# Ex-ante assessment of the "Cities of Equality" thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the EU



*FINAL REPORT*

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**Disclaimer:**

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# Executive Summary

The Urban Agenda for the E.U. is an integrated and coordinated approach to tackle the urban dimension of E.U. policies. It focuses on concrete priority themes within dedicated partnerships to improve the quality of life in urban areas. Based on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the Urban Agenda for the E.U. focuses on the three pillars of E.U. policymaking and implementation: *better regulation, better funding, and better knowledge*. The Ljubljana Agreement, adopted at the Informal Meeting of E.U. by Ministers responsible for Urban Development 2021, proposed 'Cities of Equality' (CoE) as one of the four priority themes for the expansion of the Urban Agenda for the E.U.

This report provides an Ex-Ante Assessment (EAA) of the Cities of Equality (CoE) theme under the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU). The EAA report provides a thematic analysis of the 'Cities of Equality' theme and preliminary scoping. It assesses the relevance of the proposed theme through five Ex-Ante Assessment Criteria, including multi-level governance, policy environment, regulatory environment, existing identified gaps and trends and evidence. It provides recommendations to advise on the opportunity to launch a dedicated multi-stakeholder and multi- level UAEU partnership to implement the theme in the UAEU context. The analysis has been done using the Grounded Theory as a scientific method that enabled grounding the results of the analysis presented in this report in the visions, aims and objectives of the key stakeholders involved in the EAA process.

- **Thematic focus**

The phrase 'Cities of Equality' does not appear in the academic and policy literature, nor is it used as a whole phrase (with mutual understanding) by the stakeholders interviewed for this research. This presents a conceptual challenge and the opportunity to scope the theme for the purposes of the UAEU. The preliminary articulation of the theme required an in-depth analysis of not one (for a standard UAEU partnership, eg. Housing), but two bodies of work: legal (equality and protected population groups) and policy (urban themes with equality as an ambition)) as described in detail in the sections: *(1) The term 'Equality' in the EU, member states and international legislative context (2) The term 'Equality' in the EU and international policy context and link to the urban dimensions*. Implementing the Cities of Equality theme requires mainstreaming equality into other policy spheres. To arrive to a more concrete approach to this in the context of CoE, the section *Towards the interpretation of the theme 'Cities of Equality' for the UAEU context provides an initial* scoping of the theme by answering three questions: Where? Who? and What?

The section Where? provides a clarification as to the scale of the analysis for the future Partnership by providing the definition of the term 'cities'. The section Who? provides clarifications as to the protected population groups the Partnership work will concern (age, disability, gender, sexual orientation (LGBTIQ), religion and belief, race & ethnic origin (incl. country of origin). It highlights that instead of focusing on each population group separately, an intersectional approach mirroring policy ambitions of 'leaving no one behind' should be adopted. The section What? highlights the policy themes where the ambitions related to 'equality' have been expressed as cross-cutting (or horizontal) principles (see Table 11) but where the concrete strategies to achieve them are still limited.

- **Multi-level governance**

The multidimensional nature of the Cities of Equality theme calls for a capacity to deal with complex challenges and to ensure strong levels of coherence across policy spheres and their implementation. Multi-level governance approach is compatible and essential for CoE. as the theme requires a comprehensive approach that aligns vision, incentives, and delivery mechanisms from the EU, through MS, regional, and city levels. The importance of the involvement of cities in general, and small & medium-sized in particular, is highlighted, and solutions to do so are provided in the report.

- **Policy Environment**

The CoE theme is strongly aligned with the EU headline priorities (especially the European Commission Work Programme 2023, the Union of Equality initiative, and the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027). It's also aligned with four EU policy strands: Green Transition (European Green Deal, the Renovation Wave), Urban and Territorial strand (including the New Leipzig Charter, the Pact of Amsterdam, Ljubljana Agreement, New European Bauhaus, the Territorial Agenda 2030), Social Economy strand (European Action Plan for the Social Economy, The Transition Pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy Industrial Ecosystem), and Digital Transition (European Digital Strategy) put forward by the Explorative Proposal and the linking matrix in 2021. The theme is strongly aligned with the goals and objectives of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda. In addition, a strong interest in addressing the comprehensive set of urban (and transitions-related) policy themes through an equality vantage point has been expressed at the national level (DGUM feedback). While equality (incl. inclusion, fairness and justice) has been highlighted and included as a vital cross-cutting issue in most contemporary international, EU and MS policies across themes, the key challenge remains designing concrete strategies to achieve equality while focusing on intersectionality. Also, there is little information on the policies' implementation and their results, especially at the city level. These challenges present an opportunity for the partnership and a clear justification for its launch.

- **Regulatory and funding environment**

'Equality' is the key value of the EU, with a comprehensive legislative framework, directives, strategies, and action plans (see Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, Table 5). This legislative framework protects against discrimination based on age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief, race and ethnic origin. The EU laws are transposed to all EU Member States, and EU and Member State legal systems have provisions to ensure legal equality principles are elevated to include equity and justice in practical terms. Therefore, the CoE theme enjoys a favourable regulatory environment throughout. However, several challenges justify the launch of the future CoE Partnership. First, the implementation of the regulatory framework remains a challenge at the local level, according to the analysis conducted. Second, it is important to note that these equality and non-discrimination laws are used in case of transgressions, and so they are reactive rather than proactive. The CoE partnership should move towards proactively creating environments of equality through urban policy tools. The report provides solutions how.

Regarding the funding environment, all funding streams reviewed show some dedication to equality (inclusion, integration, etc.) or are entirely dedicated to it (CERV). However, two key challenges remain. First, while the funding for equality is available at the member state level, this does not guarantee the cities' access to it. Second, funding can be made available based on being aligned with principles of

equality. However, according to the interviewees, in many cases, there is no requirement to have a specific equality strategy. Hence, this is an opportunity for the partnership to provide contributions to better regulation and funding.

- **Trends and evidence about EU cities**

Equality is a broad and complex theme, as noted above. A substantial body of literature exists for each ground of discrimination (eg. age, gender, LGBTIQ, migrants, socio-economic status etc.) from legal, sociological or political sciences vantage points. The equally rich body of knowledge exists for each of the urban and environmental themes (see Table 11) and is examined in various strands of literature, for example: urban thematic (e.g., gentrification, affordable housing, access to services), spatial thematic (e.g., urbanism, urban geography), environmental (e.g., environmental justice), and historical focus (e.g., Sassen, Lefebvre, Harveys, Jacobs studies). Each of these defines and analyses equality in the urban environment (or cities) from their own focus point and contributes to the general understanding of equality trends in cities. Once the partnership decides which urban policy domain it wishes to tackle, it will need to examine the trends and evidence specifically from that vantage point. Data is a key issue to understanding trends relevant to the CoE theme, and gaps and challenges can be appreciated, such as lack of sufficient population-related data because of confidentiality constraints (to protect specific populations), limited methods to monitor equality policy or projects, lack of information on the best practices and trends in cities. Hence, there is more to be done from both qualitative and quantitative points of view regarding data that could help enhance the work of the urban policy dimensions toward cities of equality.

- **Existing identified gaps and recommendations**

The key gaps relevant to the CoE theme have been identified through interviews and feedback from the key stakeholders involved in the EAA process.  As mentioned in the sections noted above covering EAA criteria: designing concrete strategies for inclusive policies, better access to funding, enabling better data development, and better policy and implementation of the financing, evaluation, and monitoring are some of these gaps. Analysing 14 UAEU Partnerships and 139 actions, this EAA report identified 9 Partnerships' work (Climate adaptation, Housing, Inclusion of migrants and refugees, Urban poverty, Security in Public spaces, Digital transition, Urban mobility, Innovative and responsible public procurement, Culture and cultural heritage) and their 45 actions as relevant to CoE. The new partnership can clearly build on this vast body of knowledge. However, it can also contribute to it. The previous UAEU partnerships usually address separate policy domains (eg, Housing, Security in Public spaces, Digital transition etc.) or focus on specific population groups (Inclusion of migrants and refugees, Urban poverty). The new partnership could ensure that the above body of knowledge and practice is enhanced through intersectionality (including the notion of 'leaving no one behind'), holistically addressing all grounds of discrimination and mainstreaming that knowledge in one or more policy themes or themes of past partnerships. To do so, the CoE partnership could consider collaboration with and mentorship from the previous UAEU Partnerships.

**Recommendations:**

- **Deliver recommendations to help interpret and focus the thematic scope of the theme**.

The Cities of Euality is a broad, complex and innovative theme. The establishment of the high-level task force to mainstream equality through action plans and strategies for the EU member states and across

the European Commission services testifies to its complexity at the EU and MS levels. The city level has yet different levels of detail, complexity and challenges that need to be addressed, as noted in the previous sections and in the body of the report. The starting point of the partnership, as proposed in the thematic analysis, is mainstreaming equality for all protected population groups (or grounds of discrimination) in an intersectional manner to ensure the tenant 'leaving no one behind' along the ambitions to achieve equality quoted in thematic policy strands (Table 11) are made concrete and implemented to ensure we not only address discrimination when it happens but actively create environments for equality in our cities. Urban tools and policies are the key to this process as their purpose has always been creating urban futures. However, these need to be updated to remove barriers and serve everyone. This is the task for the future Partnership.

The report provides the list of potential concrete sub-themes and actions for Better Regulation, Better Knowledge and Better Funding (Table 15, Table 16, Table 17) to help interpret and focus the theme and provide concrete directions on achieving this. Considering that equality is a cross-sectional issue, the Partnership may still need to decide which specific policy domains (see Table 11) to focus on and apply the list of potential sub-themes and actions proposed. This choice of policy thematic will also decide which previous UAEU partnership they wish to collaborate with. At the next step, it is recommended that the partnership adapts a working definition of the theme 'Cities of Equalities'.

- **Identify the most suitable form of multi-level cooperation**

EAA points out that the traditional UAEU Partnership governance structure (set up and tested between 2016 and 2021) bringing together representatives of EU institutions, member states, cities, and theme-relevant stakeholders is the most appropriate form of multi-level cooperation for CoE theme.
However, there are two possibilities for innovation:
1. Involvement of the small and medium-sized cities through a **city network package membership** approach to UAEU partnership composition.
2. Establishment of the working sub-groups within the partnerships to tackle the thematic packages of their interest and deep expertise.

- **Recommend the timing for successful implementation.**

Timing is vital for successfully implementing a new partnership and its actions within a defined institutional setting such as the UAEU. To successfully implement CoE 'UAEU Partnership, three 'timing' issues should be addressed and planned for:
1. The timing of the launch of the partnership: where no delays should be allowed for the start of the activities of the new UAEU Partnership.
2. Synchronization of the delivery of the Partnership actions with the deadlines of the EU regulatory and policy processes to increase the possibility of them being considered.
3. The timing of the implementation of the defined actions synchronised with the above to ensure impact.

- **Identify the required type of expertise of the members.**

The focus should be on identifying future members with expertise and/or proven past contributions and experience in mainstreaming equality in urban spheres and/or urban specialists tacking exclusion and inequality. To ensure the intersectionality principle (or 'leaving no one behind') is promoted in the

Partnership, it is key to focus on the following selection criteria for new members: motivation, expertise, willingness to work across disciplines, and with the principle of intersectionality in mind. Additional requirements could be experience and expertise in multi-level management and international partnerships; Proven commitment to a multi-sectoral, interdisciplinary approach and 'leaving no one behind' principle; outreach to relevant stakeholders and membership (or at least participation) in EU and/or international networks working on the issues related to advancing equality in cities in the broad sense, and past awards pertaining to inclusion and equality in cities.

● **Identify institutions/stakeholders of interest to be involved in the multilevel cooperation setup**

The tried-out UAEU governance structure is recommended for the CoE theme in line with the multi-level cooperation approach. This setup includes EU institutions (DG JUST, DG EMPL, JRC, DG R&I), representatives of selected EU member states (Ministries or agencies responsible for social policy), representatives of cities (or LAUs), umbrella organizations and theme-relevant stakeholders (NGOs and Watchdog organizations, Equinet, FRA, CEMR, Eurocities), and expert organizations (Urban planning institutions, Research institutes and/or experts).

● **Identify the type of support that will be required for the implementation**

Implementing the UAEU partnership and work required general and specific three-stage related support. The general support should be provided by the EUI Permanent Secretariat (crucial for the launch of the Partnership, communication, dissemination, and technical support) and supported by the resources for the future partners ( eg. expert support and the action plan drafting).

Specific support will be required at different stages of the partnership work:

1. The launch of the partnership stage will need support from EUI.
2. The work of the partnership stage, including the action definitions and the delivery of the action plan: will require the support of dedicated experts for the additional research where action planning requires potential specialised knowledge sharing from the JRC, involvement of the relevant European Commission DGs.
3. The implementation of the defined actions (from the completed action plan) will require commitment from the UAEU Partnership memners and support of the EUI Permanent secretariat.

• **Provide an assessment of the opportunity to launch the partnership**

In conclusion, the analysis presented in this EAA report and supported by the positive feedback provided by the interviewers and key stakeholders confirms that the opportunity to launch the 'CoE' partnership is excellent in this time and context. Its launch (at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024) comes at a perfect time concerning the state of play of the EU agenda. Notably, the CoE theme is well aligned with the current EU priorities, especially the Union of Equality initiative that works to mainstream equality (across protected grounds) across all EU policy spheres and services. Considering that the update of the EU regulations and funding is planned for 2027, launching the partnership at the end of this year or the beginning of the next would allow the Partnership to contribute to that process. Most importantly, considering the scale and ambition for urban and environmental transformation and transition in Europe today, there has never been a better time to launch a Partnership on 'Cities of Equality' that could, if successful, mainstream equality concretely and contribute to its implementation at the city levels.

# Introduction

The Ljubljana Agreement, adopted at the Informal Meeting of E.U. by Ministers responsible for Urban Development 2021, proposed 'Cities of Equality' (CoE) as one of the four priority themes for the expansion of the Urban Agenda for the E.U.  This document is the draft final report as a part of the Ex-Ante Assessment (EAA) of the 'cities of equality' thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the E.U. (UAEU).

The document is organised in the following way. The first section lays out the aims and objectives of EAA, along with the key characteristics of the UAEU. Chapter A starts with describing the methodology designed for Cities of Equality EAA to deliver recommendations to help interpret and focus the thematic scope of the theme. Chapter A concludes with the preliminary interpretation of the theme 'Cities of Equality'. Chapter B presents the preliminary results of the analysis of the five EAA criteria: Multi-level governance, Policy environment, Regulatory environment, Existing identified gaps and recommendations and Trends and evidence about EU cities. Chapter C presents recommendations to (1) Deliver recommendations to help interpret and focus the thematic scope of the theme, this section also contains a proposal for the potential sub-themes (and actions) for the partnership to cover, (2) Identify the most suitable form of multi-level cooperation, (3) recommend the timing for successful implementation, (4) Identify the required type of expertise of the members, (5) Identify institutions/stakeholders of interest to be involved in the multilevel cooperation set up, (6)Identify the type of support that will be required for the implementation, and (7) Provide an assessment of the opportunity to launch the partnership.

## 1.1    Aim, objectives and criteria of the Ex-Ante Assessment (EAA)

The Urban Agenda for the E.U. is an integrated and coordinated approach to tackle the urban dimension of E.U. It focuses on concrete priority themes within dedicated partnerships to improve the quality of life in urban areas. Based on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the Urban Agenda for the E.U. focuses on the three pillars of E.U. policymaking and implementation: *better regulation, better funding, and better knowledge*. Significantly, by involving all governmental levels engaged in the design and implementation of E.U. policies, the UAEU puts multi-level governance and participatory approach into action, aiming to strengthen the urban dimension in E.U. policies (Rosenfeld et al. 2021)[1].

In line with the Ljubljana Agreement,[2] the Ex-Ante Assessment (EAA) has been proposed as a new step towards creating partnerships and other forms of cooperation as a part of the Urban Agenda for the EU[3]. It is a significant advancement in the establishment process of the UAEU Partnerships compared to that

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of the first 14 UAEU partnerships, especially pilots created under the Pact of Amsterdam,[4] where the partnership themes were explored later in the Partnerships' operation. This led to delays in defining actions, among other critical issues (Rosenfeld O. 2017)[5].

The aims, objectives and deliverables of the EAA have been defined by the Multiannual Working Programme (MaWP) for the UAEU, issued by the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters on the 26th of November 2021[6]. They guide the analysis presented in this report and are briefly presented here.

According to the MaWP, the EAA is envisioned as 'an exploratory process, which should allow for the deployment of a pragmatic, effective and result-oriented approach aiming at increasing the impact of future UAEU deliverables'[7]. In addition, the EAA is to provide an 'in-depth analysis of the proposals for new themes to help optimise focus, timing and activities of the multi-level cooperation as well as safeguard the suitable level of partners' thematic and procedural expertise' while allowing 'flexibility in the work and decision making of partnership according to the spirit of the UAEU'.

Specifically, according to the MaWP the purpose of the EAA is defined as follows.

• To ensure the relevance and focus of the theme in the policy and regulatory context
• To guide and ease the work of the Partnership in stocktaking and preparatory actions phases
• To secure a suitable level of partners' expertise in Partnership
• To optimise the workflow of the Partnership

The analytical part of the Cities of Equality EAA is to be carried out according to five criteria chosen to establish the relevance of the theme in terms of scope and timing, as follows:

1. Multi-level governance
2. Policy Environment
3. Regulatory Framework
4. Existing identified gaps and recommendations
5. Trends and evidence about EU cities

Finally, the MaWP requires that EAA should provide the following elements[8]:

I. Thematic focus and opportunity to launch.

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4 https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/content/pact-amsterdam.html

5 The expert submitting this report has defined the theme of the Housing Partnership in 2017 (2 years after the Partnership was established) this was a self-initiative to facilitate action plan development. The theme exploration and definition were done through scientific literature review, review of EU documents and interviewing the Partnership members. See Rosenfeld O. (2017) Analytical paper:: Analysis of interpretations of the term affordable housing in the EUUA Housing Partnership, prepared for DG REGIO, European Commission, Brussels. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/briefing_note_2017_interpreting_the_term_affordable_housing_-_march_2017.pdf:

6 https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/Multiannual%20Working%20Programme%20UAEU%202022-2026.pdf

7 https://www.urban-initiative.eu/sites/default/files/2022-11/2022_11_25_Ex-ante_CoE_LC_FR_EN.pdf Please note that the MaWP elements have been organised into three chategories by the author of this report to follow the process of the theme implementation from exploration, through governance towards implementation.

8 DISCLAIMER: Please note that the elements noted in this section will be provided in the final Ex-Ante Assessment report.

1. Deliver recommendations to help interpret and focus the thematic scope of the subject
2. Provide an assessment of the opportunity to launch a partnership

II. Partnership and governance

3. Identify the most suitable form of multi-level cooperation (Partnership/OFC)
4. Identify potential institutions/stakeholders of interest, relevant and related to the thematic issue, to be involved in the multi-level cooperation set-up.
5. Identify the suggested type of expertise of the members

III. Implementation

6. Recommend the timing for successful implementation
7. Identify the type of support that will be required for the implementation

In addition to its exploratory analytical function, EAA is also expected to be 'a strategic' and, most of all 'pragmatic tool checking whether a multi-level governance approach to deliver on the objectives of the UAEU for a specific theme or question related to sustainable urban development fits in a favourable EU policy and regulatory context'. To ensure such an approach, the methodology of the EAA for Cities of Equality is explained in the next section.

## 1.2 Methodology and methods for analysis

The methodology is an essential element of the research process as it sets out the strategy for achieving the research aim and provides a guide for methodical exploration by defining and integrating methods for inquiry as well as the sources of data and data collection techniques that support those methods. This section presents the basis upon which the methodological approach was chosen for this EAA exercise.

As the first step toward devising a suitable methodology for the EAA inquiry, it is important to highlight the key elements of the context in which EAA operates that need to be factored in the overall methodology approach in order to provide the required results (see the previous section).

At the outset, is essential to underline that the goal of the UAEU partnerships is to improve existing EU regulation, funding, and knowledge linked to a specific urban theme[9]. In other words, the goal is not to introduce new regulations or funding. While new knowledge may be proposed (eg. new data), this needs to be embedded in the existing EU frameworks. The vital innovation of the UAEU is reserved for multi-level governance uniting member states, cities, EU institutions and civil society stakeholders. This multi-level governance needs to operate effectively, provide a concrete action plan for the above improvements, and implement them to the extent possible. Most importantly, UAEU has distinct vital stages (see Figure 1).

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| Figure 1 The UAEU process: the key stages from theme definition to results monitoring |
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| Theme definition | Scoping | Governance | Action Plan design | Action plan implementation | Monitoring |
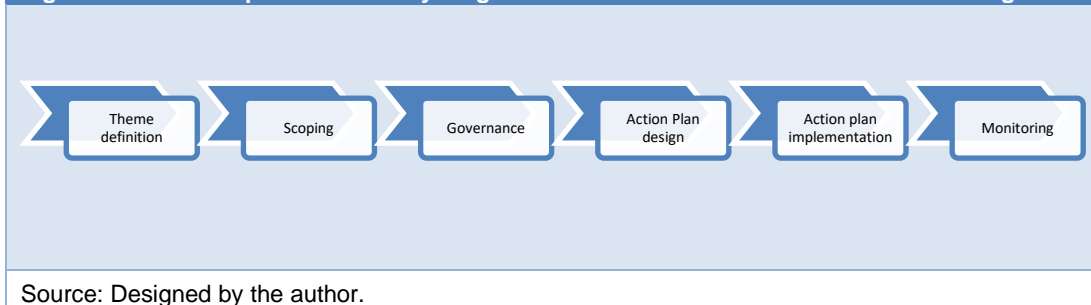
Source: Designed by the author.

In other words, the EAA is deeply embedded in the EU institutional context and in that of the UAEU, by extension. This context needs to be considered when devising a methodology to interpret the EAA theme, scope and limit it and deliver recommendations.

Another element that is vital to highlight at the outset is that EAA is envisaged to follow a collaborative process that includes interviews, consultations and feedback from and with relevant services of the European Commission, city representatives and other actors both for validation of the orientations as well as the outcomes of the report. Significantly, the Urban Agenda Technical Preparatory Group (UATPG) has the mandate to support the operational steering of the UAEU by providing technical guidance and support to the Urban Development Group (UDG) and the Director Generals for Urban Matters (DGUM).

The consultation with these entities is a part of the EAA process that allows important feedback from the above bodies. Instead of treating these requirements as a part of a mere administrative process separate from the methodology, it is deemed necessary that the above requirements are used as a vital source of data, an important qualitative part of the assessment process that must be accommodated in the methodological approach for EAA.

The third element that must be considered is the nature of the 'Cities of Equality' theme. The 'Cities of Equality' phrase does not have one common definition or interpretation at the EU level or more broadly at the international level (see section Analysis of the Cities of Equality theme in the EU context').  The lack of a common interpretation is a challenge. But as shown through the author's work on the definition of the term 'affordable housing' [10], it can also be an opportunity for the Partnership theme to be tailored to a specific EU and, by extension UAEU context. This is the aim and objective of this document. The next section elaborates on the methodology set to achieve this goal.

Based on the EAA requirements and the author's previous analytical work to facilitate the implementation and assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU[11], the Grounded Theory as an inductive Qualitative Methodology is deemed best suited for this purpose.  The next section describes the methodology in detail and explains how it is applied in the EAA 'Cities of Equality' theme.

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10 Rosenfeld O.  (2017) Analytical paper: Analysis of interpretations of the term affordable housing in the EUUA Housing
    Partnership, prepared for DG REGIO, European Commission, Brussels.
11 Rosenfeld, O. et al. (2021) Review of the contributions of the Urban Agenda for the EU to the implementation of the New Urban
    Agenda, European Commission, Brussels.

*Grounded theory as qualitative methodology*

The Grounded Theory (GT) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967[12], Strauss and Corbin, 1990[13]) is a tested scientific framework that facilitates the development of new and bespoke methodologies tailored to the specific contexts and the context-relevant available data. Moreover, the exploratory, grounded theory 'gives preference to the data[14] in the field under study against theoretical assumptions' (Flick, 2002: 41 see also Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Glaser B. 1978, 1992). In this way, GT framework ensures methodologies 'suited to its supposed uses' are created (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:3).

Using GT framework, the methodology is systematically generated from data obtained through empirical research (in this case, interviews, stakeholder engagement and observation and policy and literature review see Methods below).

Being a flexible inductive qualitative strategy, the GT framework allows for and facilitates the discovery and integration of the concepts and fields that have not been linked prior, in this case: the 'city of equality' theme, EU and UAEU context as well as the EAA 5 assessment criteria, while considering a qualitative data (eg. interviews, feedback, validation, etc.) as a key data.

**An overall approach and the applied methodology design for the EAA Cities of Equality**

The GT operates almost in a reverse fashion from traditional research. In contrast to the standard approach, where readymade concepts and hypotheses are adopted at the outset along with a pre-existing theoretical framework[15]and where the data collection is a subordinate step feeding the pre-existing framework, the Grounded Theory prioritises data and the context. A context-relevant methodology is designed and then used to provide context-informed and relevant results. In other words, GT facilitates a comprehensive process of a multi-tier in-depth analysis**,** first leading to methodology design[16] and additional ones resulting in EAA analysis and producing relevant deliverables[17]**.**

It is important to reiterate that, the GT starting point is the practice rather than a pre-existing theory and literature. 'A GT analysis starts with data and remains close to the data[18]. Levels of abstraction are built directly upon the data and are checked and refined by gathering further data' (Charmaz 2004:479). Moreover, the results of the data analysis (see Constant Comparative Method bellow) are used to lead and refine the literature review (rather than the other way around).  The result is a context and task-

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12 Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research. Chicago: Aldine.*

13 Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. Sage Publications, Inc.*

14  In this case this means qualitative data from the interviews for instance.

15 It should be added at this point that the theoretical frameworks that could be found in the existing literature are usually designed in different contexts (eg. 'just city' theory was designed in the US as a reaction to the city challenges and the US economic and welfare context) or different fields (eg. lean methodology for business).

16 Clearly, considering the Grounded Theory approach the secondary result of this process are research results as well.

17 Thus, the researcher is simultaneously involved in data gathering, analysis, investigating new themes and integrating all these data into a methodology and the next analytical steps until the concepts are sufficiently defined (or scoped) and results saturated.

18 In the present EAA report this refers to qualitative data collected through interviews with the relevant European Commission services and other important stakeholders involved in the EAA process, the meetings, conferences and written feedback.

tailored methodology that can facilitate in-depth analysis that is pragmatic in their contextual fit, results-oriented, effective, and strategic and flexible.

**Figure 2** presents the bespoke methodology designed by the expert and the author of this report for the Cities of Equality EAA based on the Grounded Theory framework.



**Figure 2 Deconstructing and contextualizing the phrase "Cities of Equality"**

Source: Designed by Dr Orna Rosenfeld, EAA Cities of Equality expert.
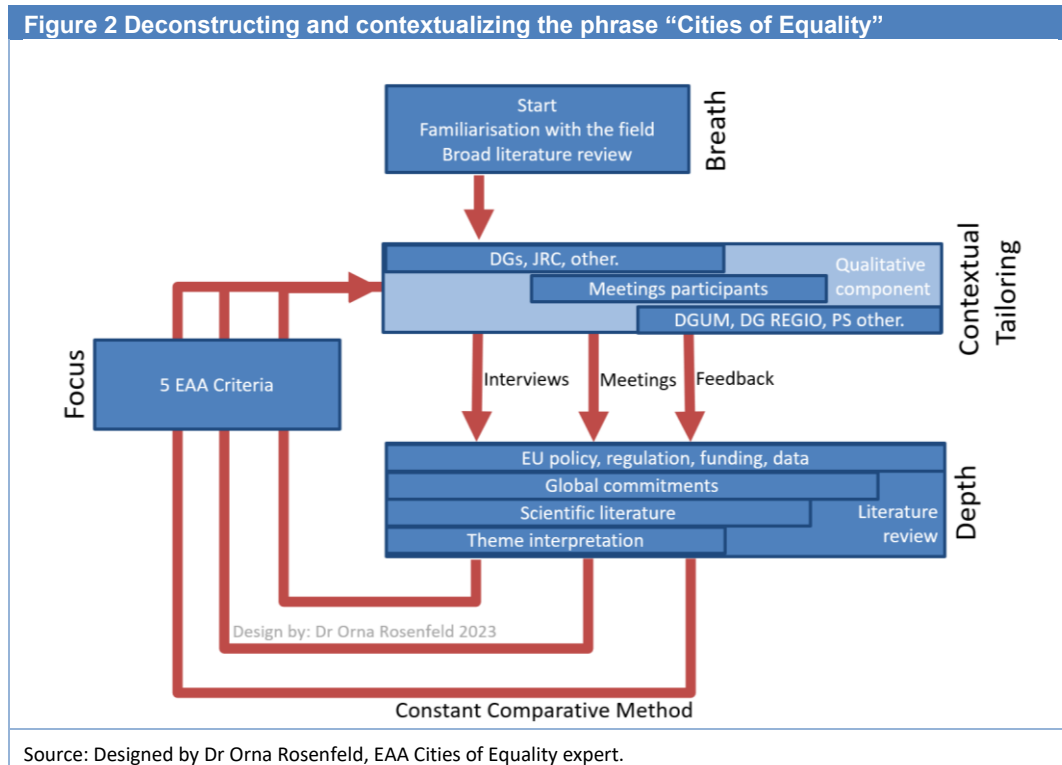
As shown in the **Figure 2** the applied methodology starts with the familiarisation with the field in the form of the broad literature review that covers EU policy and regulatory documents as well as the scientific literature linked to the theme (see Breath). The key focus of the methodology is the Qualitative Component that provides contextual tailoring through the interviews with the relevant DGs and services of the European Commission, CEMR and Euro cities. The analysis of the interviews and its results are used to refine and focus the literature review (see Depth) covering the EU policy, regulation, funding, data; global commitments related to the theme, scientific literature and aid the interpretation of the theme. The results of the interview analysis and contextually tailored in depth literature review results are examined though five EAA criteria for relevance and preliminary results.

Using the Constant Comparative Method (presented in the next section) the same process is repeated for the qualitative feedback collected during the meetings with the key stakeholders (eg. meetings with the DG REGIO and PS in the first instance, Cities Forum Conference, and later DGUM etc.) and the written feedback, until the results of five EAA Criteria analysis are obtained along with the theme interpretation (relevant to the EU and UAEU context) and other MaWP requirements.

**Constant comparative method (CCM)**

In order to facilitate methodology design from the available data while uniting disparate concepts and latter facilitate obtaining research results through the designed methodology, the Grounded Theory framework employs an iterative process of data collection, analysis, and coding, also called the **'Constant Comparative Method' (CCM)** (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:47). CCM gives the researcher the flexibility to adapt (or expand) the inquiry as their understanding in the field deepens while facilitating context relevant methodology design and its evolution throughout the process.

The constant comparative method (CCM) is an approach to qualitative data analysis that combines the coding of data and the analytic procedure of constant comparison[19]. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to react swiftly to the emerging themes and categories introduced through the qualitative component (see Figure x), developing new research trajectories that may not exist in the literature whilst clarifying and focusing on research questions.

The constant comparative method consists of four processes to help achieve these goals and that have lead this research. These are[20]: (1) *Comparing incidents applicable to each conceptual category*, (2) *Integrating categories and their properties* (3) *Delimiting results[21], (3) Whiting results*. These processes are tightly interlinked. This means that each process transforms into its subsequent one after a time. However, 'earlier [processes] do remain in operation simultaneously throughout the analysis and each provides continuous development to its successive [process] until the analysis is terminated' (Glaser and Straus, 1967:105).

### *Data sources and Methods of primary data collection*

In line with the requirements in the Ex-Ante Assessment and the provisions of the Grounded Theory methodology presented in the previous section, this section lists the data sources and briefly describes the data collection methods.

### Data sources

Two data sources are used in this research: the qualitative component (also consisting primary data sources) and the literature review (also consisting secondary data sources). These are listed bellow.

The qualitative component consists of:
1. Interviews with the key stakeholders

   - Required interviews: 8 Interviews with 14 interviewees completed: DG JUST, DG EMPL, DG HOME, DG GROW, DG REGIO, JRC, DG R&I. Secretary General of the Commission
   - Additional interviews: 3 interviews with 6 interviewees completed: CEMR, Eurocities, and Swedish Presidency.

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19 Grounded Theory approach provides a systematic guide for textual analysis through: open, axial and theoretical coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Strauss & Corbin, 1990, Chamaz, 2006). This approach aids development of the theoretical concepts and theory based on the 'life world' examination.

20  Glaser and Straus 91967:105) originally used the term 'stage', however in this research we argue that the CCM stages are in fact processes that are continually present and interwoven. The word 'stage' suggest a time limit and chronological order of things.

21 Here we mean a comprehensive matrix of results and recommendations as required in the case of EAA.

2. Feedback and consultation during meetings
   - Meeting held on the 27.02.2023 with the DG REGIO, EUI Permanent Secretariat, CEMR, Eurocities, and Swedish Presidency.
   - Cities Forum conference presentation on the 17.03.2023
   - DGUM Meeting Under the Swedish Presidency to the EU, 16.05.2023

3. Written feedback of the submitted report.
   - Written feedback on the first draft Interim Report - by the European Commission DGs, EUI Permanent Secretariat, CEMR, EUKN, Eurocities and, and URBACT, the members of the DGUM.

In line with the grounded theory, the researcher's or expert's lived experience is an important source of data (in addition to the literature review and qualitative inquiry) as it enables assigning relevant strategies for the analysis, through understanding the context in depth as well as the challenges that the previous UAEU Partnerships faced, along with their strengths. The expert and the author of this EAA report has supported the UAEU Housing Partnership (pilot partnership) in the period between 2016 and 2018 and carried out the assessment of the 132 actions of 14 Partnerships of the UAEU and their contribution to the NUA and SDGs.

A literature review consists of:
1. EU documents: EU policy, regulation, funding, data
2. Review of the EU Global commitments
3. The scientific literature on the concepts of cities of equality (and related concepts including 'just city', 'right to the city' etc.).
4. Theme interpretation exploration in different contexts.

For the detailed list of the literature and documents reviewed, please see the list of references at the end of this document.

**Methods of primary data collection**

Qualitative component:
1. Interviews: were conducted in line with the requirements of the EAA for Cities of Equalities. The interviews were designed as semi-structured to allow focus and flexibility. A set of leading open-ended questions was designed and made available to the interviewees in advance. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and were recorded in agreement with the respondents while respecting the confidentiality requirements of the qualitative inquiry process.

2. Meetings: in line with the requirements of the EAA, the results of the EAA were presented at different stages at the meetings required in the contract. This attendance is an essential part of the immersion in the EAA production process, where the participants' qualitative data is collected (by observation, listening and taking notes on the feedback).

3. Written feedback: the written feedback is treated as a qualitative input to the EAA assessment, and it is processed as such, this means that it is included into the specific analytical categories and codes where relevant.

As noted in the previous section the literature review is guided by the qualitative component analysis.

### Limitations of this research

This research is a tendered service, and as such, it must respect the client's requirements laid out in the call for tenders[22] and the contractual agreement. This approach to research contrasts with the academic one, where the authors have the liberty to design their research approach fully. In line with the call for tenders, the desk research covers a list of around thirty EU documents[23] defined by the tender (presented and analysed in this document). The contractual agreement also obliges the provider of the service (e.i. the author of this report) to carry out client-set 'Interviews and Meetings'[24]. The client is also the one who provides a precise list of interviewees to be conducted.

The choice of the interviewees (primarily EC services) influences the mapping of the key issues to address as well as the selection of the thematic directions and potential areas of work for the future UAEU partnership on the Cities of Equality (see the discussion on 'What?'). The additional input is provided through meetings and written feedback by the stakeholders in line with the internal decision made by the client. This means that the inputs in the qualitative component determine the results presented in this report.

The methodology was devised to integrate all methods required by the client, meet the client's requirements and ensure the maximum results are obtained within the framework set out for this exercise.

In line with the contractual framework, the EAA assessment had a limited number of days to be realised. This includes the following deliverables: desk research, organising and conducting interviews, interview analysis, literature review (including policy and legal documents listed in the tender and the linking matrix), drafting the interim report and final reports, including processing two rounds of feedback and their inclusion, presentations at conferences and meetings (see the full details see tendering document points 15.1, 15.2., 15.3. and 15.4 of the tendering documents[25]).

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*22 https://www.urban-initiative.eu/tenders/call-experts-ex-ante-assessment-cities-equality-thematic-area-urban-agenda-eu*
*23 See page 12 of the call for tenders: https://www.urban-initiative.eu/tenders/call-experts-ex-ante-assessment-cities-equality-thematic-area-urban-agenda-eu*
*24 See page 12 of the tender document: https://www.urban-initiative.eu/tenders/call-experts-ex-ante-assessment-cities-equality-thematic-area-urban-agenda-eu*
25 https://www.urban-initiative.eu/sites/default/files/2022-11/2022_11_25_Ex-ante_CoE_LC_FR_EN.pdf

# A.1. Thematic Analysis

This section provides a thematic analysis of the phrase 'Cities of Equality' chosen as a theme for a future UAEU Partnership. The interpretation and scoping of the UAEU partnership theme are the most important steps in the UAEU process that influence all others, including governance design and its implementation elements.

To derive a strategic and practical interpretation of the 'cities of equality' phrase and theme of the future partnership following analysis have been undertaken: interviews with the key stakeholders (including Commission services, CEMR and Eurocities), UDG members, selected European Commission DGs including the DG REGIO and the EUI Permanent Secretariat, scientific literature review (presented in the following section), in-depth analysis of the term 'equality' in the EU, MS, and international legislative frameworks, and the analysis of the term 'equality' in the EU policy documents.

The chapter starts with stating the challenges in the interpretation of the phrase 'cities of equality' identified in the review of the scientific literature, interviews and overall review of the EU policy documents. It then proposes a solution to tackle them through a deconstruction of the phrase 'cities of equality' to its constituting terms 'cities' and 'equality' and defining each separately in a manner that is tailored to the EU and the UAEU context.  The chapter concludes by proposing an interpretation of the theme and its elements suited for the UAEU context.

## 1.3    Challenges related to the interpretation of the theme 'cities of equality'

While everyone knows what they may mean when they use the phrase 'cities of equality', these interpretations may not be aligned across disciplines and geographies. Indeed, the literature review (consisting of the scientific literature, EU legislative and policy documents) and the interviews conducted for this research (see section Data sources) suggest that there is no commonly agreed upon interpretation of the phrase 'cities of equality' in general, or in the European context. In addition, the phrase 'Cities of Equality' is not used in full in any of the above.  This means that the interpretation of the 'cities of equality' phrase needs to be conceptualised for the UAEU purposes to serve the work of the future Partnership best. In this section, we provide an insight into the state of the interpretation of the proposed theme and its phrase 'cities of equality' in: 1. the scientific literature, 2. interviews and 3 and a preliminary review of the EU documents conducted for this research[26]. This is a preparatory step for the in-depth analysis that follows latter.

**The scientific literature** [27] carried out for the EAA shows that the phrase 'cities of equality' is not commonly used in its full proposed form. Rather it is loosely associated and is at times conflated with other seemingly related concepts such as phrases 'gender equal cities', 'human rights city', or 'just city'

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[26] In depth analysis can be found in the following sections of this report.
[27] As highlighted by the JRC such lack of common ground for a shared definition is also linked to expected differences among scientific disciplines (for example, urban planning and urban economics). Such differences inevitably also lead to different definition and terminology when describing urban phenomena.

among others. While these phrases have a substantial body of theoretical literature developed around them, [28] there are several significant limitations in attempting to use them in the context of EAA. Apart from the fact that they cannot be used as a substitute for the proposed and approved UAEU theme, they have been developed for theoretical and not policy purposes with significant academic debates related to them. This means that there is no commonly agreed-upon interpretation or definition for them either.  Second, these concepts have often been grounded in contexts other than the EU and certainly not linked to the UAEU. While the information from this literature is to be acknowledged, it does not and cannot provide a substitute or solution to the interpretation of the UAEU theme within its concrete institutional context[29] that is linked with a concrete UAEU work stream noted in Figure 1.

**The interviews** conducted for this research (see Data Sources section) provided valuable insight into the state of understanding or interpretation of the phrase 'cities of equality' phrase in their institutional context.  In terms of the interpretation of the theme 'cities of equality' it is worth noting that there is no shared interpretation of the phrase among the interviewees. Moreover, the respondents rarely related to the 'cities of equality' as a full phrase and focused more on interpreting the term 'equality'.  The analysis results show that each DG and each interview interprets the term 'equality' within the remit of their DG's work, but more often, even more narrowly within the limits of their specific task[30].
It is important to note that the respondents underlined the challenges that need to be addressed from their perspective for the concept of 'equality' to be fully implemented at the city level or in an urban context. This gap and limitation present a clear opportunity for the future 'Cities of Equality' partnership. That said, the interpretation of the theme is still to be crafted.

The comprehensive review of the EU policy documents (presented in the sections *The term 'Equality' in the EU, member states and international legislative context* and *the term 'equality' in the EU policy context*) shows three noteworthy challenges:

1. **The phrase 'cities of equality' does not appear as such, nor is it commonly used in its full form in the EU policy, regulation, or funding programmes.** The only exception that should be mentioned here is the working description of the related phrase 'equality in cities' presented by the Eurostat in their online publication Urban Europe[31], as follows:

   *'Successful cities are those that consider the diverse needs of all individuals and social groups, providing an environment that allows them to live their lives, for example, in school, work, with friends and relatives, or enjoying cultural and other recreational opportunities. There is a growing appreciation*

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28 Please note that the terms such as 'just city' are often used as a topical adjective, without work done to interpret or find a shared understanding or interpretation of the concept. This is a challenge when a concept is used in a multilingual, multinational and multi-disciplinary environment where partners need to deliver concrete results. Rather the concept 'just city' is used (like other topical adjectives such as 'sustainability' in the past) to express an ambition and positive direction but may be used for different ends. Using a term as a topical adjective does not imply that the work was informed by scientific literature, concepts, methodology or findings in any way either.

29 It is worth noting at the outset, that none of the interviews conducted for this research suggested linking the 'Cities of Equality' theme with any of the scientific concepts noted above. Moreover, all the interviewees underlined that the 'cities of equality' theme should not focus on gender perspective only. None of the interviewees noted the term 'just city', with one explicitly noting the challenges related to using this concept.

30 This said, one initiative needs to be highlighted at this point. This is the Union of Equality initiative that aims to mainstream 'equality' across EC services and initiatives. This initiative is important for the future of the interpretation of this EAA theme as it indicates the efforts to develop a shared understanding of 'equality' across DGs.

31 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Urban_Europe

*of the need to prioritise inclusive urban planning, as it shapes the environment around us; that environment, in turn, shapes how we all live, work, play and rest'[32].*

*(Eurostat)*

However, this description has limitations in the UAEU context[33].

2. The linguistic analysis carried out for this research shows that the **EU policy documents** (for details, see section *The term 'equality' in the EU policy context*) **often use the term 'equality' interchangeably with other synonyms, which exacerbates the noted complexity in scoping and interpretation of the phrase 'cities of equality'** as a whole. To illustrate, the analysis of the EU policy documents shows that the following terms are used interchangeably with the term 'equality' or in addition to it*: inclusion, inclusiveness, just, diversity, fair, integration, non-discrimination, and equity[34].*

3. The literature review conducted for this research shows that the term 'equality' has an advanced analysis developed in the EU legal context that focuses on 'equality and non-discrimination'. In order to provide legal clarity on the matter, this body of literature notes the interpretation of the term 'equality' in the EU law and shows how it is used at the EU Member States level. However, this literature is sparsely linked to urban or city contexts. However, the analysis of this body of work allows for exploring the potential interpretation of the term 'equality' that can have common reference points in other MS languages and their legal systems, hence allowing a shared understanding (and translation) of what the term implies. The next section provides a detailed review of this literature to advance the interpretation of the term 'equality' in the efforts to interpret the phrase 'cities of equality' as a whole.

In conclusion, there is no commonly agreed-upon interpretation of the phrase 'cities of equality' in the scientific or the EU context[35]. This conclusion is corroborated by the interviews conducted for this research with selected Commission's DGs and other Commission services. Clearly, the lack of a shared understanding and a concrete applied interpretation of the phrase used to depict the UAEU future theme is a challenge. However, it is also an opportunity to design interoperation grounded in the EU and tailored to the UAEU. The following sections show how.

## 1.4  Deconstructing the phrase 'Cities of Equality'

In order to facilitate the development of the interpretation of the 'Cities of Equality' theme for the UAEU purposes and in the EU context, it is deemed necessary to deconstruct its phrase. In other words, if a

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*32 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Urban-rural_Europe_-_equality_in_cities*

*33 While providing an understanding of what successful 'equality in cities' may be, this description is limited for the purposes of the UAEU in several ways. First, it was developed for the purposes of a short publication that focuses on the labour market and population statistics within local administrative units (LAUs), but not related to urban policies that are the focus of the UAEU. The description provides examples rather than the concrete lists (eg. 'for example', 'so on') , and suggest one possible avenue for the successful equality in cities that is limited to 'inclusive urban planning'. While inclusive urban planning is important, the given description it does not give concrete suggestions as what that would mean for the urban policy.*

*34 This interchangeability was also found when analysing the EU funded projects. For instance, the Kohesio data base, lists following terms related to 'equality' in the context of the funded projects: gender equality, social justice, inclusiveness, gender equity, solidarity, human rights, religious pluralism, equal opportunities, decent work, equal opportunity see: https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/projects?keywords=equality&sort=Total-Budget-(descending)*
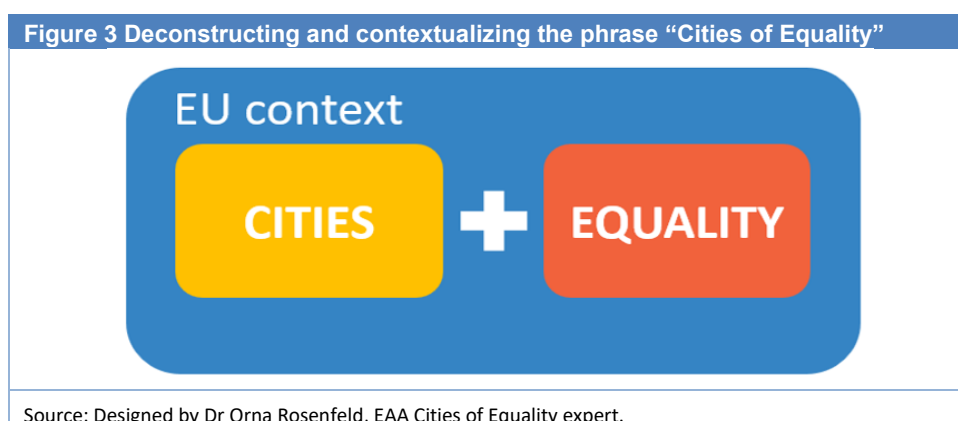
*35 The detailed elaboration of this point is presented in the next sections of this report.*

clear interpretation of the phase cannot be found, it is important to examine what its elements mean and how they can be brought together to inform the interpretation of the proposed UAEU theme.

**In doing so it is important to arrive at the interpretations of the terminology that are used and familiar in the EU institutional context and in the MS if possible.** This is important to ensure that the partners are not entangled in the conceptual debates and challenges related to the interpretation of the terminology that have proven detrimental to the work of the Partnerships in the past[36], but that they can focus on the practical issues under the UAEU partnership framework.

However, this is a demanding and challenging proposition, requiring that the conceptual issues are addressed within the EAA exercise as an additional task. The 'Cities of Equality' is a phrase made of the terms 'cities' and 'equality' (Figure 3) and set within the UAEU context that seeks to advance the urban dimension of the EU policies. While the term 'cities' is easier to define and arrive at a shared definition,this is not the case for 'equality'. As highlighted in a seminal work by McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2009) 'equality and non-discrimination are complex concepts, with considerable debate on their meanings and justification'[37]. In addition, the term 'equality' is often presented with or conflated with terms of neighbouring values such as equity and justice. This indicates that the term 'equality' is difficult to define.

In the followings, focus on examining the term 'equality' and propose the steps forward for an interpretation of the phrase 'cities of equality' as a UAEU theme in the concluding section of this chapter.



Figure 3 Deconstructing and contextualizing the phrase "Cities of Equality"

Source: Designed by Dr Orna Rosenfeld, EAA Cities of Equality expert.

*The term 'Equality' in the EU, member states and international legislative context*

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[36] See Housing Partnership for instance, and the challenges related to the interpretation of 'affordable housing' term, or similar challenges related to the interpretation of the term 'just transition'. Please note that in both cases the author was tasked to provide the working interpretations of these terms.

*37 McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2006) The Concepts of Equality and Non-Discrimination in Europe: A practical approach EUROPEAN NETWORK OF LEGAL EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF GENDER EQUALITY European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit G.2*

In order to provide a shared grounding for this term in the context of the 'cities of equality' theme and the UAEU context, a strategic decision has been taken to examine and root the interpretation of the term 'equality' in the EU, EU MS and international legal contexts first where the analysis of the interpretation of the term is well advanced and have a long tradition.

There are two reasons that underpin this decision:
1. Grounding the term 'equality' interpretation in a body of work that has a substantial history of exchange between the EU institutions and the MS can provide a concrete solution and practical step forward finding an interpretation that the future partners can easily find and relate to from their own MS perspective.
2. Grounding the interpretation of the term in the legal work has another added benefit. As noted previously the term 'equality' is often used in conjunction or instead of other terms such as equity and justice (or 'just'). There are often questions if the notion of 'equality' is sufficient.  The EU and EU and Member State legal systems have provisions to ensure legal equality principles are elaborated concretely to include equity and justice (see McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2009) for a detailed explanation).

'The general purpose of equality work is to promote equality between people and to prevent all discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, ethnic origin, religion, conviction, sexual orientation, disability, or other such grounds'[38]. However, McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2009) noted in their study *The Concepts of Equality and Non-Discrimination in Europe: a practical approach,* 'equality and non-discrimination are complex concepts, with considerable debate on their meanings and justification'[39]. (also see FRA (2018)[40])

According to McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2009) 'there are three main legal sources of equality and non-discrimination of particular significance in the development of concepts of equality and non-discrimination in the European legal context': EU law; and human rights law, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as well as the constitutional traditions of Member States and the EEA countries[41]. In particular, the EU law and United Nations conventions provide a broad and comprehensive legislative framework regarding equality and non-discrimination law.

This section provides a brief overview of the noted legislation to help frame and arrive at comparable and shared interpretation of the term 'equality' for the UAEU context[42]. This is considered particularly important, considering that the members of the future partnership will come from different EU member states with different legal and linguistic traditions.

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*38 https://www.era-learn.eu/support-for-partnerships/governance-administration-legal-base/responsible-research-innovation/equality-and-non-discrimination*

*39 McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2006) The Concepts of Equality and Non-Discrimination in Europe: A practical approach EUROPEAN NETWORK OF LEGAL EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF GENDER EQUALITY European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit G.2*

[40] FRA (2018) Handbook on European non-discrimination law 2018 edition, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and Council of Europe Available at:  https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Handbook_non_discri_law_ENG.pdf

*42 It should be noted however, that the purpose of the section is not to provide a detailed legal discussion about the interpretation of the law and their implementation. The UAEU Partnership theme is tasked with improving an urban dimension of the EU policy, therefore a detailed legal discussion is out of the remit of the EAA exercise. For the extended legal discussion, the reader is recommended to consult: McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2006) The Concepts of Equality and Non-Discrimination in Europe: A practical approach EUROPEAN NETWORK OF LEGAL EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF GENDER EQUALITY European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit G.2*

### 'Equality' in the EU legislative framework

'Equality and non-discrimination are the founding values of the European Union, as expressed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union[43].

*'The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail'.*

*Article 2 of the* <u>*Treaty on European Union*</u>

European equal treatment legislation was created to reflect the EU's founding values by ensuring the basic principle of equal treatment, and supporting and protecting people who face discrimination[44]. Indeed, fundamental rights are at the heart of the EU and are enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and further elaborated through the directives on Equal Treatment of the European Union. The **Table 1** the brief overview of the EU legislation related to equality at the highest level.

| Table 1 High level EU documents related to 'equality' | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Short Description** |
| <u>**Treaty of the European Union**</u> | The EU Treaties are binding agreements between EU member countries. They set out EU objectives, rules for EU institutions, how decisions are made and the relationship between the EU and its member countries.<br><br>**Article 2: Equality and non-discrimination are the founding values of the European Union.** EU countries have the obligation not only to respect and apply the EU laws themselves but to transpose them in their national legislation to ensure that all individuals and organizations respect and apply them as well.<br><br>**Article 10**: *In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on* **sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.**<br><br>**Article 19**: *1. Without prejudice to the other provisions of the Treaties and within the limits of the powers conferred by them upon the Union, the Council, acting unanimously in accordance with a special legislative procedure and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on* **sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.** |

*43 EUR-Lex - 12012M/TXT - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu) EUR-Lex - 12012M/TXT - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)*
*44 https://equineteurope.org/equality-in-europe/ https://equineteurope.org/equality-in-europe/*

| | |
|---|---|
| **The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** | The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU is a key *rights and equality* instrument and legally binding since 2009. It assembles the fundamental rights and freedoms protected in the EU regrouped into six chapters: dignity; freedoms; **equality;** solidarity; citizens' rights and justice. **Title III on equality contains general provisions on equality before the law and prohibition of any form of discrimination as well as more specific provisions concerning the rights of the child and of the elderly, integration of persons with disabilities, equality between women and men, and cultural and linguistic diversity.** |
| Sources: Equinet <u>EU legislative framework – Equinet</u> ; <u>EUR-LEX Treaties currently in force</u>; Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency – <u>The Directives on Equal Treatment of the European Union.</u> | |

EU equality legislation is legally binding in all EU Member States, and it is also transposed in EEA countries, EU candidate countries and other countries that have undertaken to approximate their national legislation to EU equality law. **Countries have the obligation not only to respect and apply the EU equality laws themselves, but to transpose them in their national legislation to ensure that all individuals and organisations respect and apply them as well'**[45].

'Equality as a core value of the European Union motivates a shared concern for human dignity; the participation by all in economic, social and cultural life and a voice for all groups in decisions that impact on them; and a celebration of diversity[46]. These are further elaborated in the Directives on Equal Treatment of the European Union, briefly presented in Table 2.

| Table 2 The EU Directives related to 'equality' | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Short Description** |
| <u>**Race Equality Directive (Directive 2000/43/EC)**</u> | The purpose of this Directive, also called the 'Anti-Racism Directive', is to create a framework to combat all kinds of discrimination on the grounds of racism or those which have occurred on the grounds of ethnic origin. It defines different discriminations: direct, indirect, harassment, positive action, victimization, and sharing of the burden of proof. Introduces the right to complain judicially and requires a section for discrimination. |
| **Framework decision on combating racism and xenophobia** | Hate motivated crime and speech are illegal under EU law. The 2008 Framework Decision on combating certain forms of expressions of racism and xenophobia requires the criminalisation of public incitement to violence or hatred based on race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. |
| <u>**Framework employment Directive (Directive 2000/78/EC) against discrimination at work**</u> | Provides for the principle of equal treatment in employment and training irrespective of religion or |

*45 https://equineteurope.org/equality-in-europe/eu-legislative-framework/  https://equineteurope.org/equality-in-europe/eu-legislative-framework/*

*46 https://equineteurope.org/equality-in-europe/  https://equineteurope.org/equality-in-europe/*

| | |
|---|---|
| **on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation** | belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation. Uses equivalent legal definitions to the Race Equality Directive for the different discrimination types described in this directive. |
| **Gender Recast Directive (Directive 2006/54/EC) on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation\*** | Provides protection against discrimination of men and women in access to work (including selection criteria), self-employment, occupations, vocational training, career advancement and working conditions (including dismissals). Prohibits any discrimination - direct or indirect and uses equivalent legal definitions to the Race Equality Directive. |
| **Gender Goods and Services Directive (Directive 2004/113/EC) implements the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services** | This directive prohibits any discrimination - direct or indirect - on grounds of gender, including reference to marital or family status, less favourable treatment of women related to pregnancy or maternity leave, harassment, whether of a sexual nature or not, instructions to discriminate (not applicable for the content of media and advertisement or to education). Uses equivalent legal definitions to the Race Equality Directive. |
| **Horizontal Directive Proposal – a Proposal for a Directive against discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion or belief beyond the workplace** | Provides for equal treatment in the areas of social protection, including social security and health care, education and access to and the supply of goods and services which are commercially available to the public, including housing. |
| **The European Accessibility Act (Directive 2019/882) - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion.** | Is a Directive that aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services, by removing barriers created by divergent rules in Member States. This directive benefits people with disabilities and the elderly. It is a landmark EU law which requires some everyday products and services to be accessible for persons with disabilities. It follows a commitment to accessibility made by the EU and all Member States upon ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. |
| **Web Accessibility Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/2102)** | It aims to make public sector websites and mobile applications more accessible, and to harmonize varying standards within the European Union (EU), reducing barriers for developers of accessibility-related products and services. This allows EU citizens, particularly those with a disability, to gain easier access to public services. |
| **Free Movement Directive (Directive 2004/38/EC)** | Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States amending Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 and repealing Directives 64/221/EEC, 68/360/EEC, 72/194/EEC, 73/148/EEC, 75/34/EEC, 75/35/EEC, 90/364/EEC, 90/365/EEC and 93/96/EEC |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directive 2010/41/EU** on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity | This Directive lays down a framework for putting into effect in the Member States the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self- employed capacity, or contributing to the pursuit of such an activity, as regards those aspects not covered by Directives 2006/54/EC and 79/7/EEC. |

Sources: multiple see Bibliography.

Note: (*) Prior to 2006 this Directive was identified as Directive 2002/73/EC.

## 'Equality' in international legislative framework

It is worth pausing at this point to highlight that the EU law and legislation on equality is underpinned by international legislative framework related to 'equality', as presented in Table 3.

| Table 3 International Legislative Framework related to 'equality' | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Short Description** |
| **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** | Basic set of rights even though these rights have been further detailed and defined in subsequent international or other treaties. The Preamble and Article 1 in general and Article 2, in particular, underline the importance of equality in dignity and rights of all persons, "without distinction of any kind". |
| **Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW)** | Defines the meaning of equality between men and women and how it can be achieved, establishing a "bill of rights" for women and an action plan for States to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights. |
| **Istanbul Convention** | The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention, is a human rights treaty of the Council of Europe opposing violence against women and domestic violence which was opened for signature on 11 May 2011, in Istanbul, Turkey. |
| **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)** | Requires States parties to condemn and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms. It allows for the introduction of positive action (special and concrete measures) to guarantee the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. |
| **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** | This convention aims at changing attitudes towards persons with disabilities, to be regarded as subjects with rights that they are capable of claiming instead of as objects of medical treatment, charity, and social protection. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)** | Proclaims fundamental human rights of the "second generation", such as the right to work and to form or join trade unions, the protection of the family including mothers before and after childbirth, and the rights to an adequate standard of living and to education. |
| **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** | Sets out the basic human rights that children everywhere have, setting standards in the fields of healthcare, education, and legal, civil, and social services. The main principles of the Convention include non-discrimination; the child's best interests as a primary consideration; the right to life, survival, and development; and respect for the views of the child. |
| **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** | Proclaims fundamental rights such as the right to life, the right not to be subjected to torture or held in slavery, and the right to liberty and security of person. |
| Source: Equinet available at: https://equineteurope.org/equality-in-europe/international-legislative-framework/ | |

### 'Equality' in EU member states' legal systems

The 'equality' and 'non-discrimination' as legal concepts are present in the EU member states legal systems. According to McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2009) all but two EU and EEA Members States have one or more constitutional provisions regarding 'equality' and/or 'non-discrimination'. The two exceptions are Denmark and Norway[47]. It should be noted, that while the terms 'equality' and 'non-discrimination' are used in legal documents (and therefore in all MS languages), of those MS that do have constitutional protections on discrimination and/or equality there are differences between them. However, it should be noted that the differences in language may or may not indicate a difference in interpretation. McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2009) note the following:

1. One difference relates to when the provision was introduced, with some states having experience of such provisions stretching back several hundreds of years (e.g. France, 1798), while in other states the provisions are of quite a recent vintage.

2. A second difference relates to whether the constitutional provisions are enforceable in court by individuals or others. In many states they are enforceable (e.g. Austria), while in other states, they may not be fully enforceable (e.g. in the Netherlands, they are not enforceable against an Act of Parliament)[48].

3. As regards the drafting of these provisions, there are also significant differences. Many (perhaps most) states have a general equality provision under which citizens (sometimes others as well) are regarded as being 'equal before the law' (e.g. Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany) or 'equal under the law' (e.g. Belgium).

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47 Note that the publication was published in 2009. Please provide corrections if updates are available.

48 In other words, the legal status of the various provisions differs significantly from state to state. This affects, of course, the extent to which there has been authoritative judicial interpretation of such provisions.

4. Some states, additionally or alternatively provide specifically for equal treatment to be accorded to men and women (Czech Republic, Germany, Poland). States, either in addition to or instead of these provisions, also provide for constitutional protection against 'discrimination' or 'different treatment' but again there are significant variations between states in the drafting of these provisions[49].

5. Additionally, the study of the text of the constitutional provisions carried out by McCrudden C. and Prechal S. (2009), suggests that two distinct systems exist: **a 'closed' system** of grounds of prohibited discrimination (e.g. Romania) in which the listed grounds appear to be the only grounds in which discrimination is prohibited. And **an 'open' system** (eg. Poland), where the list of grounds is either not given at all and discrimination is prohibited on any ground, (incl. where a list of grounds is specified but 'any other status' is included as well).

6. Some states prohibit discrimination across the whole range of possible situations where it might arise. Other states (as does the ECHR) restrict the prohibition of discrimination to situations where the discrimination is in some way related to other rights protected by the constitution (e.g. Lithuania).

Significantly for the EAA exercise that concerns the establishment of the future UAEU partnership focusing on equality in cities it is important to emphasise that the ways the 'equality' and 'non-discrimination' laws are implemented differs between the countries. In some countries, the implementation remains a national responsibility, while in others it is also extended to the regional and local authorities.

### Building a Union of Equality: and mainstreaming equality across the Commission services and in the EU member states

Finally, when contemplating the possible interpretation of the term 'equality' that is the key pilar in the 'cities of equality' phrase, it is deemed vital to acknowledge and build upon efforts that aim at mainstreaming equality across the Commission services and strengthening 'equality' legislation implementation in the EU member states. **It is the recommendation of the author of this report that the interpretation of the theme 'cities of equality' and the future of the Partnership work is aligned and complements these efforts even though the partnership theme was proposed and approved before the von der Leyen commission launched the Union of Equality[50] initiative.**

The ambition to *'building a Union of equality'* has been presented in the State of the Union 2020 address by the *Ursula von der Leyen* - President of the European Commission[51] . The essence of the Union of the Equality initiative is expressed by the following quotes:

> "*A prosperous and social Europe depends on us all.* We *need equality for all and equality in all of its senses."*

49 Thus most states that have such provisions use the term 'discrimination' to describe the prohibited treatment, whilst some (e.g. Finland) use the term 'different treatment' instead.
50 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1654
51 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_1655

"*We are stronger together as a union of Member States, as we are stronger together as diverse societies. We are stronger when we are all valued, when all are included. I will work for equality for women and men, race and ethnic minorities, with particular attention to the Roma minority, religious and non-religious minorities, persons who are discriminated against because of their age, persons with disabilities and gender and sexual minorities*."

Commissioner Helena Dalli, Hearing in the European Parliament, 2 October 2019

In order to achieve the outlined ambitions

*The Commission is 'putting in place mechanisms, policies and actions that challenge **structural discrimination** and the stereotypes that are often present in our societies. This to create the conditions for everyone to live, thrive and lead regardless of differences based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. An equal Union will also ensure that decision-making takes into account the needs of everyone in our societies and addressing **intersectional** discrimination'[52].*

This work has an aim to mainstream 'equality' across the Commission DGs as outlined in the Union of Equality strategies and action plans (Table 5), and other equality relevant policy initiatives. 'With the support of the Task Force on Equality created at the beginning of the mandate, the Commission aims at integrating an equality perspective in all EU policies and major initiatives'[53]. This includes providing strategic guidance, designing a toolbox for policy-makers, organising 'trainings and facilitating the work on equality undertaken by different services..  The Task Force[54] pursues an **intersectional** approach to equality mainstreaming to ensure that the different aspects of people's personal characteristics/identities are duly considered – for instance, the needs of women with disabilities are likely to be different both from those of men with disabilities and women without disabilities[55].

| Table 4 Union of Equality strategies | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Short Description** |
| <u>**EU Gender Equality Strategy**</u> **2020-2025** | This Gender Equality Strategy frames the European Commission's work on gender equality and sets out the policy objectives and key actions for the 2020-2025 period. It aims at achieving a gender equal Europe where gender-based violence, sex and gender discrimination, including gender-based stereotypes, and structural inequality between |

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52 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/dalli/announcements/union-equality-first-year-actions-and-achievements_en

53 Union of equality: the first year of actions and achievements | European Commission (europa.eu)

54 The Task Force on Equality is composed of representatives of all Commission services and the European External Action Service and is supported by a Secretariat based in the Secretariat General of the European Commission'

55 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/dalli/announcements/union-equality-first-year-actions-and-achievements_en

| | |
|---|---|
| | women and men are a thing of the past. A Europe where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are equal.<br>**Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted:  N/A (labour)** |
| <u>**LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025**</u> | As part of the Union of Equality efforts, the European Commission published the first ever LGBTIQ Equality Strategy. The Strategy sets out a series of targeted actions around four main pillars, focused on: tackling discrimination; ensuring safety; building inclusive societies; and leading the call for LGBTIQ equality around the world. The role of the local and regional dimension is acknowledged in the proposal.<br>**Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted:  housing exclusion and homelessness, access public spaces, access to services** |
| <u>**Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030**</u> | The objective of this Strategy is to progress towards ensuring that all persons with disabilities in Europe, regardless of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation: enjoy their human rights ,have equal opportunities, equal access to participate in society and economy, are able to decide where, how and with whom they live, move freely in the EU regardless of their support needs and no longer experience discrimination.<br>**Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted: non-segregated accessible, supported housing, mobility, access to services.** |
| <u>**EU Anti-racism action plan 2020- 2025**</u> | The EU Anti-racism Action plan, which   combats discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and other types of intolerance at European level rests on an established EU legal framework. It is based on a number of provisions of the Treaties as well as the general principles of non-discrimination and equality, also reaffirmed in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.<br>The EU Anti-racism Action Plan aims at not only tackling racism and racial discrimination through legislation, but also by measures addressing social attitudes, stereotypes or economic concerns. The <u>action plan</u> consists of comprehensive, horizontal and intersectional measures to step up the fight against racism and discrimination in the EU. It also recognises the structural dimension of racism which is  is the most profound and harmful form of racism. |

| | Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted: housing, access to inclusive and high-quality mainstream services, energy poverty. |
|---|---|
| **EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life** | The Strategy sets out measures focusing on: (1) preventing and combating all forms of antisemitism; (2) protecting and fostering Jewish life in the EU; and (3) education, research and Holocaust remembrance. These measures are complemented by the EU's international efforts to address antisemitism globally.<br><br>**Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted: N/A** |
| **EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020- 2030** | A 10-year plan, including a f Council Recommendation, to support Roma in the EU. There are seven key areas of focus: equality, inclusion, participation, education, employment, health, and housing.<br><br>**Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted: housing, access to services, jobs.** |
| **EU gender action plan (GAP) III INTPA/EEAS** | GAP III provides with a strategic, ambitious political tool that sends a clear message of the EU's commitment to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment through all external actions of the European Union. The EU will implement GAP III in every aspect of its external action through a gender-transformative and intersectional approach both in terms of GAP III's geographical coverage and areas of action, as well as gender mainstreaming in all areas of external action.<br>**Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted: urban services such as transportation, basic services, housing, jobs.** |
| **European Child guarantee** | The objective of the European Child Guarantee is to prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing effective access of children in need to a set of key services:<br>• free early childhood education and care<br>• free education (including school-based activities and at least one healthy meal each school day)<br>• free healthcare<br>• healthy nutrition, and adequate housing<br>**Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted: severe housing deprivation, overcrowding and energy poverty, and are more exposed to homelessness, the territorial dimension of social exclusion** |

| Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 | The Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 proposes targeted and tailored support that considers individual characteristics that may present specific challenges to migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background[56], such as gender or religious background. **Key urban dimensions of exclusion noted: Access to adequate and affordable housing, access to services.** |
|---|---|

Sources: multiple. Elaborated by the author.

| Table 5 Other equality relevant policy initiatives | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Short Description** |
| **European Democracy Action Plan** | The Commission will also ensure the **mainstreaming of equality in action** at all levels to **promote access to democratic participation,** also in line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. This entails **inclusiveness and equality** in democratic participation, **gender balance in** politics and decision-making, and proactive steps to counter anti-democratic attacks and hate speech seeking to dissuade women , LGBTIQ persons and minority groups from being politically active. Particular attention will be paid to disadvantaged young people, people with a minority racial or ethnic background , **persons with disabilities**, persons with or groups with lower levels of digital literacy and digital engagement (e.g. low-income households without easy internet access or older persons). **General equality Funding: Encouraging the use of** EU structural to fund civil society and build capacity and institutional/administrative infrastructure for civic engagement and political participation. EU funds should be used to foster access to democratic participation and trust in democracy. |
| **Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU** | The strategy underlines the overarching nature of the Charter and complements targeted efforts to make EU rights and values more tangible in areas such as victims' rights and a**ccess to justice, equality and inclusion, anti-racism and pluralism , social rights and inclusive education and training, economic rights, rights of EU citizens and rights of** |

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[56] 1 The expression "EU citizens with migrant background" covers nationals of EU Member States who had a third country nationality and became EU citizens through naturalisation in one of the EU Member States as well as EU citizens who have a third country migrant background through their foreign-born parents. EU citizens with migrant background benefit from the status and rights of EU citizens, as enshrined in Articles 20 and 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

| | |
|---|---|
| | the child. |
| **European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan** | The European Pillar of Social Rights sets out 20 key principles and rights essential for fair and well-functioning labour markets and social protection systems. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan turns the Principles into concrete actions to benefit citizens. It also proposes headline targets for the EU to reach by 2030. Delivering the Pillar of Social Rights is a shared responsibility for the EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society. |

Sources: multiple sources, see Bibliography.

## Conclusion to the section: The term 'Equality' in the EU, member states and international legislative context

It is important to note that most of the legal documents on equality and non-discrimination do not have an urban link clearly developed. However, they note an expression of discrimination on different grounds (also referred to as the protected groups) in the urban environment. The most quoted ones are lack of access to housing (and in extremes homelessness), lack of access to services (including transportation, education, health), and aspects of spatial segregation.

This section showed that there is a clear and comprehensive understanding of the term 'equality' in the legal contexts of the EU. Moreover, significant efforts are being undertaken at the moment to mainstream equality across EU commission services and in work with the EU member states.

The important message that should be taken from the preceding sections is that the term 'equality' is known, translated, and used in the legal systems of all the EU member states (unlike the term 'affordable housing', for instance, in the case of the UAEU Housing partnership). This means that rooting the interpretation of the term 'equality' in the legal context can ensure that the partners from different MS and linguistic traditions can have a shared understanding of what the term means when they join the partnership and communicate with the EU institutions and other stakeholders[57].

### The term 'Equality' in the EU and international policy context

As shown earlier in this report, the term 'equality' presents the key value of the European Union. However, while the legal framework is important for the shared interpretation of the term 'equality' (among other important issues), it is insufficient to ensure 'equality' in cities. For starters, 'equality and **non-discrimination law'** are reactionary; in other words, **they are evoked in case of discriminatory practices**. Urban and city planning is about creating urban futures. In the words of one of the interviewees it is important to consider:

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[57] Please note that this is not the case for the terms such as: 'just' and 'justice' that are conceptually harder to define. For instance, what an individual considers just is shaped not only by personal characteristics (such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status), but by the time and place in which he or she lives and the information that she/he has.

'**Moving from non-discrimination legislation [as reactive approach] towards actively creating environments for inclusion'.**

(Respondent x, DG x)[58].

This is a clear opportunity for cities engaged in rethinking urban policy, as the urban transformation sets the trajectory for the future.

The question that remains, however, is how and if the term 'equality' is used in the urban policy context, what concrete urban themes it links to and most importantly, what the link between the term 'equality' and EU policy proposing and influencing urban transformation that is ultimately implemented at the city level. These issues are explored in this section through three-level analysis.

The first section examines the term 'equality' usage in the EU policy context. The second section examines the links between 'equality' and international urban policies, notably SDGs and the UN New Urban Agenda. The final section provides an analysis of the inputs of over 70 stakeholders involved in the EAA exercise through interviews, written feedback to this document (UDG members) and verbal feedback during the DGUM meetings providing a particular input to the thematic analysis from the perspective of the EU Member States and their priorities.

### Equality' in the context of EU policy

The documents analysed in this section have been highlighted as being of importance in the explorative proposal paper in 2021 and in the linking matrix created for the 'Cities of Equalities' within the UAEU workshop of 6 October 2022.

For the purposes of the analysis, the EU policies analysed in this section are clustered in four areas:

1. **Green Transition:** The European Green Deal, The Renovation Wave
2. **Urban and territorial:** The New Leipzig Charter, the Pact of Amsterdam, Ljubljana Agreement, New European Bauhaus, the Territorial Agenda 2030,
3. **Social Economy:** The European Action Plan for the Social Economy, The Transition Pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy Industrial Ecosystem
4. **Digital Transition:** European Digital Strategy

Each policy document is analysed following four points:

a. **Key equality dimension noted:** here we wish to know how and if is the term 'equality' used in the key aims and objectives of the analysed policy. In cases the term does not appear, the closest synonym used in the policy is noted instead.

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[58] Please note that all the direct quotes have been anonymised for this interim report. They will be attributed only if the respondent requires so in writing.

b. **Key urban dimension noted:** here we wish to know 1. what the main urban transformations are proposed; 2. whether they propose a concrete way towards 'equality' or just note the intention in general terms)

c. **Synonyms for equality used:** this section lists the key synonyms for 'equality' used in addition or as a substitute for 'equality' in the given document.

d. **Population groups noted:** this section lists all the protected population groups the policy document notes, as well as other groups. This is a clear link to the legal analysis listing protected population groups.

*Green Transition*

The European Green Deal and its Renovation Wave present an ambitious programme that, if successful, will have a fundamentally transformative effect on the urban environment through other activities: renovation of housing (and reducing the energy bills), transforming transport and EU's industry transition (influencing job market).

The analysis (see Table 6) of the key messages of the European Green Deal and the Renovation Wave[59] suggests that the term **'equality'** is not used as such, but it is replaced by the synonyms such as **'just and inclusive'** that dominate the documents around the EU Green Deal. It should be noted, however, that these terms are not elaborated, clearly interpreted, or scoped as such, therefore open to the reader's interpretation. Most importantly, there are no concrete strategies to achieve these. This is important as it is adaptation versus climate change, especially considering that more vulnerable groups are those usually affected the most.

In terms of the population groups noted in the EU policy documents, **the focus seems to be on the 'all' in line with the ideal of 'leaving no one behind'**. The documents explicitly noted the vulnerable population, a population discriminated against based on socio-economic status. The Renovation Wave also notes the age and disability. However, as with the concept itself, the strategies to achieve these for all or the individual population groups are not elaborated sufficiently.

| Table 6 EU Policies dedicated to the green transition | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Description** |
| **The European Grean Deal** | **Key equality dimension noted:**<br>**European Grean Deal** *"[ ] aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts. **At the same time, this transition must be just and inclusive."*** |
| | **Key urban dimension noted:**<br>*"The risk of energy poverty must be addressed for households that cannot afford key energy services to ensure a basic standard of living. Effective programmes, such as **financing schemes for households to renovate their houses, can reduce energy bills** and help the environment. "* |

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59 The Just Transition will be added in the final report.

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| | *(2.1.2. Supplying clean, affordable and secure energy)*<br><br>*'To achieve climate neutrality, a 90% reduction in transport emissions is needed by 2050. Road, rail, aviation, and waterborne transport will all have to contribute to the reduction. **Achieving sustainable transport means putting users first** and providing them with more **affordable, accessible,** healthier and cleaner alternatives to their current mobility habits'.*<br>(2.1.5. Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility)<br><br>*"The transition is an opportunity to expand sustainable and job-intensive economic activity. [..] **The European Green Deal will support and accelerate the EU's industry transition to a sustainable model of inclusive growth."***<br>(2.1.4. Building and renovating in an energy and resource-efficient way) |
| | <u>**Synonyms for equality used:**</u> inclusive, just |
| | <u>**Population groups noted:**</u> socio-economic, horizontal issues. |
| **The <u>Renovation Wave</u>** | <u>**Key equality dimension noted:**</u><br>The Renovation Wave initiative can help trigger new investments to restart the economy, create quality jobs, and deliver a **just and inclusive transition** for European citizens.<br><br>*"With nearly 34 million Europeans unable to afford to heat their homes properly, the renovation also tackles energy poverty. It can address the health and **well-being of vulnerable people while reducing their energy bills**."*<br><br>*"Using renovation as a lever to **address energy poverty and access to healthy housing for all households, including for persons with disabilities and for older people.** The Commission presents a Recommendation on Energy poverty'.*<br>*(*3. Delivering faster and deeper renovation for better buildings) |
| | <u>**Key urban dimension noted:**</u><br>**-** Tackling energy poverty and worst-performing buildings<br>- Public buildings and social infrastructure<br>- Decarbonising heating and cooling<br>- renovation of public spaces<br>Including:<br>-Placing an integrated participatory and neighbourhood-based approach at the heart of renovation<br>-Setting up a creative European Bauhaus platform building on three pillars, sustainable, beautiful and inclusive. .<br>-Supporting sustainable and decarbonised energy solutions through Horizon Europe and the R&I co-creation space<br>-Facilitating the development of energy communities and local action through the European Smart Cities Marketplace<br>-Tackling energy poverty and worst-performing buildings Launching the Affordable |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Housing Initiative piloting 100 renovation |
| | **Synonyms for equality used:** just, inclusive, fair |
| | **Population groups noted:** age, disability, socio-economic; other: all households, vulnerable |
| Sources: multiple, elaborated by the author. | |

*Urban and Territorial*

The review of the New Leipzig Charter, The Pact of Amsterdam, Ljubljana Agreement, New European Bauhaus and the Territorial Agenda 2030 clustered under this category exhibit dual ambitions, first to achieve sustainable and integrated urban transformation, but also one that is inclusive and serves all (see Table 7).
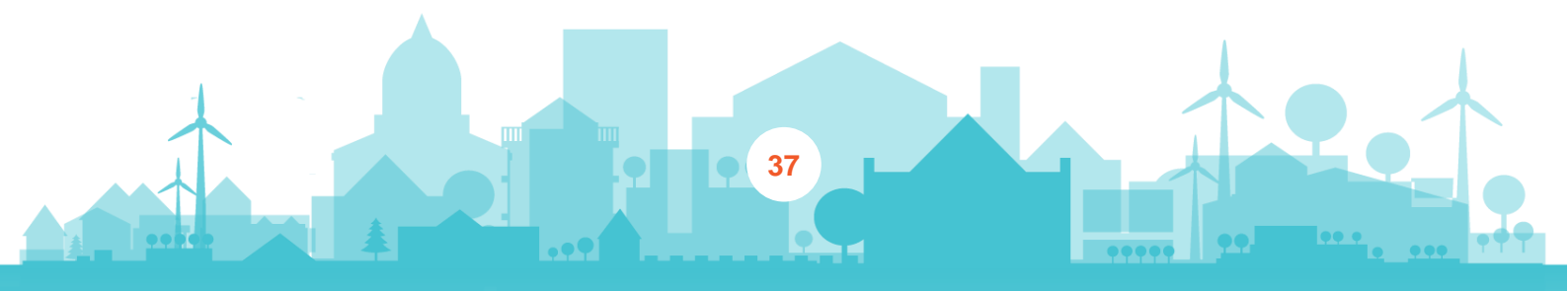
In service of the thematic analysis, it is important to note that the term 'equality' is not used in these documents, apart from the Ljubljana Agreement that recommended 'cities of equality' as a UAEU theme. The terms that are most often used across these documents are**:  just (including just city), equal, inclusion (incl. inclusive, inclusiveness), diversity, and fair.** From the linguistic point of view, it is interesting that the new documents, such as the New Leipzig Charter, Ljubljana Agreement and the Territorial Agenda 2030, all use the term 'just'. As noted in the policy documents dedicated to the green transition, these terms are not defined, interpreted, or scoped. The only exception is the New Leipzig Charter, which provides what resembles a working definition for the 'just city' phrase[60] (as shown in Table 7). Similar to the policy documents studied in the previous section, the concrete strategies to achieve the ambitions of equal, fair or just interventions noted are missing.

In terms of the population mentioned, the analysis shows that the documents New Leipzig Charter and Territorial Agenda 2030 clearly state their commitment to 'leaving no one behind' and 'sustainable future **for all places and people in Europe**', respectively. Other documents reviewed for this section note multiple population groups, including age, disability, gender, socio-economic, nationality based; other: young children, etc.

The challenge and the potential future task of the partnership seem to be similar to those noted under the Green transition policies cluster, in that equality-related synonyms expressing ambition are noted but there is not clear explanation of how this ambition could be concretely achieved. The focus of these documents is indeed the urban change. The task of the future partnership could be to concretely advise how that change could be implemented in a concrete way so that no one is left behind.

| Table 7 EU Policies dedicated to the urban and territorial dimensions | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Description** |
| ⊢ ⊣ | **Key equality dimension noted:** |

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[60] It is worth noting however, that this interpretation has little to do with the conceptualisation of the concept in the scientific literature where it has been coined (see Feinstein (2010), Just City).

|  | *"The transformative power of cities provides **equal opportunities** and **environmental justice for all,** regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, age and origin – **leaving no one behind.**<br><br>**A just city provides opportunities for everyone to integrate in society. All social groups, including the most vulnerable, should have equal access to services of general interest, including education, social services, health care and culture. Adequate, accessible, safe and affordable housing and energy supply should meet the needs of different groups in society, including an ageing and more diverse population, persons with disabilities, young people and families.**<br><br>Socially balanced, mixed and safe urban neighbourhoods promote the integration of all social and ethnic groups and generations. Urban areas with a high percentage of migrants need a comprehensive integration and anti-segregation policy for this."* |
|  | **Key urban dimension noted:**<br>*"The main message of the first Leipzig Charter, to promote **integrated** and sustainable **urban development, and thus improve overall living conditio**ns in Europe's cities (especially in the most deprived urban neighbourhoods),"*<br><br>*"The New Leipzig Charter highlights that **good urban governance** is necessary to help all cities develop **just**, green and productive **urban systems**."*<br><br>*"Digitalisation is a major transformative, cross-sectoral trend affecting all dimensions of sustainable urban development. In many ways it offers an opportunity for urban transformation. Digital solutions can deliver innovative and high-quality services to the public and businesses. These include smart urban mobility, energy efficiency, sustainable housing, public services, retail, supply of daily goods and civic-led governance".* |
|  | **Synonyms for equality used:** just city, integration, anti-segregation, equal |
|  | **Population groups noted:** age, disability, race & ethic origin, socio-economic; other: young, migrants**, all** |
| **The Pact of Amsterdam** | **Key equality dimension noted:**<br>The equality is not explicitly noted in the Pact of Amsterdam but addressed through cross-cutting issues.<br><br>*12.6 **Impact on societal change, including behavioural change, promoting, among other things, equal access to information, gender equality and women empowerment.**<br><br>It is also touched upon through the overall objectives of the Pact to address challenges related to segregation, unemployment, and poverty in urban areas.* |

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|---|---|
| | **Key urban dimension noted:**<br>*"A balanced, sustainable and integrated approach towards urban challenges should, in line with the Leipzig Charter on sustainable European cities, focus on all major aspects of urban development (in particular economic, environmental, social, territorial, and cultural) in order to ensure sound urban governance and policy. There is a need to enhance the complementarity of policies affecting Urban Areas and to strengthen their urban dimension. **The Urban Agenda for the EU offers a new form of multilevel and multi-stakeholder cooperation with the aim of strengthening the urban dimension in EU policy.** Each stakeholder is free to determine its own level of participation in the Urban Agenda for the EU."* |
| | **Synonyms for equality used:** equal, integration |
| | **Population groups noted:** age, disability, gender, socio-economic, nationality based; other: young children |
| **Ljubljana Agreement** | **Key equality dimension noted:**<br>The connection to urban equality is the recognition of cities of equality as a priority on the UAEU: *"The following new themes are added to the existing list of UAEU priority themes: • **Cities of Equality** • Food • Greening Cities • Sustainable Tourism.* |
| | **Key urban dimension noted:**<br>'Reaffirm the value of the Pact of Amsterdam that established the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) and enabled stronger multi-level and multi stakeholder cooperation on urban issues in the EU'. |
| | **Synonyms for equality used:** equality, just, fair |
| | **Population groups noted: N/A** |
| **New European Bauhaus** | **Key equality dimension noted:**<br>By creating bridges between different backgrounds, cutting across disciplines and building on participation at all levels, the New European Bauhaus inspires a movement to facilitate and steer the transformation of our societies along three inseparable values:<br>• sustainability, from climate goals to circularity, zero pollution, and biodiversity<br>• aesthetics, quality of experience and style beyond functionality<br>• **inclusion, from valuing diversity to securing accessibility and affordability** |
| | **Key urban dimension noted:**<br>*"The New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative, launched by the European Commission in 2020, connects the European Green Deal to our living spaces and experiences and expresses the EU's **ambition of creating beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive places, products and ways of living**."*<br><br>The first EUI-IA Call for Proposals will not be prescriptive with regard to the nature of expected proposals. However, cities are invited to consider <u>four themes</u>. Among them: |

| | |
|---|---|
| | *'Innovative construction and renovation processes should **also favour participation** (e.g. in promoting citizen led activities) **as well as inclusiveness** (e.g. new skills, jobs and/or functions for disadvantaged collectives) **in securing accessibility** (including affordability) for all, with **a specific attention to less-represented groups**, and the long-term objective of proposing a new, replicable model of solidarity and cooperation'.* <br><br> *(The prompt for the submitting local authorities notes)* |
| | **Synonyms for equality used:** diversity, inclusion, inclusive, inclusiveness |
| | **Population groups noted:** age, gender, socio economic; other: cultural background |
| **Territorial Agenda 2030** | **Key equality dimension noted:** <br> The aim of the Territorial Agenda 2030 a sustainable future **for all places and people in Europe**. <br><br> The Territorial Agenda 2030 defines two overarching objectives, a **Just Europe** and a **Green Europe**. <br><br> **Just Europe offers future perspectives for all places and people**, including the following elements: *Balanced Europe*: better balanced territorial development utilising Europe's diversity; *Functional Regions*: Convergent local and regional development, less inequality between places; *Integration beyond borders*: Easier living and working across national borders. |
| | **Key urban dimension noted:** <br> **The Territorial Agenda is a policy document for spatial planning in Europe, its regions and communities.** <br><br> *The Territorial Agenda underlines the importance of and provides orientation for strategic **spatial planning and calls for strengthening the territorial dimension of sector policies** at all governance levels. It seeks to promote **an inclusive and sustainable future for all places** and to help achieve Sustainable Development Goals in Europe.* |
| | **Synonyms for equality used:** just, inclusive, diversity |
| | **Population groups noted:** socio-economic, nationality based; other: all people |
| Sources: multiple, elaborated by the author. | |

*Digital transition*

While the EU Digital Strategy does not note the urban dimension explicitly, it is **particularly relevant to the access to services in cities and urban areas**. As noted in the analysis of the legal documents, access to services at the city level presents one of the key expressions of exclusion resulting from different forms of discrimination. As more and more services are digitalised, some marginalised groups can no longer access the most essential urban services, such as public transport with e-ticketing. City

services are increasingly available through digital environment, as is the information on the energy consumption, environmental impact or circumstances in different city areas. For instance, the application for social and rental housing is increasingly done in digital environments, where the eligibility for accommodation is decided. Apart from access to digitalised services and digital literacy, the issues such as disability and language issues are among critical issues to address in order to secure equitable access to services in the future.

The policy analysis related to digital transition (presented in Table 8) shows **commitment to inclusive technology that leaves no one behind**. While expressing similar approaches to the policies under Green Transition and Urban and Territorial transformation, **the methods to achieving inclusivity and equality are not clearly explained.** Similarly to the above policies, the **synonyms: inclusion, fair, and just, are used but not defined. The concrete strategies to move towards fulfilling these ambitions are also very limited.**

| Table 8 EU Policy dedicated to digital transition | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Description** |
| **European Digital Strategy** | **Equality dimension noted:**<br>*'Everyone should have access to technology, which should be **inclusive, and promote our rights'.** The declaration proposes rights in a number of key areas to ensure that **nobody is left behind by the digital transformation**, making sure that we take extra effort to include e**lderly people, people living in rural areas, persons with disabilities, and marginalised, vulnerable or disenfranchised** people and those who act on their behalf.*<br>*(*Chapter II: solidarity and inclusion)<br><br>*'**Everyone should have access to a trustworthy, diverse and multilingual online environment.** Access to diverse content contributes to a pluralistic public debate and should allow everyone to participate in democracy'.*<br>*(*CHAPTER IV: Fostering participation in the digital public space)<br><br>*'Everyone should have access to accurate, easy-to-understand information on the environmental impact and energy consumption of digital products and services, allowing them to make responsible choices'.*<br>*(*CHAPTER VI: sustainability of the digital future) |
| | **Urban dimension noted:** No urban dimension noted. |
| | **Synonyms for 'equality' used:** inclusion, fair, just |
| | **Population groups noted:** Age, Disability, Gender, Socio-economic; other: marginalised, vulnerable or disenfranchised |
| Sources: multiple, elaborated by the author. | |

*Social economy*

Social economy businesses (SEB) and organisations (where present) complement the government's vital public and/or social services, where governments might not have the resources or expertise to deliver effectively. As such SEBs can help ensure all community members have access to services.  As noted by one of the respondents interviewed for this research and the feedback received. The biggest value of social economy organisations is based on their local embeddedness and familiarity with local needs and their outreach and empowerment of vulnerable and difficult-to-access populations. It also encourages cities to work on a community level. For this reason, it is vital to examine the relevant EU policies addressing this matter, notably:  The European Action Plan for the Social Economy and The Transition Pathway for the Proximity & Social Economy Industrial Ecosystem.

Similarly to other policy documents analysed in this section, the term 'equality' is not used as such, rather, synonyms, including equal, diversity, inclusion, , and integration, appear. As in other documents, the intention is to address the challenges of a number of disadvantaged groups (e.i. protected grounds in legal terms), including persons with disabilities, older people, long-term unemployed, persons with a migrant, minority racial or ethnic background and to contribute creating equal economic opportunities for all. However, here as well, the challenge is to find concrete strategies that would ensure this ambition is implemented.

This limitation is critical to address. For instance, The Transition pathway for Proximity and Social Economy focuses on green and digital transition. It thus provides important links on connecting initiatives implemented by local governments in collaboration with social economy organisations with green/digital transition policies.  What is also interesting to note in the context of the European Action Plan for the Social Economy is the clear intention to launch a transition pathway for the "proximity and social economy" industrial ecosystem based on the approach of the updated 2020 EU Industrial Strategy[61], to further work with public authorities at all levels (including urban and local authorities) and stakeholders on the implementation of the action plan in this area.

| Table 9 EU Policies dedicated to social economy | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Description** |
| **The European Action Plan for the Social Economy** | **Equality dimension noted:** <br> *'The social economy complements Member States' action in delivering quality social services in a cost-effective manner. It also complements their efforts to integrate young people and disadvantaged groups (e.g. persons with disabilities, older people, long-term unemployed, persons with a migrant, minority racial or ethnic background)'.* <br><br> *[Social Economy Actors] 'create and retain quality jobs, contribute to social and labour-market inclusion of disadvantaged groups and equal opportunities for* |

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[61] https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-05/communication-industrial-strategy-update-2020_en.pdf

| | |
|---|---|
| **The Transition Pathway for the Proximity & Social Economy industrial ecosystem** | *all, drive sustainable economic and industrial development, promote the active participation of citizens in our societies, play an important role in Europe's welfare systems, and revitalise Europe's rural and depopulated areas'.*<br><br>(4.3. Maximising the contribution of the social economy to the green and digital transitions) |
| | **Urban dimension noted:**<br>*'Social economy partners play a key role in the **provision of social housing**, cooperative housing and urban development strategies. In terms of Affordable Housing Initiative, the Commission will enhance the renovation capacity in social and affordable housing by mobilising cross-sectoral partnerships to pilot 100 renovation districts and by promoting qualitative, liveable, accessible, affordable homes'.*<br><br>(4.3. Maximising the contribution of the social economy to the green and digital transitions) |
| | **Synonyms for equality used:** equal, diversity, inclusion |
| | **Population groups noted:** age, disability, gender, Rece & Ethnicity, Socio Economic/Poverty; other: Roma, unemployed. |
| | **Equality dimension noted:**<br>**'***Social economy is largely locally rooted and, as such, is a driver for local growth and for the development of proximity economy, fostering short value chains for mainly local production and consumption. **This makes social economy inclusive, for example by integrating the more disadvantaged groups to the labour market, such as persons with disabilities, older people, unemployed young people,** as they combine the entrepreneurial mode with a social and/or persons with a migrant background, and more broadly responding to the needs of communities by offering social, care and personal services'.*<br><br>(II. The ecosystem before and after COVID-19 p. 4) |
| | **Urban dimension noted:** The urban dimension refers to scale and location of the social economy business model operation (eg. local level, city). Especially relevant is the link to social innovation and development where "*investment in social infrastructure* "(meaning housing, among others) helps the development of society and with this it fights against people in disadvantaged conditions. (p. 9) |
| | **Synonyms for equality used:** inclusive, just, integrating |
| | **Population groups noted:** Age, disability, gender, Rece & Ethnicity, Socio Economic/Poverty; other: Roma, unemployed, young |
| Sources: multiple, elaborated by the author. | |
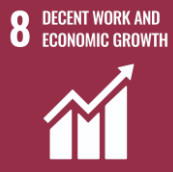
## 'Equality' in the context of international commitments: SDGs and the UN New Urban Agenda

The term 'equality' and related ambitions are also noted in the international commitments, notably, SDGs and the UN New Urban Agenda. This section briefly analyses these in relation to the term 'equality', and the population groups noted.

Table 10, notes the specific SDG goals and their direct quotes related to the notion of equality (explicit and implicit), in addition, the analysis of the potential contribution of the future partnership is assessed should the partnership choose the specific issue addressed by the SDG goal.

| Table 10. The links between the Cities of Equality theme and the SDGs | | |
|---|---|---|
| **SDGs** | **SDG Goal and Target Quote linked to 'equality' and 'cities or equality = urban equality'** | **The potential contribution to Cities of Equality in the EU to the SDGs** |
| 1 NO POVERTY | *Commitment to ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources [...](Page. 15, section 1.4)* | "No poverty" is part of the basic goals when working towards equality. For this reason, this goal has an important potential to contribute to equality and antidiscrimination work. |
| 2 ZERO HUNGER | *Commitment to end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round. [...]* (Pag. 15, section 2.1,2.2) | Access to food expresses another way of inequality and socio-economic discrimination. For this reason, equal access to good and quality food is an important element when working on equality, and cities of equality can have potential contributions. |
| 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | *Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all".* (Pag. 16, section 3.8) | Working on inequality can improve well-being and provide more access to good health, especially when working on age, disability, race and other grounds of discrimination. |
| 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | *Commitment to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes; [...](and) eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people's and children in vulnerable situations by 2030.* (Pag. 17, section 4.1, 4.3,4.5) | Cities of equality work could potentially affect culture and education in general as it can change perception and understanding of society, meaning changing people's judgment and promoting less discrimination. |
| 5 GENDER EQUALITY | *Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.* (Pag. 18, section 5.5) | Cities of equality may directly affect gender equality by being a goal of key interest for the partnership. |
| 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | *Commitment to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by 2030.* (Pag.19. Section 7.1) | Working on inequality issues can contribute to tackling energy poverty and making energy more affordable, understanding where and who needs it. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH** | *Commitment to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030. (Pag. 19. Section 8.5)* | Equality and non-discrimination are essential to a decent work environment, for this reason, cities of equality would contribute to this goal. |
| **9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE** | Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020. (Pag. 21. Section 9.C) | Cities of equality may have a potential contribution as this goal aims to promote equal and more inclusive digitalisation, that is the key to access to services and labour markets. |
| **10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES** | *Commitment to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other. [...] Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.* (Pag. 21. Section 10.2, 10.3, 10.4) | Cities of equality could have a direct contribution to reducing inequalities. |
| **11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES** | *Commitment to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums by 2030. [...] [and] enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries; [...]* (Pag. 21-22. Section 11.1,11.2,11.3,11.b) | Cities of equality work can directly contribute to this goal as access to decent, affordable and adequate housing is one of the key expressions of discrimination in urban settings that must be addressed. |
| **13 CLIMATE ACTION** | *"Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning;[...] Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.* (Pag. 23. Section 13.3,13.b) | Even if the contribution is indirect, cities of equality can potentially contribute to this goal as its objective is to protect and make cities more equal. Climate change is affecting them directly, and working on equality can help reverse the effect climate change has on vulnerable communities and groups. |
| **16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS** | *Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.[...] And provide legal identity for all, including birth registration by 2030.*(Pag. 25, Section 16.3,16.9) | There is a potential contribution of cities of equality as this goal wants to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. |

Source: United Nations, General Assembly (2015) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Pages 15- 27.
Own elaboration and analysis for the EAA Cities of Equality.

In addition to the clear links to a number of SDGs the term 'equality' and the theme 'cities of equality' is particularly well aligned with the UN New Urban Agenda its leading topics and subtopics, as follows:
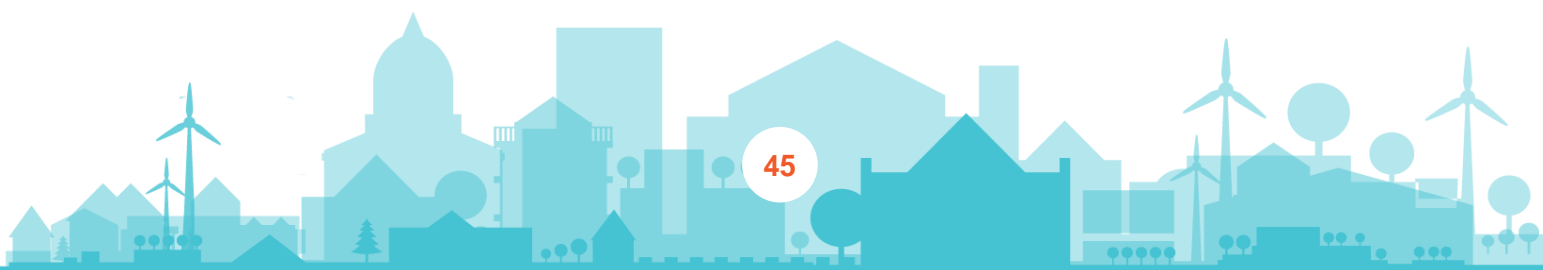
**Topic 1. Sustainable Urban Development for social inclusion and ending poverty**
Sub-topic A. Social inclusion and ending poverty
Sub-topic B. Access to adequate housing
Sub-topic C. Social inclusion and ending poverty

**Topic 2. Sustainable an inclusive Urban Prosperity and Opportunities for all**
Sub-topic A. Inclusive Urban Economy
Sub-topic B. Sustainable prosperity for all

**Topic 3. Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Urban Development**
Sub-topic A. Resilience, mitigation and adaptation of cities and human settlements
Sub-topic B.  Sustainable management and use of natural resources

**Topic 4. Effective implementation**
Sub-topic A. Building the Urban Governance Structure: Establishing a Supportive Framework
Sub-topic B. Planning and Managing Urban Spatial Development
Sub-topic C. Means of Implementation: mobilization of financial resources, capacity development, information technology and innovation

Similarly to the EU policies, the SDGs and NUA often present ambitions to alleviate challenges to the population as a whole ('all')  in order to achieve 'equality', or they list specific population groups depending on the specific goal or target. The challenges are also similar in that the concrete strategies to achieve equality (or inclusion) are not elaborated. Clearly, in the case of the SDGs and NUA the localisation strategies were envisaged to do so (through UAEU, among other tools available to the EU). The key benefit of the analysis of the SDGs and the NUA in relation to the term 'equality' is that it further maps of the policy themes and issues where equality is a clearly expressed ambition at the international level.

**'Equality' in the context of EU Member States: stakeholder feedback**

The comprehensive examination of the EU Member States' priorities in relation to 'equality' in the urban context is out of the scope of this research. For this reason, this section highlights the priorities and ambitions presented by the Directors Generals for Urban Matters (DGUM) in the written and verbal feedback to the first draft interim report. In addition to the urban themes noted in the EU policy documents selected by the client and the EUKN linking matrix, the following priorities have been noted by the DGUM members during the meeting organised by the Swedish Presidency: **environmental justice, urban resilience, housing, accessibility, air quality and informal settlements**. In addition, the European Commission services suggested three additional policy spheres: **food, biodiversity, and culture.**

The wide variety of themes added through the stakeholder feedback indicates the known need and the ambition to achieve equality in disparate MS and EU policy spheres. It highlights that 'equality' (incl. fairness, justice, equity) are cross-cutting issues embedded in almost all contemporary policy spheres with urban dimensions.  However, building equitable cities remains a challenge despite wide recognition and commitment. In many policies spheres the concrete strategies to achieve equality are

missing, along with the challenges related to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their impact.

## 1.5 Towards the interpretation of the theme 'Cities of Equality' for the UAEU context

The notion of Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with now legally protected characteristics (grounds of discrimination) such as race or ethnic origin, disability, sex and sexual orientation, religion and belief and more have experienced discrimination.

In general terms, equality ensures that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their life and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have lesser life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

**The cities that can successfully move towards equality ' are those that consider the diverse needs of all individuals and social groups, providing an environment that allows them to live their lives, for example, in school, work, with friends and relatives, or enjoying cultural and other recreational opportunities. There is a growing appreciation of the need to prioritise inclusive urban planning, as it shapes the environment around us; that environment, in turn, shapes how we all live, work, play and rest'[62].**

The transitions that Europe is planning, including just, digital and green, are a vital opportunity to implement the ambitions to achieve equality in cities at the moment they are going through transformations. The future task of the 'Cities of Equality' partnership will be to develop concrete solutions on how to achieve that.

This section aims to bring the results of the analysis together to provide an articulation of the 'cities of equality' theme. This is achieved through strategic framing that builds on the thematic analysis presented above by answering three questions:

1. **Where?** - What scale of urban and policy intervention is the focus of the future Partnership work (cities)
2. **Who?** - Who is concerned by the future partnership work? Or which protected grounds or groups should be covered? (legal aspects of the term 'equality')
3. **What?** - What are the potential areas of the partnership work[63]. (policy aspects of the term 'equality')

**Where?**

As the title of the 'Cities of Equality' theme suggests, the focus of this partnership work shall be the 'city'. The interviews conducted for this research strongly suggest that there is a need and relevance of

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62 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Urban-rural_Europe_-_equality_in_cities
63 Clearly, how is very important too, but this will be the focus of the future detailed scoping paper and ultimately the partnership action plan.

the focus on this scale across the board, from the implementation of the national legislation and action plans created at the EU level, through cities' access to funding for 'equality' matters, to access to the data and evidence on equality matters at the city and neighbourhood levels.

While the term 'city' or 'cities' may have different interpretations as such, we propose to adopt the definition proposed by Eurostat as follows:

*'a city is a local administrative unit (LAU)[64] where at least 50 % of the population lives in one or more urban centres'[65].*

Within this definition, the LAU and the urban centres are defined as follows.

**Local administrative units (LAUs)** 'are low-level administrative divisions of a country below that of a province, region or state. Not all countries classify their locally governed areas similarly, and LAUs may refer to a range of different administrative units, including municipalities, communes, parishes or wards2[66].

**Urban centres** are high-density clusters in the technical terminology of the Eurostat **(**with a population density of at least 1 500 inhabitants per km²)[67]**.**

The interpretation of the term 'cities' as LAUs, fits the **governance** proposition of the UAEU partnerships, where the representatives of local authorities (with recognised administrative boundaries) are invited as partners. The interpretation of the cities as LAUs with urban centres also allows potential future partnerships to include cities or different sizes in their membership (small, medium and large) as well as examine ways to approach equality at their scale and jurisdiction.

Using the term 'cities' in this way also suggests that the Partnership analysis and action plan will focus on the **scale** of the city (or a local authority with recognised administrative borders) or its lower elements, such as city neighbourhoods within the administrative border.

This point is important to emphasise and clarify because there may indeed be different interpretations of the term 'city' or 'cities. For instance, in addition to LAU, functional urban areas (FUA) are used to study cities in a functional way. While LAUs are a clear administrative concept, FUAs are a theoretical concept and, therefore, not suitable for the UAEU governance and working method.

Here the LAU definition is preferred to the FUA, because we are also interested in the element of governance which is more explicit in the case of LAU.

### Who?

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64 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Local_administrative_unit_(LAU)
65 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:City
66 Glossary:Local administrative unit (LAU) - Statistics Explained (europa.eu)
67 Glossary:Urban centre - Statistics Explained (europa.eu)

As noted in the previous sections we propose rooting the interpretation of the term 'equality' in the legal context as this can ensure that there is a shared reference point to interpretation and understanding of the term between the future Partnership members coming from different MS, the EU institutions, and other stakeholders[68]. The EU legislation on 'equality and non-discrimination' also has provisions to ensure that the rulings (in case of transgressions) are equitable and just (as applied in the MS legal systems).

The previous section reviewing European legal documents on 'equality' and 'non-discrimination' show that legislation has been developed to protect against specific grounds of discrimination, including**:**

- **age**
- **disability**
- **gender**
- **sexual orientation (LGBTIQ)**
- **religion and belief**
- **race & ethnic origin (incl. country of origin)[69]**

For the purposes of this report, we also refer to these as **protected population groups** as they are protected by the EU legislation (among others).



**Figure 4 Protected population groups (grounds of discrimination)**

Images source: Equinet.
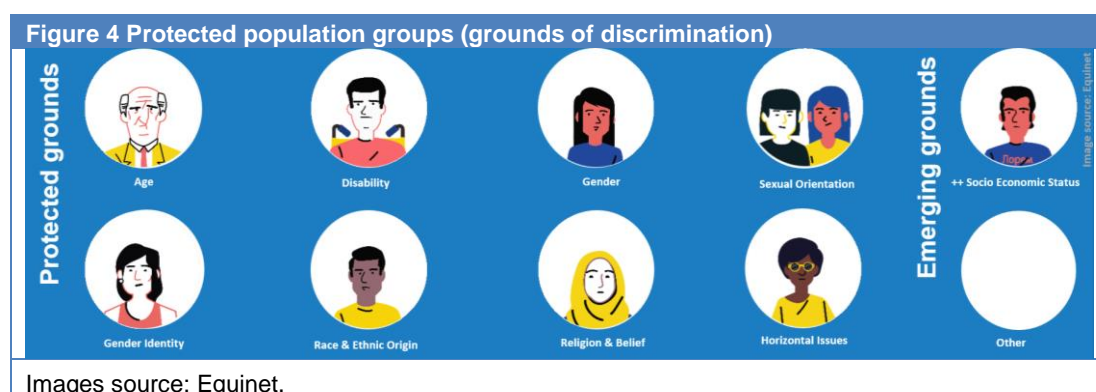
However, it is important to highlight that the interviews and the literature review conducted for this research indicate that **there are other grounds of discrimination** in the urban environment that need to be considered, the most quoted being **socio-economic status**.

Therefore, in conceptualising equality for the Cities of Equality UAEU theme, adopting an approach that resembles **an 'open' system** (legally speaking) that can include 'any other status' identified as important to include by future partnership members. These may include the population groups noted in the EU policy documents, such as **socio-economic status (eg. poverty), and children/young.**

While the action plans and strategies focus on protected population groups separately, they also emphasise the **importance of intersectionality (related to 'horizontal issues').** The notion of

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68 Clearly, there may be differences in precise legal interpretation and use of the term in each MS legal system, but legal use of the term is not the concern of the UAEU partnership. What is important is to have a common point of reference point to start from.
69 https://equineteurope.org/

intersectionality aims at moving from singular narratives of discrimination divided by grounds of discrimination into understanding that one person's discrimination can be experienced simultaneously at different grounds[70]. **Intersectionality** is an analytical framework for understanding how a person's various social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. **Intersectionality identifies multiple factors of advantages and disadvantages.** As noted in the introduction of the European Capitals Inclusion and Diversity Award:

> *'As we move towards a more inclusive society, we need to start **looking at diversity and inclusion more holistically and stop compartmentalising each of the issues**. As we call out the need to stand **for equality**, we all need to acknowledge the **importance of intersectionality** and work towards understanding overlaps in our identities'.*

<div align="right">

European Capitals Inclusion and Diversity Award[71]

</div>

Conceptualising equality in an intersectional way is in line with the ambitions expressed by the stakeholders contributing to the qualitative component of this research to **approach equality issues holistically for all groups and grounds rather than focus on each group separately.**

This approach is very much in line with the ambitions of '**leaving no one behind' noted in the EU policy documents** in the proposed transformations and transitions that affect the urban environment. This approach seems very appropriate when considering urban policies, planning and implementation that should be accessible and usable widely.

At this junction, it is important to note that most of the legal documents on 'equality and non-discrimination' do not have an urban link clearly developed. However, they note an expression of discrimination on different grounds (also referred to as the protected groups) in the urban environment. The most quoted ones are lack of access to housing (and in extremes homelessness), lack of access to services (including transportation, education, health), and aspects of spatial segregation.

### What?

The review of the EU and international policy documents highlight international, EU and national ambitions to make future interventions 'equitable' (incl. Inclusive, just and fair) across most contemporary policy domains. Indeed, '**equality' is not only a core value of the European Union in the legal sense but also a cross-cutting issue as well as a horizontal guiding principle across EU policy spheres and funding.**

The mapping and analysis of all of the EU and MS policy areas where 'equality' (incl. justice, fairness, equity) is noted as an ambition is out of the scope of this exercise.

For this reason, the author of this EAA took a strategic decision to systematise and list the policy areas where 'equality' has been identified as an ambition in the (1) EU policy analysis carried out for this

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[70] CEMR (2022) An introduction to intersectionality for local and regional Governments, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, 2022. Available at: https://issuu.com/ccre/docs/cemr_intersectionality_en?fr=sMWEzMTU2MjA5MzE

*71 https://www.eudiversity2022.eu/the-award/*

research (see section Equality' in the context of EU policy[72]), (2) interviews (see section Data sources and Methods of primary data collection) and (3) written and verbal[73] feedback (by the European Commission Services and the DGUM members on the interim report). The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 provides the answer to 'What?' type of urban policy domains 'equality' is highlighted as an ambition by the key stakeholders involved in the EAA. The results of the analysis are systematised under four categories:

1. **Inclusive urban planning, renewal and supply of urban infrastructure**
2. **Social inclusion, including institutions for equality**
3. **Economic inclusion and equal economic opportunities**
4. **Green transition (as an overall context)**

The results of the analysis presented in Table 11, suggest that ensuring that tomorrow's cities provide opportunities and better living conditions for all involves a complex web of multiple spatial, social and economic factors. In addition, it is set in the overall context of the green transition. However, there are challenges to address too. As noted in the sections, the key challenge is that many policies note ambitions related to 'equality' (incl. fair, inclusion, justice) but do not have concrete strategies to achieve this, monitor, evaluate or measure impact. Implementing the available strategies is also challenging, especially at the city level.

The priorities and focus depend on the context and vantage point of each stakeholder involved in this EAA. It should be highlighted that the future partnership operating within the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU will not be in a position to tackle all of the listed policy domains listed in Table 11.

**The work of the 'Cities of Equality' partnership will be mainstreaming 'equality' in concrete urban policy domains of their choice** (in line with scoping provided under sections Who? and What?).

However, it is acknowledged that the vast list of policy themes where 'equality' has been noted as an ambition (see Table 11) as identified through the analysis carried out for this EAA may be a challenge for the future Partnership. To address this issue while respecting the input of all the EAA stakeholders involved in this exercise, the author of this study took two key steps:

1) In other to help to short list the potential focus of the future partnership the author made a strategic decision to cross reference the policy domains identified in Table 11 with the most

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[72] *Please note that the EU policy documents analysed for this research have been preselected by the client and listed in the tendering document. As noted in the section Equality' in the context of EU policy they are categorised as follows:* **Green Transition:** *The European Green Deal, The Renovation Wave;* **Urban and territorial:** *The New Leipzig Charter, the Pact of Amsterdam, Ljubljana Agreement, New European Bauhaus, the Territorial Agenda 2030;* **Social Economy:** *The European Action Plan for the Social Economy, The Transition Pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy Industrial Ecosystem;* **Digital Transition:** *European Digital Strategy.*
[73] DGUM meeting held on the 16th of May, 2023 in Stockholm.

often quoted urban expressions of exclusion listed in the *Union of Equality strategies* (see Table 4) focusing on specific grounds of discrimination (or protected groups). This highlighted 9 out 24 policy themes mapped through EAA analysis (see column *Urban expressions of exclusion (Table 4)* in red), as a potential focus area for the partnership. The partnership will choose one or more among them based on the members' priorities and expertise.

2)     While the concrete policy domains will be the final choice of the partnership, it is possible to propose concrete horizontal sub-themes and actions based on the challenges noted in the qualitative component of this research to help further scope the work of the future partnership. These are elaborated in detail in chapter C. Recommendations; section Deliver *recommendations to help interpret and focus the thematic scope of the theme*. Specifically, tables Table 15, Table 16, Table 17 provide concrete sub-themes for *better regulation, better knowledge and better funding.*

| Table 11  Policy domains where the equality has been expressed as an ambition | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Policy themes** | Policy domains of relevance to CoE theme noted by the EAA stakeholders and identified in the selected EU policy documents | Urban expressions of exclusion (Table 4) |
| **Inclusive urban planning, renewal and supply of urban infrastructure at the city level** | **Housing** (including access adequate, supported, affordable housing, eligibility criteria, homelessness) | 🟥 |
| | **Accessibility** (Universal Design) | 🟥 |
| | **Urban mobility and transportation** | 🟥 |
| | **Public spaces** (access and accessibility) | 🟥 |
| | **Urban and city infrastructure renewal** | |
| | **Urban resilience** | |
| | **Informal settlements** (and unplanned and unauthorized construction) | |
| | **Tackling spatial segregation at the city and neighbourhood levels** (Territorial dimension of social exclusion) | 🟥 |
| **Social inclusion, including institutions for equality at the city level** | **Access to services** (health, education, transport, health, care and other public services) | 🟥 |
| | **Digital transition** (as the means for access to services) | 🟥 |
| | **Culture and sport** | |
| | **Democracy, elections and participation in local life** (incl. participation in decision-making). | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Transformation of public institutions** | |
| | **Mechanisms and structures for support victims of discrimination** | |
| **Economic inclusion and equal economic opportunities at the city level** | **Social economy businesses** | |
| | **Employment and skills** | |
| | **Inclusive labour markets** (including green and digital transition trends in the job market) | <span style="background:red"> </span> |
| | **Entrepreneurship support** | |
| **Themes setting overall context the green transition** | | |
| **Green Transition** | **Environmental justice** | |
| | **Biodiversity** | |
| | **Air Quality** | |
| | **Food** | |
| Source: Author's analysis. | | |

# B.1. Ex-Ante Assessment Criteria

## 1.6   Multi-Level Governance

This section addresses three points related to multi-level governance in the UAEU context and that of the Cities of Equality theme. First is the compatibility of the proposed theme with the multi-level governance approach, second is the involvement of the small and medium-sized cities in the theme, and the third is the reach out to the wider circle of cities and stakeholders at local, regional, and national and EU levels.

1. **The Compatibility of the multi-level governance approach**

The multidimensional nature of the Cities of Equality theme calls for the capacity to deal with complex challenges and to ensure strong levels of coherence in policy lines and their implementation. Pursuing the ambitions of the Cities of Equality within the overall context of the efforts invested in the Union of Equality at the EU level requires a comprehensive multi-level governance approach that aligns vision, incentives, and delivery mechanisms from the EU through MS, regional and city levels. Civil society organisations, including representatives of the protected population groups, are essential for shaping solutions that are closer to local circumstances and needs[74].

A multi-level governance approach in the development of the UAEU Partnership action plan for better EU regulation, funding and knowledge is therefore not only compatible with the proposed theme but essential to ensure that the available not only so that the EU laws and regulations are implemented locally (see previous sections), but that the relevant solutions are designed to proactively create environments for inclusion, that the bottlenecks at the national level are addressed and most importantly that the needs, preferences and concerns of stakeholders, including protected populations, are reflected in decision making.

The need for the multi-level governance approach in addressing challenges to pursuing equality through non-discrimination is also reflected in two recent action plans, including the EU Anti-racism action plan 2020- 2025 and Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 that have been designed within the Union of Equality umbrella.

For instance, the **Anti-Racism Action plan**[75] suggests that racism must be addressed holistically at all levels. This action plan suggests EU institutions working at all levels with all actors:  National Level, Local Level, International Level, Civil Society and Stakeholders and Business. This includes involving regional and local authorities, civil society and equality bodies.

The **EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life** highlights that Jewish life can only flourish within an inclusive society, building on strong and trustful relations with other communities, including newcomers, particularly at the local level. The strategy encourages local

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74 This may include NGOs and Watchdogs organisations.
*75 https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-09/stepping_up_action_for_a_union_of_equality_-_factsheet_en.pdf*

authorities, regions and cities to adopt and use the IHRA definition of antisemitism[76] and includes a mapping and development of a guide of good practices and training for organisations that operate at regional and local levels.

The recent action plan on **Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027**[77], stresses that "Integration and inclusion of people with a migrant background is a two-way process. We need a whole-of-society approach that includes migrant and local communities, employers, civil society and all levels of government." Regarding the points related to the governance questions, the action plan recommends "Partnerships with Member States, local and regional authorities, civil society, social and economic partners, employers, philanthropies, and foundations".

Clearly, there is one key challenge that the Cities of Equality partnership, both regarding its composition and its proposed actions, will need to tackle. This is the ambition to **address equality holistically for all groups rather than focus on each protected group separately** (as the previously noted action plans do). Notably, traditionally the focus and expertise have been dedicated to separate protected population groups not only at the EU law and legislation level but also on the ground in terms of civil society organisations and individual experts. However, addressing this challenge with UAEU multi-level governance model, with the urban expertise, has the potential to bring key added value to implementing the 'Cities of Equality' partnership.

2.      **Involvement of cities, including small and medium-sized cities**

The interviews conducted for this research stressed the importance of the involvement of cities in general and medium and small cities in particular in the context of the 'Cities of Equalities' theme. It should be noted, however, that these responses often focused on the work under their DGs' jurisdiction (eg. implementation of separate EU legislation related to each protected group or employment in the context of the proximity economy), highlighting the previously noted challenges related to focus on individual protected groups. Several reasons for this are worth highlighting at this point.

First, the cities have not been involved in implementing the legislation and the action plans drafted for the protection of separate population groups, as noted in the quote in one of the interviews.

*'Our work on the non-non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion has been mainly through the anti-racism action plan and through the L G BT IQ strategy, where it was specifically stated that more visibility and more focus should be given to the work of the cities and regions. That was new from, from our point of work, as they have not been our stakeholders. We work with civil society organizations, NGOs, and with businesses and representatives of the member states through high level groups, but we have never worked directly with the representatives of the local authorities'.*

*(Respondent x, DG x[78]).*

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[76] https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism
77 https://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/AnteprimaPDF.aspx?id=749
78 Please that this is the direct quote from one of the interviews conducted for this research. All direct quotes have been anonymised. They will be attributed only if the respondent explicitly requests and approves this in writing.

From the perspective of the same interviewee the prospect of having a partnership that will bring cities as a new stakeholder closer to them and thus potentially inform their work would be of great value. Some of the recent work, including the Anti Racism Action plan[79] and the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, acknowledge that local authorities have a lot of experience in developing effective strategies to combat racism and antisemitism, for instance, and in building networks. This is one of the benefits involving cities could bring. However, other respondents noted the lack of information of the local best practices and projects that would be especially beneficial for their work. While there are awards for specific Equality-related initiatives, such as The European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity[80], and the Access City Award[81], these also focus on identifying best practices that are focused on a limited spectrum of Equality in Cities.

The importance of involving small and medium cities resonated across the responses of the majority of the interviewees as well as the challenges in achieving this ambition. One of the interviewees highlighted that the challenges related to social and economic inclusion might be even more challenging than in larger cities, leading to various issues related to territorial political fragmentation that reinforces discrimination in different forms.

There are two challenges that respondents have noted as potential reasons for the lack of involvement of small and medium-sized cities: First is the limited or lack of budget for voluntary work and travel costs required for the work in the UAEU partnership, second, is the language barrier (as the personnel in the small and medium cities may not be speaking English required for the work in the EU context). This challenge could be overcome with a **city network package membership** approach to UAEU partnership composition[82] that is further elaborated in chapter C. Recommendations.

3. **Reach out to the wider circle of cities and stakeholders at local, regional and national and EU levels**

COVID-19 resulted in increased interest in matters of inclusion and equality across international policy networks. As a result, many initiatives and networks have been attempting to advance inclusion, diversity and equality from different perspectives. Here we note only several selected initiatives with significant membership.

First to highlight is the Equinet[83]. **Equinet is the European Network of Equality Bodies**. It serves as a professional platform for cooperation, capacity building and peer support amongst Equality Bodies around the legal interpretation and implementation in practice of the EU equal treatment Directives and around the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination. The Equinet is a network of National Equality Bodies established in each EU member state.

79 https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-09/stepping_up_action_for_a_union_of_equality_-_factsheet_en.pdf
80 https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/tackling-discrimination/diversity-and-inclusion-initiatives/european-capitals-inclusion-and-diversity-award_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Capitals%20of%20Inclusion,and%20create%20discrimination%2Dfree%20societies.
81 https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141
82 Applying this approach could also contribute the 'Governance across administrative boundaries and inter-municipal cooperation: urban-rural, urban-urban and cross-border cooperation; link with territorial development and the Territorial Agenda 2020 (well-balanced territorial development)' emphasised as a cross cutting issue in the Pact of Amsterdam.
83 https://equineteurope.org/

Second to note is the **Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)[84].** The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is an independent centre of reference and excellence for promoting and protecting human rights in the EU. It helps to promote and protect the rights: (a) Be free from discrimination on the basis of age, disability or ethnic background, (b) Have personal data protected, (c) Get access to justice. It works with stakeholders from local to international levels.

Third, we highlight a number of cities and mayors' networks that may be relevant for the collaboration and reach-out efforts of the future partnership.

The **Human Rights Cities Network**[85]  EU law is also implemented at a local level, including the disbursement of EU funds. To better address their challenges, some cities declared themselves 'human rights cities' and built on human rights principles to guide local policymaking. The additional benefit of this network is cooperating with cities, their networks, and partners such as the Council of Europe and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, thus providing further opportunities for outreach for the Partnership.

The **UNESCO-led European coalition of cities against racism[86]** is worth highlighting. This network focuses specifically on the issues related to combating racism locally as the name suggests.

**OECDs Champion of Mayors for Inclusive Growth[87]**, is an ambitious international initiative.  Champion Mayors form a coalition of willing leaders committed to tackling inequalities and promoting more inclusive economic growth in cities.

**CEMR Rainbow Cities Network[88], consists of** 47 members from 22 countries defending the rights of the LGBTI people at the city level. It facilitates the exchange of good practices, joint activities, and initiatives among members as important ways to increase the impact of local approaches and allocate budgets effectively to create sustainable and liveable cities for all.

**Community/Observatory of signatories of the European Charter of Equality (run by CEMR)[89]** aims to promote best practices in the field of gender equality in local life, to facilitate exchanges between signatories and to encourage the development of decentralized cooperation and twinning projects.

Other local initiatives, such **Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy,** could serve as platforms or models for further developing city-level action promoting racial equality and supporting social inclusion through areas such as tackling energy poverty or access to decent housing.

The engagement with these networks would allow access to potential partner cities for the UAEU partnership in the selection phase especially concerning the expertise required, ensuring that the efforts are not duplicated during the work of the partnership, but also ensuring reach out to the wider

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[84] https://fra.europa.eu/en/about-fra
*85 Human Rights Cities Network*
*86 https://www.eccar.info/en*
*87 http://www.oecd-inclusive.com/champion-mayors/about/*
[88] https://www.rainbowcities.com/
[89] https://charter-equality.eu/atlas-of-signatories-of-the-charter/presentation.html

circle of cities and stakeholders at local, regional and national and EU levels to maximise its benefits and the overall UAEU results.

## 1.7    Policy Environment

The 'Cities of Equalities' theme is strongly aligned with the EU headline priorities, specifically the European Commission Work Programme 2023 and the key priorities of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 (see Table 12). However, focusing on more specific issues may require closer attention to constraints and opportunities for the Partnership work arising from specific EU policies.

| Table 12 EU Headline Priorities | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Short Description** |
| <u>**European Commission Work Programme 2023**</u> | Equality for all in all senses, is at the heart of the European Commission Work Programme 2023, that bears the name 'Union of Equality'. *The program has a holistic approach to equality, with specific reference to the **rights of persons with disabilities, combating violence against women and domestic violence and, pay transparenc**y, effective **protection against discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin**. The program also notes the need to* use of all available data and increase transparency, it refers to different policies/ actions from different programs with urban dimensions such as the: European Green Deal (Revision of the combined transport Directive (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Articles 91 and 100(2) TFEU, Q2 2023)), Sustainable transport Greening corporate fleets initiative (legislative or non-legislative, Q3 2023), A Europe Fit for the Digital Age Mobility package, A common European mobility data space (non-legislative, Q2 2023) and more. |
| <u>**Cohesion policy** 2021 **– 2027**</u> | Cohesion policy as the EU's main investment policy *' contributes to strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union. It aims to correct imbalances between countries and regions. It delivers on the Union's political priorities, especially the green and digital transition." The Joint Action Plan includes actions on: 1. a more competitive and smarter Europe 2. a greener, low carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy 3. a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility **4. a more social and inclusive Europe 5. Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories.*** |

Sources: [cwp_2023.pdf (europa.eu)](#)
[https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/what/investment-](#)
[policy_en#:~:text=Cohesion%20Policy%20is%20the%20EU's,improve%20citizens'%20quality%20of%20life](#)

With this in mind, the section will explore how the sources, initiatives, and/ or programs align with 'equality' term, then its link with urban matter for this particular issue, and the differences in proposed actions (withing policy documents). Also, we will explain the different population groups tackled and finally the holes that can be perceived from the data.

Different references were analysed and were divided into different groups:  EU headline priorities (European Commission Work Programme 2023[90] and Cohesion Policy[91]), green transition (Renovation Wave and European Green Deal[92]), Urban and territorial policies (The New EU Bauhaus, The New Leipzig, The Pact of Amsterdam, The Ljubljana Agreement and UAEU, and Territorial Agenda 2023), Social economy (European Action Plan for the Social Economy, The transition Pathway for the proximity and social economy industrial ecosystem), Digital transition(European Digital Strategy),

Specific 'grounds of discrimination' or protected population group strategies as outlined in the Union of Equality strategies and action plans (EU Gender Equality strategy 2020-2025, LGBTIQ Equality strategy 2020-2025, EU Anti-racism action plan 2020-2025, the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030, EU Gender action plan (GAP) III INTPA/EEAS, European Child guarantee, Action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027), and other equality relevant policy initiatives ( European Pilar of Social Rights, Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, and European Democracy Action Plan).

When looking at the intake of equality from each program or source, some of them have a more generic take on the matter as we can see on those sources grouped as general. They express a general definition of "protection from discrimination" and emphasize establishing a "Union of equality[93]". These fulfil the function of being the base for other programs and work on equality. The same happens in the case of references marked as *Social economy and Digital transition*, such as the *European action plan for the social economy*, *The Transition pathway for the proximity and social economy industrial ecosystem*, and *The European Digital Strategy.* They have a holistic approach to equality, looking to work against equality, creating better *opportunities for all and integrating the more disadvantaged groups,* but sometimes a less specific undertaking. In the case of the source grouped as *green transition*, although they also have a more general look at equality, their idea is more linked to sustainable living and the creation of a healthier environment; for example, in urban terms, creating better homes with more efficient energy systems. This describes a different point of view of equality, either it positions this issue as not the main goal but a secondary, as the initiatives look at a sustainable environment as their main objective, or looks at equality in the context of climate change and environmental issues, which describes policies against inequalities but for a different end. On another note, in the case of those sources that are grouped as Urban and Territorial, they express a more precise link to dimensions of equality (although expressed through synonyms) related to cities, especially The New Leipzig, the pact of Amsterdam, and the Territorial Agenda 2023. These highlight the **transformative power of cities[94]** to provide equal opportunities targeting different population groups, such as gender, people with disabilities, poverty, and migration. In this case, the urban policies initiatives define and cover equality issues from a direct urban perspective, as The New Leipzig and the Pact of Amsterdam put more emphasis on governance and the

*90 https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/cwp_2023.pdf*
*91 https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/whats-new/panorama/2023/03/03-01-2023-cohesion-report-highlights-need-to-adapt-policies-to-changing-demographics_en*
*92 https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en*
*93 https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/whats-new/panorama/2023/03/03-01-2023-cohesion-report-highlights-need-to-adapt-policies-to-changing-demographics_en*
*94 https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/brochure/new_leipzig_charter/new_leipzig_charter_en.pdf*

stringing of the urban dimension to create equality. On another spectrum of equality conceptualisation are the strategies and actions plans dedicated to specific protected population groups whose definition and goal is the Equality of its main group described. As we can see, the definition and take on equality goes from a more generic and broader to a more specific and concrete one emphasising **this issue is a transversal one touching many aspects**.

The link between equality and urban policies is not always evident or direct, and within these references varies, as it is not always explicit, and sometimes non-existent, as it is in the case of European Digital strategy. However, in the policies that show a link between urban policies and equality, there are two main urban actions which are **housing and mobility policies,** and as less common policies, **urban space planning and adaptation as well as access to services,** are noted. However, some dissimilarities can be seen. In the case of the Renovation Wave and the European Green Deal, where their focus is to create equality for a more sustainable and better living, the urban policies are linked to the energetic renovation of buildings making them more environmentally friendly and resilient, the same in the case of mobility. In the case of Urban Policies initiatives, their link with urban action and equality is more direct with specific policies for anti-segregation purposes. In this case, it can be observed housing projects whose main objective is to pursue migration inclusion and accessibility to better living conditions. On the other hand, those population groups' programs or actions such as gender and LGBTQI, propose urban policies such as housing and access to services, an aspect that was not mentioned in other programs. As we can see, the link to urban actions and policies with equality and inclusion is presented in many forms. The policies mentioned, are intended to be implemented through a variety of EU funding streams. However, the information about the implementation of these policies and results in terms of achieved equality of those projects as such is generally missing.

## 1.8   Regulatory and Funding Environment

As shown in chapter A.1. section *The term 'Equality' in the EU, member states and international legislative context* the theme 'cities of equality' as articulated in the section *Towards the interpretation of the theme 'Cities of Equality' for the UAEU context* the proposed theme 'cities of equality' enjoys favourable regulatory environment overall at the EU level. Equality is the founding value of the European Union enshrined in the Treaty of the European Union, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, The European Pillar of Social Rights and eight Directives on Equal Treatment of the European Union and one proposal (see tables Table 1, Table 2 ). Moreover, this legislative guidance at the EU level is transposed to the legal systems of the EU member states as shown earlier. As led by the example of the European Democracy Action Plan[95], a number of strategies and action plans further efforts are being made to mainstream equality in action at all levels to promote access to democratic participation (see Table 5). In recent years, particular progress has been made in protecting the rights of several grounds of discrimination, including gender[96], LGBTIQ community[97] , and tackling discrimination on the grounds of race[98] and disability. [99]  The focus on equality (expressed as inclusion, fairness, justice etc.) is also prevalent in the EU policy context.

However, as underlined by the interviews conducted for this research and the review of available evidence in the literature, the implementation of the ambition expressed in the legislative and policy framework remains a challenge, especially at the local level.

This section focuses particularly on the funding available for the aspects of equality identified as important for the 'cities of equality' theme in the section *Towards the interpretation of the theme 'Cities of Equality' for the UAEU context.* The funding review examines different forms that EU funding takes, looking at them and their different goals linked to 'equality'[100] the focus is on large funds and their support to disparate aspects of equality linked to the theme.

In order to start grasping the categories, scope and scale of the 'equality' related funding (in terms of social, economic and urban) at the EU level we need to start with the forms that EU funding has. This one comes in many different forms[101]:

A.   Grants – partly funded by the EU and partly from other sources –usually follow public announcements known as calls for proposals.
B.   Subsidies managed by national and regional authorities.
C.   Loans, guarantees and equity as forms of financial assistance to support EU policies and programmes.
D.   Awards and prizes to winners of different programmes (eg. Horizon 2020).

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*96 https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/stories/s/Cohesion-policy-supporting-gender-equality/gkxm-7hxd/*

*97 LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (europa.eu)*

*98 EU Anti-racism action plan 2020- 2025 EU Anti-racism action plan 2020- 2025*

*99 trategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030*

*100 As noted in the section reviewing EU policy documents number of synonyms are used instead or in addition to the term 'equality' these include: inclusion, integration, therefore the review of the funding streams also includes these.*

[101] Funding, grants, subsidies | European Union (europa.eu)

**Figure 5** presents the multiannual financial framework for the EU for the period 2021-2027, the funds available as well as their distribution. While there is a clear marking that funds belonging to new and reinforced priorities (2021-2027) cover 'Justice, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values, ' concluding that the funding dedicated to disparate aspects of 'equality' is limited to that category would be vastly misleading as other funding frameworks such as the entirety of the Cohesion Policy funds (including European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund + (ESF+) dedicate part of their funding to that end as it will be explained later using selected examples of funds. Among the new and reinforced priorities funding the Just Transition Fund, Horizon 2020 also supports disparate aspects of 'equality' (incl. inclusion, justice etc.).

**Figure 5 EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027**



MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2021–2027: KEY FIGURES

**COHESION POLICY** 372.6

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 226
- Cohesion Fund (CF) 48
- European Social Fund+ (ESF+) 98.5

**COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP)** 378.5

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) 87.4
- European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) 291

**NEW AND REINFORCED PRIORITIES** 377.3

- Connecting Europe Facility (Transport, Energy, Digital) 20.7
- InvestEU 3.0
- European space programme 14.9
- Digital Europe programme 7.6
- Single market programme 4.2
- Horizon Europe 86.1
- Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument 79.5
- Other 105
- Justice, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values 0.9
- EU4Health 2.4
- Just Transition Fund 8.4
- Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) 5.4
- Humanitarian aid 11.6
- Erasmus+ 24.6
- Creative Europe 1.8
- RescEU 1.3

Source: The EU's 2021-2027 long-term budget and NextGenerationEU - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu)

**Cohesion Policy Funds - general provisions: at the outset, it is** worth highlighting the following provisions under Cohesion Policy:

- **Horizontal principles[102]** (all investments under all policy objectives will ensure respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, with the horizontal principles on gender equality, non-discrimination (based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation), and accessibility in all stages of programming and implementation). Specifically, we note ensuring equal access to mainstream (non-segregated) services in the context of the cohesion policy funds. The Funds should not support actions that contribute to any form of segregation or exclusion and, when financing infrastructure, should ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

- **Enabling conditions framework** (especially the Horizontal Enabling Condition on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Horizontal Enabling Condition on the UN CRPD).

- **Partnership principle** (involvement of independent fundamental rights bodies and human rights organizations in all the stages of programming, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation).

**European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**[103] (under Cohesion and Values, Regional Development & Cohesion) is focused on strengthening EU economic, social and territorial cohesion by correcting regional imbalances through local government programs. "*In 2021-2027, the fund will enable investments to make Europe and its regions: More social, supporting effective and inclusive employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare, as well as enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism; Closer to citizens, supporting locally-led development and sustainable urban development across the EU*". This program also helps to promote the socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees, including housing[104].  **Figure 6** presents a snapshot of the proportion of the funding desiccated to disparate aspects of 'equality' such as equal access to healthcare, education, culture and tourism, integration of marginalised communities and other social infrastructure for social inclusion.

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[102] *See Regulation 2021/1060 of 24 June 2021, art. 9 (horizontal principles), recital 6 and Art 15, Annex III & IV (enabling conditions)*
*103 Open Data Portal for the European Structural Investment Funds - European Commission | Data | European Structural and Investment Funds (europa.eu)*
*104 Promoting socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees in the next EU budget (2021 – 2027)*
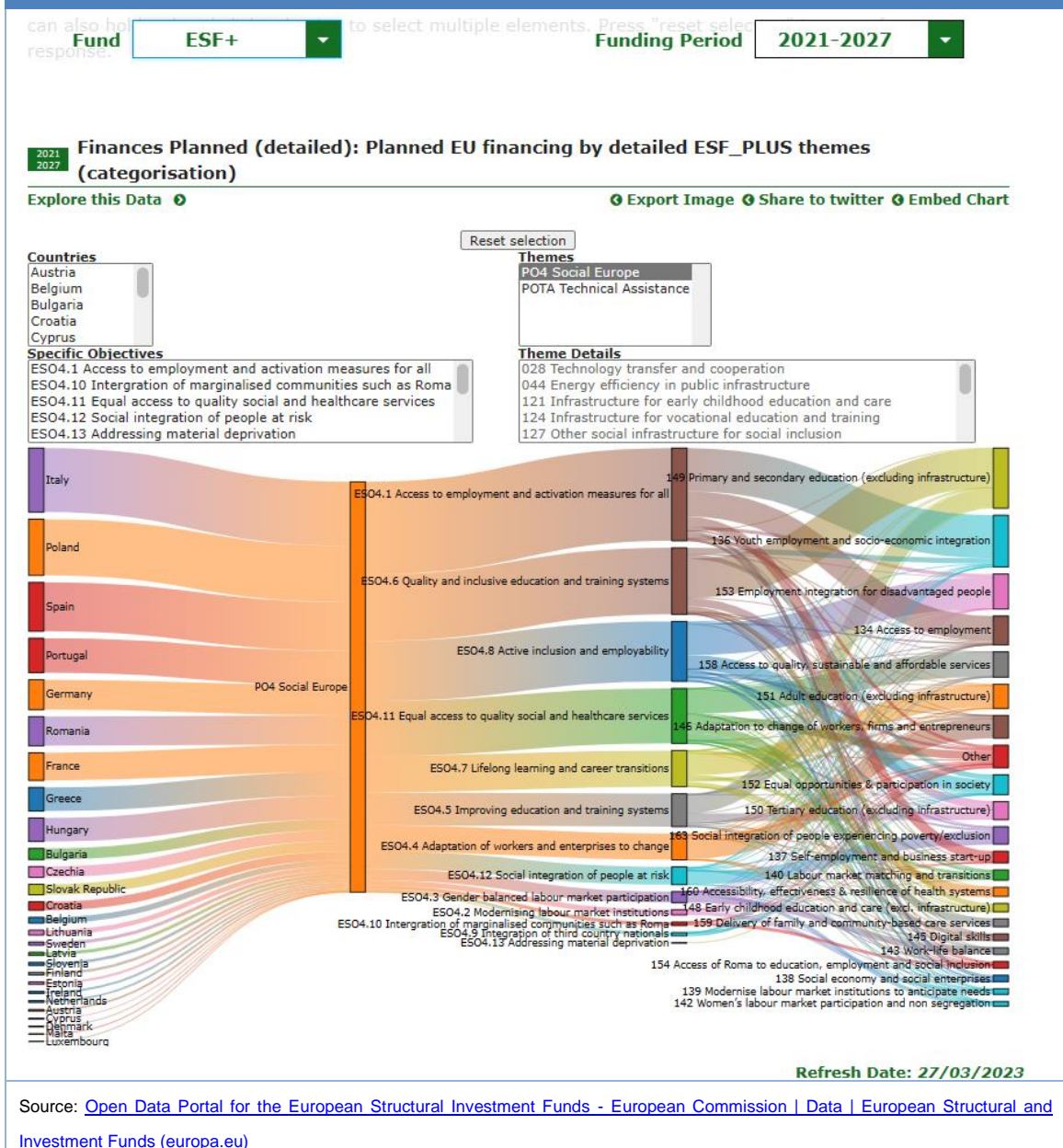
Figure 6 ERDF funding for social infrastructure for social inclusion

Source: **Open Data Portal for the European Structural Investment Funds - European Commission | Data | European Structural and Investment Funds (europa.eu)**
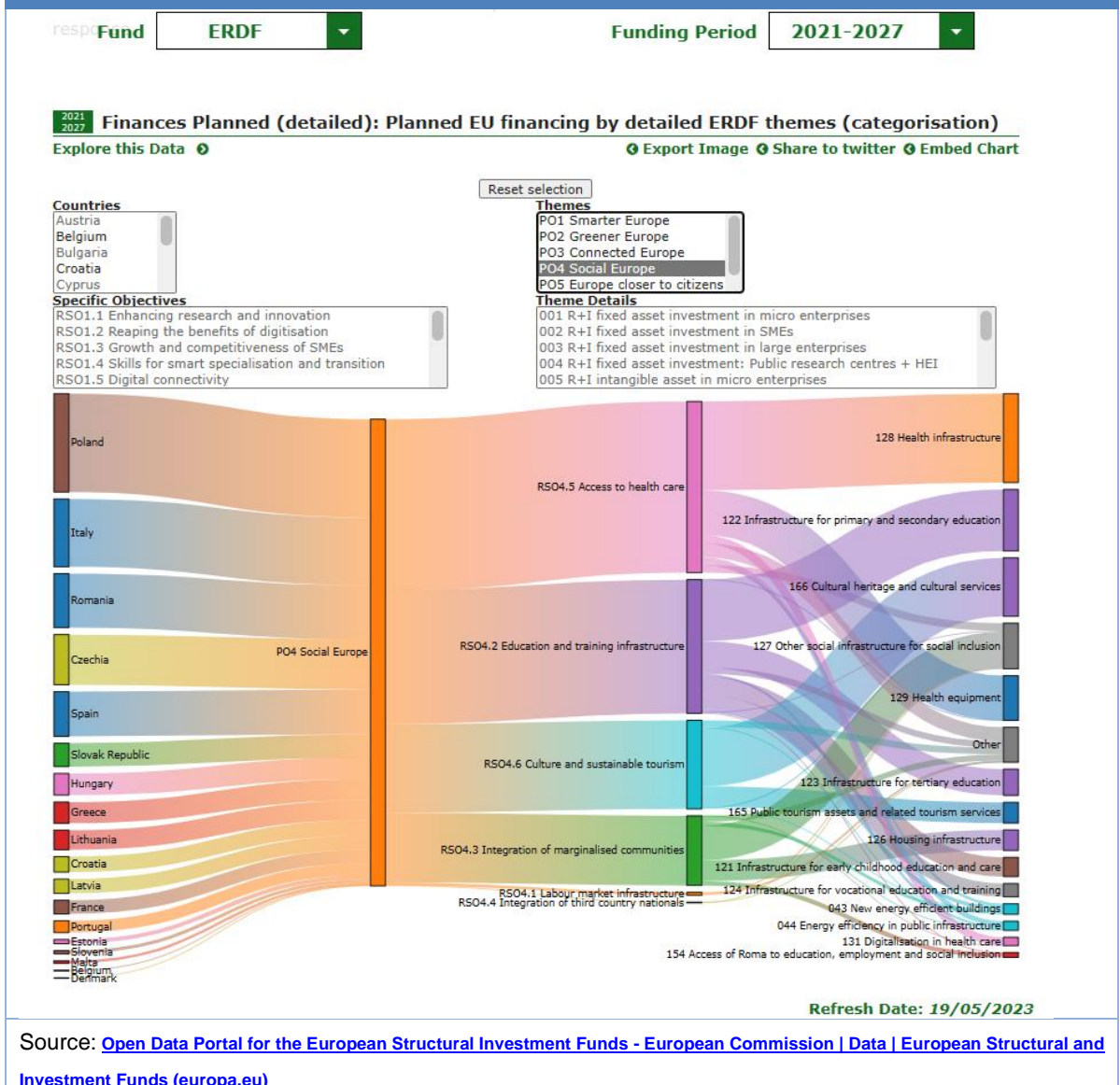
**European Social Fund+** (under Cohesion and Values, Investing in People, Social Cohesion & Values) is the EU's main instrument for investing in people with the aim of building a more social and inclusive Europe with an initial allocation of EUR 98 billion available for the programming period 2021-2027. Under the "More Social and Inclusive Europe" policy objective, it helps people find employment or create businesses, supports disadvantaged groups, improves education and makes public services more efficient. This includes different objectives: Social integration of people at risk; equal access of health; gender balance, job participation; integration of migrants; Integrated development of urban areas[105] Figure 7 illustrates the application of the funds for different allocations under the social Europe theme.

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[105] https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/funds/21-27

## Figure 7 ESF+ funding for Social Europe



Source: Open Data Portal for the European Structural Investment Funds - European Commission | Data | European Structural and Investment Funds (europa.eu)

**Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme**[106] (CERV) (under: Cohesion and Values, Investing in People, Social Cohesion & Values) is dedicated specifically to the protection and promotion of the rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The programme is based on four strands:

1. Equality, Rights and Gender Equality - promoting rights, non-discrimination, equality (including gender equality), and advancing gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming

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106 Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme

2. Citizens' engagement and participation - promoting citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union, exchanges between citizens of different Member States, and raising awareness of the common European history
3. Daphne - fight violence, including gender-based violence
4. Union values - protect and promote Union values

Equality is more related to civic participation than urban projects, as seen in the types of projects funded[107].

**The Just transition fund (JTF)** is a new funding instrument for 2021-2027 with an EU budget of EUR 19.2 billion available for the programming period. It supports the territories most affected by the transition towards climate neutrality. In particular, it will help regions dependent on solid fossil fuels (such as coal, peat and oil shale) and on carbon-intensive industries (such as steel, cement or chemicals) to cushion the socio-economic impacts of their transformation.
Here we note two projects that are linked to the maters of 'equality'[108]:

a. RCO113 Integrated actions for inclusion of marginalised population: Population covered by projects in the framework of integrated actions for socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities, low-income households and disadvantaged groups
b. RCO70 Social Infra: Capacity of social care facilities. The capacity of new or modernised social care facilities (other than housing).

**Horizon Europe**[109] is the EU's 7-year research and innovation programme from 2021 to 2027. The programme is designed to serve all the political priorities of the European Union: scientific, technological, economic, environmental and societal impact; support to all forms of research and innovation**.** Our search has shown that the specific projects that link equality and urban policy are dedicated to transport and mobility. **There are 60 results that link projects to "inclusion" and 32 results of projects which include equality.** Some of them are associated with different population groups, like socio-economic (poverty)[110]. In addition to the Horizon Europe Mission on Climate Neutral Cities should be noted.

> Horizon Europe Mission on Climate -Neutral Cities by 2030, which supports 100 European cities and 12 additional cities from associated countries to become climate neutral by 2030, as hubs of experimentation and innovation for green, digital and inclusive transformations, and lead by example the rest of cities to follow the climate neutrality pathways by 2050.  To support the climate neutrality targets by 2030 , social innovation, citizen engagement, inclusiveness, and equality are promoted,  leaving no one behind and inviting all citizen groups to join the process.

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*107 https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-results;programCode=REC*
*108 https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/funds/jtf/21-27*
*109 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1f107d76-acbe-11eb-9767-01aa75ed71*

*110 An example of this is the project "High reach innovative mobility solutions to cope with transport poverty" link: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/769819 Funded: SOCIETAL CHALLENGES - Smart, Green And Integrated Transport Total cost: € 2 024 875*

**Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund - AMIF**[111] (under: migration and border management, migration) is dedicated specifically to migration, Asylum and Integration; Common European Asylum System; Migration Management; Solidarity. With a total EU Allocation of EUR 9.9 billion, the Fund aims to put in place a fairer and more integrated European approach to manage migration and asylum.

**Next Generation EU**[112], aims to support economic and social opportunities for all, including employment opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as for those living in rural, remote or disadvantaged areas. It aims to support access to decent, adequate housing and invests in inclusive education for children, regardless of their background, situation or special needs.
Link to equality in a broad sense:

- fighting against racism and xenophobia
- promoting gender equality and women's empowerment
- protecting the rights of the LGBTQI+ community and combating discrimination
- strengthening EU law to cover all forms of hate speech and hate crime

The Recovery and Resilience Facility is the key instrument of NextGenerationEU to help the EU emerge stronger and more resilient from the current crisis, thus having the potential to support different aspects of equality post-COVID-19.

**InvestEU**[113] (under: Single Market, Innovation and Digital, European Strategic Investments) provides the EU with crucial long-term funding, crowding in private investment, supporting the recovery and a greener, more digital and resilient Europe. The link to equality is through job creation. In the period between 2021 and 2017, "InvestEU will have a budgetary guarantee of €26.2 billion funded from NextGenerationEU resources and the Multiannual Financial Framework."
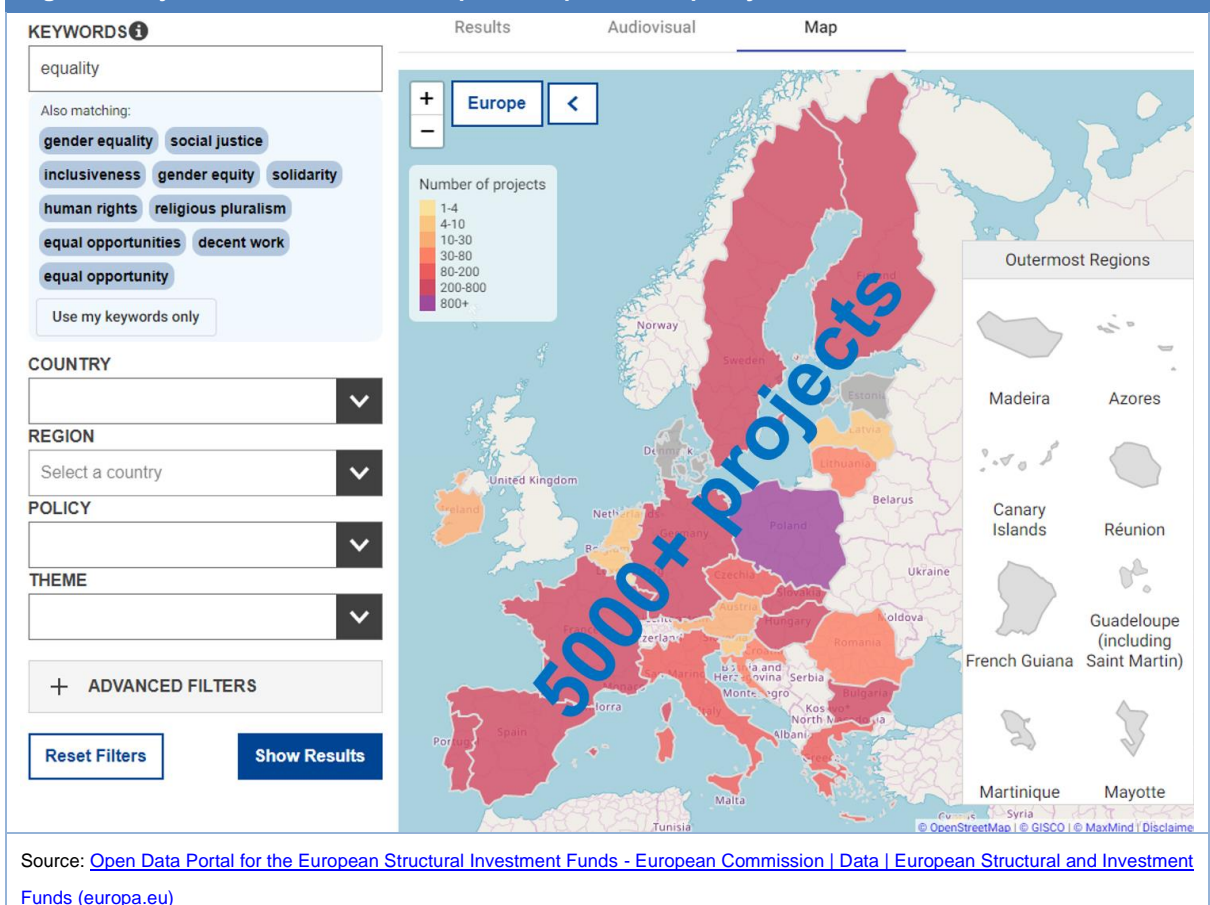
Apart from the large-scale funds noted above, other smaller scale programs support different aspects of equality at different levels national and regional levels. The commitment to 'equality' as a focus for specific population groups, policy aims and or objectives or cross-cutting issues means that a very large number of projects are funded that support some aspect of equality. The Kohesio database search shows over 5000 projects (as noted in **Figure 8**). Among those social inclusion categories include: 1469 projects, with the biggest budget of 65.583651,41 euros on a project on educational access, and the smallest project has a budget of 131,73 euros in Spain "state campaign for equality in socio-occupational relations in the agriculture sector" . Sustainable and quality employment counts 1265 projects, the project with the biggest budget of 95 600 000 euros , and the project with the lowest budget is 1593,38 euros for Digitalisation in personnel and organisational development, among others.

111 https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/funds/amif/21-27
112 NextGenerationEU - europa.eu
113 InvestEU

**Figure 8 Projects funded related to disparate aspects of 'equality'**



Source: Open Data Portal for the European Structural Investment Funds - European Commission | Data | European Structural and Investment Funds (europa.eu)

In addition to the projects noted in the Kohesio database, the projects are also funded under the UIA (see Annex 1), URBACT, and New European Bauhaus, among others. These concretely link with the urban dimensions of equality[114].

The brief review of the funding available to disparate aspects of 'equality' covering social, economic and territorial may give an impression that discrimination and exclusion are matters of the past in Europe. However, recent efforts under the Union of Equality as well as the accounts from the respondents interviewed for this research, indicate differently. There are two main challenges noted.

1. While the funding for equality is available at the member state level, this does not guarantee the cities' access to this funding. Interviewees note, among other issues, potential political tensions between central and local governments may hamper the distribution of funds from the central to the local government levels, among other issues.
2. There is a special concern that small and medium cities less often benefit from funding that the cities themselves can apply for because of different reasons, among them a lack of capacity to apply and manage funds. The interviewees highlighted that the challenges related to equality may be greater there.
3. The competences in policy design related to inclusion and equality are usually at the member state level, while the urban policies are most frequently local. There may be a lack of connection between the two. There may be differences in the competences related to their implementation.

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[114] Due to the extensive volume of the documentation linked to the theme these projects will be noted in the final report only.

At the EU level, the interviewees noted the following challenges related to funding dedicated to relevant aspects of 'equality' in the urban context.

1. There is a lack of impact indicators that could capture/measure the benefits (or lack of thereof) of the funded projects for the specific protected population groups. Therefore, their social impact (including aspects of equality, change in spatial segregation, or quality of life for example) is not known or measured.
2. The funding can be made available based on being aligned with the EU priorities and horizontal principles, of which equality is one of the most important and quoted ones as seen in the overview of the funding available. However, in many cases, there is no requirement to have any specific 'equality strategy'. This means that the potential benefits are not known, measured, or monitored.

## 1.9    Existing and Identified gaps and recommendations (past UAEU Partnerships)

This section focuses on the analysis of the work of the previous UAEU Partnerships that operated in the period between 2016 and 2022 and assesses the relevance of their work for the Cities of Equality theme as well as the gaps that could be addressed considering its strategic framing of the 'Cities of Equality' theme presented earlier in this report.

The analysis is presented in Table 13 and based on the Table of Actions - Update September 2021[115] that summarises 139 actions of 14 Partnerships. The analysis shows that the work of 9 Partnerships and their 43 proposed actions is relevant to the Cities of Equalities theme. This volume is not surprising considering two factors. First, focus on equality is a cross-cutting issue present in the work of the EU Commission and partly expressed in a Pact of Amsterdam[116]. Second, the strategic framing of the Cities of Equalities theme suggests a need for mainstreaming equality (across all grounds of discrimination, see section Who?) in line with the principle of 'leaving no one behind' in the concrete policy domains (see section What? Table 11).

Table 13 shows that the Partnerships actions with the most synergies for the Cities of Equalities theme are: Urban Poverty with 12 linking actions, Housing with 10, Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees with 8, and Security of Public Spaces with 6 relevant actions. The partnership on Climate Adaptation has 3 relevant actions, Urban mobility with 2, Culture and Cultural Heritage 2 and Digital Transition and Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement in cities with one action each.
Considering these results, the future partnership on Cities of Equality may consider **mentorship** from the cities that were key partners or coordinators of the partnerships with the most relevant actions noted: Brussels Capital Region (BE), Ile de France Region (FR) for Urban Poverty[117], City of Vienna for Housing, City of Amsterdam for Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, City of Genoa(IT) for, Climate adaptation and Madrid (ES) Nice (FR) Security of Public Spaces.

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*115 https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/monitoring-actions/monitoring-table/table-actions-update-september-2021?language=fr*

*116 Please note that one of the cross-cutting issues noted in the Pact of Amsterdam is: 12.6 Impact on societal change, including behavioural change, promoting, among other things, equal access to information, gender equality and women empowerment.*

*117 Please note that this is the only partnership where the cities were not coordinators. None the less here we list two city regions that have proven successful in different issues related to inclusion.*

The future Partnership's decision to focus on one or more specific policy domains when mainstreaming equality at the city level (see Table 11) will largely decide which former or present Partnership they should seek to work with specifically.

Even though there are lots of potential synergies to be found with previous partnerships (see Table 13) there remain two key challenges or gaps to be addressed in the future Cities of Equalities Partnership:

1. Addressing equality holistically, on all grounds of discrimination or for all protected population groups rather than focusing on each protected group separately. As Table 13 shows, many relevant actions usually focus on one protected population group while failing to consider their intersectionality. The focus is for instance, on children, Roma, homeless, migrants and refugees, and gender (women) separately. Many of the actions indirectly relate to the socio-economic status but do not explicitly explain what that entails. Some of the actions are more explicit on what types of barriers the noted or assumed population groups face. This means that while the technical recommendations are valuable, they are limited in addressing equality issues holistically. This is something that the new partnership could address, along with being clear on what barriers are tackled for which group.

2. Many of the actions defined by the previous partnerships were based on unexpressed intention or underlining assumption to assist groups that are vulnerable in one way or another, without a clear definition of who these population groups are or what are their specific characteristics (this is a challenge as the needs of the groups may be assumed away). However, there is little indication of who these groups are concretely or why or how they are excluded from some services. For example, a number of Housing Partnership actions note the need to increase the affordable housing provision and supply, but they do not mention how assumed vulnerable groups could access this newly supplied housing. They do not address eligibility criteria for the supplied housing, which means that the challenges of the discriminated population groups may remain unaddressed.

3. The new partnership could also consider mainstreaming equality intersectionality throughout the previous partnerships' actions, especially in the cases that exhibit the above limitations (as noted in points 1 and 2 above). For instance, This could mimic the Union of Equality Task Force's work.

In addition to these two points, Table 13 lists the actions of each partnership whose work is assessed as potentially linking to or relevant to the 'cities of equality' theme. Concrete links and gaps for each relevant action are explained in detail.

| Partn. | Action name | Links and gaps with Cities of Equality |
|---|---|---|
| **Table 13 Relevant actions of the first generation of UAEU Partnerships** | | |
| **Climate adaptation** | **Political training on climate adaptation (BK)** | **Links:** This action presents an indirect link in terms on direct equitable and discrimination actions as it targets the authorities on political training for climate mitigation. **Gaps:** Knowledge and data to ensure the proposed transformation, policy making, and strategy contributes equality and non-discrimination of those most affected by climate change. |
| | **Enhancing stakeholder involvement at regional and local levels. (BK)** | **Links:** Even though climate change doesn't seem to be a direct equality issue, its effects will be and are being felt more by those less privileged and with fewer resources. Hence, this action links to the work on equality and indiscrimination specially in socio-economic terms. **Gaps:** For this reason, the need for knowledge and awareness among stakeholders and citizens on dimensions of equality is essential for better planning and strategy. |
| | **Further engagement of national and sub-national government's associations as key facilitators (and relevant Covenant of Mayors supporters) to best support local authorities in their adaptation process (BK)** | **Links:** This action has an indirect link with the proposed CoE theme as this target the authorities to enhance the climate strategies. **Gaps:** However, the stronger the role of authorities in implementing the policies and their knowledge about equality, the better the strategy and policy making and implementation of climate change and inclusion of equality in these actions. |
| **Housing** | **Guidance on EU regulation and public support for housing (BR)** | **Links:** Housing and its accessibility is link directly to inequalities in socio-economic differences. This action affects directly as it helps people access to proper and better housing. **Gaps:** However, the action does not address the challenges experienced by protected population groups in access to housing. The assumption is a generic vulnerable population, this means that addressing the challenges faced by specific protected groups/grounds of discrimination may be omitted. |
| | **Affordable housing good practice database (BK)** | **Links:** The provision on better knowledge and data on social housing will help directly in the provision of making better affordable housing policies. **Gaps:** However, the action does not address the challenges experienced by protected population groups in access to housing. The assumption is a generic vulnerable population, this means that addressing the challenges faced by specific protected groups/grounds of discrimination may be omitted. |
| | **Policy guidance for the supply of social and affordable housing in Europe (BK)** | **Links:** This action helps to provide the necessary knowledge to help cities and other stakeholders can provide social and affordable housing, being a direct urban action towards equality. **Gaps:** However, the action does not address the challenges related to the eligibility criteria, which may affect some protected groups/grounds of discrimination and hamper their access to provided housing. |

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| | **Exchange programme for urban housing professionals (BK)** | **Links:** The exchange of knowledge in terms of urban housing is a direct action towards developing a more equitable and inclusive city.<br>**Gaps:** However, the action does not address the challenges related to the eligibility criteria, which may affect some protected groups/grounds of discrimination and hamper their access to provided housing. |
| | **Monitoring system for affordable housing in the European Union (BK)** | **Links:** This action has a link to equality and discrimination as it tackles housing proprieties at different level (city, regional, and national) has allows to allocate better housing to people poorer socioeconomic conditions.<br>**Gaps:** However, the action does not address the challenges related to the eligibility criteria, that may affect some protected groups/grounds of discrimination. |
| | **Exchange on affordable housing at Member State level in close cooperation with cities (BK)** | **Links:** Through the provision of better knowledge and data about affordable housing policies and focal points among authorities helps to improve equality urban policies.<br>**Gaps:** However, the action does not address the challenges related to the eligibility criteria, that may affect some protected groups/grounds of discrimination and hamper their access to provided housing. |
| | **Recommendations on improvement of EU urban housing market data (BK)** | **Links:** This action effects the work on equality in cities directly by providing information on housing prices. In this way cities and regions can develop better housing policies to make housing prices and their accessibility reachable.<br>**Gaps:** While there is a potential, there is no direct link developed with spatial segregation that is characteristic for protected population groups. |
| | **Recommendations on improvement of EU gender-poverty-energy nexus data (BK)** | **Links:** Providing better data on gender- energy- poverty and making the link with cities and housing development is crucial to be able to have a more strategic path towards better housing (affordable, social, etc) and create more equal cities.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| | **Recommendations on EU funding of affordable housing (BF)** | **Links:** This action is directly linked to equality as providing affordable housing is a key mean to construct a more equitable society.<br>**Gaps:** However, the action does not address the challenges related to the eligibility criteria, that may affect some protected groups/grounds of discrimination and hamper their access to provided housing. |
| | **Recommendations on Good Housing Policy (BF)** | **Links:** This is a key action as it's recommends a better housing policy taking into account the protection of vulnerable groups, especially lower income population.<br>**Gaps:** While the focus is on socio-economic status, there is no explicit discussion on the holistic dimensions of equality. |
| **Inclusion of migrants and** | **Recommendations on the protection of unaccompanied minors (BR)** | **Links:** This action impacts equality regarding migration, although the connection on urban policies is little as it proposes the protection of unaccompanied minors.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |

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| | **Towards more evidence-based integration policies in cities: setting the agenda, exploring comparable indicators & developing a toolbox for good practice transfer (BR)** | **Links:** This action could affect or be linked with equality in cities with the toolbox as it helps the inclusion of migrants and refugees.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| | **Improving access for cities to EU integration funding (BR)** | **Links:** This action treats directly the improvement of migrants and refugees on cities through urban regulation and changes allowing them more accessibility to funding.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| | **Establishment of an Academy on Integration strategies (BK)** | **Links:** This is a less direct way to promote equality, by engaging and preparing governments to promote integration of migrants.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| | **Establishment of an European Migrant Advisory Board (BK)** | **Links:** As the previous action, this one concentrates on engaging stakeholders and authorities on making the inclusion of migrants and better equality conditions for them through this new inclusive platform. This action contributes to making cities more equal, although the action in not as direct as others.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| | **Establishment of Financial Blending Facilities for cities and SMEs (BR)** | **Links:** This action has a direct action by helping cities to gain more access into direct funds for migrants and refugees.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| | **Improving desegregation policies in European cities (BK)** | **Links:** Through this action there is a direct way that tackles equality with migrants through educational policies and legal amendments that can help the disaggregation of migrants on cities.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| | **Further reinforce the role of Microfinance, for instance through blending (BR)** | **Links:** Even though this particular action is more related to business development, and less to urban development, is still connected to equality and the shift of migrants' segregation by giving better economic opportunities.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| **Urban poverty** | **Transversal Actions – Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Block Grant for Urban Authorities To Fight Poverty (BF)** | **Links:** This action is a cross-cutting action that helps directly to overcome equality and segregation that come from poverty / socio-economic differences through the provision of funding.<br>**Gaps:** Focus on socio-economic aspects only. There is no regard to intersectionality or other dimensions of discrimination. |
| | **Transversal Actions – Setting up an European network of national observatories with experience in urban poverty (BK)** | **Links:** This action can be a cross-cutting action that helps have and get the necessary information to create better policies for fight socio-economic differences and equality.<br>**Gaps:** Focus on socio-economic aspects only. There is no regard to intersectionality or other dimensions of discrimination. |

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| **Transversal Actions – Developing data on urban poverty at EU level (BK)** | **Links:** This action helps to provide necessary and better data on socio-economic differences and poverty, social exclusion, homelessness, which is a key element to have and create better policies and actions tackling inequality and discrimination.<br>**Gaps:** Focus on socio-economic aspects only. There is no regard to intersectionality or other dimensions of discrimination. |
| **Child Poverty – Adoption of a European Child Guarantee (BR)** | **Links:** This is a direct regulatory action towards reducing socio-economic inequalities, particularly helping young population to have better opportunities for the future. This an important action to work and develop equality in cities and, as the action explains, it can "break the cycle".<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| **Child Poverty – Progress towards a directive on investing in children based on the Recommendation Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage (BR)** | **Links:** Like the previous action, this one has a direct effect on regulation helping achieve equality for future generations and breaking disadvantage cycles. Nonetheless is not necessarily link with urban actions.<br>**Gaps:** Focus only on one protected population group. |
| **Regeneration of Deprived Urban Areas and Neighbourhoods – Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Setting up a new Urban Territorial Objective (BF)** | **Links:** This funding action has a direct link with actions targeting equality and cohesion in cities, as it is an action that evolves urban development and territorial space change.<br>**Gaps:** Focus on socio-economic aspects only. There is no regard to intersectionality or other dimensions of discrimination. |
| **Regeneration of Deprived Urban Areas and Neighbourhoods – Cohesion Policy Post 2020: Local Pact for the Regeneration of Urban Deprived Areas (BF)** | **Links:** Like the previous action, this one is a direct economical urban development action. This action propose changes on neighbourhoods to shift socio-economic inequalities and discrimination, working in this way on integrated strategies.<br>**Gaps:** Focus on socio-economic aspects only. There is no regard to intersectionality or other dimensions of discrimination. |
| **Homelessness – Ending homelessness by 2030, through the reform of social inclusion strategies at the national level (BR)** | **Links:** This regulatory action is a direct one towards ending socio-economic inequalities through a specific policy targeting homelessness at a national level.<br>**Gaps:** No regard to causes of homelessness, that may have discrimination as a cause. |
| **Homelessness – Capacity building for the use of the EU funds to end homelessness (BK)** | **Links:** Through building capacity and knowledge , this action fights against socio-economic inequalities by bringing more possibilities to end homelessness.<br>**Gaps:** No regard to causes of homelessness, that may have discrimination as a cause. |
| **Vulnerability of Roma People – Adoption of an integrated Roma framework from a multi-level governance approach (BR)** | **Links:** This action affects directly a vulnerable and discriminated group, like Roma people. In this way this regulatory action helps develops equality policies.<br>**Gaps:** Focus on one protected population sub-group. |

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| | **Vulnerability of Roma People – Strengthening the desegregation principle in EU urban areas (BR)** | **Links:** As the previous action, this one works directly on discrimination and inequality in cities by providing the proper legislation to get the necessary funds to achieve this goal. **Gaps:** Focus on one protected population sub-group. |
| | **Vulnerability of Roma People – Ease cities' access to EU funding in parallel to introducing local ex-ante conditionalities regarding – among others – Roma inclusion (BR)** | **Links:** This action has an effect and can help in working on inclusion of Roma society, working in this way on non-discrimination actions. This one is a direct regulatory action that can develop inclusion and equality targeted policies. **Gaps:** Focus on one protected population sub-group. |
| **Security in Public Spaces** | **Developing a Framework for a Self-Assessment tool dedicated to Urban Authorities (BK)** | **Links:** Changes in public urban spaces and their security helps to access a safe public space. This action helps provide the necessary knowledge and data to make public spaces more secure. **Gaps:** While the action can help promote equality, the focus is anti-terrorism, tackling the root causes of crime and insecurity for the entire population. There is no focus on the issues faced by the protected population groups. |
| | **Recommendations on EU security strategy, multi-level, participatory and innovative governance and funding (BF& BR)** | **Links:** In the same way that the previous action, this one helps to providing the necessary regulation and funding to make changes in cities and make them more secure. **Gaps:** While the action can help promote equality, the focus is anti-terrorism, tackling the root causes of crime and insecurity for the entire population. There is no focus on the issues faced by the protected population groups. |
| | **Evaluate the application of AI inclusive technologies (BR)** | **Links:** As other actions that target security on urban spaces, this one help promote this goal by provide the necessary regulation to better usage on AI technology and the use on cities. **Gaps:** While the action can help promote equality, the focus is anti-terrorism, tackling the root causes of crime and insecurity for the entire population. There is no focus on the issues faced by the protected population groups. |
| | **Develop a capacity building training scheme about integrated sustainable urban security (BK)** | **Links:** This action works directly on providing the necessary knowledge in terms of skills and competences to city stakeholders, to make cities and their public spaces safer. **Gaps:** While the action can help promote equality, the focus is anti-terrorism, tackling the root causes of crime and insecurity for the entire population. There is no focus on the issues faced by the protected population groups. |
| | **Measure the impact of social cohesion and inclusion on security in public spaces of urban and peri-urban areas (BK)** | **Links:** This action works inclusion and equality on urban and peri-urban spaces by providing the knowledge of measuring the impact of social cohesion and inclusion on urban spaces. **Gaps:** There is a need for the desegregation of data based on the protected population groups. |
| | **Develop guidance for architectural spatial design and planning (security by design) (BR)** | **Links:** The same as the previous action, this one could have a direct effect on the work on equality by providing the urban regulatory means to develop better and more secure/ safe urban designs, making in this way a more equal city. **Gaps:** While the action can help promote equality, the focus is anti-terrorism, tackling the root causes of crime and insecurity |

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| | | for the entire population. There is no focus on the issues faced by the protected population groups. |
| Digital transition | Digital Neighbourhood Instrument (BF) | **Links:** Many people need help with accessing and using digital tools and services. In order to facilitate this, the creation of assisted spaces is necessary. Here, trained individuals and sufficient infrastructure should be available to help others with information and advice.<br>**Gaps:** There is no specific link to protected groups/grounds of discrimination this means that the need of some may be ignored. |
| Urban mobility | Reinforcing multi-level cooperation and governance (BK) | **Links:** Transportation and mobility is one of the key elements for people to be included and have a more equitable life conditions.<br>**Gaps:** While the action could help advance equality there is no specific focus on the protected population groups. |
| | Developing guidelines on infrastructure for active mobility supported by relevant funding (BK) | **Links:** Access to good quality and safe mobility services is essential to develop equality in cities, as people in low socio-economic conditions have little access to good transportation, and by consequence having a worse and unequal quality of life.<br>**Gaps:** While the action could help advance equality there is no specific focus on the protected population groups. |
| Innovative and responsible public procurement in | Enabling Sustainable Economic Recovery Through Public Procurement (BK) | **Links:** Sustainable economic recovery through public procurement, including concrete activities that can be undertaken by the public authorities to stimulate and to recover economy; good practices will be identified and published.<br>**Gaps:** While the action could help advance equality there is no specific focus on the protected population groups. |
| Culture and Cultural Heritage | Raise Awareness for Public Libraries and their new Tasks on a European and National Level | **Links:** Culture is an important aspect in tackling exclusion. The local and national public libraries are locus of culture. The objective of this action is to involve public libraries in European policies, programs and initiatives and to help them, not only financially, to be places for the entire European society and key institutions for democratic participation.<br>**Gaps:** While the action could help advance equality there is no specific focus on the protected population groups. |
| | Local Cultural Services Fostering Social Inclusion: Identification of Cities' Research Needs and Peer Learning | **Links:** The improvement of the local cultural policies is key to advancing inter-cultural understanding, and thus promoting inclusion and preventing exclusion and discrimination. The Action is aimed at identifying cities' specific research needs to guarantee that the results of these research projects are used at the local level to improve cultural policies, to contribute to the overall reinforcement of cultural offers in European cities.<br>**Gaps:** While the action could help advance equality there is no specific focus on the protected population groups. |

Note: BR – Better Regulation; BK – Better Knowledge; BF – Better Funding
Source: Analysis by Dr Orna Rosenfeld, EAA Cities of Equality expert.
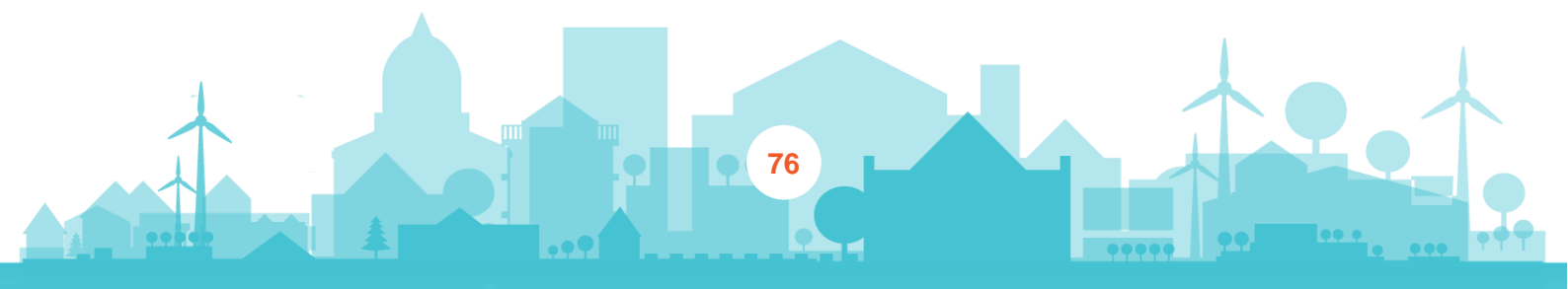
## 1.10  Trends and Evidence about EU cities

This section provides a brief overview of the types of available evidence and scientific expertise coming from a number of relevant data platforms, including Urban Data Platform+, which includes *Future of cities,* and other key platforms such as Eurostat and Kohesio. The first provides tools for developing better policies at the city and regional levels; Eurostat provides data necessary to do so, while Kohesio provides information on projects funded by the Cohesion Policy.  As shown in the previous sections, the 'Cities of Equality' is a complex and innovative theme that brings together two perspectives. The first one focuses on the grounds of discrimination (or protected population groups, see section Who?) and the second on the concrete policy domains (see What?). The literature review conducted for this research indicates that research data exists for each of the protected population groups (or grounds of discrimination)[118], while each of the policy domains listed in $\mathrm{Table\ 11}$ is a field of research in itself (take for instance, Housing or Environmental Justice among 24 noted). This high interest highlights the relevance and importance of the Cities of Equality topic. However, this also means that it is out of the scope of this EAA to review all evidence available for all grounds of discrimination or potential policy domains is far out of the scope of EAA. However, it is possible to provide the future partnership an overview of the relevant EU data bases as well as their content so that when the partnership decides on the specific actions to define it can use the data and research available to establish an evidence-based perspective-taking into consideration urban challenges and territorial specifications of the theme.

Here we have more detailed information on the types of data these data sources provide:

- The Urban Data Platform Plus

The Urban Data Platform Plus provides information at different scales - city, province, region or country - covering socio-economic and environmental indicators.  The platform analyses different themes trying to "make sense of the different data" transforming data mapping into multi-dimensional analysis at those different levels.

Within Urban Data Platform Plus, a page dedicated to  "Future of Cities" can be found, as highlighted report by the platform. This report highlights drivers shaping the urban future, identifying both the key challenges cities will have to address and the strengths they can capitalise on to build their desired futures proactively. This one provides an analysis at the regional and urban level and in some individual cases at a neighbourhood level (like the case of *"Box 12 Integrated policies for neighbourhood regeneration")*. The section provides a clear link between equality and urban policies, understanding that urban policies can make a difference when working for equality. it presents information on mobility, affordable housing, provision of services, and social segregation, looking at different population groups: age, migration, poverty (socio-economic differences), cultural and ethnic. Future of cities introduces different concepts as "invisible segregation" (in this report's context, urban segregation i*s an unequal distribution of different social groups in the urban space, based mainly on occupation, income and education, as well as on gender and ethnicity).*

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[118] This does not mean that the data is sufficient or available on the needed scale.

Within the same data platform, in the section thematic analysis, it is also possible to find reports dealing with a) Sustainable Urban Development Strategies and the integration of migrants in Functional Urban Areas[119], b) Homelessness in EU cities and towns before and during the COVID Pandemic[120] c) A methodology for city Labs[121], d) the accessibility to urban amenities by older residents within European Cities[122] and d) A number of Policy Briefs, covering aspects of interest for cities such as cities for the digital age, shrinking cities etc.

Finally, in the Urban Data platform plus page dedicated to the Localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there are publications dealing with a) the monitoring of slums and informal settlements in Europe through geospatial and earth observation techniques [123] b) How European cities make the Leave no One Behind principle operational in their mission statements, policies and budgets[124].

- STRAT-BOARD

A platform developed by the JRC provides an environment where scholars/policy makers can find information on Sustainable Development Strategies targeting directly cities, FUAs, and Regions with the detail also of the thematic objectives of the funding. Among the many thematic objectives, there are a number linked to equality, such as "Social Inclusion, poverty and discrimination".

- The fit for Future Platform (RegHub subgroup)

This data platform provides a tool to create and develop better policies at a regional and city level. Even though this is not specifically linked to equality or urban policies, it provides an important tool providing evidence for policy making. The Fit for Future Platform is a high-level expert group that will help the Commission in its efforts to simplify EU laws and to reduce related unnecessary costs. Within this platform, exists the new generation of its Regional Hubs Network (RegHub). Its members monitor the implementation of EU policies on the ground and ensure that the voices of hundreds of regional and local stakeholders are considered when these policies are evaluated at the European level. This hub works at the city, local/ municipal, regional and national levels, helping to establish good practice implementation at the EU level by providing a network of local and regional stakeholders.

- Eurostat

This data base explained the stats at a EU, from a national, regional, and at times city level. Among others, the data base covers the issue of equality, especially gender, disability, migration and poverty. It focuses on available data based on a population group. In terms of urban policy, data on housing indicators is available in this platform.

- Kohesio

Kohesio data base allows to look at all national, regional, and local projects supported by Cohesion Policy funds, including on theme related to equality such as Sustainable and quality employment, social

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[119] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC127151
[120] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC129384
[121] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC130471
[122] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC126033
[123] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC130204
[124] https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/beyond-behind-along-how-european-cities-make-leave-no-one-behind-principle-operational_en

inclusion, and REACT EU support. This covers different population groups such as sexual orientation, Age, Disability, Gender, Race and Ethnic Origin, Religion or belief, Socio-Economic Status (poverty), migration, and different projects at the EU level.

Looking at these data sources and their coverage of equality, many different population groups appeared: age, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender, migration, poverty or socio-economic differences, horizontal issues, or *intersectionality*, among others. The most mentioned regarding the number of projects noted on their website, programs, stats, etc, are gender, migration, and poverty or socio-economic differences. This is based on reading and researching each of the data sources. In the case of the Future of Cities platform, the data works on the link between cities and urban policies with equality, understanding that these policies can make a difference on equality. However, the platform looks to certain population groups: gender, poverty or socio-economic differences, and age, as these are the ones mentioned on platforms and projects. Furthermore, there is a clear weight disequilibrium regarding the presence of certain population groups in the general discourse and initiatives, programs, and action plans, which is shown in the available data.

A clear example of this is that no platform talks about sexual identity. The same happens with intersectionality, which is also less covered and considered. This aspect, in particular, is key to understanding and developing equality actions and policies, as the more precise and defined this is, the better the quality of the policy.

| Table 14 Review of the data sources relevant for the theme | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Name of the data source** | **Type of the data available** | **Scale on which data is available** | **Comments** |
| **The Urban Data Platform** | Population type: Age, Disability, Gender, Race and Ethnic Origin, Religion or Belief, Socio-Economic Status (poverty), migration. <br><br> Urban characteristics related to equality: urban space, housing, mobility, access to services, digitalisation | Neighbourhood, city, province, region or country | The information is relatively comprehensive and provides data at different levels. Nonetheless, some population groups are not covered (LGBT IQ). |
| **The fit for Future Platform** | Population type: none <br><br> Equality data: no equality data specific <br><br> Urban characteristics related to equality: nothing | Local/ municipal, city, regional, national | The platform provides data to create a network of stakeholders, giving them regional and local contact. |

| Eurostat | Population type: Eurostat includes most of the equality terms, except for sexual identity.<br><br>Equality data: provides information on gender, age, and migration.<br><br>Urban characteristics related to equality: housing, transportation, living conditions | City( for some items), Regional, National, EU. | Covers data on the protected population groups but not all (eg, not information on sexual orientation). |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kohesio | Population data types: Sexual orientation, Age, Disability, Gender, Race and Ethnic Origin, Religion or belief, Socio-Economic Status (poverty), migration<br><br>Equality data: Sustainable and quality employment, social inclusion, REACT EU program | City, Regional, National, EU. | The database provides data on the projects funded by the Cohesion Policy Funds. Over 5000 projects are identified under the keyword 'equality'. However, it is not clear what the benchmarks are for it. |
| Source: multiple sources. | | | |

Equality is undoubtedly a cross-cutting issue that touches traversal programs and different sectors, and many initiatives have been carried out to work against inequalities and towards inclusion and equality. Nonetheless, the data collection and creation, from a qualitative and quantitative point of view, are still missing to understand the general picture of 'equality', and assess or monitor it. From a quantitative perspective, there are the following challenges to be noted:

1. **Legal or confidentiality issues related to collecting protected population groups data**: There is a lack of data for specific population groups as in some countries, there are legal constraints to collecting and sharing certain information. (For instance, in some countries, it is forbidden to collect information on religion).

2. **Limited data on the city level**: there is a general lack of data on the city level in terms of the percentage of the protected population groups in the localities, their spatial location (and concentration), incl. spatial segregation, data on challenges related to exclusion and inclusion at the local level, data on the successful initiatives to tackle exclusion or move toward equality is not always accessible among other issues.

3. **Lack of data on the urban characteristics at the city level that would enable inclusion** (for example urban adjustments made for disability). There is little information and work on some protected groups/grounds of discrimination, such as sexual orientation, creating an unbalanced situation regarding information and possible interventions to address their challenges.

4. **Lack of methods to monitor progression towards equality when equality is stated in the projects either as a goal or a cross-cutting issue.**

Qualitatively speaking, data need to be collected, treated, and process differently, so it can provide more accurate and useful information for the cities to progress towards equality. One good example of how this can be achieved is presented in the Thematic toolkit: Building a 'city for all'[125] designed in case of migrants as a protected population group for local governments and particularly smaller local administrations as well as for partners such as NGOs. However, there are still limitations to the implementation of these types of best practices, and a number of challenges prevail. For this interim report, we highlight three points:

1. **Lack of participation of the protected groups in urban planning and access to basic services.** In order to understand and take into consideration the barriers protected population groups face at the city level as well as the opportunities they see for inclusion and equality locally the engagement with these groups and their participation in the urban development process is necessary. However, this qualitative element that is essential to updating urban transformation and development practices is still very limited or for some population groups (and some localities), missing.
2. **Updating of urban and architectural codes used locally based on the presence and issues concerning protected population groups.** The acknowledgement and participation of the protected population groups should ideally lead to updating and modifying the urban planning and architectural design codes to reflect the needs of the local population in that locality. Clearly, this is challenging in cases challenges presented in point 1 prevail.

Although we can see that many programs are being created and significant efforts are made regarding the inclusion of selected protected population groups, there are still significant gaps in data to be addressed. These findings are corroborated by the results of the interviews conducted for this research. We can see a tendency and requirements for equality to be more present in disparate programs or/and initiatives. This shows the strong relevance of the 'cities of equality' as a theme. The challenges related to data presented in this section present an opportunity for the partnership to design actions that would contribute the better knowledge aspects of the subject.

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[125] https://inclucities.eu/images/Toolkits/inclucitiestoolkits-2EN.pdf?utm_content=buffer561e7&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

# C.1. Recommendations

## 1.11  Deliver recommendations to help interpret and focus the thematic scope of the theme

According to the assessment of the UAEU conducted in 2019 by the European Commission, while 'the high degree of flexibility and experimentation that characterised the first phase of the UAEU was necessary to get the TPs 'off the ground', 'the balance needs to shift towards greater clarity and transparency, even if this is at the expense of a certain amount of flexibility'[126]. While flexibility remains a guiding principle in the design of new thematic partnership, the issue of 'clarity' is of high importance in the case of the 'Cities of Equality' theme that is broad, complex, and highly innovative.

With regards to the balance between 'flexibility' and 'clarity', the stakeholders interviewed for this research fall into two groups. First is the group that wishes to keep the theme broad in order to allow flexibility for future partntership work. Second, the group wishes to see the concrete actions defined for the partnership at this early stage. To progress towards the theme's interpretation and focus, the EAA assessment's author took a strategic approach to analyse and interpret the theme to the extent possible in the EAA framework.

In Chapter A, it has been highlighted that the phrase 'Cities of Equality' does not appear in the academic and policy literature, nor is it used as a whole phrase (with mutual understanding) by the stakeholders interviewed for this research.

The preliminary articulation of the theme required an in-depth analysis of not one (for a standard UAEU partnership, e.g. Housing), but two bodies of work: legal (equality and protected population groups) and policy (urban themes with equality as an ambition)) as described in detail in the sections: *(1) The term 'Equality' in the EU, member states and international legislative context (2) The term 'Equality' in the EU and international policy context and link to the urban dimensions*.

Section *Towards the interpretation of the theme 'Cities of Equality' for the UAEU context provided an* initial scoping of the theme, highlighting the common points (and ambitions) between two bodies of knowledge and answering three questions: Where? Who? And What? These provide an initial scoping of the theme.

- **The section Where?** provided clarification as to the scale of the analysis for the future Partnership, by providing the definition of the term 'cities' as a LAU (Local Administrative Unit) or all sizes.

- **The section Who?** provided clarifications as to the protected population groups the Partnership work will concern (age, disability, gender, sexual orientation (LGBTIQ), religion

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[126] European Commission et al 2019 quoted in https://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/sites/default/files/2022-10/EAA%20Report%20Sustainable%20Tourism.pdf

and belief, race & ethnic origin (incl. country of origin). It highlighted that instead of focusing on each population group separately, an intersectional approach mirroring policy ambitions of 'leaving no one behind' should be adopted.

- **The section What?** mapped the policy domains where the ambitions related to 'equality' have been highlighted by the EAA stakeholders. A total of 24 such domains have been identified. In order to help narrow down the choices of policy domains highlighted by EAA stakeholders, a strategic decision has been made to cross-reference these with the most quoted 'urban expressions of exclusions' in the Union of Equality documents related to specific population groups (          ). These are:

     - **Housing** (including access to adequate, supported, affordable housing, homelessness)
     - **Accessibility** (Universal Design)
     - **Urban mobility and transportation** (access and accessibility)
     - **Public spaces** (access and accessibility)
     - **Tackling spatial segregation at the city and neighbourhood levels** (Territorial dimension of social exclusion)
     - **Access to services**
     - **Digital transition** (as the means for access to services)
     - **Inclusive labour markets** (including green and digital transition)

While it will be up to the future partnership to decide which policy domains (noted in Table 11 ) they wish to focus on (based on the expertise and priorities of its prospective members), the value that this EAA brings is the practical and clear scoping of the meaning of the term 'equality' (based on the EU and MS law that has provisions for fairness, equity and justice) and the manner of approaching it and the scale of the future focus.

Furthermore, to progress towards the future focus of the CoE theme, the author of this EAA assessment took a strategic approach to identify, map and analyse key challenges related to legal and/or policy work (at EU, MS and city scales) reported by the EAA stakeholders, and translate these into sub-themes (potential actions) systematized in three UAEU categories: Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge. The recommendations are provided in the three tables below. They answer to the question How?.

**Regarding the recommendations for the next steps, a working definition of the theme 'Cities of Equality' should be considered and potentially chosen based on the Partners' choice of the policy domains to focus on.**

| Table 15 Sub-themes for Better Regulation | |
|---|---|
| **Sub-theme** | **Reasoning/Relevant Regulation** |
| 1. **Mainstreaming equality in the existing policy areas** | Equality is a goal shaped through non-discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation (LGBTIQ), religion and belief, race & ethnic origin and others. To achieve it, equality mainstreaming is the incorporation of a focus on equality, non-discrimination and diversity into all legislation, policies and programmes designed and developed at all levels and at all stages of the planning process, and into the policies, procedures and practices of all institutions involved in the design and delivery of public sector policies and programmes.<br><br>The key policy domains of interest to the EAA stakeholders are noted in Table 11 (shortlist available above). They present a choice for focus for the future partnership under this sub-theme/action. |
| 2. **Implementation of the available regulation at the city level** | While a comprehensive set of regulations for 'equality and non-discrimination' are available at the EU and MS levels, their full implementation at the local or city level remains a key challenge.<br><br>The partnership could consider improving the implementation of the existing regulation (see Table 6, Table 7, Table 8, Table 9) at the city level. |
| 3. **Development of concrete equality strategies for the EU policies** | The EU policies note ambitions to achieve equality (incl. equitable, fair or just results) while leaving no one behind. While there is adherence to horizontal rules, the equality perspective of concrete strategies relevant to the urban context (including action plans and monitoring) could be better and more concretely reinforced. Furthermore, the existing strategies under the Union of Equality could in turn, further strengthen their urban perspective, building on the already recognised importance of cities and local authorities in addressing inequalities.<br><br>The concrete action could include mainstreaming equality in the urban policy areas of choice by the Partnerships (the policy areas relevant to the EAA stakeholders are noted in Table 11). |
| 4. **Development of concrete equality strategies at the city level** | While considered at the EU and MS levels, equality is ultimately achieved (or not) at the city level.<br>In order to ensure progress towards equality ambitions for all (while leaving no one behind), the cities need concrete equality strategies that address their urban policies and interventions. This includes considerations of the equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. |
| 5. **Developing system-level coherence between social and urban policies** | Social policies (addressing various aspects of equality and non-discrimination) are often designed at the national level, while city development (and urban development) are local competencies. There is a need for developing system-level coherence between social and urban policies at the city levels (this includes identifying and addressing bottlenecks). |
| 6. **Coordination (vertical)** | The regulations and policies relevant to the 'Cities of Equality' theme are designed at the EU, national, regional and local levels. It is important to improve the coordination and collaboration between the EU, MS, regional and local levels to deliver the best results (in the policy areas of the future Partnership's choice).<br>It is relevant to look at every government layer to understand the perspectives and identify potential bottlenecks to devise concrete strategies for improving coordination. |

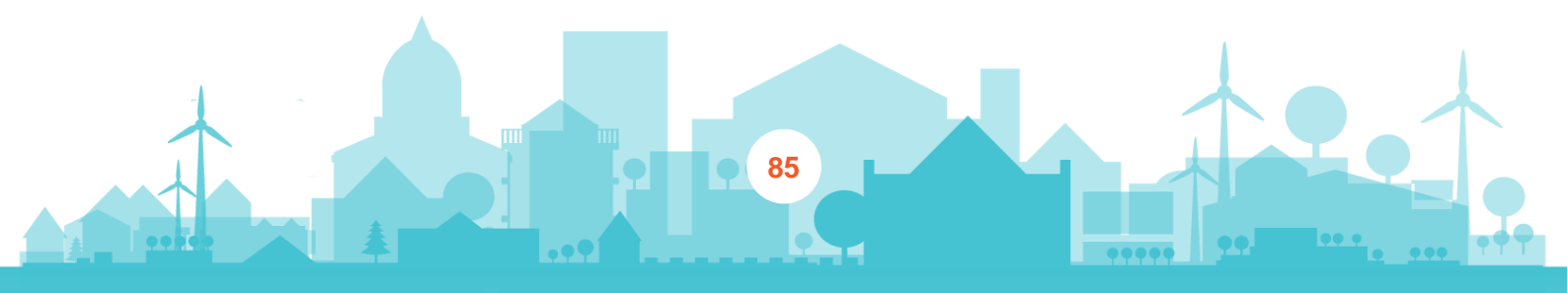| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7. | **Coordination (horizontal)** | The horizontal coordination also called a 'whole government approach,' is essential to consider. It is vital to deliver coordinated interventions with the capacity to ensure that the urban interventions at the city level provide equitable outcomes and remove barriers (be it physical or societal).<br><br>This involves horizontal coordination within departments of local public authorities (eg. Addressing challenges related to internal coordination within urban authorities in implementing integrated solutions including equality, social inclusion and the fight against discrimination, among other issues).<br><br>It also includes the coordination between sectors (private, public and civil society) and disciplines (social and urban). This includes social economy businesses operating at the local level. |
| 8. | **Participation and engagement of the protected population groups in local life and the** decision-making **processes** | One of the key challenges to understanding the challenges and needs the protected population groups at the local level face is the insufficient stakeholder engagement and lack of capacity to use quadruple helix in addressing equality challenges. This involves both analogue and (increasingly) digital participation methods.<br><br>Strategies to involve protected population groups/grounds in the decision-making and shaping of urban environments are the key. These strategies should take an intersectional approach while ensuring no one is left behind. This includes both analogue and digital involvement. |
| 9. | **Capacity Building** | While the ambitions to advance 'equality' in cities may be present, the city administration often lacks capacity (including resources) and expertise at an urban level. This is especially true with the innovative approaches to equality, such as intersectionality and their mainstreaming into concrete urban policy spheres and areas.<br><br>City-level equality initiatives and projects could be increased through capacity building and technical assistance to project implementers, especially at the local level – local governments. This could involve developing toolkits, workshops, peer to peer learning, among other issues and using Cohesion Policy funding available for capacity building and technical assistance. |
| Source: Author's analysis conducted for Cities of Equalities EAA | | |

| Table 16 Sub-themes for Better Knowledge | |
|---|---|
| Sub-theme | **Reasoning** |
| 1. **Best Practices Database** | The best practices are an important source of information and inspiration for cities and other stakeholders. However, in the case of the 'Cities of Equality', the information about the best practices (on different initiatives promoting equality in cities) on design, process and implementation is still missing.<br><br>A centralised best practices database on the aspects of equality of cities chosen by the future Partnership would be of great benefit. The database could be accompanied by guidance and toolkits inspired by this knowledge.<br><br>Such a database could build on the existing compendium of EU Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity, Access City Awards, and other fora where good examples have been collected.<br><br>As part of this sub-theme, members should agree on a benchmark for good practices' quality, grounded in relevant legal and policy frameworks included in this report. |
| 2. **Toolkits for implementing the intersectional approach to mainstreaming equality in urban dimensions at the city level** | An intersectional approach to equality appears to be a promising way to progress towards 'leaving no one behind' ambitions expressed in the EU, MS and local policy sphere (especially considering concrete urban interventions and themes). However, the skills to implement this approach are still limited.<br><br>Toolkits for implementing the intersectional approach and mainstreaming equality in urban policies, practices and implementation (of the choice of the partnership) at the city levels would be of great value. |
| 3. **Peer-to-peer learning and exchange** | Encouraging collaboration and knowledge-sharing - exchange of best practices, innovative solutions, and lessons learned among cities are of great importance. This can contribute to more effective and impactful projects in the long run, and boost innovative approaches and out of box thinking on the local level, driven by local governments. |
| 4. **Addressing challenges related to 'equality' related data collection of data** | Data collection at the EU, national and city levels has different issues. The challenges also depend on the context and locality. There is a need to comprehensively work on data collection at different levels and address challenges related to the collection of population and other data (considered sensitive information, or in case of hard-to-reach/identification population groups).  This is especially important if the cities are to devise concrete strategies that equitably inform their urban interventions. |
| 5. **Collection of qualitative data from the population groups** | At the city and neighbourhood level, it is important to map and understand the barriers protected population groups face as well as their needs to address them and incorporate them in urban policy, planning and implementation to remove barriers and address those needs. Opinions of people and how they experience discrimination not only matter but are the critical information currently missing to update the urban and architectural codes to serve all populations equitably.  The methods for their collection are the key. |
| 6. **Spatial data collection** | To address the issues related to spatial segregation (among others), it is important to develop a systematic approach to spatial information pertaining to disparate equality issues. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7. | **Collection of data on urban features** and amenities **enabling equality** | There is a need for data on the characteristics of the urban environment, physical, digital services and amenities (Eg. in the case of accessibility, the types of buses equipped to take on people with reduced mobility, accessible housing, public spaces and leisure services (eg. pools) etc), they availability, distribution and accessibility for the protected populations. At the micro level, the availability of infrastructure of services is key to devising urban developments that reduce inequalities and promote equality. |
| 8. | **Collection of data over time to assess the results of equality strategies and their implementation at the city level** | The investment in equality should result in the improvement of life opportunities and outcomes over time. However, this aspect is not sufficiently captured in the data. The vulnerable populations are invested in (at a point in time), but there is rarely a follow-up to see what these investments have resulted in. Collecting data over time to assess the results of equality strategies and their implementation at the city level is crucial to learn about the effectiveness of the urban interventions that have equality as one of their ambitions. |
| 9. | **Measuring progress, monitoring and** impact **evaluation** | Measuring progress, monitoring implementation and evaluating the impact of urban interventions with equality as one of their ambitions is still limited. It is needed at the EU, MS and city levels for the UAEU partnership on Cities of Equality.<br><br>it would be interesting to see what cities are doing, and how they are measuring their progress in equality, improving social inclusion, or reducing social inequalities. |
| 10. | **Develop indicators (Cohesion Policy)** | There is a lack of indicators in territorial development, specifically for the social groups. For instance, the urban strategies do not have to mention the vulnerable or protected groups. In the case of the Cohesion policy supporting territorial development initiatives, the population disaggregated indicators are limited, as impact indicators on issues like improvement of the quality of life in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.<br><br>Development, suggestions and/or examples of indicators that could be used in the next regulation is still something the Partnership could work on more concretely. |
| 11. | **Research clusters and academic research for regional and city scales** | A cluster is a competitive alliance of businesses in a certain sector that jointly come together to improve locally relevant research and intelligence. Local clusters can pull resources to carry out research in an area. The academic research dimension might be quite valuable for evidence-based policy-making and collecting data at the local level. This is one of the key challenges that cities face - a lack of evidence in order to create better policies. |

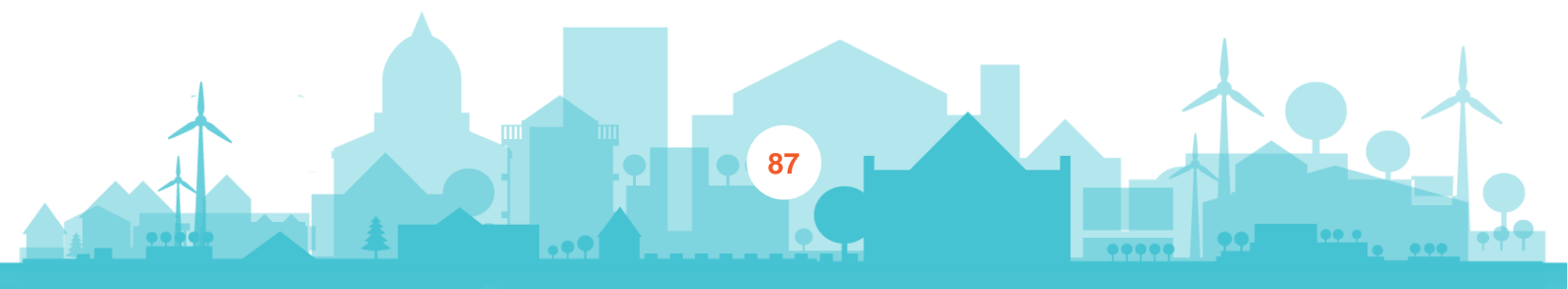Source: Authors analysis conducted for Cities of Equalities EAA

| Table 17 Sub-themes for Better Funding | |
|---|---|
| **Sub-theme** | **Reasoning/Funding Program** |
| 1. **Developing the capacity to access and manage EU funding** | While the funding at the EU level may be available for various issues linked to reaching equality ambitions (as noted in the report), the capacities are sometimes lacking to access and use this funding. It is important to develop capacity at the member states as well as local levels (especially in the case of cities, including small and medium-size cities) to access and use the available funding. The possibilities should be explored under the Cohesion Policy technical assistance for funding and guidance provided to be used at a larger scale. |
| 2. **Information about what is funded in terms of equality (and related ambitions)** (Cohesion Policy) | The EU funding is available to EU MS only for the proposed interventions that are aligned with horizontal principles for equality, non-discrimination, accessibility etc. However, there is a lack of indicators on how the funding once received at the MS level is used, what population groups benefit from it, and how. Information about what is funded in this aspect and the indicators are important to address. The Partnership could work on this topic in view of the post-2027 Cohesion Policy Proposal. |
| 3. **Addressing bottlenecks in access to funding** | Access to funding for cities, especially medium and small cities, should be addressed. This may require the examination of the competencies at the national and city-level competencies, bottlenecks related to the distribution of funds from the MS to its cities, and devising strategies for addressing these issues. |
| 4. **ERDF and ESF+** | The ways to improve funding provisions under ERDF and ESF+ is an issue that the partnership could work on concretely. |
| 5. **Innovative funding and finance at the EU level** | The partnership could explore alternative avenues for funding through grants, loans and other types of finance with European Investment and Development Banks. For example. The EIB and CEB banks are already involved in the examination of this type of finance for other partnerships (eg. Housing, Migrants and Refugees), and can blend financing for long-term financing of social infrastructure. Exploring alternative sources beyond EC funds would be of great value and benefit for progressing towards 'Cities of Equality' ambitions. |
| 6. **Cluster alliances** and i**nvestment at the city level** | Transitions and transformations require a change of practices across the board and are costly. However, they are ultimately a local affair. <br><br> The city is a very interesting scale to focus on because it can pull different actors together around the table (in the form of a cluster alliance, for example). It can bring them together to invest jointly in the local area where they are rooted to deliver complex changes that require specific focus on specific urban intervention and equality in process and outcome for different protected population groups. In addition to the above, there are other great opportunities at the city level for innovative approaches to funding (i.e crowdfunding, PPP) and scaling up funding solutions. |
| Source: Authors analysis conducted for Cities of Equalities EAA | |

## 1.12 Identify the most suitable form of multi-level cooperation

Termed 'multi-level governance in action' the Urban Agenda for the EU developed an innovative governance method in the form of the UAEU Partnerships[127]. The UAEU partnerships bring together the representatives of the EU institutions, member states, cities and other (Partnership theme relevant) stakeholders to bring about better regulation, funding and knowledge for each UAEU Partnership theme. Some Member States have been inspired by the Urban Agenda for the EU and applied similar approaches at the national and/or regional level[128], while the *Review of the contributions of the Urban Agenda for the EU to the New Urban Agenda*[129] recommended the UAEU multi-level cooperation method developed by first 14 UAEU partnerships (2016-2021) as one of the key transferable lessons in the context of the international development.

In 2021, the Ljubljana agreement and the MaWP[130] introduced the possibility of considering 'other forms of cooperation' (OFC). This said the lack of previous experience with OFC within the UAEU suggests caution in pursuing this option in the case of the 'Cities of Equality' theme.

**The EAA Cities of Equality analysis points out that the UAEU proposed Partnership governance structure is the most appropriate form of multi-level cooperation in the case of the 'cities of equalities' theme.** Two key arguments support this recommendation:

1. **The need to establish better vertical and horizontal coordination between the stakeholders** at the EU, MS, regional and city levels (and other stakeholders) to ensure the implementation of the equality and non-discrimination legislation and the proactive creation of the environment for equality supports this recommendation strongly. Within the tried-out UAEU partnership governance structure, future partnership members will be able to advance the UAEU aims and objectives and experiment with better coordination in a neutral setting.

2. **The complexity and the level of innovation required from the future members to implement the theme will require a tested-out governance structure.** When considering the implementation of this partnership, it is essential to rely on the structure of governance that has been tested to focus the partners' and coordinators' efforts on thematic innovation (rather than experimentation in organisational typology as well). Experimentation at both ends may render the Partnership, a pilot with highly uncertain outcomes.

However, it is essential not to disregard the possibility of innovation. In the context of the 'Cities of Equality' future partnership, two possible innovations could be considered to facilitate the inclusion of small and medium-sized cities and facilitate the work of the future partnership (enhancing its working method).

1. **Involvement of the small and medium-sized cities:** There are two challenges that respondents have noted as potential reasons for the lack of participation of small and

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[127] https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/library/online-brochure-urban-agenda-eu-multi-level-governance-action-has-new-revised-version

[128] *https://www.citiesforum2023.eu/docs/Urban/Urban%20Agenda%20for%20the%20EU%20-%20Brochure%202021.pdf*

[129] *Rosenfeld, O. et al. (2021) Review of the contributions of the Urban Agenda for the EU to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, European Commission, Brussels.*

[130] https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/Multiannual%20Working%20Programme%20UAEU%202022-2026.pdf

medium-sized cities: First is the limited or lack of budget for voluntary work and travel costs required for the work in the UAEU partnership, second is the language barrier (as the personnel in the small and medium cities may not be speaking English required for the work in the EU context).

These challenges could be overcome with a **city network package membership** approach to UAEU partnership composition[131]. This would mean that each city selected to become a partnership member would form a small network of smaller cities from their own country (e.g. 3 to 5 small cities) to liaise and work throughout the UAEU partnership work. While the official UAEU member city would participate in all the meetings and work of the partnership like in the past partnerships, they would also have their own meetings with their small national city network. These mini networks attached to me official members of the partnership could also enrich the input into the overall work of the partnership and provide special insight into the challenges and opportunities of equality in small cities. Regarding logistics, the small towns would work with the official UAEU members in their local language and participate in meetings online rather than in person, for example.

2. **Establishment of the working sub-groups within the partnerships to tackle the thematic packages of their interest and deep expertise**. While the further scoping of the 'Cities of Equality' thematic area will certainly go through a further focus during the orientation phase, the theme is still expected to remain complex and wide in its coverage. This means that it is not expected that all of the Partnership members will have the expertise in all themes covered by the partnership work nor time to tackle them all. **A sub-group working approach could be a solution to this.** The author's support of the UAEU Housing Partnership (2015-2018) resulted in the institutionalisation of the sub-group working approach that consisted of establishing three sub-groups of 9 to 10[132] partners to work on a package of specific sub-themes of the partnership and define the concrete actions related to these (for more information see: Rosenfeld (2017) [133]). The sub-groups also functioned as peer review groups to one another, where each sub-group would present their work to the other two for feedback. In addition to focusing on the specific theme, this approach can also be deployed when there is a need for a specific and targeted approach, for example, when the sub-topic requires a quicker response or targeted delivery.

## 1.13 Recommend the timing for successful implementation

Timing is vital for the successful implementation of a new partnership and its actions within a defined institutional setting such as the one of the UAEU. The MaWP[134] states that 'to enhance the impact of the UAEU at the EU level, the UAEU should be better linked with EU agenda setting, policymaking and legislative processes at different levels'.

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131 Applying this approach could also contribute the 'Governance across administrative boundaries and inter-municipal cooperation: urban-rural, urban-urban and cross-border cooperation; link with territorial development and the Territorial Agenda 2020 (well-balanced territorial development)' emphasised as a cross cutting issue in the Pact of Amsterdam.

132 Please note that some partners were sitting in all the sub-groups (eg. the European Commission).

133 Rosenfeld O. (2017) Analytical paper: The Working Method of the Housing Partnership, prepared for DG REGIO, prepared for DG REGIO, European Commission, Brussels.
https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/system/files/migration_files/analytical_paper_2017_the_housing_partnership_working_method.pdf

134 https://www.citiesforum2023.eu/docs/Urban/Multiannual%20Working%20Programme%20UAEU%202022-2026.pdf

To meet the ambitions for 'the successful implementation of the UAEU Partnership, three 'timing' issues should be addressed and planned for[135]:

1. **The timing of the launch of the partnership.**
2. **The timing of the actions' definitions (the partnership's working process) and the action plan's delivery.**
3. **The timing of the implementation of the defined actions (from the completed action plan).**

These three timing issues relate differently to EU agenda-setting, policymaking and legislative processes, so each recommendation is presented separately.

1. **Timing of the launch of the partnership.** According to the EAA timeline, the partnership composition is to be approved by the end of 2023 and the work of the partnership launch at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024**. No delays should be allowed for the start of the activities of the new UAEU Partnership for the following reasons:** The launch of the partnership comes at a perfect time regarding the EU agenda and its implementation, especially considering the Union of Equality initiative presented in the State of the Union 2020 address by the *Ursula von der Leyen* - President of the European Commission[136] and launched in 2021.  Supported by a dedicated task force, the Union of Equality initiative aims at mainstreaming equality across the Commission services and strengthening 'equality' legislation implementation in the EU member states through a number of strategies and action plans presented in the report. According to the interviews conducted for this research, the missing link is the implementation of the equality priorities at the local level – or city level – and this is where the Partnership could provide a key contribution. The partnership activities could link with the above efforts, and the exchange could be mutually beneficial.

2. **The timing of the actions' definitions (the partnership's working process) and the action plan's delivery.** According to the MaWP it could be useful to synchronize the delivery of the Partnership actions with the deadlines of the EU regulatory and policy processes in order to increase the possibility to be taken into account. This would require close collaboration of the Partnership with the representatives of relevant DGs who could share the information about the timing of the relevant regulatory and policy processes (or consortiums, such as the Eurocities, that would have this information). Synchronizing with the EU policy and regulatory processes would require shorter timeframes for the definition of selected relevant actions. Considering the experience of the previous partnerships, the partnership could consider starting the liaison with the relevant stakeholders during the definition of the actions (so they are informed about the potential input) and the implementation of selected completed actions before the submission of the action plan as a whole.

3. **The timing of the implementation of the defined actions (from the completed action plan).** After the individual actions have been defined and the final action plan approved by the

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[135] This recommendation is based on the author's experience in supporting the European Commission in the implementation of the UAEU Housing Partnership. Please note that the author was specifically commissioned to support EC in the implementation process.

*136 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_1655*

relevant stakeholders, it is important to plan for the actions implementation phase. This is the phase that was unevenly developed in the first 14 UAEU Partnerships, yet it is crucial if the partnerships are to be successful in bettering regulation, policy and knowledge related to the specific theme. Regarding improving the EU policy and regulation, two issues can be considered.

a) **Improving the current policy and regulation.** For instance, the partnership could try to define concrete strategies to implement 'inclusion and equality' ambitions noted in disparate EU policies (that do not have this part elaborated sufficiently). The partnership could also address the issues that lead to the limited implementation of the existing EU regulation on equality at the local level. This work could be done during the Partnership 3-year work period (e.g. 2024 – 2027).

b) **Improving the policy, regulation and funding for the next period starting from 2027.** For example, this could relate to the next Cohesion Policy work, ERDF and ESF funding. This means that the action plan containing relevant actions should be ready without delay in 2027 (and some actions earlier, to be considered for the above). This last point also supports the launch of the partnership no later than the beginning of 2024.

## 1.14  Identify the required type of expertise of the members

As shown in the EAA report, the Cities of Equality is a broad theme that requires mainstreaming equality (in line with the intersectionality principle) into urban policy spheres that can be approached from varied perspectives.  The interviews conducted for this research highlight the lack of information about the cities' work related to the 'Cities of Equalities' theme (including lack of information about the best practices), among other issues. This means that the assessment of the expertise and skills related to the successful implementation is yet to be mapped. Therefore, it is hard to define one-size-fits-all expertise for future members.

For this reason, **a practical approach should be taken for the identification of the expertise concerning the Cities of Equality theme.**

The elaboration of the theme presented in this report gives the future partners choice and flexibility in choosing the concrete list of themes and actions to develop. Such choice and flexibility should also be applied to identify the relevant expertise and experience of the future Partners.

The focus should be on identifying the future members with expertise, including proven outstanding past contributions and experience in promoting **equality in cities from the equality (social and or legal perspective) or urban (see urban themes in** Table 11**).  In practical terms, this would mean that the best among the applicants would narrow the theme based on their expertise to ensure the best results.** This approach should be complemented by the requirement to find highly motivated applicants willing to advance the UAEU 'Cities of Equality' theme in a way that leads to better EU policy, regulation and knowledge related to the theme.

To ensure the intersectionality principle (or 'leaving no one behind') is promoted thoroughly in the work of the Partnership, the applicants should also demonstrate their experience or at least willing to work across different population groups/grounds of discrimination and urban themes.

The call for applications should therefore show a clear relationship between specific expertise developed by an applicant (and a potential member) and the particular issue or set of issues that motivate the applicant to be part of this specific partnership. The selection criteria can include:

a) **Motivation** to become a member, advance one or more identified sub-themes and issues in a way that contributes betterment of EU policy, regulation and knowledge relevant to the theme and brings specific contribution at the city level.

b) **Expertise** including proven experience (and qualifications) of the applicant in regards to (1) equality from legal and/or social perspective (e.g. experts on gender, age, intersectionality) with proven experience working in the urban context and/or (2) particular urban theme through which of lack of equality has been tacked (eg. experts on affordable housing, universal design etc.). The expertise and experience could be acquired through (national, regional, or local) policy making, projects (design, management and/or implementation), research, activism (in the case of NGOs and watchdogs), as well as active participation in international, EU and national networks within EU or national programmes contributing to equality efforts.

c) **Willingness to work across disciplines and with the principle of intersectionality in mind (leaving no one behind)** in order to ensure that (while potentially bringing specific deep expertise) the equality issues are addressed holistically (in an urban sense) and in an intersectional manner (groups/grounds) in the partnership work.

The applicants considered for the coordination role may be given additional requirements such as:

1. **Experience and expertise in managing multi-level, international partnerships** (and adequate commitment of human and financial resources).

2. **Proven commitment to multi-sectoral, interdisciplinary approach and commitment to intersectional approach to equality and leaving no one behind principle** (ideally experience to prove the above).

3. **Outreach to relevant stakeholders and membership (or at least participation) in EU and/or international networks working on the issues related to advancing equality in cities in a broad sense.**

## 1.15  Identify institutions/stakeholders of interest to be involved in the multilevel cooperation set up

The composition of the partnership is essential in defining the thematic scope of the 'Cities of Equality' theme in detail, as the background of each partner will play a critical role in this process. In line with the recommendation on the most suitable form of multi-level cooperation, the tried-out UAEU set-up is recommended for the 'Cities of Equality' theme. This set-up includes representatives of relevant EU institutions, representatives of selected EU member states, representatives of cities (or LAUs), umbrella organisations, theme-relevant stakeholders, and expert organisations[137]. This section provides concrete recommendations regarding the institutions and stakeholders for each category.

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[137] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/studies/assess_uaeu_en.pdf

**EU Institutions:** the European Commission Directorate Generals involved in this EAA assessment through interviews and feedback are proposed key institutions of interest. They include DG JUST, DG EMPL, DG HOME, DG GROW, DG REGIO, DG SANTE, DG EAC, DG RTD, with the potential to collaborate with other DGs in the lead of digital and green transition files, Secretary General of the Commission and JRC. These EC services could contribute to the partnerships with relevant information about the ongoing policy and regulation processes of relevance to be tackled. They could also benefit from the exchanges with the partnership that focuses on city matters concerning equality which is underlined to be missing during their interviews.

**Representatives of selected EU Member states:** Relevant national/regional level ministries/agencies responsible for social policy (covering equality issues), equality bodies and other public bodies working in the field of equality, on one hand, and urban policy, on the other, would be of essential importance. This pairing would allow exchanges between these two types of actors in a neutral setting.

**Cities (defined as LAUs):** in line with the recommendations of this report, the representatives of the Local Administrative Units representing cities of different sizes are the key stakeholders.
- Large cities with experience in tackling a variety of issues related to equality (related to protected groups/or grounds of discrimination: age, disability, gender, sexual orientation (LGBTIQ), religion and belief, race & ethnic origin and others**)** in line with the urban themes noted in Table 11.
- Small and medium-size cities, possibly through city network package membership recommended previously.

**Umbrella organisations and thematic relevant stakeholders**
Involvement of the stakeholders committed to tackling issues of inequalities in at the EU, national and local levels is of key importance as these organisations often have an in-depth insight into the issues to be addressed. In the case of the 'Cities of Equality' theme, these include:
- **NGOs and Whatchdog organisations dedicated to protecting rights on the grounds of :** age, disability, gender, sexual orientation (LGBTIQ), religion and belief, race & ethnic origin and others.
- **EU organisations dedicated to equality such as: Equinet, EIGE The European Institute for Gender Equality and FRA The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.**
- **Umbrella organisations such as CEMR, Eurocities.**
- **Social economy partners/businesses (e.g. providers of public transport).**

**Expert organisations:**
- **Urban planning institutions are responsible for cities' urban, spatial and landscape planning**. The objective of their participation would be to strengthen the level of integration of equality into urban and spatial planning, as well as to bring insight and technical expertise.
- **Research institutes and/or experts specialising in applied research** relevant to the Cities of Equality theme with the capacity to provide multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary and intersectional analysis for the partnership.

## 1.16  Identify the type of support that will be required for the implementation

The implementation of the UAEU partnership and its work consists of three stages (as noted in the section *Recommend the timing for successful implementation*).

1. The launch of the partnership.
2. The work of the partnership, including the definitions of the actions (the partnership's working process) and the action plan's delivery.
3. The implementation of the defined actions (from the completed action plan).

These three stages required overarching general support and specific stage-related support.
The recommendations in this section are based on the author's direct experience in supporting one of the first pilot UAEU partnerships and assessing the first fourteen UAEU partnerships.

**General support:**

**EUI Secretariat:** In addition to the commitment of the UAEU Partnership coordinator(s) the provision of assistance by the EUI secretariat is crucial throughout the implementation of the future Partnership, from the coordination of its inception and launch, through the information about the processes (eg. requirements of writing the orientation paper, action plan), including communication and dissemination of the partnership activities and work. Clarity in the secretariat's role and early communication about the kind of support provided is critical for the effective launch of the partnership and reducing as much as possible transaction costs related to establishing new partnerships. The EUI secretarial should also have provisions to provide both technical support and source needed expertise when the partnership finds this kind of support necessary.

**Resources for the future partners:** voluntary participation in the UAEU partnership requires upfront commitment in terms of staff, time and resources from the members. A commitment of these resources has been the noted challenge for the previous Partnership (that resulted in the disengagement of some partners wholly or partially, or frequent change of staff attending the meetings, among other issues).  In the previous sections, some specific suggestions were made to include small and medium-sized cities in the UAEU partnerships. In addition to that, **support should be provided for the travel and accommodation of the members (where necessary), technical and expert support for the preparation of specific actions (including punctual research and drafting analytical papers) as well as the drafting of the action plan.**

**Specific implementation stage-related support:**

1. **The launch of the partnership:**

In addition to the general support recommended above, the Partnership may need to receive specific support during the launch phase of the partnership.

- **The role of the EUI will be crucial in this phase of setting up the partnerships.** Support with clarifying and communicating the role of the members from the beginning will be essential as well as clarifying the planned procedures of the UAEU.

2. **The work of the partnership, including the definitions of the actions (the partnership's working process) and the action plan's delivery.**

The Cities of Equality covers a number of possible themes that require the science-policy interface. This means that the partnership may need a specific in-depth examination (eg. analytical papers, briefs) about specific themes shortlisted by the partnership[138] that would be later developed into concrete actions. This kind of work will require expert support.

Expert support can be provided in two ways:

- **Continuous expert support and/or ad-hoc (thematic) expert support of a dedicated expert for the partnership, similar to that provided for the past UAEU partnerships** The expert support could provide tailored support to the partnership, mitigate for the limited time and resources available to the members and coordinators, and provide additional skills (eg, research, articulation of practitioners' work into actions fitted for UAEU action plans, drafting etc.).

- **The invited lectures from the JRC on the themes that the Centre has already researched**. In this case, the input would be more general (as it would be based on the requirements of the already commissioned research and not one tailored to the Partnership's needs) but nonetheless, this could give the partnership an overview of the specific issues of their interest as a first step for their own analysis.

- **Involvement of the relevant European Commission DGs for the duration of the definition of the specific actions**. While the involvement of the DG representatives during the duration of the past UAEU partnerships has proven challenging (because of their own resource constraints), their absence from the definition of specific actions came with several challenges. Therefore, as an alternative, the future Partnerships could plan (and inform) the relevant DGs about their intention to develop specific actions (that address the policies or regulations in their jurisdiction) and invite them to collaborate during a defined period. Another solution for limited involvement of the relevant DGs could be setting up a contact point for this purpose that could manage the potential communication towards the DGs and delegate issues to relevant personnel in real-time so that the betterment of the concrete and relevant policies and regulations could be made more efficient.

Transfer of the knowledge acquired by the first 14 UAEU Partnership is essential for more effective development of the next generation of the UAEU. The change of the UAEU secretariat from a private entity to a public one might mean that the private entity had kept lots of knowledge produced during the 'learning by doing' process from 2016 till 2021. This also might mean a loss of valuable knowledge and experience gathered in this period. However, this can be compensated by the engagement of other actors present in the pilot and advanced stages of the first 14 UAEU partnerships. This could entail:

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[138] For example, the author of this research was asked by the Housing Partnership and the EU commission to research and draft analytical papers on various themes that underpinned the definition of actions, for instance an analytical paper on the EU Semester, the State Aid, etc.

- **Exchange with and potential mentorship by the past members and coordinators of the first generation of UAEU Partnerships.** This type of collaboration would ensure not only potential thematic exchanges (related to the actions of common interest, for instance) but also that the knowledge created in the 'learning by doing' phase of the first generation of the Partnerships is transmitted to the new partnerships, and that the past mistakes are not repeated.

- **Tailored advice and insight from independent experts[139] who successfully supported the first-generation UAEU partnerships and served as close advisors to the Coordinators and members throughout the Partnership work cycle** (but were not part of the private entity serving as secretariat).

- **Liaison with the organisations that have been involved in the first generation of the UAEU partnerships, such as: Eurocities, EUKN, CEMR, CoR[140] etc.** (provided that their key personnel and management did not change)

   3. **The implementation of the defined actions (from the completed action plan).**
The examination of the work of the previous partnerships such as *Assessment Study of the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU)* and the *Review of the contributions of the Urban Agenda for the EU to the New Urban Agenda*[141] revealed that the implementation of the defined actions has been uneven across the first 14 UAEU partnerships, with the additional challenges related to the collection of data related to their implementation (as some partners have dissolved or members disengaged), and consequent challenges associated with the monitoring of the implementation of actions and assessing their actual contribution to bettering EU policy, knowledge and regulation and their actual impact.

**If its mandate allows, the EUI secretarial could have a special added value in this domain and develop support that could ensure that this shortcoming is tacked and overcome in the new generation of the UAEU partnerships.**

## 1.17  Provide an assessment of the opportunity to launch the partnership

The analysis presented in this Ex-Ante Assessment report and supported by the positive feedback provided by the interviewers and other key stakeholders confirms that the opportunity to launch the 'Cities of Equality' partnership is excellent at this time.

The poly-crisis that Europe and the world have been faced in the period between 2020 and 2023 has exposed and exacerbated inequalities across people and places, especially in cities, where

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[139] This means experts who are not full time employees of the private entity that provided secretariat services.

[140] It is important to ensure that the staff now working in these organisations has been involved in the previous UAEU Partnerships, as the potential knowledge input depends on that. For instance, while URBACT could be considered here too, but it should be noted that it changed top management completely that means that the new management does not have the insight into the UAEU that the previous would have, and that number of experts working on its behalf in the period between 2016 and 2021 are no longer part of URBACT.

[141] *Rosenfeld, O. et al. (2021) Review of the contributions of the Urban Agenda for the EU to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, European Commission, Brussels.*

vulnerable groups such as migrants, people with low incomes, women, and the elderly, among other population groups, were hit hard.  As a response to these challenges, the interest in matters related to equality has gained importance at the local, national, EU and international levels.

The launch of the partnership comes at a very good time in regard to the EU agenda, EU international commitments and their implementation. The 'Cities of Equality' theme is extremely well aligned with the current EU priorities, especially the Union of Equality initiative presented in the State of the Union 2020 address by Ursula von der Leyen - President of the European Commission[142] and launched in 2021. While this initiative focuses on mainstreaming equality at the EU and MS levels, more work must be done at the city level.  This is where the UAEU Partnership on 'Cities of Equality' can bring added value.

Specifically, more work must be done to implement the EU and MS legislative provisions advancing 'equality and non-discrimination' at the local levels. However, cities can do more than that. Using urban planning and policy as their key expertise, they can move from reactive practices of anti-discrimination law enforcement to proactively create environments for equality. They can build 'cities of equality' – places that consider the diverse needs of all individuals and social groups and provide an environment that allows them to live their lives fully.

The triple transition the European policies are supporting at the moment, green, digital and social, along with the urban and environmental transformation, are all a great opportunity to do so, as they come with plans and visions and substantial resources and funding. However, while all the policies explicitly support inclusion and equality, the key challenge is that there are seldom concrete strategies accompanying these ambitions, in general, and at city levels in particular. The social dimension, as it has been said many times, is still a weak link in a number of them. This is the opportunity the future partnership should seize.

There is no better time to cast equality in cities' build environments than when the transitions are anticipated for and supported at the scale they are supported in Europe at this time. This said, great work stands ahead of the Partnership. It is the work of bringing social dimension and urban dimensions together in a new manner. This will include a high level of exploration, learning and, most importantly, co-creation, challenging old and discovering new methods to engage with the protected population groups, understand their needs and challenges and translate these into plans to make urban futures equitable for all.

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142 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_1655

# List of abbreviations

CEMR  Council of European Municipalities and Regions CF Cohesion Fund

CEB Council of Europe Development Bank

CoE  Cities of Equalities

CoR  European Committee of the Regions

COSME Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

DG GROW Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

DG HOME Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

DG JUST Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

DG R&I Directorate-General for Research and Innovation

DG REGIO Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy

DGUM Directors-General Meeting on Urban Matters

EAA Ex-ante assessment

EEA European Economic Area

EC European Commission

EC  European Commission

ECHR European Convention on Human Rights

EIB European Investment Bank

ERDF European Regional Development Fund

ESF European Social Fund

ESIF European Structural and Investment Funds

ESPON European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion

EU European Union

EUI European Urban Initiative

EUKN European Urban Knowledge Network

GT  Grounded Theory

JRC Joint Research Centre

MaWP Multi-annual Working Programme

MS  Member state

NUA UN New Urban Agenda

OFC Other forms of cooperation

PS  Permanent Secretariat

SEB Social economy business

SDG (United Nations) Sustainable Development Goal

TFEU Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

TP Thematic Partnership

UAEU Urban Agenda for the European Union

UATPG Urban Agenda Technical Preparatory Group

UDG Urban Development Group

UIA Urban Innovative Action

URBACT European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development

# List of tables and figures

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# Annex 1.

A selection of the projects developed under the Urban Innovative Actions ( https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities ) relevant to the Cities of Equalities theme, provided with the courtesy of EUI:

1. **Inclusive Urban Planning**

   **OASIS - School yards: Openness, Adaptation, Sensitisation, Innovation and Social ties: Design and transformation of local urban areas adapted to climate change, working jointly with users. Paris**
   https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/paris-call3

   The OASIS project plans to transform 10 schoolyards into cool islands through innovative techniques, nature based solutions, in an integrated approach. The transformations will emerge through a co-design process carried out with the pupils and the educational community, and develop the corresponding methodological tools. The results of this process will assist the City in defining the specifications for such interventions. This will be built with the expertise of a wide range of stakeholders, in an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach, to develop innovative technical solutions as well as opportunities to engage with the communities of the neighbourhoods.

   **CAPACITyES – CAPACITyES – Children Against Poverty Awake the CITy Education System; Bergamo**
   https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/bergamo

   CAPACITyES intends to address urban educational poverty in a multiple perspective, taking into account different dimensions: housing, education, art, sport and culture, through active participation and inclusion of the citizens.
   The interconnected solutions are, as follow:
   - a Co-Housing facility for families with children with personal and shared spaces to live in. Their presence will be temporary and aimed at supporting them in dealing with housing difficulties, staying on the labor market and exercising full autonomy;
   - a creative HubForKids that will be focused on improving children's cognitive and non-cognitive skills, proposing artistic, sport, music and cultural activities, and performances targeted for different age groups. Children will also benefit from scholarships, as an economic help;
   - site specific Artistic Installations to be located inside the Co-Housing building, the HubforKids and in different city spots becoming a single huge site-specific installation aimed at connecting the centre and the suburbs, by facilitating their cross-contamination.

2. **Institutions, participations and access to services**

   **B-MINCOME - Combining guaranteed minimum income and active social policies in deprived urban areas.  Barcelona**      Urban poverty Project testing several models for guaranteed minimum income.
   https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/barcelona

   The project is based on the city's decision to implement a guaranteed minimum income (GMI) to supplement income in the most deprived and poor areas or the city. It is expected that 1,000 households will receive this minimum income on a trial basis. The implementation of the GMI among households in situations of poverty should also prompt a comparative analysis concerning the costs of policies aimed at fighting poverty, with the ultimate goal of developing more efficient welfare services. It is a new solution adapted to the new poverty related

phenomena occurring in the city. The municipal GMI system will provide families with security, freedom and greater responsibility as a lever in overcoming poverty. The new strategy is based on new core elements: Testing several types of GMI; Combine GMI with integrated one-stop-shop public and private active policies and Strengthening inhabitant and community's initiative.

3. **Integration of migrants and refugees**[143]

**Curing the Limbo - From apathy to active citizenship: Empowering refugees and migrants in limbo state to ignite housing affordability. Athens**
https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/athens

The "Curing the Limbo" project capitalises on Athens' vibrant civil society to help refugees and the local unemployed to overcome the stage of inertia. The programme develops around a circular "gift" system, addressing the twofold issue of both housing and inactivity: Refugees receive affordable living spaces from the city's available housing stock and in return, they work for the public benefit, supporting the needs of the local community and participating in citizen-led activities that improve quality of life in Athenian neighborhoods.
Beneficiaries receive on-the-job training supervised by the University of Athens, which includes language learning, psychosocial support, "street law" knowledge and other basic social and soft skills. These skills are tailored to the beneficiaries' needs and are offered in an integrated way, during which other parallel activities are also gradually introduced.

**5Bridges 5Bridges - Creating bridges between homeless and local communities Nantes**
https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/nantes

The project will bring solutions to tackle urban poverty in 5 main dimensions: jobs, housing, health, inclusion, and empowerment through involvement.
Indeed, the aim of the 5Bridges project is to experiment an innovative way to tackle the interconnectedness of the major factors of urban poverty, and to break the circle of social and spatial polarization by:
- Promoting an innovative approach of support and conceiving the project from the ground: based on the users' choice model and their empowerment through an active involvement to define the needed services.
- Creating an innovative social urban equipment: a building operating as a One-stop Shop interconnecting different social groups, providing work opportunities (through a neighborhood restaurant, a collective urban farm, a solidarity store), as well as solidarity-based housing, low threshold health care, and a high level of integration of tailored social services opened 24/24 and 7/7.

- Locating the social equipment at the heart of a new central multifunctional district, already including health clusters, social solidarity businesses, private and social housing.
Opening the project to the people living/working in the area, through neighborhood dialogue and involvement of civil society.

3. **Social economy, private/public partnership for economic inclusion.**

**USE-IT! USE-IT! - Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together. Birmingham**
https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/birmingham

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[143] Here is an article summarising the main highlights of the IMR UIA: https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/theme/integration-migrants-and-refugees

The projecy will use the social, cultural and educational micro and macro assets already present in individuals and communities. Local government, the health service and universities will work with neighbourhoods to capture their aspirations and social and support networks. These will be mapped and brought to life with citizen narrative, thus providing a 'live' quantitative and qualitative evidence base to guide changes in administrative, health and educational strategy, investment and evaluation. We will support local people into jobs in the National Health Service and social enterprise, harnessing existing professional expertise that needs reaccreditation and transposing business opportunities onto grassroots cultural networks. We will help communities develop the language and understanding of structures and systems needed to make a difference to the jobs, built environment, natural space and social networks open to them. We will help fine-tune and connect the talent that lies within the chosen transect.