Nations their good practices; share innovative solutions towards making their city more smart and sustainable. The Day of Cities pledge, under a common definition and shared goals of smart sustainable cities, includes the commitment to:

- use of UNECE tools to improve quality of life and efficiency of urban operations and services
- apply KPIs as a monitoring tool for smart sustainable cities
- volunteer to undertake a KPIs assessment of your city

Smart Sustainable Cities Exhibition and Information Fair

During the day of Cities and the Commission session, participants are invited to showcase to an international audience in the Palais des Nations their good practices; share innovative solutions towards smart and sustainable cities in the UNECE region; present their use of UNECE tools to help facilitate the transition towards smart sustainable cities.

The exhibition and information fair will encourage peer learning, cooperation among European cities and partnerships with international organizations, academia and the private sector.

For more information on the Day of Cities

Please check our website at www.unece.org

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Sustainable Housing

UNECE updated condominium management guidelines in continued effort to ensure sustainable housing



The global financial crisis of 2008 led to more inequality in the UNECE region. The past two decades have witnessed a general trend towards increasing home ownership. According to the Habitat III Regional Report on Housing and Urban Development for the UNECE Region (2016), many local governments and individuals (especially home owners) were unable to keep up with the rapid rate of privatisation of housing. In the eastern part of the region, the phenomenon of low-income homeowners has therefore become endemic, as a result of the privatization of public housing, lack of maintenance, and rising energy costs. Delays caused by collective decision-making of large housing estate owners, whether in affluent or poor areas, have increased costs and often resulted in the deterioration of apartment blocks, particularly in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The housing sector needs to respond to these changes by securing new sites for housing and meeting new aspirations, such as energy efficiency and customer-adjusted design, along with the provision of additional services (e.g. for elderly, homeless and migrant people).

In 2017, member States requested an update to the UNECE "Guidelines on Condominium Ownership of Housing for Countries in Transition" developed by the Committee on Housing and Land Management. The Guidelines were initially published in 2003 to support better management of housing and to promote its affordability and energy efficiency. The Guidelines were developed to assist national and local governments, as well as new homeowners, during the transition of housing to private ownership in Central and Eastern European countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This document provided guidance on issues requiring legal-regulatory intervention, capacity building, and design of financing schemes and best practices on condominium management and ownership.

The new edition of the Guidelines, which were prepared during 2017-2018 by the Committee's Bureau and Real Estate Market Advisory Group, was launched today. It builds upon the previous Guidelines and expand the scope to address contemporary challenges and reflect the commitments of the whole region. Application of the Guidelines will support governments' efforts in cost-efficient maintenance and operation of the housing stock, and to increase energy efficiency of buildings. This process leads the way to more effective implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing adopted by UNECE in 2015 and its goal of ensuring access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all.

The Guidelines are available at:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/sessions/docs2018/Info_doc_3_Condo_Guidelines.pdf

UNECE member States adopted the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development at the Committee's session in 2017

Cities and human settlements in the UNECE region face enormous challenges. The population in the region is ageing, bringing changing demands on infrastructure and social services. Increased urban expansion has reduced the land available for other uses. Climate change and natural disasters are causing vast economic and social losses. With the expansion of the knowledge economy and automation in all spheres of life, cities are being reshaped to new forms that affect education, training and employment. Finally, in recent years, international migration flows have risen to levels unprecedented since World War II. From 2010 to 2015, the number of refugees received in the UNECE region has doubled from 2 to 4.8 million. All these challenges in the context of the post-financial crisis amplify the challenges of the limited access to affordable and adequate housing and basic infrastructure for all.

Over the last seventy years, the Committee has helped to mobilize governments and stakeholders to address key urban development challenges, including post-war housing reconstruction, building resilient and climate neutral cities, promoting energy efficiency in buildings, and making homes affordable and adequate. In 2014, countries endorsed the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. The Charter



Ministerial photo

supports member States to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing. It provides clear guidelines and benchmarks for assessing progress in achieving this goal.

Strengthening commitment to addressing shared challenges ahead

As a symbol of countries' continued commitment to cooperation, Ministers, Heads of Delegation and high-level representatives from forty member States have adopted the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development at the 78th session of the Committee in 2017.

The Ministerial Declaration reiterates the importance for governments at all levels and relevant stakeholders in the UNECE region to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant global and regional commitments. In adopting the Declaration, countries further renewed their commitment to strengthening synergies, intergovernmental and cross-sectoral cooperation.

UNECE joined global coalition to improve fire safety in buildings through industry standards



The Grenfell Tower fire in London in June 2017 has brought under the spotlight the need for a coherent global approach to fire safety. That fire - the worst in the UK for almost a century that claimed 72 lives - not only focused attention on building and fire safety in the United Kingdom but also exposed global inadequacies in how fire safety standards are set.

As the property market has become increasingly international with investments flowing across national borders, the sector still lacks a consistent set of high level global principles for the design, construction, and management of buildings to address the risks associated with fire safety. Differences in materials testing and certification, national building regulations or codes, and standards on how to manage buildings in use, particularly higher risk buildings, means there is confusion, uncertainty and risk to the public.

The UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management has been working on building standards since its establishment in 1947. The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing endorsed in 2014, underlines the importance of improving the resilience of buildings to natural and human-generated hazards through safety planning, design and construction. To respond to the need to address safety of buildings, UNECE has joined the International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition.

The Coalition was launched with the support of UNECE in Geneva at the Palais des Nations on 9 July 2018. It brought together key organizations from around the world dealing with fire safety of buildings with the purpose of discussing the

development of landmark industry standards to address fire safety in buildings.

The coalition consists of national and international professional bodies and standard-setting organizations committed to developing and supporting a shared set of standards for fire safety aimed at delivering greater consistency of minimum levels of fire safety and professionalism in buildings across the world.

"The Grenfell Tower fire focused the world's attention on how many buildings are threatened with the prospect of failing fire safety standards. All over the world we see the need for more high-rise structures which pose risks in the absence of a coherent and harmonized approach to setting global standards in fire safety. The effort by the IFSS Coalition aims to address this concern and bring together the design, construction and management aspects of ensuring fire safety of building assets," says Gary Strong, RICS Global Building Standards Director and Chair of the IFSS Coalition.

UNECE and partners launched network to support the development of high performance buildings

In 2017, UNECE adopted the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings which promote the adoption of aggressive, performance-based codes for buildings. To support the deployment of the Framework Guidelines and to advance the performance of buildings broadly, UNECE has launched a global network of International Centres of Excellence on High Performance Buildings that will provide on-the-ground implementation assistance for building owners and developers, contractors, architects, engineers and planning officials.

On 10 July, the Building Energy Exchange (BE-Ex) of New York City signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNECE to become a founding hub of this critical knowledge sharing network to bring high performance building best practices to scale. Additional centers are underway in Vancouver, British Columbia; Wexford, Ireland; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Brussels, Belgium. The network will expand as other communities join.

The goals of the network are directly aligned with the Paris Agreement and will provide access to best practices and fully vetted solutions for communities pursuing those goals, including cities, states and businesses.

BE-Ex develops education and training for professionals, case studies and retrofit playbooks for decision makers, and interactive exhibits that make new technology tangible. Visitors can learn about which technology might be right for their building, how much money they can save, and how to pay for the project.



UNECE supports housing sector reforms in Ukraine



Ukraine is facing multiple challenges related to its housing sector. Housing is not affordable, especially to vulnerable groups of the population, including young people entering the labor market and low-income families. The housing affordability index, which is calculated as a ratio between the average price of available for purchase housing and the average household annual income in Kyiv, the capital, is 13.6 (an index of 3 to 5 is recognized as providing affordable housing market), which makes it very difficult for the vast majority of the population to afford buying property. At the same time, the very high level of ownership, at 93.7% of the housing stock after the privatization campaigns of the 1990s, means that the rental market is under developed.

The government of Ukraine is implementing large scale economic reforms, including in the housing sector. Multiple laws, including the Housing Code, Law on Rental Housing and many others are being drafted and discussed with wide participation of all key stakeholders in the sector.

A UNECE expert group on housing, established at the request of the government, worked with Ukrainian government representatives to share experiences and best practices and offer concrete recommendations to the above-mentioned draft laws. The UNECE expert group, which included representatives from countries relevant to the situation in Ukraine, such as Estonia, Latvia, Poland, the Republic of Moldova and Slovakia, met with the Ukrainian Parliamentary Committee on Construction, the Ministry of Regional Development and the State Fund for Support to the Youth Housing Construction. A capacity building workshop to share international best practices and a stakeholder consultation was also organized as part of the mission.

As a next step, the UNECE expert delegation will be working with the government and experts from UN-Habitat and UNDP to develop approaches for evidence-based urban development and housing policies to achieve the urban related Sustainable Development Goals and to implement the New Urban Agenda and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing.

The result of this cooperation is regarded as crucial to meeting the challenges Ukraine currently faces in the development of its housing sector.

Technical assistance to countries with economies in transition to support sustainable housing and urban development

The UNDA Ninth tranche project “Strengthening national capacities for sustainable housing and urban development in countries with economies in transition” was completed at the end of 2017 with the regional workshop in November in Geneva. Within the project, the Guidelines and the policy paper on the development and implementation of the National Action Plan in the field of housing, urban development and land management were prepared. According to these Guidelines, the governments of Armenia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Tajikistan, drafted their National Action Plans to implement the recommendations of the country profiles.

A new UNDA project from the Tenth tranche, on “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition”, has been carried out in collaboration with UN-Habitat. Under this project, advisory missions and national validation workshops were organized in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. A policy paper with the methodology for data collection relevant to the 2030 Agenda and New Urban Agenda was also drafted. A group of international experts have proposed recommendations to the draft legislation on the provision of housing and rental housing in Ukraine. The recommendations were presented during the mission to Kiev in April 2018; accompanying the mission a round table to discuss the best international practices and the housing challenges in Ukraine was also organized. Capacity building activities on the development of evidence based policies in Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine are planned to be organized in 2018-2019.

The UNDA Eleventh tranche project “Strengthening evidence-based and participatory housing policies and strategies” started in 2107 and is being carried out in collaboration with UN-Habitat. The project includes cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development of Bulgaria on the review of the draft National Housing Strategy and other documents. A joint workshop on housing and land administration is also planned for 15-16 November 2018 to be held in Sofia.

Vertical farming, vertical forests and wood construction: it stacks up!

by: Pavitra Raja and Leonie Meier, UNECE



The pace and scale of urbanisation is rampant: the glow of city lights have come to symbolise progress but in the face of climate change, masses of concrete, tarmac and paving can render cities hostile. Further, air, soil and noise pollution, along with sweltering temperatures, pose severe threats to health as well as stability of our cities. Integrating green spaces into our cities is more important now than ever before.

The environmental and health benefits of forests and green spaces are well-known. Trees in the city serve as natural air conditioners, cooling the air by between two and eight degrees Celsius, and act as a carbon sink to help mitigate climate change. In fact, one large tree can also absorb 150 kilograms of carbon dioxide a year and thereby act as a carbon sink to help mitigate climate change and lower cities' carbon footprints. Further, integrating green spaces contributes to biodiversity and provide for habitat, food and protection for flora and fauna. However, the world's population is expected to increase to 9.1 billion by 2050. Feeding all those people will mean increasing food production by 70%, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation. With half the world's population already living in urban areas (and the number is set to rise to 6.5 billion by 2050), we are running out of areas to integrate green spaces into.

However, there is a solution to this problem: going vertical. Vertical farming, vertical forests and wooden skyscrapers could pose as innovative solutions to the growing ails caused by urbanisation. In a panel discussion, "Sky is the Limit" organised by UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit, together with the FAO Liaison Office in Geneva, eminent speakers discussed the myriad of mechanisms to integrate greenery into urban areas.

Ambassador Foo Kok Jwee, permanent representative of Singapore to the UN in Geneva, emphasised the importance of vertical farming as it optimises land use in a land-scarce Singapore and operates on minimal manpower as well as minimal inputs of water and nutrients. Vertical urban farming thus provides important opportunities for improving food security in cities, lowering the carbon footprint of food production and providing fresh local produce in high density cities.

Arch. Maria Chiara Pastore of Stefano Boeri Architetti shared the vision of Stefano Boeri, creator of Milan's emblematic 'Vertical Forest', an architectural design which integrates trees within building structures, thereby increasing tree cover in cities and creating a vegetal system that contribute to the construction of a microclimate, produces humidity, absorbs CO₂ and dust particles and produces oxygen.

Dr. Michael Ramage, director of the Centre for Natural Material Innovation at the University of Cambridge, was instrumental in

the design of the "Toothpick," a wooden skyscraper that could become the second-tallest building in London. In his discussion of "supertall timber," Ramage discussed wood construction involving cross-laminated timber, a material made of many sheets of wood glued and compressed together; it is stronger than steel and a viable candidate for building skyscrapers, he said. Further, wood construction requires less resources and construction sites are usually less noisy.

With 1.9 billion ha, corresponding to more than 40 percent of the total forest area, the UNECE region has more forests than any other region of the world. It is also experiencing one of fastest rates of urbanisation. Hence, we could lead the way to integrating forests into cities – proving that when it comes to creating sustainable cities, green technology and ingenuity have no limits.

Sustainable Urban Development and Land Management

Geneva UN Charter Centre of Excellence in Vienna to support UNECE activities on smart sustainable cities



The Secretary General of the Organization for International Economic Relations (OIER), Ms. Kari Aina Eik, and the Executive Secretary of the UNECE, Ms. Olga Algayerova, signed today a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a Geneva UN Charter Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities at the OIER.

Due to their long-standing partnership, which started with the launch, in 2014, of the programme "United Smart Cities" (USC), UNECE and OIER have decided to strengthen their collaboration on the topic of smart sustainable cities and establish the related Geneva UN Charter Center of Excellence in Vienna.

The Centres of Excellence take their name from the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, a non-legally binding document that is seeking to help national and local governments to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all. The UNECE endorsed the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing in 2015.

The first three Charter Centres were established in Tirana, Albania; Tallinn, Estonia; and Glasgow, UK. These Centres play a crucial role in promoting all four principles of the Charter: environmental protection, economic effectiveness, social inclusion and participation, and cultural adequacy. The Centres, depending on their specialization and available expertise at host institutions, work at national and/or international level and on topics covered by the Charter. Established as a network under the coordination of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, the Centres support the implementation of the Charter through exchange of experiences, knowledge sharing, training and research, advisory services, cooperation and dissemination of its principles among the UNECE member States and beyond.

Glasgow Centre (United Kingdom) hosts the Geneva UN Charter Center with the special focus on integrated urban planning and design while Tallinn (Estonia) hosts the Geneva UN Charter Center which is specialized in training programmes on housing management. The Centre in Tirana is in development and is specializing on housing policies.

The Geneva UN Charter Centre of Excellence on Smart and Sustainable Cities in Vienna will support UNECE to implement activities related to capacity building and cooperation, especially using the framework of the United Smart Cities (USC) and the recently-established SDG Cities Leadership Platform. In particular, the Centre will:

- Support cities to assess their economic, environmental and socio-cultural performances and set priorities for action;

- Promote exchange of best practices among countries and cities engaged in the implementation of smart sustainable city activities;
- Encourage cooperation among international, national and local stakeholders;
- Ensure knowledge transfer and strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities to develop and implement policies and actions to improve the quality of life of people and efficiency of urban operations;
- Identify financing tools and mechanisms to accelerate progress of smart city projects;
- Support the achievement of the SDGs at the city level.

Enhanced cooperation among industrial safety and land-use planning communities is critical to mitigate the potential effects of industrial accidents, within and across borders

Severe accidents remind us time and time again of the need to invest in their prevention, and to mitigate their consequences, which can be far-reaching and transboundary. The cyanide spill in Baia Mare, Romania in 2000 demonstrated the devastating effects that an accident at a mining company can have on the local population (who continue to endure health-related effects today) and the environment. The far-reaching effects in this case were felt in riparian countries, which suffered from polluted drinking water.

Land-use planning has a crucial role to play in mitigating industrial safety risks when deciding on the location of industrial sites and the planning of the use of land around them - as showcased by the video "The benefits of enhanced cooperation between land-use planning and industrial safety" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3PjrBkNXOw>), which was launched at the UNECE seminar on land-use planning and industrial safety held in Mechelen, Belgium, 16-17 May 2018.

The seminar, organized by UNECE, the government of Flanders (Belgium) and the European Investment Bank (the EU Bank), brought together the industrial safety and the land-use planning communities from 32 countries. It also involved related communities, including on environmental impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment and disaster risk reduction. It further brought together representatives of national and local governments, urban planners, business associations and individual consultants.

During the seminar, participants agreed on the following:

- Severe accidents remind us time and time again of the need to invest in their prevention, and to mitigate their consequences, which can be far-reaching and transboundary. The cyanide spill in Baia Mare, Romania in 2000 demonstrated the devastating effects that an accident at a mining company can have on the local population (who continue to endure health-related effects today) and the environment. The far-reaching effects in this case were felt in riparian countries, which suffered from polluted drinking water.

Transboundary cooperation in practice on land-use planning and siting decisions involving industrial safety considerations is still rare. There is a need to further promote the implementation of the [UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents](#) (Industrial Accidents Convention) and other

relevant legal instruments, such as the [UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context](#) (Espoo Convention), its [Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment](#) (Protocol on SEA), the [UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters](#) (Aarhus Convention), policy frameworks such as the [UN Charter on Sustainable Housing](#), and the [UNECE Guidance on Land-Use Planning, the Siting of Hazardous Activities and related Safety Aspects](#). Enhanced cooperation among national authorities, to notify neighbouring countries about proposed industrial facilities and to consult each other on ways to mitigate accident effects, is important in this regard. Information sharing with the public and its participation are crucial in a transboundary setting in order make sound decisions on land use and the siting of facilities which may cause impacts across borders.



- The land-use planning and industrial safety communities need to share information at the earliest stages possible of a land-use plan or programme or a decision on the siting or modification of a specific project, such as a hazardous industrial facility in order be able to effectively cooperate to reduce risks to people and the environment surrounding hazardous industrial facilities.
- Effective land-use planning and industrial safety integration is key in order to manage and reduce disaster risks, and to achieve the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#). Climate change and the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, and the associated risks of natural disasters triggering technological accidents, needs to be taken account of in the decision-making process on the siting of industrial facilities and the use of land surrounding it.

The seminar has created an important momentum, and an opportunity to understand existing approaches and good practices. Countries have been encouraged to make further use of these, and to continue to develop their own approaches to improve the integration between industrial safety and land-use planning considerations – both formally, through policies/legislation, and in practice. Bringing together land-use planning and industrial safety considerations benefits everyone: it protects lives and livelihoods, benefits our economies and encourages safe and efficient industrial activity.

Notes

The UNECE seminar on land-use planning and industrial safety was co-organized by the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) and Committee on Housing and Land Management (including its Working Party on Land Administration), the government of Flanders (Belgium) and the

European Investment Bank (the EU bank). The UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), and UN-HABITAT also contributed. The presentations delivered at the seminar are available at:

(<https://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/meetings-and-events/industrial-accidents/workshops/2018/seminar-on-land-use-planning-and-industrial-safety/docs.html>)

The seminar builds on previous joint activities among these partners, notably the organization of previous seminars on land-use planning and industrial safety (such as those held in Leuven in 2007, [The Hague in 2010](#), and [Geneva in 2016](#)) and the development of the guidance on land-use planning and siting. The UNECE 'Guidance on Land-Use Planning, the Siting of Hazardous Activities, and related Safety Aspects' (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47851>) was produced jointly by the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention, Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA, with contributions from the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management.

The video on the 'Benefits of Enhanced Cooperation between Land-Use Planning and Industrial Safety' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3PjrBkNXOw>) was produced in partnership between UNECE, the European Investment Bank and Zoi Environment Network.

Accelerating action under the United for Smart Sustainable Cities Initiative (U4SSC)



Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are key to reach the objectives set out by the United Nations for cities, particularly the Sustainable Development Goal 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

They are also crucial to help cities to become smarter and more sustainable, by lowering energy use and GHG emissions while boosting socio-economic growth and competitiveness, in line with the New Urban Agenda. To support the implementation of these global agreements, the UNECE and ITU launched the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative in May 2016. The U4SSC is a UN initiative that primarily advocates for public policy to encourage the use of ICTs to facilitate and ease the transition to smart sustainable cities worldwide and is currently supported by sixteen other UN bodies.

At the invitation of the city, UNECE and ITU organized the Third Meeting of the U4SSC initiative on 26 April 2018 in Malaga, Spain. The meeting approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Initiative, which will guide the activities of U4SSC in 2018-2019. With the adoption of the revised ToR, the U4SSC Partners and stakeholders will continue to commit themselves to work together and support city leaders to address their urban challenges.

During the event, three reports of the initiative were presented - the flipbooks:

1. "Enhancing innovation and participation in smart sustainable cities"
2. "Connecting cities and communities with the SDGs"
3. "Collection Methodology for Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities"

Meeting participants also agreed on the U4SSC Action Plan, which foresees the development of "Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities projects", "Guidelines on strategies for circular cities", "City science application framework", "Guiding principles for artificial intelligence in cities", "Blockchain 4 cities" and "The Impact of new Frontier Technologies in cities".

During the meeting, the cities of Pully (Switzerland), Bizerte (Tunisia), and Singapore were granted the U4SSC certificate for having successfully implemented the Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities developed within the U4SSC and based on Recommendation ITU-T Y.4903/L.1603: Key performance indicators for smart sustainable cities to assess the achievement of sustainable development goals. These KPIs are free international standards. These indicators fully reflect the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); they help cities to evaluate their economic, environmental and socio-cultural performances and assess their achievement of the SDG targets.

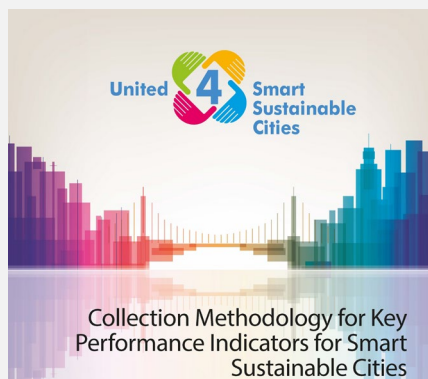
The U4SSC Initiative is co-chaired by H.E. Gloria Placer Maruri, Ministry for the Digital Agenda of Spain and Mr. Nasser Al Marzouqi, Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates.

They are supported by the Vice-Chair Dr. Paolo Gemma, Huawei and Ms. Victoria Sukenik, Ministry of Modernization of Argentina. The secretariat of the Initiative includes staff of ITU and the UNECE.

The U4SSC KPIs to support the transition into smarter and more sustainable cities

by: Domenica Carriero, UNECE

The Committee on Housing and Land Management of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) started to work on smart sustainable cities in 2014 when the programme United Smart Cities (USC)¹ was launched. In 2016, UNECE and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) established the UN global initiative United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC)², which currently involves 16 UN bodies.



According to the U4SSC definition: "A smart sustainable city is an innovative city that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects". Hence, a smart sustainable city uses technology and ICTs to support sustainable urban development.

In 2017, the U4SSC stakeholders elaborated a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)³ for smart sustainable cities which includes 92 indicators (core and advanced) divided in the 3 dimensions of sustainable development: economy, environment, and society and culture. The KPIs encompass the following topics: ICTs, transport, productivity, infrastructure, spatial planning, innovation, air quality, water and sanitation, waste, public spaces, energy, education, health, culture, safety, housing, food and social inclusion. The indicators are fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and serve as a tool for evidence-based decision making, progress monitoring and achieving the SDGs at the local level.

50 cities of different sizes and development are implementing the KPIs worldwide, including Dubai, Singapore, Montevideo, Valencia, Rome, Astana, Manizales, Goris, Voznesensk, Bizerte, Pully etc. The Committee is further working to build capacities of national and local governments especially in countries with economies in transition in the region.

The author of the article is an Associate Economics Affairs Officer at UNECE and is the coordinator of Smart Cities project of UNECE.

Links:

1 <http://www.unece.org/housing/smartcities.html>

2 <http://www.unece.org/housing-and-land-management/united-4-smart-sustainable-cities-u4ssc.html> and

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/ssc/united/Pages/default.aspx>

3

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publication/s/U4SSC-CollectionMethodologyforKPIfoSSC-2017.pdf>

The first United Smart Cities SMART CITY LAB opened in Vienna

According to United Nations estimates, around two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2050. Smart sustainable cities technologies and approaches, including those based on ICT solutions and Internet of Things (IoT) are already helping people to overcome multiple challenges of urban development and to progress towards achieving global objectives for cities, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

The focus on smart sustainable cities has given rise within a growing number of cities to the establishment of an ecosystem of local stakeholders and of platforms for collaboration and the implementation of initiatives.

United Smart Cities, a global Smart Cities program implemented by UNECE and the Organization for International Economic Relations (OIER), opened its first Smart City LAB together with Smart Data experts BRAINTRIBE in the Firestarters Space in Vienna, to offer the necessary platform to urban stakeholders. The aim of the LAB is to develop and implement urban sustainability projects in cities in the areas of education, health, infrastructure, mobility, energy, IoT, etc. and to support the

acceleration of new projects. During the launch of the Smart City LAB, more than 25 smart urban solutions were presented by companies including Twingz (Austria), DigitalGlobe (USA), Pluvi.on (Brazil) and many others.

The LAB was opened by Ms. Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary, Ms. Kari Aina Eik, Secretary General, Organization for International Economic Relations (OIER) and Mr. Stefan Ebner, CEO and Founder, BRAINTRIBE.



Olga Algayerova expressed her support to the initiative, and highlighted UNECE's work to foster stronger engagement with the private sector in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

"Smart cities should be part of broader local economic development efforts that bring governments, business, and the community together. They are about boosting innovative economic development, driven by the public sector, with a flexible approach that leaves sufficient room and incentive for the private sector to try out different, innovative solutions", she said.

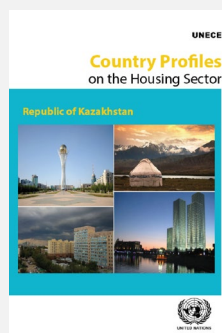
"Cities are the hubs of the future and need individual integrated solutions to solve their challenges. The Smart City LAB enables the development and showcasing of these solutions" said at the event Kari Eik, Secretary General of OIER.

CEOs of Austrian and international companies, startups, city representatives of London, Bristol, Helsinki, as well as Smart City experts, attended the launch and directly contributed to the event. "In terms of the wordings, the activities of the LAB should be " co-creation " and not co-working, as the LAB works together on specific topics and creates a community that pushes each other", explained Stefan Ebner of BRAINTRIBE.

The first USC LAB in Vienna gives the very first impression of how such city platform can facilitate sustainable urban development. Serving as a model for platforms elsewhere, the concept of this innovative United Smart City LAB will be brought to other cities worldwide, establishing a global network enhancing the development of the cities of the future. The solutions jointly developed in the LAB will be made available to the global community of Smart Cities through a digital platform - Co-Create Locally, Share Globally!

Publications

Country Profile on the Housing Sector of Kazakhstan



The Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management are intended to assist governments to improve the performance of their housing, urban development and land management sectors and, at the same time, to promote sustainable development.

This Country Profile of Kazakhstan, prepared at the request of the Government of Kazakhstan, is the twentieth in the series and was

published in 2018. It focuses particularly on the housing sector, specifically on issues of housing provision and affordability, management and maintenance of the housing stock, energy efficiency in housing, housing finance, smart sustainable cities, and the legal and institutional framework. The publication is available in English and Russian on the website.

Collection Methodology for Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities



This publication has been developed within the framework of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative and was published in 2017. It provides cities with a methodology on how to collect data or information from key performance indicators (KPIs) for smart sustainable cities (SSC). This set of KPIs for SSC were developed to establish the criteria to evaluate ICT's contributions in making cities smarter

and more sustainable, and to provide cities with the means for self-assessments.

The publication is available at the UNECE [website](#) in English and Russian languages.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AT THE SECRETARIAT:

Our consultants



Pavitra **Raja** has been working as a Consultant at UNECE HLM for the last 10 months. She is passionate about human rights, especially access to shelter and women's rights.

Pavitra holds a Juris Doctor and B.A. and has worked in marketing, communications, PR, research, legal and political affairs. She has a keen interest in Roman History and wishes to try cuisine from all over the world.



Izabel Bairamukova is from Moscow, Russia. She recently completed her Master degree in International relations specializing on Russia and Eastern Europe at the University of Geneva. She holds a Bachelor degree in International relations and Master degree in International security from the Moscow State University Lomonosov. She has been working in the UNECE as a consultant since July 2018, providing support in preparation of Country Profiles and preparation to the 79th Committee Session. She has keen interest in photography, painting and arts where she gets to express her creative side.

Our interns



Tommaso Bassetti joined the UNECE HLM Unit as an intern in August 2018. After completing his bilingual high school studies in Italian and Spanish in 2014, he left for Utrecht, the Netherlands where he pursued an interdisciplinary BA in Human Geography, Political Science and Sociology. In 2016, he spent a semester at the University of California, San Diego, where he had the chance to observe both the positive and negative sides of urban planning practices. These experiences led him to pursue an MPhil in Planning, Growth and Regeneration at The University of Cambridge, where new interests arose, from climate change and renewable energy policies to the understanding of urban power structures through a dissertation on London's housing situation.

In the future he wishes to go back to Rome, and join/start a movement where he could apply his experience from different cities across the globe to help improve the livelihood of residents in his hometown.



Milica Apostolovic joined the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit as an intern in August 2018. She holds an undergraduate degree in International Relations from the Queen Mary University of London, and MPhil in Development Studies from Cambridge University. She also studied at the National University of Singapore, where she completed a special course on urbanisation and sustainable development and the future of cities in Southeast Asia.

As her mandate as UK Branch President of Organisation of Serbian Students Abroad just expired, she is reacquainting herself with the joys of travelling, voracious reading and cooking.

A NOTE ON THE COORDINATOR:



Inputs to this newsletter are coordinated and edited by Ms. Cecilia Batac. You may contact her at cecilia.batac@un.org

For more information on the work of the Unit, please visit our website – www.unece.org/housing - or email housing-landmanagement@un.org

See what's happening on our social sites:



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<https://www.facebook.com/UNECEpage/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/unece-housing-and-land-management-unit/>



<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL889FD40CAFFC5B94>