



Press release

Lisbon, 7th February 2020

Lisbon is turning into the European hotspot for sustainable cities

The URBAN FUTURE Global Conference has announced 50 Young Leaders and launched its official Programme

Between April 1st and 3rd, 2020 around 3,000 *CityChangers* from all over the world, including more than 100 mayors from various cities, will gather in Lisbon to share ideas and concrete projects on how to create more sustainable cities.

The programme that has just been announced focuses on four key themes: mobility, water, districts and leadership. Each of the themes selected for this year allows the audience to debate creative and feasible ideas to reorganise Lisbon, as well as other cities around the globe.

The conference that is organised in close collaboration with the municipality of Lisbon is one of the signature events of the European Green Capital 2020 campaign. The Portuguese capital was awarded the precious EGC award for its continuous improvements in terms of sustainable urban development. The latest highlight is the newly designated ZER project, which intends to reduce the number of cars in the Baixa and Chiado districts by 40%. With this project, Mayor Fernando Medina wants to give the city back to its citizens and further expects to save 60,000 tons of CO₂ annually.

The new generation of change agents

But it's not only mayors who can make change happen within a city! Gerald Babel-Sutter, CEO and founder of UFGC about the recently announced 50 Young Leaders: "*New generations are the main catalyst for ongoing changes, and therefore it is good to see that the URBAN FUTURE is becoming a point of convergence for young people willing to drive change. Despite their diverse ambitions, everyone shares not only the strong desire to transform our cities into better places but also concrete ideas and examples on how to make that change happen. That is why we decided to launch the second edition of the Young Leaders Programme, which will help us find tomorrow's urban leaders.*"

These 50 young people were chosen to be part of the Young Leaders Programme 2020 because of their visionary ideas and their strong desire to lead change. They come from all continents, more than 45 cities in 31 countries, from Johannesburg to Toronto, from Vienna to Lisbon. During the conference, participants will have access to all sessions in addition to specific skills workshops and private meetings with some of the most inspiring speakers from all around the world as well as further networking sessions. Learn more about the diverse crowd of Young Leaders here <https://www.urban-future.org/youngleaders>

Who to expect as speakers?

Attendees can look forward to around 200 inspiring *CityChangers* like **Mikael Colville-Anderson** (Urban Designer & TV Host), **Fernando Medina** (Mayor of Lisbon) **Jennifer Keesmaat** (CEO The Keesmaat Group,



Former Chief City Planner Toronto), **Margaret Heffernan** (Entrepreneur & Writer), **David Sim** (Creative Director at Gehl), **Daniel Termont** (Honorary Mayor of Ghent), **Maria Vassilakou** (Former Vice Mayor Vienna), **Orna Rosenfeld** (Award-winning Urban Strategist), **Anni Sinemäkki** (Deputy Mayor for Urban Environment Helsinki) or **Miguel Gaspar** (Deputy Mayor for Mobility, Security and Economy).

One of the most impressive speakers of last year's edition who will also join the event in Lisbon is the Mayor of Tirana, **Erion Veliaj**. He will introduce the audience to the Orbital Forest project, a forest consisting of two million trees that will supply oxygen to the city. Each tree will be planted by one family, representing a child's birthday in order to grow together.

More names are listed on the conference website: <https://www.urban-future.org/speakers/>

It's all about change! Dive into a few highlight sessions:

Rebuild to evolve

The session "Brownfield unicorns: Turning big dreams into reality" will illustrate practical examples of rehabilitation of abandoned buildings or places in urban spaces.

It will bring together Johan Snel, urban planner in Amsterdam; Elly Andriopoulou - responsible for financing one of the largest philanthropic foundations in the world, Stavros Niarchos; and Dávid Vitézy, Urban Director of the Hungarian Transport Museum.

Changing mentalities

How to persuade citizens to change their mobility routines and choose more sustainable options? International experts will analyse some strategies implemented in cities around the world and understand what worked, and especially, what did not. Among them, Jeni Cross - a sociology professor at Colorado State University who is studying how social science tools can accelerate the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and Helsinki Mobility Ombudsman and Deputy Mayor, Anni Sinnemäki.

How to mobilize people?

For changes to take place, people need to identify with the causes. For that reason, it is essential that CityChangers have the ability to unite others around a greater good. This leadership session will tackle the fundamental tools and techniques to improve the skills to mobilize others. It will gather the Mayor of Tirana, Erion Veliaj, Keesmaat Group CEO, Jennifer Keesmaat and BonnLAB CEO, Johanna Schäfer.

Demystifying water reuse

The session "Flush them: Breaking down the barriers to water reuse" will bring to the stage professionals who are actively breaking the barriers that prevent the reuse of water. Joaquim Poças Martins, Director of the Hydraulic Resources Section and Environment of the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto will moderate this session about new technologies and strategies in water management; Innovative solutions can be expected from Gabriela Costa, Sustainability Consultant at Sweco UK and Maria Oliver Tizón, Environmental Technician at Sant Cugat del Vallès Chamber.

**Facts and numbers:**

- 70+ sessions and 38 Field Trips
- Around 200 speakers from 60 different countries – 160 are confirmed
- 3,000 attendees expected
- 100 Mayors
- 50 Young Leaders
- 100 partner organisations

About the URBAN FUTURE Global Conference (UFGC)

The UFGC is the world's largest meeting place for CityChangers, people who strive to make their cities more sustainable with lots of passion and commitment. They implement concrete projects, thus improving life in the respective city. The UFGC brings our brightest minds together, regarding itself as a neutral platform without any political agenda. The conference was founded in 2014 and is taking place in a different European city every year from 2018 onwards.

- General information about the event: <https://www.urban-future.org/>
- Programme sessions and field trips: <https://www.urban-future.org/programme/>
- Accreditation or images: <https://www.urban-future.org/media/>

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