

UNCONFERENCE 2016 - INSIGHTS

Workstudio 7 | [#ws_cities](#)

sUsTOPIA City

Facilitating Sustainable Urban Life



Contact

Marco van der Ree
Senior Advisor, CSCP

marco.vanderree@scp-centre.org

From insights to pitching ideas and solutions

The sUSTOPIA City Workstudio opened with Marco van der Ree, CSCP Senior Advisor making the case why cities are central to providing sustainable lifestyle solutions, increasing life satisfaction and staying within environmental limits. This will be essential in achieving the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

Two guest presentations followed, first from **Arab Hoballah**, Chief of the Sustainable Lifestyles, Cities and Industry Division at UNEP introduced the **ABC for Sustainable Cities**. The objective of this UNEP document is to provide clarification on terms and concepts used in discussing sustainable cities, in order to facilitate and support dialogue between stakeholders and enhance collaboration.

Maryse Gautier of the Ministry of Sustainable Development of France discussed the networking and side events that will be open to stakeholders at the Habitat III Conference. The aim is to provide a space for initiatives and actions towards the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

Next, **nine inspiring pitches** were presented on initiatives being carried out in cities across Europe and globally, which aim to provide solutions for transitioning towards sustainable cities. City government representatives from the cities of Bonn and Essen were inspired by such initiatives and discussed the practices and challenges being faced by local administrations.



sUSTOPIA Solution Tables

The second part of the workstudio consisted of four solution tables hosted by city experts, with the objective of developing an integrated solution for sUSTOPIA city – the sustainable city of the future:

- **North Rhine-Westphalia City** – Prof. Dr. Uwe Schneidewind, President and Chief Research Executive, Wuppertal Institute
- **European City** – Maryse Gautier
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) City** – Arab Hoballah, UNEP/DTIE
- **Smarty City** – Satu Lähteenoja, Demos Helsinki

Concluding remarks from Schneidewind emphasised the success of the event in highlighting key initiatives and bringing stakeholders together to discuss ideas for creating change.

Multi-stakeholder dialogue as driver for sustainable city development

The Workstudio aimed to convene and engage participants in multi-stakeholder dialogues on integrated solutions for urban sustainable development. As such, grassroots initiatives were joined by representatives from business, city government, academia and global organizations to develop innovate visions and ideas for sustainable cities and advance potential collaboration opportunities for the future.



Key outcomes of the sUSTOPIA Solution Tables

- North Rhine-Westphalia City discussed opportunities for implementing initiatives such as that of Colabor in Cologne into other cities in Germany. Representatives of the city of Wuppertal claimed they would like to extend such initiatives to other neighbourhoods of the city and a representative of the city of Essen pledged to realise such an initiative in Essen.
- European City discussions centred on creating the right space to enable and enhance communication between communities and municipalities. A proposition was made to allocate a percentage of total work time of government staff for reaching out to communities and establishing networking opportunities. It was further highlighted that task forces can be created at the municipal level to strengthen participation of companies and experts in exchanging ideas and best practices for sustainable city planning.
- SDG City discussed the importance of cities as enablers and drivers of change, as well as their key role in supporting national governments. Cities are sites where data is most easily collected and made available, and where multi-stakeholder dialogues can effectively take place to seek out the implementation of projects and ideas. Addressing SDGs in the city context further allows integrative thinking and enhances coordination and cooperation between levels and across institutions and organisations.



photos by Mona Schulzek

- Smart City discussed the importance of smart cities as being both technologically and human-oriented cities whereby technology acts as a facilitator or enabler for sustainable living. Technologies can further facilitate communication and collaboration between different stakeholders, accelerate business model innovations, and empower citizens by allowing them to actively engage in urban development through apps and platforms.

Key Insights

- Cities have high ambitions and are willing to create change but many lack the necessary resources and knowledge on how to best achieve this.
- It is essential to establish mutual support between bottom-up and top-down initiatives and facilitate and improve communication and collaboration between diverse city actors.

Quotes

“If we want to enable the sharing of ideas between communities and municipalities, we need to find the right space and environment at the local level that will allow for such exchanges. Everything is about communication, and without the right space to do this, the willingness to express ideas will not progress.”

“This was truly a fascinating event, highlighting inspiring city initiatives and bringing people together to make noteworthy changes. The CSCP has fulfilled its unique position and role for bringing actors together and making things happen.”



photos by Mona Schulzek

What's next?

As all the groups expressed an interest in continuing the discussion, it is being reviewed how this could best be done. The NRW group of cities and organisations would be able to meet for a follow up conversation. Interest in this is being explored. This is also the case for the other themes, including Habitat III.

Focal points for follow up with CSCP:

Marco van der Ree, Senior Advisor: marco.vanderree@scp-centre.org

Jan Per Bethge, Project Manager: jan.bethge@scp-centre.org



photos by Mona Schulzek