REPORT

on the challenges for urban areas in the post-COVID-19 era (2021/2075(INI))

Committee on Regional Development

Rapporteur: Katalin Cseh
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLANATORY STATEMENT</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETTER OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the challenges for urban areas in the post-COVID-19 era
(2021/2075(INI))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in particular Title XVIII thereof,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) No 2020/2221 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 December 2020 amending Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 as regards additional resources and implementing arrangements to provide assistance for fostering crisis repair in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its social consequences and for preparing a green, digital and resilient recovery of the economy (REACT-EU)¹,


– having regard to Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments⁴,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) No 2021/1056 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the Just Transition Fund⁵,

– having regard to the Pact of Amsterdam establishing the Urban Agenda for the EU, agreed by the EU ministers responsible for urban matters on 30 May 2016,

– having regard to the Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) in Paris on 12 December 2015 (the Paris Agreement),

⁴ OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 94.
– having regard to the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 on sustainable cities and communities,
– having regard to its resolution of 9 September 2015 on the urban dimension of EU policies⁶,
– having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2018 on the role of EU regions and cities in implementing the COP 21 Paris Agreement on climate change⁷,
– having regard to its resolution of 3 July 2018 on the role of cities in the institutional framework of the Union⁸,
– having regard to its resolution of 17 September 2020 on the European Year of Greener Cities 2022⁹,
– having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all¹⁰,
– having regard to the Declaration towards the EU Urban Agenda, agreed on by the ministers responsible for territorial cohesion and urban matters on 10 June 2015,
– having regard to the Council conclusions of 24 June 2016 on an Urban Agenda for the EU,
– having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),
– having regard to the Commission communication of 18 July 2014 entitled ‘The urban dimension of EU policies – key features of an EU urban agenda’ (COM(2014)0490),
– having regard to the Commission communication of 30 June 2021 entitled ‘A long-term Vision for the EU’s Rural Areas – Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040’ (COM(2021)0345),
– having regard to the Commission communication of 7 October 2020 entitled ‘A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation’ (COM(2020)0620),

⁷ OJ C 162, 10.5.2019, p. 31.
⁸ OJ C 118, 8.4.2020, p. 2.
¹⁰ OJ C 456, 10.11.2021, p. 145.
– having regard to the New Leipzig Charter on the transformative power of cities for the common good, adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meetings organised on 30 November 2020,

– having regard to the New Urban Agenda adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, on 20 October 2016,

– having regard to the Commission’s State of European Cities Report 2016,

– having regard to the UN Women’s Global Flagship Initiative ‘Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls’,

– having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which opened for signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011 (the Istanbul Convention),

– having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Transport and Tourism,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development (A9-0352/2021),

A. whereas cities continue to be on the front line of the COVID-19 crisis, with dwindling economic activity, high rates of infection, low rates of vaccination and often inadequate resources; whereas the pandemic has also exacerbated the prevailing shortcomings in urban areas, exposing their vulnerabilities;

B. whereas long-standing inequalities within cities and towns have been deepened by the pandemic; whereas people in vulnerable situations have become even more vulnerable; whereas cities face challenges such as access to affordable housing, homelessness, social exclusion, poverty and a lack of access to public, health and other essential services;

C. whereas 72% of people in the EU live in cities and towns; whereas cities and towns must be directly involved in the recovery from COVID-19; whereas recovery efforts must strive to address long-standing vulnerabilities and go beyond addressing the health impacts of COVID-19 to tackle the persistent inequalities;

D. whereas the pandemic has had gendered impacts that cities, towns and functional urban areas will need to take into account; whereas quarantines and social distancing requirements have put women at an increased risk of gender-based violence, while at the same time, women’s access to support networks, social services and sexual and reproductive health facilities has been curtailed;

E. whereas metropolitan areas are the most unequal when it comes to access to essential resources such as healthcare, education and digitalisation, especially for people in vulnerable situations; whereas more sustained efforts are needed to combat multiple forms of discrimination and inequality;
F. whereas the digital divide is intersectional and spans all categories, including gender, generation and social status gaps, and has been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic; whereas many households and educational institutions lack access to adequate, up-to-date digital equipment;

G. whereas job losses are estimated to be higher in large cities than elsewhere, which hits low-skilled, self-employed and migrant workers and those with precarious contracts particularly hard; whereas the risk of unemployment is highest among young people, whose education, training pathways and personal development have been disrupted, and many have not found the internships or apprenticeships required to complete their studies;

H. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the culture and sport sectors, which has led to an economic recession and job losses; whereas urban areas, especially metropolitan areas, need adequate resources for the cultural and creative sectors to allow for the personal development of their habitants;

I. whereas cities, towns and functional urban areas, such as metropolitan areas, are key economic pillars to boost growth, create jobs and enhance the Union’s competitiveness in a globalised economy; whereas functional urban areas and mid-sized cities, despite strong disparities in the quality of services provided between urban and rural areas, can act as driving forces for rural attractiveness and development and provide their surrounding rural and depopulated areas with access to a number of services;

J. whereas in urban areas, on top of the list of existing challenges, the climate emergency and demographic challenges are also present; whereas the multiplicity of challenges ultimately requires a response that is based on an integrated approach that brings together different sectors and looks for solutions that accommodate sectoral needs;

K. whereas physical distancing requirements have highlighted the lack of adequate parks, green areas and outdoor recreational facilities as well as the lack of adequate, safe transportation and alternative transport infrastructure in and around functional urban areas;

L. whereas the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated challenges such as the transport of food and medicines and the provision of health services, and has highlighted serious shortcomings in medical infrastructure and professional training for healthcare workers on how to respond to pandemics or other health emergency situations;

M. whereas housing is a universal right and so Member States should establish specific strategies and appropriate measures to overcome obstacles to the right to housing; whereas investment in affordable housing is needed;

N. whereas urban areas are responsible for the biggest proportion of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in the EU and play a key role in the Union’s fight against climate change; whereas cities, towns and functional urban areas will require extensive urban construction and the creation of a circular economy to help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, limit global warming, reduce congestion, recycle waste and ensure the sustainability of the economy;
O. whereas the global urban population is expected to increase by up to three billion people by 2050 and two thirds of the global population will be living in cities, and will consume 75% of the world’s natural resources and produce 50% of global waste and over 60% of greenhouse gas emissions;

P. whereas public transport plays an important role in the fight against transport poverty; whereas there is an urgent need for a rapid increase in investments in sustainable public transport and in improving access to it, and in better walking and cycling infrastructure for the safety of road users and especially users with reduced mobility and other disabilities;

Q. whereas all European cities are facing a record-breaking surge in energy prices that threatens to affect the post-pandemic economic recovery;

R. whereas multi-level governance including the active involvement of urban authorities, based on coordinated action by the EU, the Member States and regional and local authorities, and in accordance with the partnership principle as laid down in the Common Provisions Regulation, are essential elements for the design and implementation of all EU programmes; whereas urban authorities have jurisdiction over project selection under funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for sustainable urban development and under the new European Urban Initiative, which replaces the Urban Innovative Actions for the new programming period and offers further opportunities to test new solutions and approaches including those supporting urban areas for the post-COVID-19 era;

Inclusive cities

1. Acknowledges the social, economic, territorial, cultural and historical diversity of urban areas across the Union, and stresses the need to tackle challenges such as segregation and poverty;

2. Underlines that while the density of cities has many advantages in terms of sustainable living, a high concentration of the population in certain urban areas may also have repercussions on housing affordability, pollution levels, quality of life and the risk of discrimination, poverty, inequality and social exclusion;

3. Underlines that the COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the trend of depopulation in underdeveloped urban areas, which often lack sufficient own revenues to provide residents with quality public services; encourages the Commission to provide recommendations and foster the sharing of best practices between Member States regarding administrative-territorial organisation and reforms;

4. Calls on the Member States to develop positive action measures that promote the inclusion of marginalised communities such as people with disabilities, more isolated older people, homeless people, migrants and refugees and ethnic minorities such as Roma; calls for funding needs to be directed at a local level, including those of urban areas, especially metropolitan areas, as well as at a regional, national and EU level, in order to support these marginalised communities sustainably; recalls that, in addition to sufficient national resources, structural funds are key to the successful implementation of policy measures put forward by the EU Roma strategic framework for equality,
inclusion and participation; stresses the role of urban authorities in ensuring that these measures reflect the actual needs of Roma communities;

5. Underlines the vital role of urban accessibility in enabling persons with disabilities to exercise in full their right to mobility, study and work; calls on the Commission to promote full inclusivity and to provide access to urban development funding to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities;

6. Stresses that for urban economies to recover without leaving anyone behind, investments and reforms should lead to stable and high-quality jobs, reinforced public infrastructure and services, enhanced social dialogue and support for inclusion and integration of disadvantaged groups, including by strengthening social protection and welfare systems;

7. Emphasises the need for an EU framework to support local and national strategies to fight homelessness and ensure equal access to decent housing for all by promoting an integrated approach combining housing support with social care, health services and active inclusion;

8. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and local and regional authorities to establish specific strategies and appropriate measures to overcome obstacles to the right to housing such as discrimination, financialisation, speculation, touristification, abusive lending practices and forced evictions;

9. Stresses that services of general economic interest (SGEIs) in housing should be principally guided by specific requirements determined by national, regional or local authorities, since these authorities have the ability to identify and address the housing needs and living conditions of different groups, which can differ greatly between rural and urban areas, and since these authorities play crucial roles in well-targeted decision-making; urges the Commission to adapt the target group definition of social and publicly funded housing in the rules on SGEIs, so as to allow national, regional and local authorities to support housing for all groups whose need for decent and affordable housing cannot be easily met under market conditions, while also ensuring that enough funding is allocated to the most disadvantaged, in order to unblock investment and ensure affordable housing, housing tenure neutrality and sustainable urban development and to create socially diverse neighbourhoods and enhance social cohesion;

10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to further increase investment in social, public, energy-efficient, adequate and affordable housing, and in tackling homelessness and housing exclusion in the EU; calls for, in this regard, investment through the ERDF, the Just Transition Fund, InvestEU, ESF+, Horizon Europe, NextGenerationEU and especially through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative and the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus; calls for greater cooperation between these instruments; welcomes the financing of social and affordable housing loans through InvestEU and the broader portfolio of the European Investment Bank (EIB); calls on the Commission and the Member States to integrate social progress as an investment priority, together with the green and digital transitions, into the Recovery and Resilience Facility in order to protect vulnerable people against the negative impact of the current crisis and to include
social progress plans in recovery and resilience plans and outline how the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights are going to be implemented and where social investments are going to be targeted, including investment in social housing; calls urgently on the Commission to ensure that EU funding and EIB financing become more accessible to local and regional social and public affordable housing providers; calls on the EIB to try to increase relevant landing via targeted technical assistance and closer cooperation with financial intermediaries and the Member States;

11. Highlights the socioeconomic challenges of urban centres, especially metropolitan areas with significant populations of migrants and refugees and other people in vulnerable situations; recalls that cities have a key role in building inclusive, accessible and welcoming communities where no one is left behind;

12. Notes that migration has a direct impact on the inclusiveness of cities and requires tailored policy responses; points to the potential of the EU Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 in building inclusive and cohesive societies and targeting programmes to the most deprived neighbourhoods; notes also that community-led local development strategies are an essential tool to create jobs, reduce poverty and increase access to services in urban areas;

13. Highlights that in deprived urban areas, children often experience multiple risk factors, such as poor housing, discrimination, violence and unequal access to services such as childcare, healthcare and education; calls on the Member States to support local child guarantee schemes to address the specific challenges of urban child poverty;

14. Stresses the role played by cities towards gender equality and recalls that in accordance with the Common Provisions Regulation, all actions implemented under cohesion policy should take gender equality into account as a guiding principle throughout their preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation; underlines that action aimed at bridging the gender gap under cohesion policy should employ an intersectional approach that takes appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on religion or belief, disability, age or gender orientation and that bases itself on national strategic frameworks for gender equality; stresses, moreover, that the beneficiaries of cohesion policy programmes should not adopt any discriminatory policies, least of all against minorities, such as the LGBTI community; encourages the rejection of applications from potential beneficiaries, including from regional or local authorities, who have adopted discriminatory policies against members of the LGBTI community, such as the declaration of ‘LGBT-free zones’;

15. Highlights that in addition to health risks, women are more vulnerable to the economic risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic; recognises that in a post-pandemic context, supporting women in the formal and informal sectors and better integrating women into policy planning for regional and urban development focusing on designing gender-inclusive cities and communities are essential for urban economic recovery;

16. Highlights the widespread gender data gap in the field of cohesion policy and urban planning and calls on the Member States to introduce data collection methods using sex-disaggregated data;

17. Emphasises the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to spikes in domestic
violence; calls on the Member States to allocate cohesion policy funding and mobilise urban authorities to address the global increase in gender-based violence; encourages EU cities to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive approaches to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and gender-based violence in public spaces by committing to the principles of the UN Women’s Global Flagship Initiative ‘Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls’;

18. Calls on all Member States to urgently conclude the ratification of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women; asks the Commission to propose legislation to tackle all forms of gender-based violence and take the necessary steps to identify gender-based violence as a new area of crime to be listed under Article 83(1) TFEU;

19. Recognises the burden placed on women as principal caregivers in formal and informal settings, and the social value of that care, especially during the COVID-19 crisis; points out that 80% of all care provided across the EU is provided by (unpaid) informal carers, 75% of whom are women; points to the relevant role of European structural funds in securing investment in care services; welcomes the Commission’s intention to propose a European care strategy;

20. Draws attention to unemployment and youth unemployment in particular, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; calls on the Member States to actively involve urban authorities in devising programmes that meet the needs of young people in cities and in creating policies that focus on the mental health and well-being of young people, which is especially crucial in the post-COVID-19 context;

**Sustainable cities**

21. Stresses the importance of sustainable urban development, including sustainable and affordable public transport, for the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Union and the quality of life of its population and for reaching its climate neutrality goals by 2050 at the latest; recalls the opportunities for urban areas presented by the New European Bauhaus initiative and its guiding principles, which include sustainability, multi-level governance, aesthetics and inclusion;

22. Recognises that a synchronised strategy responding to COVID-19 and the green and digital transitions should be implemented to usher in an economic recovery that accelerates the sustainable transition;

23. Calls on the Union and the Member States, in line with their commitments under the Paris Agreement and the UN SDGs to prioritise and support circular economy frameworks, investments in renewable energy, sustainable and affordable urban and suburban mobility (in particular cycle path networks), alternative transport infrastructure in and around urban areas, proper maintenance of existing infrastructure and rapid investment in green infrastructure, parks, outdoor green and recreational facilities and respect for the ‘do no significant harm’ and ‘energy efficiency first’ principles; notes that initiatives such as the New European Bauhaus are a chance for urban areas to showcase the Renovation Wave and projects prioritising the circular economy.

---

11 COM(2020)0662.
economy, sustainability and biodiversity; is encouraged that the New European Bauhaus is dedicated to following a participatory and transdisciplinary approach to building a sustainable environment for people to inhabit;

24. Believes that the COVID-19 crisis has shown the need for new urban planning and mobility solutions in order to make urban areas more resilient and adaptable to mobility demand and that the crisis should be taken as an opportunity to reduce transport congestion and greenhouse emissions; calls for investments in the promotion of urban mobility through environmentally friendly transport systems; highlights the need to promote and develop sustainable public transport systems in urban areas and to adapt public transportation capacity to the growing demand of day-to-day job travel in or out of city centres; calls on the Member States to reassess their investment in urban mobility and to give priority to digital infrastructure that will benefit all passengers, including people with reduced mobility;

25. Welcomes the Commission’s intention to engage with cities and the Member States to ensure that all large cities and urban nodes in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) draw up sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) by 2030; calls on the Commission and the Member States, in this regard, to work closely with regions and cities, particularly across borders, to enhance and complete missing last-mile infrastructure and multimodal and cross-border connections throughout the TEN-T; points out that many European ports are located near urban centres and are important transport nodes in the TEN-T;

26. Believes that the Commission should ensure that access to EU funding programmes for urban mobility, such as the ERDF, the Cohesion Fund and the Connecting Europe Facility, is conditional on existing or prospective SUMPs; emphasises that cohesion policy can help to grasp the potential of both artificial intelligence and the smart city model, such as by improving administrative capacity and digital skills, and should encourage a shift from experimenting with to scaling up smart city initiatives with funding and related support; calls on the Commission to consider ways to support cities in preparing their SUMPs to the highest standards; stresses that the Commission, the Member States and the regions should assist local authorities wherever possible in achieving this goal; welcomes, moreover, the EIB’s intention to work together with public authorities to support ambitious investment programmes that promote sustainable mobility at local and regional levels, including through SUMPs and public transport projects;

27. Highlights that the lockdown and sanitary measures have had a considerable impact on mobility demand and choice of transport mode, leading people to use public transport less; calls for the sharing of best practices with regard to the implementation of a single and multimodal ticketing system which would allow people to move in a more user-friendly and safe way between and within urban areas in the EU;

28. Encourages the Commission to foster sharing of best practices between urban areas on sustainable urbanism and infrastructure, green urban planning, clean energy, energy efficiency, zero-emission public transport, pedestrian and cyclist mobility, efficient water resource management and sustainable and circular waste management;
29. Calls for the revision of the Commission's guidelines on developing and implementing SUMP; calls for those plans to foster multimodality and tackle some repercussions of an overconcentration of the population in certain urban areas, such as congestion and rising transport costs, through, for instance, balanced socioeconomic arrangements to ensure that the plans are non-discriminatory;

30. Asks the Commission, in view of the upcoming revision of the urban mobility package, to promote coordination between safety and sustainability measures in urban areas; encourages parking possibilities at the entry of urban areas (such as park-and-ride systems), to provide easy access to different modes of public transport, in order to substantially reduce urban congestion, CO\textsubscript{2} emissions and inner city above-ground and underground parking, and also to rebuild and enhance the attractiveness of city centres and attract potential customers to support the weakened retail sector post-pandemic and boost local value;

31. Highlights that the economic recovery of cities will be impeded by soaring energy prices; calls for proper steps to be taken to advance the Energy Union and strengthen the resilience of the European energy market; underlines that cheaper energy for all in urban areas is a must; encourages, therefore, the establishment of massive programmes to insulate buildings and place solar panels on roofs; highlights that local renewable energy communities should be empowered in order to reduce energy consumption, further the decarbonisation of energy systems and allow for the enjoyment of the social benefits of a local energy market;

32. Calls for action to improve urban air quality to minimise the risks for human health and fight environmental noise levels, which are rising in urban areas;

33. Notes that new personal mobility devices (including e-scooters and electric bikes) raise a number of safety concerns in urban areas; encourages the Commission to issue guidelines for Member States on managing these safety issues;

34. Notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the expansion of the home delivery sector, which has led to the emergence of new types of platform work and business models in urban areas; recognises the need for recommendations on the safety of delivery personnel and on training in the digital tools they use, such as applications and interactive platforms;

35. Recalls that almost 40 % of all road fatalities in Europe occur in urban areas; reiterates that speeding is a key factor in around 30 % of fatal road crashes and an aggravating factor in most crashes; calls on the Commission to use its anticipated recommendation on speed to make 30 km/h the maximum default speed in residential areas and areas with a high number of pedestrians and cyclists, with the possibility for higher limits on main arterial roads and appropriate protection for vulnerable road users; welcomes the fact that the EU has reaffirmed its long-term strategic goal to get close to zero deaths and zero serious injuries on European roads by 2050 (Vision Zero) and its medium-term goal to reduce deaths and serious injuries by 50 % by 2030; calls on the Commission, therefore, to better integrate road safety into the SUMP guidelines and calls on local authorities to promote road safety through awareness-raising initiatives, appropriate actions and funding opportunities;
36. Warns that cities and towns are acutely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; is highly concerned that heatwaves, which are already more extreme in cities due to the effects of urban heat islands, are increasing in both intensity and frequency, while extreme precipitation events and storm surges are likely to result in increased flooding such as that witnessed in Europe in summer 2021, or in extreme snow storms as in winter 2020-2021, which show the necessity of significantly increasing disaster resilience in cities; calls on the Commission to reinforce, where appropriate, its collaboration with local governments through existing structures, such as the EU Covenant of Mayors, the Green City Accord and the Mayors Alliance for the European Green Deal, to identify the needs and challenges related to climate change that urban areas face, co-design solutions to make cities greener and channel investments toward local actions; urges national, regional and local authorities to establish, in addition to their national energy and climate plans, urban strategies for climate change adaptation that encourage investment to transform cities and adapt them to the threats of climate change;

37. Reiterates that 30 % of the multiannual financial framework and 37 % of NextGenerationEU are dedicated to climate action, while 20 % of NextGenerationEU is allocated to the digital transition; calls on the Commission to monitor and provide Member States with guidance and recommendations to ensure that necessary skills are developed to achieve the double green and digital transitions; deplores the exclusion of urban areas in the context of NextGenerationEU and therefore calls for better involvement and participation of cities, towns and functional urban areas in the planning and implementation of recovery and resilience plans;

38. Emphasises the need to plant more trees and install green roofs, as the greening of cities provides important recreational value for human beings and reduces the temperature, absorbs excess rainwater and therefore counteracts the effects of climate change and the loss of biodiversity; highlights that retrofitting buildings to lower-energy use and redesigning cities to increase green spaces and promote walking and biking will generate savings, create jobs, help fight energy poverty and yield climate benefits;

39. Stresses that the commitment of urban areas is crucial for the transition to a climate-neutral society and to a prosperous, fair, sustainable and competitive economy; notes that, in some cases, local governments lack the know-how, human resources and access to high-quality data necessary for launching actions and making progress; believes, therefore, that capacity building, technical support and funding must be used to the full, as agreed in the Common Provisions Regulation for urban and suburban authorities to achieve the targets of the European Green Deal and believes that urban authorities must have direct access to EU funding in the future;

Innovative cities

40. Emphasises that digitalisation has helped to address some of the immediate challenges arising from the pandemic, particularly during lockdown periods, and that among the many inequalities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital divide is a serious one; notes that the pandemic has accelerated digitalisation, and technology has become imperative for teleworking, home-schooling, e-commerce, e-health, e-government, digital democracy and digital entertainment; calls on the Commission to monitor these
developments closely and to ensure full compliance with the Union *acquis*, in particular as regards workers' and social rights; recalls that digitalisation and digital connectivity must be a priority for local communities in their recovery; reiterates the importance of having an adequate competition law and State aid framework that gives Member States full flexibility under State aid rules to support the economy during the coronavirus outbreak, especially by deploying high speed broadband and 5G infrastructure in all cities regardless of their size; calls on the Member States to support connectivity, provide equipment and ensure the presence of trained personnel in public, social and educational institutions;

41. Calls for actions and policies for a just digital transition, which should be deployed across various levels, from cities to the EU itself; calls for digital inclusion to be recognised as a right for all generations and for a clear commitment to achieve universal internet connectivity for cities;

42. Stresses that digital literacy should be strengthened to expand access to new opportunities; considers that investment in education and training must be boosted with comprehensive programmes in both the public and private sectors for worker upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning that respond to the shifts in demand for skills; calls for the advancements of women and girls in education and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM);

43. Recalls that urban tourism has played an essential part in the devising of urban policies; points out that most EU cities have suffered from downturns in tourism following the pandemic and have had to search for new and more sustainable modi operandi to restore tourism, leading to the increased use of new digital technologies, which has enabled the better management of urban spaces and the movement of urban tourists to prevent the build-up of large groups and risky situations in the context of the pandemic;

44. Highlights that libraries and cultural centres are vectors for the facilitation of digital and social inclusion, lifelong learning and pathways to employment for urban communities and disadvantaged groups; draws attention, moreover, to the need for additional places for personal and political exchange;

45. Underlines that artificial intelligence enables smart urban solutions, including more efficient energy, water and waste management and reduced pollution, noise and traffic congestion; is worried that local authorities will face numerous digital challenges, such as availability and reliability of data technology, dependency on private third parties and lack of skills; stresses that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence must adhere to ethical criteria to avoid reproducing existing social inequalities;

46. Considers that existing urban primary health structures need to be strengthened physically and financially; notes that the shift in healthcare delivery should also increase digital innovation and improve the integration of care through up-to-date information channels to deliver more targeted, personalised, effective and efficient healthcare; calls on the Member States to work with local, regional and especially urban authorities to develop networks to educate people in the use of digital healthcare and digital public administration, which would enable universal and equitable access, while thoroughly protecting sensitive data and preventing cybercrime; highlights, therefore, the crucial
role of Member States in supporting city authorities in their efforts to shape and ensure
digital inclusion by protecting personal data and empowering people and local
businesses through access to data;

Learning cities

47. Stresses the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and highlights the
need to ensure inclusion and access to education;

48. Underlines the need for support to the cultural sector, as culture and cultural heritage are
vital assets for regional competitiveness and social cohesion and help to shape the
identity of cities and regions; stresses the importance of creating more cultural sites and
ensuring their recovery post-COVID-19 and stresses the need to attract more young
people to them;

49. Underlines the economic and social contributions and impact of the cultural and sport
sectors to society; calls on the Commission and the Member States to cooperate and
allocate sufficient national and EU funds to create a robust cultural and sport
infrastructure and to promote education for the economic and recreational sectors,
especially for grassroots culture and non-professional sport in urban and suburban areas;
encourages the Member States to come up with an action plan to restart and boost the
resilience of the two sectors as important parts of the economy at the local, national and
EU level;

50. Stresses the importance of protecting the rights of children and young people and the
need to create education and training systems that are robust, inclusive and functional,
meet the real needs of people in their respective urban areas and are equipped for any
health crises or natural disasters that may occur in the future;

51. Notes with concern that the COVID-19 crisis has had dramatic effects on a significant
portion of European youth, which has manifested itself, in particular, in worrying
isolation, numerous job losses and disrupted educational or training paths; underlines
that this situation has resulted in changes in both the composition and size of the
population of youth not in education, employment or training, which is a situation that
needs to be properly assessed and identified in order to tackle the specific challenges
resulting from the crisis and assist Member States in developing effective outreach
strategies towards young people; suggests that the Commission carry out a study on the
possibility of developing common European tools to map and track young people not in
education, employment or training in order to enable an appropriate policy response in
support of this particularly vulnerable group in the context of the COVID-19 crisis;

52. Emphasises the need to rethink solutions for the revitalisation of inner city centres as
they have suffered from the closures of businesses and cultural sites, vacancies, a loss of
attractiveness and an increase in online trade during and after the pandemic;

53. Invites the Member States and regions to rethink and redesign educational infrastructure
in line with new developments in the education professions; calls on the Commission
and the Member States to allocate sufficient funds for the development of educational
facilities and for the training of both teachers and students of all ages in the
development of green and digital skills to prepare them for the future; recalls that
digitalisation should go hand in hand not only with providing access to the internet, but also to the equipment necessary for internet use;

54. Considers that a series of innovative concepts, especially the hybrid use and multifunctionality of urban spaces, land-use justice and the ‘15-minutes city’, will play a crucial role in the new model for the EU’s urban areas;

**Tailor-made policy initiatives**

55. Underlines the need to adapt to the new reality in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and to reflect on a new model for the EU’s urban areas, while leaving more room for creativity, civic engagement and experimentation; believes that the Conference on the Future of Europe is an opportunity to bring cities more prominently into EU decision-making processes, and to give them an essential role in building stronger participatory democracy and dialogue with residents while adopting a bottom-up approach and rethinking urban governance; highlights the importance of developing comprehensive strategies based on the European Green Deal, the European Digital strategy and the long-term vision for the EU’s rural areas; recalls the specific characteristics of the outermost regions in accordance with Article 349 TFEU;

56. Recognises the fact that despite the lack of explicit EU competences on urban development, a broad range of EU initiatives do have an impact on cities, towns and functional urban areas; acknowledges the need for stronger cooperation on EU programmes and policies among and within urban areas; is concerned that while various urban initiatives have grown in recent years, coordination remains low and risks of duplication and vague impacts remain;

57. Welcomes the Urban Agenda for the EU as a new model of multi-level governance; regrets that this remains a voluntary process and urges the Member States and the Commission to commit to implementing the recommendations; underlines the need for stronger civil society involvement in decision-making process and for the promotion of bottom-up approaches in order to address local and regional needs; stresses the importance of the participation of local small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups in the context of urban and district development strategies and plans;

58. Recognises the important role that urban areas play in the concrete implementation of programmes and projects derived from EU legislation; calls on the Commission and Member States to provide strong support to local and regional authorities and their project management teams on EU programmes and funding opportunities, while ensuring that adequate administrative facilities in cities, towns and functional urban areas, including appropriately trained staff, exist;

59. Insists that regional and local authorities have a key role to play in all stages of EU decision-making: planning, preparation and implementation; calls for more direct EU funding to be made available to local and regional authorities in order to improve efficiency, ensure consistency and reduce administrative burdens; calls on the Commission, moreover, to provide Member States with all necessary guidance and to facilitate access to funding, differentiating between cities and regions depending on

---

12 COM(2020)0067.
their level of digitalisation;

60. Reiterates the need for adequate and directly accessible funding opportunities in the future for cities to implement programmes locally; recalls that EUR 400 million of the resources for investments in jobs and growth should be allocated to the European Urban Initiative under direct or indirect management by the Commission as laid out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1058; calls on the Commission, in its mid-term review of the current programming period, to examine the effectiveness of the European Urban Initiative, in particular its budget and scope, and to encourage Member States to provide greater resources to support the delivery of the Urban Agenda;

61. Calls for the European Urban Initiative to be given a greater budget and scope, while ensuring that cities in the outermost regions have effective and facilitated access to it; notes that it should support the delivery of the Urban Agenda in the current programming period; views urban communities as key actors and stakeholders in the successful implementation of the EU-funded policies embedded in national recovery and resilience plans; calls on the Council and Member States to allocate up to 15 % for urban areas to address post-COVID challenges;

62. Highlights the importance of EU funding for implementing social inclusion locally; calls for its impact to be strengthened through a common management and reporting framework;

63. Acknowledges the crucial and unique role of local and regional authorities in tackling issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic; regrets that there is no current possibility of establishing a structured dialogue between the Commission and cities on the Recovery and Resilience Facility in order to monitor the involvement of urban authorities in the implementation of national recovery and resilience plans; calls on the Commission, in its review, to report on the implementation of the facility to examine the possible role of functional urban areas and if needed to strengthen their role in order to guarantee an effective implementation of the facility; underlines that urban authorities should be provided with the necessary support to properly implement national recovery and resilience plans through capacity building, exchanges and technical assistance;

64. Is of the opinion that, within the cohesion policy, the support from funds should strengthen participation processes to test new concepts and share experience by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives; believes that capacity building of urban actors is an important factor in the creation of more resilient and sustainable cities; encourages cities, towns and functional urban areas to support citizens’ initiatives; underlines that cities are urban laboratories, since they are places where sustainable future concepts and policies can be tested and where solutions for smart and inclusive communities can be developed;

65. Reminds each Member State that they should prepare a Partnership Agreement, in accordance with the code of conduct on partnerships, which sets minimum standards for the involvement of regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social and other partners, as stated in Article 8(1) of the Common Provisions Regulation; calls for a greater involvement of the partners, including those in academia, innovation and research, in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
of EU programmes, including in monitoring committees;

66. Calls on the Member States and regions to ensure a comprehensive partnership, including with urban authorities, to design and implement the cohesion policy and to notify urban authorities as to why funding applications are refused; calls on the Commission to examine complaints from stakeholders such as urban authorities, including where no valid justification is given for the refusal of an application for funding;

67. Calls on the Commission to develop a strategy for functional urban areas and mid-sized cities, including funding opportunities for actions such as innovation partnerships and joint procurement schemes between EU cities and cooperation between EU cities and regions;

°

° °

68. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, Member States and their parliaments.
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Simultaneously a health, economic and social crisis, COVID-19 presents a serious challenge for cities, hit hard by the pandemic. Despite dwindling economic activity, high rates of infection and often inadequate resources, urban authorities have shown leadership in managing the COVID-19 crisis on the frontline, trying to limit the spread of coronavirus and manage its impact on the ground.

Cities must be engaged as key partners of the recovery from COVID-19 toward an inclusive, sustainable and resilient Europe. Recovery efforts must strive to address long-standing vulnerabilities that cities face, and go beyond addressing the health impacts of COVID-19 in order to tackle persistent inequalities.

The report offers a set of recommendations addressing some of the most serious challenges of urban areas in the post-COVID era, organised into four chapters: inclusive cities, green cities, innovative cities and tailor-made policy initiatives.

Metropolitan regions, currently including three fifths of the EU population – a proportion that is expected to increase in the future, are facing long-standing inequalities that have been deepened by the pandemic. The overconcentration of the population in certain urban areas is leading to side-effects, such as the growing challenge of affordable housing, pollution, and the deterioration of the quality of life. Additionally, certain segments of the population face a significant risk of poverty and social exclusion in many urban areas.

As the crisis unfolded, it became clear that the pandemic has gendered impacts that cities will need to take into account. Firstly, women may face a heightened risk of exposure to the virus as they make up large parts of the health workforce and the majority of caregivers in homes and communities. In addition to health risks, data also suggest that women are more vulnerable to the economic risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Quarantines and social distancing requirements have also put women at increased risk of gender-based violence and, at the same time, women’s access to support networks, social services and sexual and reproductive health facilities has diminished.

Cities have played a key role in ensuring equality across the Union, but more needs to be done. Concrete actions aimed at bridging the gender gap under Cohesion Policy are vital. Member States need to introduce data collection methods corresponding to sex-disaggregated data. Gender blindness in data collection and monitoring can be detrimental to evidence-based policy response and more broadly, to cities delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals. We must also adopt an intersectional approach that also takes into consideration age, race, and disabilities. To ensure equality across our Union, beneficiaries of Cohesion Policy should never adopt any discriminatory policy, in particular against minorities, such as the LGBTI community.

Member States also need to address the funding requirements of the local authorities, including those of urban areas to sustainably support Roma communities. Urban centres, with a significant population of migrants and refugees face many socio-economic challenges. European cities have a key role in building inclusive and welcoming communities, where no
one is left behind.

Unemployment, and in particular youth unemployment, has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Europe must strengthen digital literacy in order to expand access to new opportunities. Investment in education and training must be boosted with stronger programs for worker upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning. Member States should actively involve urban authorities in the design of programmes responding to young people’s needs at city level.

As the global urban population is expected to increase by up to three billion people by 2050, cities will require extensive urban construction that must also mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming. A synchronised strategy that responds to both COVID-19 and the climate crisis must be implemented so that we do not see adverse effects of both during potential pandemics.

European urban areas and cities are responsible for the biggest proportion of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in the EU. However, they also play a key role in the Union’s fight against climate change and will be crucial in the transition to a climate-neutral society. If the Union’s commitments under the Paris Agreement are to be met, our cities need further support. We must focus on circular economy frameworks, sustainable urban mobility, and accelerating investment in green infrastructure and renewable energy at the city level, and respecting the ‘do not harm’ principle as priorities.

After months of lockdowns and quarantine, open spaces for recreation and physical activity have become crucial. Cities that lack such areas must re-evaluate space management to mitigate the mental and physical health impacts of pandemics in the future.

Among the many inequalities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital divide is a serious one that needs to be addressed in order to ensure a just digital transition. Large parts of education, work, and social services moved online in a matter of weeks. Though many people lack the connections, equipment, and skills to access what are often fundamental rights, much of this change will be permanent.

Digitalisation and digital connectivity must be a priority for local communities in their recovery. Europe must recognise the right to digital inclusion as a new generation social right, and must commit to achieving universal internet connectivity for all. But cities cannot overcome digital inequalities on their own, actions and policies for a just digital transition will have to be deployed across various levels – from cities all the way to the European Union.

Critically, Europe must adapt to the new reality following the COVID-19 pandemic, and to reflect on a new model for the Urban Areas of the EU. Despite the lack of explicit EU competence on urban development, a broad range of EU initiatives already impact towns, cities and functional urban areas. Further funding opportunities are needed for cities to implement programmes locally. While EU funding is extremely important for implementing social inclusion locally, its impact can also be strengthened through a common management and reporting framework.

Finally, Europe must ensure that the partnership principle, as laid down in the Common Provision Regulation is fully implemented. The Commission must put forward a Code of Conduct on partnerships. This code of conduct should set minimum standards for the
involvement of regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social partners and relevant bodies representing civil society, along with non-governmental organisations. This will ensure their participation throughout the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Union programmes, including participation in monitoring committees.
23.11.2021

LETTER OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Mr Younous Omarjee
Chair
Committee on Regional Development
BRUSSELS

Subject: Opinion on the Challenges for urban areas in the post-COVID-19 era
(2021/2075(INI))

Dear Mr Chair,

Under the procedure referred to above, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs has been asked to submit an opinion to your committee. At its meeting of 23 November 2021, the committee adopted its opinion in the form of a letter.

At this meeting, the Committee decided to call on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution.

Yours sincerely,

Lucia Ňuriš Nicholsonová
SUGGESTIONS

Input of the EMPL Committee to the REGI own-initiative report “Challenges for urban areas in the post-COVID-19 era”

A. whereas over two thirds of the global population will be living in cities by 2030;

B. whereas a steep and continuous increase in house prices and market rents can be observed, in particular in cities and urban or suburban areas;

C. whereas the housing crisis more severely affects urban areas in many Member States, where it has become difficult to find affordable housing at market prices, including for middle-income households;

D. whereas speculative acquisitions of housing and land play a prominent role in the continuing escalation in housing prices;

E. whereas housing market failures endanger social cohesion in Europe, increase homelessness and poverty, and affect trust in democracy; whereas, to address all these challenges, national and local authorities must be able to adopt adequate housing policies, including State aid measures, in order to create conditions and support for investments in social and affordable housing;

F. whereas, according to Article 36 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Union recognises and respects access to services of general economic interest as provided for in national laws and practices, in accordance with the Treaties, in order to promote the social and territorial cohesion of the Union; whereas these services include social housing as a social service of general interest; whereas social services of general interest respond to the needs of vulnerable citizens, in line with the principles of solidarity and equal access; whereas, the Commission Communication on the Quality Framework for Services of General Interest in the EU guarantees access to essential services for all citizens and promotes quality in the field of social services;

1. Calls for an EU level goal to end homelessness by 2030; calls on the Commission to take more effective action to support Member States in reducing and eradicating homelessness as a priority in the context of the action plan on the EPSR;

2. Believes that the Commission should explore further the implementation of successful existing models, such as Housing First, through appropriate funding instruments such as the European Social Fund Plus and the European Regional Development Fund;

3. Notes with concern the increased financialisation of the housing market, in particular in cities, whereby investors treat housing as a tradable asset rather than a human right; calls on the Commission to assess the contribution of EU policies and regulations to the financialisation of the housing market and the ability of national and local authorities to ensure the right to housing; calls on the Member States and local authorities to put in place appropriate measures to counter speculative investment, to adopt policies favouring long-term investments in the housing market, and to develop urban and rural planning policies that favour affordable housing, social mix and social cohesion;
4. Stresses that services of general economic interests (SGEIs) in housing should be principally guided by specific requirements determined by national, regional or local authorities, since these authorities have the competence to identify and address the housing needs and living conditions of different groups, which can differ greatly between rural and urban areas, and since these authorities play crucial roles in well-targeted decision making; urges the Commission to adapt the target group definition of social and publicly funded housing in the rules on SGEIs, so as to allow national, regional and local authorities to support housing for all groups whose needs for decent and affordable housing cannot be easily met under market conditions, while also ensuring that enough funding is allocated to the most disadvantaged, in order to unblock investment and ensure affordable housing, housing tenure neutrality and sustainable urban development, and to create socially diverse neighbourhoods and enhance social cohesion;

5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to further increase investment in the EU in social, public, energy-efficient, adequate and affordable housing, and in tackling homelessness and housing exclusion; calls in this regards for investment through the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund, InvestEU, ESF+, Horizon Europe and Next Generation EU, and especially through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) and the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+); calls for greater synergies between these instruments; welcomes the financing of social and affordable housing loans through InvestEU and the EIB’s broader portfolio; calls on the Commission and the Member States to integrate social progress as an investment priority, together with the green and digital transitions, in the Recovery and Resilience Facility in order to protect vulnerable people against the negative impact of the current crisis, and to include social progress plans in the Recovery and Resilience Plans, outlining how EPSR principles are going to be implemented, and where social investments are going to be targeted, including investment in social housing; calls urgently on the Commission to ensure that EU funding and EIB financing become more accessible to local and regional social and public affordable housing providers; calls on the EIB to try to increase relevant landing via targeted technical assistance and closer cooperation with financial intermediaries and the Member States;

6. Calls on the Commission, Member States and regional and local authorities to recognise, support and fund community led, democratic, and collaborative housing solutions, including community land trusts, as legitimate and viable means to provide market and social housing; calls for a sustainable approach to urban land use, for instance giving priority to the rehabilitation of abandoned houses over the building of new ones;
16.11.2021

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

for the Committee on Regional Development

on the challenges for urban areas in the post-COVID-19 era
(2021/2075(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Vlad Gheorghe

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Transport and Tourism calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Underlines that urban areas are home to nearly three quarters of the EU population, which has led to a greater demand for urban mobility; whereas while this has served to boost economic growth and job creation, it has also led to safety issues, severe congestion, a deterioration in air quality, and an increase in noise and CO₂ emissions;

2. Stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns have had a considerable impact on mobility demand and the choice of transport mode, especially in urban areas; notes that the social distancing introduced as part of sanitary measures in the EU has led citizens to take up mobility options other than public transport in order to avoid gatherings of people, which has also led to an increase in the use of private cars;

3. Points out that the transport sector has been among the most severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic; stresses, however, that it has played a vital role in maintaining essential connectivity and delivering critical goods and services; emphasises the key role played by workers in the transport sector during the most difficult moments of the pandemic and underlines how in spite of being more exposed to the risk of infection, they have helped to guarantee the entire urban supply chain, in particular essential supplies of medical supplies and products;

4. Believes that the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the need for new urban planning and mobility solutions in order to make urban areas more resilient to future crises, such as pandemics or natural disasters, and adaptable to mobility demand; considers that this crisis presents an opportunity to reduce transport congestion and greenhouse gas emissions; stresses the need, in this respect, for local authorities to adapt and reengineer public transport and infrastructure, taking due account of the specific features of each territory, including the outermost regions, in order to ensure smart, accessible, interoperable, competitive, affordable, safe, healthy and environmentally sustainable commuting options and to complement public transport with on-demand and shared transport services, smart parking and collaborative innovation platforms; underlines the...
need to adapt infrastructure and reconfigure how space is managed to include active mobility and sustainable freight;

5. Notes that demand for public transport fell drastically in Europe due to the social distancing requirements of the pandemic and that public transport systems have struggled to regain market shares of users since the restrictive measures were eased or removed; recognises the key role of urban mobility and public transport in particular as one of the main backbones for a sustainable, smart and environmentally friendly post-COVID-19 recovery and transport; urges public authorities to put in place strategies and campaigns to encourage citizens to regain trust in public transport, tackling any safety concerns passengers may still have; stresses, in this regard, the particular role of guided transport – a social mode of mass transport compatible with stringent health control standards; highlights that sufficiently frequent services would allow for social distancing;

6. Notes the huge impact on mobility demand of increased teleworking during the lockdown period and believes that teleworking will remain an attractive option for many workers, at least those working part-time, which will have an impact on future urban mobility planning; underlines, in this respect, that the pandemic has facilitated the rediscovery of nearby shops and activities, as these afford greater flexibility and can mainly be accessed on foot;

7. Underlines that the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted and laid bare considerable disparities between urban areas, on the one hand, and peripheral urban and rural areas, on the other, for example in terms of the quality of and access to basic services such as healthcare and transport; recalls that rural areas, which are home to 30.6 % of the EU population, and above all sparsely populated areas, are suffering from a shortage of quality transport infrastructure and infrequent collective transport services, which directly affect their connectivity, accessibility and ultimately their socioeconomic development; reiterates that improving and reinforcing rural-urban connectivity can play a decisive role in reversing depopulation trends and addressing post-COVID demographic changes and behaviours, such as the increasing use of teleworking or rural tourism;

8. Commends the fact that cities are creating mobility hubs as part of the mobility as a service initiative, which enable people to access a variety of shared services for electric cars, bikes and scooters and to utilise smart digitalised parking; welcomes, in this regard, the creation of intermodal facilities such as park-and-ride schemes to enable commuters from outside urban areas to reach cities by rail or other modes of public transport;

9. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the right tools are put at the forefront of the new Urban Mobility Framework to support the expansion of affordable, attractive, competitive, safe, accessible and sustainable transport; highlights, moreover, that the framework should reflect the changing nature of urban mobility, such as the repurposing of public spaces, and promote synergies between safety and sustainability measures in urban areas; stresses the need to properly coordinate the different EU initiatives and the different visions and strategies of smart cities within the Urban Agenda; urges the Commission, furthermore, to propose legislation requiring that the Member States
collect and regularly submit the relevant data on urban mobility; recalls the role of the Committee of the Regions in increasing the coherence and visibility of the objectives of these strategies;

10. Believes that all future measures must be based on science, be technologically neutral, and follow comprehensive impact assessments that take into account economic, environmental and social considerations to ensure a sustainable transition in urban areas;

11. Notes that the World Health Organization’s new global air quality guidelines published on 22 September 2021 provide evidence of the damage caused by air pollution to human health; highlights that emissions from the transport sector are partly responsible for the high levels of air pollution in urban areas; stresses the importance of making urban areas easier and better to live in and of including the health dimension in all transport, mobility and infrastructure policies; welcomes plans to support the creation of climate-neutral cities through the modal shift, as an example of urban mobility, in line with the EU’s climate and environmental objectives;

12. Recalls that the EU has actively promoted the concept of sustainable urban mobility planning for a number of years and is committed to supporting national, regional and local authorities in developing and implementing sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs), including through funding instruments and technical expertise;

13. Calls for a revision of the Commission guidelines on developing and implementing the SUMPs to include, among others, the following new objectives: making mobility systems more resilient to rapid fluctuations in mobility demand, facilitating active mobility, guaranteeing the protection of active road users, fostering multimodality, developing urban logistic and land-use plans, and boosting cooperation and competitiveness;

14. Recalls that almost 40 % of all road fatalities in Europe occur in urban areas; reiterates that speeding is a key factor in around 30 % of fatal road crashes and an aggravating factor in most crashes; calls on the Commission to use its anticipated recommendation on speed to make 30km/h the maximum default speed in residential areas and areas with a high number of pedestrians and cyclists, with the possibility for higher limits on the main arterial roads and appropriate protection for vulnerable road users; welcomes the fact that the EU has reaffirmed its long-term strategic goal to get close to zero deaths and zero serious injuries on European roads by 2050 (Vision Zero) and its medium-term goal to reduce deaths and serious injuries by 50 % by 2030; calls on the Commission, therefore, to better integrate road safety into the SUMP guidelines and calls on local authorities to promote road safety through awareness-raising initiatives, appropriate actions and funding opportunities;

15. Notes that cycling has increased in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; believes that local authorities should consider maintaining through their regular urban planning processes the cycling and walking infrastructure erected in the Member States as a response to the pandemic, as well as further extensions; calls on the Member States and local authorities to make active mobility an integral part of urban mobility and infrastructure design and to earmark adequate investment for this purpose; calls on the
Commission to publish a strategy on active mobility and to mobilise funding accordingly;

16. Recognises that urban logistics such as postal, delivery and refuse vehicles are an essential and increasingly in-demand public service, which require not only new and safe space for the ever more frequent stops by the operators of those vehicles, but also long-term solutions to meet socioeconomic, environmental and climate needs; calls on local authorities to develop dedicated sustainable urban logistics plans, including clear policies and specific loading and unloading areas, which integrate freight into the planning of more dynamic and flexible uses of curb space; calls for a reflection on the use of urban transport vehicles for other urban logistics uses, particularly at night; points to the key role of intermodal exchanges to facilitate freight transport and calls for multimodality to be encouraged in order to make freight transport sustainable; stresses, in this respect, the potential use of cargo bikes in urban areas, including in last-mile logistics, as they are energy efficient and can help to alleviate road congestion;

17. Welcomes the Commission’s intention to engage with cities and the Member States to ensure that all large cities and urban nodes in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) draw up SUMPs by 2030; calls on the Commission and the Member States, in this regard, to work closely with regions and cities, particularly across borders, to enhance and complete the missing last-mile infrastructure and multimodal and cross-border connections throughout the TEN-T; points out that many European ports are located near urban centres and are important transport nodes in the TEN-T;

18. Calls for the SUMP guidelines to include provisions on reinforced cooperation, information exchange and the sharing of best practices between municipalities to improve public and private transport management and boost the satisfaction of transport users in urban areas; calls for an acceleration of the transition to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal regarding mobility and transport;

19. Underlines that the road transport sector has an important role to play in reducing emissions, as highlighted by the Commission’s handbook on the external costs of transport; highlights that the transition to zero-emission vehicles will be crucial and will require specific infrastructure, such as charging points, which should be included in the SUMPs; urges the Commission, the Member States, the regions and local authorities to start making plans to deploy charging points for electric vehicles throughout their infrastructure in order to boost the roll-out of charging points and safe and smart parking; stresses that the EU should strongly support the development of financing schemes for the purchase and procurement of the yet more expensive zero-emission vehicles, particularly for public transport fleets;

20. Calls on the Commission to come up with proposals in its upcoming revision of the Urban Mobility Package to accelerate the digitalisation of urban mobility in order to deploy mobility as a service and introduce a single and multimodal ticketing system enabling digital ticketing payments, integrated tickets and the digitalisation of operations, such as touchless buttons, the sharing of real-time mobility flows and smart digital parking; calls, in this respect, for the swift completion of the Common European Data Space for Mobility and urges the Member States to mobilise digital innovation hubs, which have a key role to play in supporting urban authorities in rolling out
effective smart city strategies; considers that AI, in particular, should address the specific needs of public authorities in designing new mobility and transport models;

21. Calls on the Member States and local authorities to reassess their investments in urban mobility and to give priority to develop digital mobility solutions and infrastructure that will improve the general experience of all passengers, including people with reduced mobility, and will be adapted to the post-COVID-19 needs of transport workers;

22. Notes that the deployment of powered transporters, electric rideable vehicles, personal light electric vehicles and personal mobility devices are posing new challenges in particularly dense urban areas, especially in terms of road safety and accessibility; believes that authorities should promote innovative policies to integrate these with pedestrians and other types of vehicles, as well as education campaigns on the safe use of micro-mobility devices;

23. Stresses the need to make public transport accessible to all, including people with disabilities and reduced mobility, who are vulnerable users and at risk of social exclusion; points out that architectural barriers continue to pose obstacles to the accessibility of public transport services, which are often not sufficiently adapted to people’s needs and the demands on their time; urges public authorities to actively involve people with disabilities and reduced mobility in identifying needs and devising solutions and to ensure that they can participate in the SUMP process;

24. Recognises the importance for urban mobility of the gender dimension and the conditions for people accompanying children; underlines that a further modal shift towards sustainable public transport and active mobility would require ensuring accessibility for everyone, including taking into account the particular needs of women and people accompanying children in terms of scheduling, destination and mobility patterns, accessibility, proximity to services, security and safety; calls on the Commission and the Member States to put forward recommendations to encourage the participation of people accompanying children and of women in the planning of urban mobility solutions and in decision-making processes;

25. Notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the expansion of the home delivery sector and the use of vans and powered two-wheeled vehicles such as mopeds and bicycles, leading to the emergence of new types of platform work and business models; calls on the Commission, in conjunction with the Member States, to come up with a recommendation on the safety of delivery personnel, including requirements for employers and companies to ensure the provision and use of safety equipment and safe vehicles, as well as training in the digital tools they might have to use, such as applications and interactive platforms;

26. Recalls that the EU disbursed some EUR 16.5 billion for urban mobility between 2014 and 2020, mainly for clean transport (metro and tram infrastructure), but also cycle paths and intelligent transport systems; considers that this funding should be increased so that more urban areas can benefit from it; stresses that such EU-funded projects should always be based on comprehensive multiannual urban mobility strategies and differentiate between cities and regions; points out that according to the Court of Auditors’ (ECA) special report No 6/2020 on sustainable urban mobility in the EU,
EU funding for sustainable mobility has not been used effectively to achieve its objectives; stresses that congestion has significant socioeconomic costs, particularly in terms of lost productivity, and recalls that the ECA report estimates that congestion is costing the EU around EUR 270 billion a year; requests, therefore, that the Commission closely monitor the money allocated to ensure it is actually spent;

27. Believes that the Commission should ensure that access to EU funding programmes for urban mobility, such as the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Connecting Europe Facility, is conditional on existing or prospective SUMP s; emphasises that cohesion policy can help to grasp the potential of both AI and the smart city model, such as by improving administrative capacity and digital skills, and should encourage a shift from experimentation to scaling up smart city initiatives with funding and related support; calls on the Commission to consider ways to support cities in preparing their SUMP s to the highest standards; stresses that the Commission, the Member States and the regions should assist local authorities wherever possible in achieving this goal; welcomes, moreover, the European Investment Bank’s intention to work together with public authorities to support ambitious investment programmes that promote sustainable mobility at local and regional levels, including through SUMP s and public transport projects;

28. Insists that regional and local authorities have a key role to play in all stages: planning, preparation and implementation; calls for more direct EU funding to be made available to local and regional authorities in order to improve efficiency, ensure consistency and reduce administrative burdens; calls on the Commission, moreover, to provide Member States with all the necessary guidance and to facilitate access to funding, differentiating between cities and regions depending on their level of digitalisation;

29. Notes that the tourism sector has also been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; recalls that in terms of volume, cities are the main locations for European tourism; stresses the need, therefore, to plan mobility offerings with specific services for tourism-related travel and other services for everyday mobility; reiterates that sustainable and resilient development and the management of urban tourism need to be fully integrated into the wider urban agenda and calls on the Commission to take tourism into account when devising the new Urban Mobility Package; calls on the Member States, moreover, to invest in funding to support the shift towards more sustainable, innovative, resilient and high-quality tourism products and services and further contribute to sustainability;

30. Recalls that urban tourism has played an essential part in devising urban policies; points out that most EU cities have suffered from downturns in tourism following the pandemic and have had to search for new and more sustainable modi operandi to restore tourism, leading to an intense use of new digital technologies, which have enabled urban spaces and the movement of urban tourists to be managed better to prevent the build-up of large groups and risky situations in the context of the pandemic;

31. Recalls the importance of a modern and seamless TEN-T and of strengthening urban nodes and cross-border transport services across Europe to unleash the potential of international collective sustainable transport and make tourism more sustainable all year round.
**INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date adopted</th>
<th>15.11.2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Result of final vote** | +: 42  
  -: 0  
  0: 1 |
| **Members present for the final vote** | Andris Ameriks, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Jakop G. Dalunde, Johan Danielsson, Karima Delli, Gheorghe Falcă, Isabel García Muñoz, Jens Gieseke, Elena Kountoura, Boguslaw Liberadzki, Peter Lundgren, Benoît Lutgen, Tilly Metz, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Caroline Nagtegaal, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, João Pimenta Lopes, Rovana Plumb, Dominique Riquet, Dorien Rookmaker, Massimiliano Salini, Vera Tax, Barbara Thaler, Lucia Vuolo, Kosma Złotowski |
| **Substitutes present for the final vote** | Pablo Arias Echeverria, Leila Chaibi, Markus Ferber, Vlad Gheorghe, Ondřej Kovařík, Colm Markey, Nora Mebarek, Jutta Paulus, Robert Roos, Kathleen Van Brempt, Marianne Vind |
| **Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote** | Matteo Adinolfi, Markus Buchheit, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Jutta Paulus, Tsvetelina Penkova, Jessica Polfjärd, Ramona Strugariu |
### FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECR</strong></td>
<td>Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Peter Lundgren, Kosma Złotowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID</strong></td>
<td>Matteo Adinolfi, Markus Buchheit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NI</strong></td>
<td>Dorien Rookmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PPE</strong></td>
<td>Pablo Arias Echeverría, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Gheorghe Falcă, Markus Ferber, Jens Gieseke, Benoît Lutgen, Colm Markey, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Jessica Polfjärd, Massimiliano Salini, Barbara Thaler, Lucia Vuolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RENEW</strong></td>
<td>Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Vlad Gheorghe, Ondřej Kovařík, Caroline Nagtegaal, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Dominique Riquet, Ramona Strugariu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S&amp;D</strong></td>
<td>Andris Ameriks, Johan Danielsson, Isabel García Muñoz, Bogusław Liberadzki, Nora Mebarek, Tsvetelina Penkova, Rovana Plumb, Vera Tax, Kathleen Van Brempt, Marianne Vind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE LEFT</strong></td>
<td>Leila Chaibi, Elena Kountoura, João Pimenta Lopes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERTS/ALE</strong></td>
<td>Jakop G. Dalunde, Karima Delli, Tilly Metz, Jutta Paulus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECR</strong></td>
<td>Robert Roos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key to symbols:**
+ : in favour
- : against
0 : abstention
**INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date adopted</th>
<th>6.12.2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result of final vote</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+:</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-:</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substitutes present for the final vote</strong></td>
<td>Katalin Cseh, Stelios Kypourooulos, Rovana Plumb, Veronika Vrecionová</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>Chiara Gemma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPE</td>
<td>Pascal Arimont, Isabel Benjumea Benjumea, Tom Berendsen, Fran Bogovič, Christian Doleschal, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Krzysztof Hetman, Peter Jahr, Stelios Kyprouopooulos, Dan-Ştefan Motreanu, Andrey Novakov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renew</td>
<td>Stéphane Bijoux, Vlad-Marius Botoș, Katalin Cseh, Susana Solís Pérez, Irène Tolleret, Yana Toom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
<td>Erik Bergkvist, Corina Crețu, Constanze Krehl, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Pedro Marques, Nora Mebarek, Tsvetelina Penkova, Rovana Plumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Left</td>
<td>Martina Michels, Younous Omarjee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verts/ALE</td>
<td>François Alfonsi, Rosa D'Amato, Niklas Nienå, Caroline Roose, Monika Vana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECR</td>
<td>Raffaele Fitto, Elżbieta Kruk, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Veronika Vrecionová</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Matteo Adinolfi, Mathilde Androuët, Rosanna Conte, Alessandro Panza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to symbols:
+ : in favour
- : against
0 : abstention