DIGITAL CITIES CHALLENGE

Digital Cities Challenge
Mayors Summit
4th of December 2018
Brussels

CONCEPT NOTE

About the **Digital Cities Challenge**

The Digital Cities Challenge is an initiative of coaching and facilitation by the European Commission to help European cities develop and implement policies that focus on smart, sustainable growth through the uptake of advanced technologies by local businesses.

The aim of the Challenge is to offer high level advisory services to 15 European cities and help them build up innovation ecosystems through the deployment of advanced tech.

Due to the high interest showcased by the 92 applications from cities all over Europe, the initiative has increased its outreach to include 21 Fellow cities that have joined on their own resources and 6 Mentor cities that inspire and share best practices with the group. Together they create a network of over 40 cities that participate in the initiative.

Map of participating cities:

Oulu (FI), Pori (FI), Espoo (FI), Ventspils (LV), Karlskrona (SE), Sunderland (UK), Londonderry (IE), Amsterdam (NL), Hamburg (DE), Antwerp (BE), Gelsenkirchen (DE), Cork (IE), Grand-Orly Seine Bièvre (FR), Nuremberg (DE), Heidelberg (DE), Graz (AT), Arad (RO), Iași (RO), Padua (IT), Idrija (SI), Gijón (ES), Mantova (IT), Rijeka (HR), Nice (FR), Sofia (BG), Guimarães (PT), Terrassa (ES), Reggio Emilia (IT), L'Aquila (IT), Alcoy (ES), Barcelona (ES), Trikala (EL), Kavala (EL), Thessaloniki (EL), Granada (ES), Athens (EL), Lisbon (PT), Alicante (ES), Patras (EL), Seville (ES), Algeciras (ES), Heraklion (EL)

- ● Challenge Cities
- ● Fellow Cities
- ○ Mentor Cities

The concept of a city's Digital Transformation

The Digital Cities Challenge is about:

| Designing **policies for smart, sustainable, clean and inclusive growth and competitiveness,** enabled by advanced technologies | Empowering local authorities and leaders to identify the **'collective' actions** which can and should be implemented for this process to take place | Creating the conditions and the environment that can contribute to **better and more sustainable standards of living** in the cities participating in the challenge |

Developing and testing novel policy levers in a collaborative approach with other cities as peers is needed more than ever to reap the benefits of digital transformation. The rationale is by no means to design yet another distinct digital strategy, but to provide cities with expert advice on how to maximise existing strategies and fill the gaps that are holding them back from fully exploiting new technologies.

The initiative seeks to foster synergies between existing policies involving digital priorities (e.g. economic development, smart specialisation, smart city, sustainable and clean growth, circular economy, climate action, digital skills, etc.) and the newly planned policy actions supporting digital transformation.

Individual expert teams are working with each participating city and their relevant partners (including business organisations, academia, city labs, schools, community groups, local press, and city and regional authorities). Besides meetings and workshops organised in the cities, representatives of city administration, business sector, and experts meet during the Academy Seminars to share experiences and take advantage of peer to peer learning.

Outcome and Progress

At the end of the initiative, each city will have:

Set an ambitious vision for their city in the 21st century, shared by citizens, authorities, businesses and organisations

Built a community of local stakeholders committed to engage in the transformation of their city to a better place to live, thanks to advanced tech

Built a network of European peers and partners able to offer mutual support and advice in the future

Developed and started implementing a strategy and action plan to build up innovation ecosystems of industrial modernisation. This will include tangible, achievable and measurable steps to be taken in the short, medium and long term

Gained exposure at European level and established itself as a beacon for the transformative power of digitalisation

Throughout the duration of the initiative a library of **Good practices** is compiled covering the following dimensions:

Accelerators to enhance digitalisation of industry

Governance leadership & branding - Overall coordination and governance is needed to streamline the process

Support Services - The ecosystem greatly benefits from a portfolio of support services facilitating digital transformation

Finance - Funding is needed to support digital projects

Community - Interactions between different stakeholders of the ecosystem can enhance digitalisation

Prerequisites to create favourable framework conditions

Infrastructure - A basic requirement to enable digitalisation

Access to data - Processing of data requires access to data through technology

Digital skillset - Human assets and capabilities are prerequisites to enhance digital transformation

Companies digital competencies - Companies need specific digital competencies to realise digital transformation

As shown by the progress of the initiative so far, the visions and ambitions are multiple, reflecting the diversity of the participating cities. **Algeciras** is aiming to set up the required digital infrastructure to connect big players with small businesses and citizens, focusing on the digital capabilities in specific sectors like transport and logistics, petro-chemical, metallurgy, tourism and hospitality, and energy efficiency sectors.

At the same time, **Granada** is envisioning becoming a regional pole for the development of innovative solutions in creative industries, tourism, health and biotech, while **L'Aquila** plans the use of the city as a test-bed, research, product and service development centre to promote entrepreneurship and empower existing cases of success among digital SMEs and non-digital SMEs.

Thessaloniki envisages supporting the digitalisation of local companies, unleashing the use of open data and focusing on activities that are critical to the local economy (e.g. tourism, ICT, wholesale and retail, transport and logistics), and **Patras** puts the emphasis on the development of broadband infrastructures, new generation networks and computing capabilities, and large scale projects especially in the area of sustainable energy and waste management.

While strengthening the business ecosystem of the ICT sector is the overarching goal in **Sofia** with the view to developing city solutions, and creating markets for ICT products and e-services, **Ventspils** places the focus on strengthening ICT infrastructure, and enhancing the use of ICT in enterprises especially in the manufacturing sector. Comparatively, **Iasi** aims to introduce digitisation into fields such as Education, Health, Infrastructure, Governance/Administration, as well as foster a regional entrepreneurship ecosystem and ensure a strong digital PR/marketing presence.

Each city will develop a set of key indicators and targets to be used to monitor the progress and success of its digital transformation strategy.

15 Challenge cities

Alcoy · Algeciras · Arad · Granada · Grand-Orly Seine Bièvre · Guimarães · Iasi · Kavala · L'Aquila · Patras · Pori · Rijeka · Sofia · Thessaloniki · Ventspils

Draft agenda

Digital Cities Challenge, Mayors Summit

Date: 4th of December, 14:00-17:00 followed by networking reception
Venue: Committee of Regions, Belliardstraat 99-101, 1040 Brussel. Room VM1

Moderator: Slawomir Tokarski, Director for Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, European Commission

1. **Welcome and introduction**

   Markku Markkula, Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions
   Slawomir Tokarski, Director for Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, European Commission
   Time: 15 minutes

2. **Digital Cities Challenge: The progress so far.**

   Dana Eleftheriadou, Head of Advanced Technologies Team, European Commission
   Time: 5 minutes

3. **From Strategy to action**

   Format: the cities will be divided in 4 panels with short presentations, questions by the moderator and audience
   Time: 160 minutes

   - **Success story.** The city of Amsterdam to share its experience in developing its brand, strategy, access to technologies and attraction of investments. (10')
     Franc Weerwind, mayor of city of Almere on behalf of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area (AMA) and coordinator of the Challenge Digital Connectivity of the Amsterdam Economic Board

   - **City strategy and brand**– what do cities do to show their unique assets and build their brand?
     o Short presentations (5') by 4 cities (tbd) followed by discussion

   - **Access to technology** (ex.establishment of fab labs, centers, innovation centers)
     o Short presentations (5') by 4 cities followed by discussion

   - **Skills, employability and attraction of talent**
     o Short presentations (5') by 4 cities followed by discussion

   - **Investments and Finance**
     o Short presentations (5') by 4 cities followed by discussion

4. **Closing**
   Time: 15 minutes

The event will be followed by networking reception in foyer VMA where the mayors will sign a memorandum of collaboration.