

## **Background information**



On 29 September European Commission launched five new **EU missions**:

- Adaptation to Climate Change: support at least 150 European regions and communities to become climate resilient by 2030;
- Cancer: working with Europe's Beating Cancer Plan to improve the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030 through prevention, cure and solutions to live longer and better;
- Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030;
- 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030;
- A Soil Deal for Europe: 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030.

EU missions are new and innovative way to work together and improve the lives of people in Europe and beyond. A novelty of [Horizon Europe](#) and also an original concept in EU policy, missions will support the Commission's main priorities and find responses to some of the greatest challenges we are facing today. Missions are a new tool that includes a set of actions, such as research and innovation projects, policy measures and legislative initiatives, to achieve concrete goals with large societal impact and within a specified timeline.

In practical terms, **the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission** will support, promote and showcase 100 European cities in their systemic transformation towards climate neutrality by 2030 and make these cities into experimentation and innovation hubs for all cities. Through a multi-level and co-creative process formalised in Climate City Contracts, tailored to the specific situation of each city.

On 29 October European Commission published an **Info Kit for Cities** with comprehensive information about the Mission “100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030” - <http://ec.europa.eu/mission-cities> (at the bottom of the page under “Documents”).

**Part I of the Info Kit (“Understanding the Cities Mission”)** is a practical guide to help cities prepare for the Call for Expression of Interest, which we plan to launch in the second half of November. **Part II (“A short guide to urban climate neutrality”)** offers resources and strategies towards climate neutrality at city level. Part II is intended as guidance throughout the implementation of the Mission, and cities are **not** expected to have addressed the various aspects highlighted in this part of the document at the stage of expressing their interest.

EC also published a **Frequently Asked Questions** document, which contains answers to the questions asked by participants during the webinar “The Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission” of 1 October. You can find it in the same place as the Info Kit and also on the event page, together with the recording of the event and the presentations: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/climate-neutral-and-smart-cities-mission-webinar-2021-oct-01\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/climate-neutral-and-smart-cities-mission-webinar-2021-oct-01_en).

On Thursday 25 November, the [Call for Expression of Interest](#) was launched. This means that cities across Europe can express the interest in joining the Cities Mission by filling in a questionnaire online. The call will be open until 31 January 2022.

To help cities fill in the questionnaire of the Call for Expression of Interest, a series of webinars will be organised, focusing on different sections of the questionnaire.

- 30 November, 14.00-16.00, Webinar on the first part of the questionnaire (Eligibility, Additional Information, Current Emissions)
- 10 December, 14.00-16.00, Webinar on the second part of the questionnaire (Current Policies, Ambition)
- 15 December, 14.00- 16.00, Webinar on the last part of the questionnaire (Capital Needs, Barriers and assistance needs)

Registration for webinars via the [link](#).

#### Links to other relevant documents:

- Factsheet for Cities Mission: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/eu-mission-climate-neutral-and-smart-cities\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/eu-mission-climate-neutral-and-smart-cities_en)
- Implementation Plan for the Cities Mission: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research\\_and\\_innovation/funding/documents/cities\\_mission\\_implementation\\_plan.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/funding/documents/cities_mission_implementation_plan.pdf)
- Link to Cities Mission webpage: [EU Mission: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eu-mission-climate-neutral-and-smart-cities/)

#### **Background notes**

75% of EU citizens live in cities and as projected to increase to about 85% in 2050. More than 65% of energy consumption and more than 70% of CO2 emissions worldwide, air and noise pollution; congestion; dangerous roads increasing are in addition problems in cities. It is only with cities in the vanguard of efforts that we will be able to reduce climate emissions by 55% by 2030 and to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

The objectives for the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities mission are ambitious – and necessary: (1) to deliver at least 100 climate-neutral cities by 2030 and (2) to ensure that these cities act as experimentation and innovation hubs to enable all European cities to follow suit. Multi-level cooperation: linking local, regional, national, and EU levels is one of the key factors to achieve these ambitious objectives.

The NetZeroCities consortium runs the Mission Platform, launched on 1 October 2021. A project will support the delivery of the Cities Mission, by working directly with cities to support their transformation with technical, practical, and financial expertise. NetZeroCities is coordinated by EIT Climate-KIC and includes 33 partners, such as universities, think tanks, associations, consultancies, city networks, and research organisations from 13 countries. Cities will prepare and implement Climate City Contracts, which will be co-created with citizens and local stakeholders and will build on EU, national and regional funding support.

The total budget to be used in the first three years of the Horizon Europe programme for the Cities Mission is EUR 359.29 million (resp. EUR 119.37 million in 2021, EUR 123.09 million in 2022 and EUR 116.83 million in 2023). Around 85% in the Work Programme 2021-2022 and overall 75% in the first three years of the HE programme is focused on R&I activities.

EC is also working with the European Investment Bank, and we will involve other public and private investors. In addition, the EU sustainable finance agenda offers new opportunities to encourage investors to invest locally.

Timeline of the activities:

- November 2021: Opening the call for expression of interest for cities
- January 2022: Closing of the call
- March 2022: Selection of participating cities with the help of external experts
- Mid 2022: Mission Platform works with first cities to develop Climate City Contracts