

# 7<sup>th</sup> EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE CITIES & TOWNS

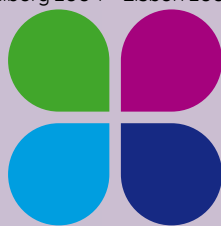
*A green and socially responsible  
economy: a solution in times of crisis?*

*Conference outcomes at a glance*

17-19 APRIL, 2013  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

[www.sustainablegeneva2013.org](http://www.sustainablegeneva2013.org)

Aalborg 1994 > Lisbon 1996 > Hannover 2000 > Aalborg 2004 > Sevilla 2007 > Dunkerque 2010



## GENEVA 2013

*7th European Conference on  
Sustainable Cities & Towns*

Organised by:





## The largest forum on urban sustainability in Europe!

The European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns is the biggest conference series on urban sustainable development in Europe. Hosted by the City of Geneva from 17-19 April 2013, the 7th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns offered a place to discuss how cities can drive a transition towards sustainability in the face of the current economic, environmental and social crises. As global policy processes have largely failed to put the world on the track to sustainability, hopes are increasingly placed on local and regional actors. However, as cities across Europe struggle with austerity measures, can they meet the challenge to drive such a transition?

Good practice examples from local and national governments, and reflections from sustainability experts, finance and business representatives, made this an event not to be missed.



*“We need to strengthen the social economy and choose sustainable investment strategies. In this spirit, Geneva 2013 has brought together representatives from all levels of government to build a strong local and regional foundation for the sustainable development of our societies in Europe and beyond. Geneva as a centre of humanism, multilateralism, peace and international solidarity has provided a symbolic location.”*

Sandrine Salerno,  
Mayor of the City of Geneva



*“The notion that social and environmental concerns need to be put on hold until the economic crisis has been solved fails to recognise the linkages between these. There is enormous potential for economic benefits through smart spending.”*

Wolfgang Teubner,  
ICLEI Regional Director for Europe



## Key messages

- **Times of scarcity are times to turn towards sustainability:** Cities are best placed to create a green and socially responsible economy as an effective response to today's crises, and to promote positive activities that value human relations and ecologically sound processes.
- **Urban areas consume resources, but can also produce them:** Cities and regions should explore their own strengths and potential before looking beyond their area.
- **Bridge the culture and communication gap:** Build partnerships between the public and private sector to find new ways to best leverage resources and generate smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- **Ensure social cohesion:** Cities need to ensure that quality of life is shared in a more equitable way, in order to create a spirit of solidarity and safeguard the stability of urban societies.
- **Strengthen the local and regional focus in the spirit of European and global responsibility:** Strategic alliances, self-confident representation, commitment and openness for dialogue are crucial to achieve a closer link and the deeper involvement of local governments in relevant international processes.

*“Invest in a creative and better environment. To maintain funds on the public level, cities have to focus on projects that have direct economic effects.”*

Alexandra van Huffelen,  
Deputy Mayor, City of Rotterdam, The Netherlands

*“There are opportunities to capture - social return and financial return are not antonyms but complementary.”*

Mario Marconi,  
Head of Philanthropy & Values-based Investing, UBS S.A.

*“The initiative to upscale the networking of cities and towns in the pursuit of sustainable development, through the European Sustainable Cities Platform, is very timely and pertinent, given the essential role that local governments can and should play in the transition towards a more sustainable future for all.”*

Jan Dusik,  
Acting Director, UNEP Regional Office for Europe

## Sustainable Cities Platform: your sustainability hub

Launched at the 7th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns, the European Sustainable Cities Platform is an information hub for local governments, organisations involved in urban sustainability at the European level, and interested individuals. Recognising the variety and diversity of schemes, awards and activities organised for local governments by a multitude of actors, the Platform aims to bring together all relevant partners working on issues around sustainable cities, and offers a one-stop shop for any local community trying to find the right entry door for engaging in sustainability action. The Platform is an initiative by ICLEI and the City of Aalborg, emerging from the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign. The Platform has received financial support from the City of Dunkerque and is open to further sponsors and associates.

More: [www.sustainablecities.eu](http://www.sustainablecities.eu)





## Network, share and exchange

The three-day programme was designed to take a visionary but also practical look at the leading role of cities and towns moving towards sustainability. Events included:

**A Mayors Session** discussing how to finance public services in times of crisis

**7 plenary sessions** setting the political, economic and environmental framework at the local, international and global level

**17 workshops on-site** giving a practical flavour of sustainable projects and initiatives carried out by the City of Geneva, neighboring municipalities, and local businesses and NGOs

**29 topical break-out sessions** enabling participants to delve into sustainable and innovative solutions on diverse issues including adaptation, green infrastructure, sustainable finance, citizen participation, city standards, energy efficiency, and waste and water management

**45+ exhibitors** from light-house projects, committed businesses and other inspiring organisations

**And many social events** catering for inspiring discussions while tasting local delicacies and experiencing Geneva



## About the host city

For many years, the City of Geneva has been committed to promoting sustainable development at all levels. Since 1980, it has been at the heart of international thinking on this issue, hosting the Brundtland Commission, which shaped the report "Our common future" published in 1987. Since then, the City of Geneva has firmly chosen the path of sustainability.

Measurable sustainability objectives were defined for the 2011-2014 period in the following areas: shared vision and participation, clean air, renewable energy, biodiversity, responsible procurement, urban planning, mobility, integration, neighbourhood well-being, local agriculture, work-life balance, access to culture and cooperation.

**More: [www.ville-geneve.ch/ville-durable](http://www.ville-geneve.ch/ville-durable)**



## Exploring the crucial role of cities and towns

**How can cities contribute to maintaining and regenerating their resources?  
Can cities become producers rather than only consumers of resources?  
How can city regions become more independent from the global economy?**

*“Cities have a key role to play in this transformation towards sustainability. They have a number of instruments in their hands, such as green public procurement, waste and water management, improved mobility, housing improvements, stimulating eco-product markets, and urban planning. We are also starting to talk about urban mining. Urban mining may sound like an urban legend, but for making one golden wedding ring you would need approximately 10 tons of golden ore but only 10 kilos of mobile phones.”*

Janez Potočnik,  
European Commissioner for the Environment

*“Unless we change the way the cities of the world impact the global environment, we will ultimately be on a slippery slope into a greater and greater decline of ecosystems and ultimately their services will be diminished to an extent that will affect the future of cities themselves in a major way.”*

Herbert Girardet,  
Co-Founder, World Future Council

*“Continuous investment of 1% of city GDP in rail transit will create the best public transport in the world. Similar initiatives will turn your city into a productive city.”*

Peter Head,  
Executive Chair, Ecological Sequestration Trust,  
Chairman, Institute for Sustainability

*“The positive alternative, which must take root at the local level, is the organisation of transition strategies towards cities with a good quality of life, towards territories where well-being is a social and political goal and not simply a personal one; this creates a link, a hopeful link, between the issue of well-being, the issue of democratic quality and the issue of an economy which becomes once again socially and ecologically responsible.”*

Patrick Viveret,  
Essayist and philosopher



**More on programme,  
speakers and presentations:**

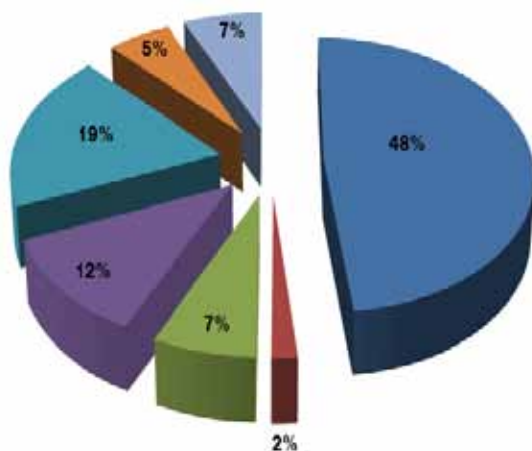
[www.sustainablegeneva2013.org](http://www.sustainablegeneva2013.org)





## Participants' engagement and feedback

### Who attended the conference?



#### Legend:

- Local Governments, their associations/ networks & utilities
- Regional Governments
- National Governments
- Non governmental organisations
- Research Institutes
- Business
- Other

*“The 7th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns was a very inspirational event. The challenges and stakes of our future urban development make it paramount that we not only think sustainable but also act and act now. Events like this federate thought and trigger collective and concerted action for a more sustainable future. (...) Congratulations to the organisers and to the city of Geneva for having hosted this event!”*

Charlina Vitcheva,  
Director of Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial  
Development and Northern Europe, Directorate-General  
for Regional Policy, European Commission

*“This conference was a great moment of converging views towards our future sustainable cities. Thanks to its cultural heritage and its efforts to achieve ambitious energy and environment targets, Europe has a strong asset in its green and socially responsible economy. We need to promote it worldwide.”*

Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero,  
Directorate-General Research and Innovation, European  
Commission, Supervisor of the Global Europe 2050 Report

### Participants in figures:

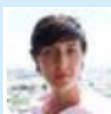
**850+** participants  
**200+** speakers  
**50+** countries represented across Europe,  
the Americas, Africa and Asia

## Communicating creative and innovative thinking



Twitter is a simple tool to give a voice to everyone. By adding the hashtag **#sustainablegeneva**, participants and speakers alike could share thoughts, projects, key messages and feedback in real time.

### Engaging



**Cinthia Pereira** @\_cipereira

17 Apr

The presenter of the plenary summons the twitters present at the event to make this event the most international we can.

**#sustainablegeneva**



**Green Capital** @bgreencapital

18 Apr

Fab to finally meet the **@EU\_GreenCapital** team at **#sustainablegeneva** After so many tweets, it was great to chat :-)  
[pic.twitter.com/po97gcuSmP](https://pic.twitter.com/po97gcuSmP)

### News



**Emilie Doran** @emilie\_events

19 Apr

**@Good\_Policies** Herbert Girardet takes the stage to tell us more about Regenerative Cities! **#sustainablegeneva**  
[pic.twitter.com/73I5oCYKjv](https://pic.twitter.com/73I5oCYKjv)

### Expectations



**Mark Irwin** @SDEGlasgow

16 Apr

Looking forward to **#sustainablegeneva** tomorrow and telling people of Glasgow's **@greenglasgow** **@EU\_GreenCapital** bid  
from Hillingdon, London

### Political messages



**ACR+** @ACRplus

17 Apr

Commissioner Potocnik: it's not about green growth, it's just about growth

### Feedback



**Damien CAREME** @DamienCAREME

19 Apr

**#sustainablegeneva** Thanks ICLEI, all ICLEI's employees & Geneva for this very interesting conference! See you soon! We've Just to Do It Now!



**Ed Synnott** @ed\_synnott

19 Apr

**#sustainablegeneva** sad to have left Geneva this morning. Fantastic conference. Thank you to the organisers!

## Next European Sustainable Cities & Towns Conference host city

Host the next European Sustainable Cities & Towns Conference in 2016 and turn your city into an international forum.

Why host the European Cities & Towns Conference?

- Your city is walking the sustainability talk and would like to obtain and reinforce its international recognition and prestige
- Your city is looking for a way to showcase its sustainable achievements as well as the eco-innovative approaches of your local businesses
- Your city would like to play a more active role and make its voice heard at the European level

For more information, contact: [events.europe@iclei.org](mailto:events.europe@iclei.org)

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## CO-ORGANISED BY THE CONFERENCE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE



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