



Welcome to the EU Cities Gateway Program

We are pleased to share the progress of a new chapter in transatlantic urban cooperation, now well underway after several months of dynamic engagement. The EU Cities Gateway Program, running from 2025 to 2028, builds on the legacy of longstanding EU-funded initiatives such as the International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) North America Program and the Global Covenant of Mayors.

Launched last year, the program has brought together **32 cities and regions from the European Union, Canada and the United States** for a three-year journey of peer learning, collaboration and concrete action. From housing affordability and circular economy to nature-based solutions and digital innovation, participating cities are working side by side to turn shared urban challenges into joint solutions.

Supported by the European Union and coordinated with the EU Delegations to Canada and the United States, the program is fostering long-term partnerships across the Atlantic - not only through dialogue, but through structured peer learning, thematic collaboration and pilot projects.

This first edition of our newsletter captures key milestones since launch, highlights ongoing activities, and looks ahead to what's coming next. We invite you to stay engaged and become an active part of the growing EU Cities Gateway Community.

The journey has begun - and we are glad you are part of it.



The 32 Cities and Regions of the EU Cities Gateway Cohort

We are proud to welcome the following cities and regions to this new phase of transatlantic cooperation:

European Cities

- Albacete, Spain
- Alicante, Spain
- Barcelona, Spain
- Debrecen, Hungary
- Dublin, Ireland
- Hamburg, Germany
- Heidelberg, Germany
- Larissa, Greece
- Lipor / Greater Porto, Portugal
- Parma, Italy
- Riga, Latvia
- Rijeka, Croatia
- Sofia, Bulgaria
- Tampere, Finland
- Trier, Germany
- Vilnius, Lithuania

Canadian Cities

- Edmonton, Alberta
- Guelph, Ontario
- Halifax, Nova Scotia
- Laval, Quebec
- Nanaimo, British Columbia
- St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Toronto, Ontario
- Ville de Terrebonne, Quebec

Cities from the United States

- Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Atlanta, Georgia
- Austin, Texas
- Birmingham, Alabama
- Boulder, Colorado
- Fort Worth, Texas
- Jacksonville, Florida
- Phoenix, Arizona

Four Thematic Clusters - Turning Exchange into Action

To focus our collaboration and turn exchange into action, the EU Cities Gateway is structured around four thematic clusters.

Each cluster brings together cities working on similar priorities and provides a dedicated space for structured exchange. Through webinars, peer learning sessions, study visits and expert input, the participating cities will explore concrete practices, compare approaches and identify opportunities for collaboration.



Affordable & Attainable Housing and Innovative Living Spaces

Addressing affordability, inclusion and access to quality housing in growing urban regions.



Circular Economy

Advancing resource efficiency, waste reduction and new circular business models.



Nature-Based Solutions

Integrating biodiversity, climate resilience and green infrastructure into urban planning.



Digitalisation & Urban Innovation

Leveraging digital tools and smart governance to improve public services and sustainability.

Each cluster combines webinars, peer learning, study visits and thematic expertise - creating structured pathways for cooperation and long-term partnership.

Join the EU Cities Gateway Community



The EU Cities Gateway is more than a program for 32 cities, it is the start of something bigger.

We are opening the network to a broader circle of cities, regions, and urban partners through the EU Cities Gateway Community:

a flexible, open space for anyone who wants to stay connected to transatlantic urban cooperation, learn from peers, and explore new collaboration opportunities across Europe, Canada, and the United States. Cities from other regions of the world are also welcome where there are shared priorities and opportunities for collaboration.

Who is the Community for?

The Community brings together a diverse group of urban and regional actors, including:

- Alumni cities from the International Urban and Regional Cooperation, North America, International City Partnership, World Cities, and Global Covenant of Mayors programs
- Local, state, provincial, and other regional and sub-regional authorities
- Urban networks and associations
- Knowledge institutions and experts
- Policymakers and practitioners working on shared urban challenges

What do members get?

Joining is simple, free, and flexible.

Community members:

- ✓ Receive regular updates on EU Cities Gateway activities and cooperation opportunities
- ✓ Are invited to participate in selected webinars, masterclasses, and thematic exchanges
- ✓ Access knowledge resources and insights from across the EU Cities Gateway thematic clusters
- ✓ Connect with peers across Europe, Canada, and the United States through a dedicated online collaboration space on Basecamp

Participation is activity-based and interest-driven - engage when and how it makes sense for you.

Ready to join?

Express your interest via the contact form on our website - membership is open and free.

[Join the EU Cities Gateway Community](#)

From Annapolis to Toronto to Phoenix: Key Milestones in Transatlantic Urban Cooperation

The first key activity under the EU Cities Gateway brought together the eight cities of the [Affordable & Attainable Housing Cluster in Toronto, Canada from 10–12 December 2025](#).

The objective of the event was to discuss one of the most pressing urban challenges of our time: how to ensure access to affordable and attainable housing in rapidly changing cities.

The host city of Toronto offered a particularly relevant setting. As the fastest-growing city in North America, it faces intensified pressures around housing affordability, homelessness and access to services - dynamics that strongly resonated with the participating cities. Despite different local contexts, the similarities were striking.

What emerged clearly was a shared understanding: **no city can address the housing challenge in isolation**. Sustainable solutions require collaboration across levels of government, partnerships with civil society and the private sector, and a balance between preserving existing housing stock and developing inclusive new neighborhoods.

Earlier, on 29–30 October 2025, the programme's first on-site activity took place in **Annapolis, Maryland**. A delegation of EU Cities Gateway cities from the Circular Economy Thematic Cluster - including Boulder (Colorado), Phoenix (Arizona) and Terrebonne (Quebec) - was welcomed by Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley. During the study visit, participants explored the city's pioneering work on urban resilience, including innovative measures to address sea-level rise and recurrent flooding in its historic downtown.

The exchange continued at the **Circular Economy Forum 2025**, co-hosted by the State of Maryland, the EU Delegation to the United States and the City of Annapolis, where EU Cities Gateway representatives joined policymakers and experts from both sides of the Atlantic to advance dialogue on circular economy strategies and sustainable urban transformation.



Thematic Cluster Meeting and Second Circular Economy Forum in Phoenix



Phoenix has been embedding circular economy principles into its city plans since 2011 - with concrete targets for zero waste, clean water and air, and resilient local food systems by 2050. It was therefore a natural choice to host [the official launch of the EU Cities Gateway Circular Economy Cluster on April 22](#).

The eight cities of the cluster came together for a full day of site visits and peer exchange, exploring how Phoenix has turned resource recovery into a driver of economic opportunity including large-scale textile reuse and regional plastics processing. What emerged was a shared conviction that the real value of circular economy strategies lies not only in environmental outcomes, but in their potential to create jobs, strengthen local supply chains, and reduce dependence on scarce materials.

The cluster meeting ran alongside the EU-US 2nd Circular Economy Forum (April 23–24), co-organized by the City of Phoenix, the State of Arizona, and the EU Delegation to the United States, bringing together city and state leaders, business executives, and experts from both sides of the Atlantic to explore practical solutions across construction, energy efficiency, critical minerals, and water reuse.

The EU Ambassador Jovita Neliupšienė summarised the outcome of the Forum as follows: “Alongside clear environmental benefits, circular business models will give companies in Arizona and the European Union a competitive edge that enables stronger trade and investment ties.”

Upcoming events

25–28 May 2026

EU Cities Gateway Nature-Based Solutions Cluster Launch

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



Cities from the Nature-Based Solutions Thematic Cluster will come together in Halifax for the official launch cluster, exploring the city's hands-on approach to flood risk reduction, coastal protection, and urban greening through site visits.

The event coincides with the **ClimatAdapt Conference (May 27–28)** and will be organized in cooperation with our sister project Low Carbon Business Action Canada (LCBA), which supports partnerships between EU and Canadian stakeholders to advance cleantech business solutions.

29 June – 3 July 2026

EU Cities Gateway Urban Innovation & Digitalization Cluster Launch

Heidelberg, Germany



The participating cities of the Urban Innovation and Digitalization Cluster will meet in Heidelberg for the first time, exploring how cities can break down data silos, strengthen data-driven decision-making, and harness AI for smarter public administration.

Site visits to Heidelberg's innovation hub and university, as well as dedicated working group sessions are part of the agenda. The event extends into advanced collaboration missions in both Heidelberg and the neighboring city of Trier, where smaller groups of city representatives will deepen their work on specific shared challenges around AI in public services and digital solutions for citizens.

Stay connected



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