

Green Week 2016

Partner event: 'Social Innovation for Accelerating Transition to Sustainable Cities'



Monday 30 of May –10.00-13.00

Venue: Committee of the Regions

Van Maerlant Street n°2, 1040 Brussels (EC building VM2 -room VMA 1 - 2nd floor)



Social innovation comes in many forms such as nature-based solutions and people-based solutions that hand in hand transform our cities. Transition initiatives as makers of social innovation foster new relationships, new institutions and, contribute to new urban realities: sharing economy, green economy, and sustainable lifestyles. In our seminar we will interactively debate key messages for policy, practice and education that invigorate the way urban social innovation plays out in accelerating low-carbon transitions via altering city-making, and creating green jobs. Research efforts discovered that the proliferation of urban social innovation initiatives in cities raises new questions for city-making, the role of university and existing welfare state models.

The scope of our seminar:

Cities are homes of innovative solutions and alternative social arrangements. Social innovations come in many forms, including nature-based solutions and people-based solutions that hand in hand transform our cities, district-by-district, one infrastructure service at a time. These actor-networks that we call transition initiatives come in various shapes and sizes, led by actors from public, private and civil society sectors or spanning across sectoral divides, and have become increasingly visible in many European cities. Transition initiatives as makers of social innovations in cities foster new relationships, new institutions and, ultimately, can contribute to the emergence of new urban realities: the sharing economy, green low-carbon economies, and new sustainable lifestyles.

Whereas the question was how to discover these transition initiatives and the solutions they put in place, research efforts¹ now discovered that the proliferation of those initiatives in cities raises new questions for place-making and overall city-making. Looking at the evidenced impact in cities that sustainability initiatives from civil society and from partnerships bring about, we come to question what we can learn about accelerating urban sustainability transitions and facilitating a transition to low-carbon economy, with new types of green jobs and welfare state models.

In this seminar we will interactively debate about the key messages for policy, practice and education as synthesized across 6 research projects that look at social innovation and the way it plays out in facilitating and accelerating low-carbon transitions to sustainability in cities. We will also include cases from Brazilian cities on showing the potential for ideas to travel across countries, and the possibility to establish transnational collaboration and knowledge exchange by learning about co-creating sustainable urban futures and inclusive urban economies.

We will go beyond the usual presentations and create a theater of experience and knowledge to communicate our messages and also actively interact with the audience of the Green Week. We will use physical material from the case study grounds and audio-visual inputs from our engagement and collaboration with artists to capture the imagination and feelings of people about the future of low-carbon sustainable cities in Europe.

A complementary afternoon session, 'EU-Brazil actions for Sustainable Cities', held in the same venue, will focus on innovations in European and Brazilian cities (<https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm>).

¹ EU funded research projects ARTS (www.acceleratingtransitions.eu), TESS (www.tess-transition.eu), PATHWAYS (www.pathways-project.eu), GREEN SURGE (www.greensurge.eu), GLAMURS (www.glamurs.eu) and TRANSIT (www.transitsocialinnovation.eu).

SEMINAR AGENDA

10:00: Opening – Imagining the city of the future (Genk Video) & setting the scene– Niki Frantzeskaki, DRIFT, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

10:30 Theater Session I: THE KNOWNNS – what makes cities accelerate to low-carbon futures?

Accelerating urban sustainability transition within and across cities– Dr. Niki Frantzeskaki, DRIFT, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Community-led transitions for low-carbon urban futures – Dr. Jaco Quist, TU Delft, The Netherlands

Action research mediating social innovation in cities? – Dr. Holger Berg, Wuppertal Institute, Germany

Roundtable discussion with questions from audience– Moderator: Barbara Anton, ICLEI, Germany

11:30 Theater Session II: THE CATALYSTS – power, politics and momentum of urban social innovation

Making time for urban social innovation – Sustainable lifestyles as drivers for low-carbon cities and new forms of green jobs – Prof. Ricardo Garcia Mira, Universidade da Coruña , Spain.

Nature-based solutions building momentum for sustainable urbanisation – Guilherme Wiedman – Brazilian Ministry of Technology and Innovation, Brazil

Meta-networks and power dynamics of social innovation: an urban reality? – Dr. Eamon O’Hara, AEIDL, Belgium

Innovating Cities: Accelerating Open urban innovation – Ugo Guarnacci, EU DG R&I, Belgium

Roundtable discussion with questions from audience – Moderator: Dr. Niki Frantzeskaki, DRIFT, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Wrapping up and group picture