

Sketches of a New City

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Sketches of a **New City**

Green European Foundation
Cities as Places of Hope – Resilient Cities

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Introduction

This publication is one of the results of IPE's participation in the GEF transnational project "Cities as Places of Hope – Resilient Cities", where we aimed to vividly illustrate the most recent developments in some European cities and trace the pathways through which they can develop resilience, increase the well-being of citizens, reach ecological sustainability, and achieve more social justice.

In three chapters, we share with you the views, opinions and insights gained through the direct experience, empirical evidence and daily struggle of key changemakers at municipal level: researchers, scholars, practitioners and activists (some of them politically engaged). Our randomised look into various urban landscapes (and political/social conditions behind their development) begins from obstacles and challenges, continues with practices and ends with visions.

These "Sketches of a New City" are here to share and further develop these visions, translating and replicating ideas into collective actions. Far too often, big and ambitious projects end with failures. We want to start in the opposite way – with small sketches; with working material that can in time develop into something durable and resilient. Let us follow these ideas together and envision the new city as a place – wherever in Europe – where we would all love to live, where conviviality and resilience could co-exist in new forms of collective efforts and actions.

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Editors:

Vedran Horvat and Lana Pukanić

1.

Which challenges and obstacles is your city facing in achieving ecological sustainability, well-being for all citizens and social justice?



As the real estate market in **BELGRADE** becomes the most lucrative business, spatial resources and all the processes that produce them (from planning to construction) become attractive for different forms of misuse, corruption, and malmanagement, says Iva Čukić, architect and activist from the Belgrade-based collective Ministry of Space. In spite of seemingly more and more regulations concerning spatial politics, she says, what is in fact happening is *deregulation* that allows particular, private interest to jeopardize public benefit. In her opinion city development is steered by the imperative of economic growth, further capital accumulation and particular, rather than public interest, and less in response to the diverse needs of the citizens.

When it comes to citizens' participation, the practice of urban planning demonstrates *significant* lack of *democratic capacity* and is often performed even below the formal minimum. Its effects depend greatly on external elements, such as the media pressure that citizens' initiatives create or the political decisions beyond the area of urban development, claims Čukić. As a result, she continues, there is a growing number of spatial conflicts and injustices constituting the urban life in Belgrade. If there is a nominal commitment to substantial democratization of the planning process, it seems that the current practice, as well as regulation, needs radical transformation, she concludes.

Likewise, **MADRID's** urban model also considers the city as a product, claims Ana Méndez de Andrés, architect and urban planner who lives between Madrid and Sheffield, and was once the member of the municipalist platform *Ahora Madrid* and an advisor in city administration.

The city centre is increasingly deployed as an amusement park for tourists and an open-air commercial and recreation centre for locals and visitors alike. The new city development is built as real estate assets that ignore basic questions such as sustainable mobility, local commercial, cultural and social activities, and public space. It is a model without a model: a territory deployed available for investors and financial speculation made out of fragmented interventions that cannot be challenged because the strategic objectives are never explicit, claims Ana Méndez de Andrés.

Neoliberal economy, she explains, has been a persuasive element in the conservative governments in the city and the region for more than 25 years. While public narratives and policies are shaping cultural aspects and subjectivities based on competition, individualism and segmentation, this vision of the city – internalised as it might have been - is not aligned with a civic society that has consistently demonstrated a high degree of solidarity and collaboration, for example during the COVID-19 pandemic, or extreme weather events.

The most challenging obstacle that the Montenegrin capital **PODGORICA** is facing is urban development model which prioritizes private gains over public need, says Sonja Dragović, urban researcher currently living in Lisbon, Portugal. This manifests in every turn, she continues, from a housing market characterized by a constantly growing surplus of new unoccupied apartments (built to be sold, but not necessarily inhabited), to perpetual traffic congestion, loss of urban greenery, lack of well-maintained public spaces, and a spiralling decrease in the quality of public services.

In her opinion, it is clear that urban development policies according to which Podgorica has been developing in the last few decades were designed to serve the interests of private capital. This resulted in the rise of social and spatial inequalities which are now inscribed in the urban form, and which will be difficult to eliminate, she concludes.

In **SARAJEVO**, space is - or should be - one of the most valuable resources and a common good, says Alma Midžić, researcher focusing on social movements, common goods and natural resources (such as water). The biggest challenges are the lack of accountability of those who make decisions and implement policies, and the lack of vision. Citizens' participation in decision-making is still at a low level, the process is not sufficiently regulated legally or in practice. Furthermore, explains Midžić, spatial planning has been defragmented and reduced to changes and additions to the planning documentation, which mainly favours the construction of business-residential facilities and residential settlements without adequate social, public, and easily accessible infrastructure.

It seems that the development of the city has been reduced to the construction of buildings, as the local self-government perceived it as a (rare) opportunity to attract investors and make money. Unfortunately, says Midžić, decision-makers do not see, or do not want to see, that unplanned, short-sighted, and profit-oriented development will downgrade the quality of life in the city in the long term.

For many Greek cities alike, the main issue remains being both unwilling and incapable of managing the urban fabric. In **THESSALONIKI**, there is a lack of transparency about local government planning processes. The city has lacked a municipal planning authority since 2014, and the planning of the city is instead dictated by the central state. From a geographical perspective, it appears that the city's administration fails to grasp the socio-cultural plurality and place-based particularities of its neighbourhoods, claims Giorgos Chatzinakos, activist and scholar. There are cases, he explains, where *unused* public land or assets belong to more than one public institution; sometimes these assets do not entirely belong to the city itself. The lack of clarity over such land ownership not only matters for those trying to intervene and improve their local neighbourhood, but also raises serious questions about the finances and rationale behind intra-governmental asset transfers.

There is no legal framework that supports participatory/community-led planning or locally-organised collective action for the appropriation of public space for communal use and culture (e.g. for neighbourhood fiestas). The city lacks reference points for community-building (e.g. socio-cultural centres), Chatzinakos concludes, where residents could collectively engage in problem-solving activities or spaces that promote socio-cultural activities in public space that may reinforce opportunities for social mixing.

In **LJUBLJANA**, the obstacles that prevent the city from achieving ecological sustainability are its authorities, says Eva Matjaž, independent researcher and co-founder of Poligon, first creative center in Slovenia. The municipality mayor Zoran Janković, first elected in 2006, and his government have had a majority in the city council for almost the entire

17-year-long period. Janković to many represents an ambitious manager who peaked in the nineties and successfully translated corporate strategies into running the municipality, explains Matjaž. Under the slogan “Ljubljana is the most beautiful city in the world,” the municipality’s well-oiled PR machine is successfully greenwashing and social-washing all of the biggest city projects, with economic growth as the common denominator and gentrification as the end result.

The air quality in Ljubljana is worrying, Matjaž continues, however, the next big municipality project is the waste incineration plant. Instead of making our streets and squares more resilient to heat waves, many trees are still being cut down and replaced with tons of concrete. Ljubljana shows no concern about overtourism, and Airbnbs are outnumbering the city center inhabitants.

In **BUDAPEST**, the Hungarian capital, the government has taken away the city’s tax revenue so its green mayor is struggling with a lack of funds. It is proving quite difficult to change old habits, like driving and parking cars everywhere in the city. A lot of communication and social advertising is required, but the government carries out a continuous counter-propaganda against the green initiatives of Budapest, explains Rebeka Szabo, one of the green and progressive political leaders in Budapest.

In **SEVILLA**, currently the main challenge is the rise in temperature and the related heat waves. It seems that the local policy-makers are not doing enough systemically, says Felipe Gonzales Gil, activist and researcher from Seville. There is a social movement that includes parents of school children, because many of the schools (so called: Heat Schools) are not prepared for high temperatures and they already register many health-related problems. The school is an interesting example, as the building belongs to the city council, teachers are hired from the regional government, and educational plans/curricula are designed at the national level. Another problem Sevilla has is the number of cars. Despite having a very high number of bike lanes (which is the legacy of the progressive city council two decades ago), the number of cars is still too high and presents a huge

problem for ecological sustainability at municipal level, points out Gil. On top of that, he continues, the price of increasing housing prices is another problem. As many other European cities, Sevilla has the problem of renting for tourist purposes which affects rent prices, although less than in Barcelona or Madrid.

In case of **ZURICH**, federal and cantonal legislation, politics and administrations very often overrule progressive solutions and policies of the city, says Philipp Klaus, seasoned social and economic geographer, researcher and lecturer at ETH. Housing and tenants rights have to be reinforced, but get blocked at the national level, while changes in car policy need bigger efforts.

A referendum in 2014 set the goal of having one third of all rental apartments not for profit purposes. The main systemic obstacle to get on with this are the ever-increasing land prices due to the immigration of high salary incomes, and the respective response of the housing market, Klaus explains.

PULA, the Croatian city on the Istrian peninsula, also faces a lack of political will and capacities for more ambitious measures and a change towards sustainability, says Dušica Radojčić, local green politician. Relying on mass tourism and massive coastal construction as major economic activities (20-25% of the national GDP) results in a huge impact of those interest groups on national legislation and local decision-making.

PRAGUE is most known in the European Union for having the lowest level of the climate debate, says Vit Masare, Czech educator and advisor working on sustainability and climate issues. He claims that in the city there is an overwhelming and odd kind of silence around climate municipal policies which were systematically avoided by the Prague mayor. And now with old conservatives, it's even worse, argues Masare.

In **BARCELONA**, the city's public policy was for decades left to big private interests and multinationals. For example, water management is in private hands, with a contract for over 30 years. Waste management is in private hands with an equally long contract, explains Pablo Sanchez,

who was a campaigner and director of international relations in the early years of Colau's government.

So, the two obstacles are the impossibility to make public policy with ecologic or social objectives, as there are little (or no) tools to ensure environmental criteria, and the private interests' resistance to change along those objectives. They continue to demand for more planes, more cruise ships, more things that are not sustainable but are highly profitable, explains Sanchez. As long as those private interests have more say than the city council, the challenge to change the the economic dynamic and increase social and ecologic justice remains.

For **ZAGREB**, the Croatian capital, there are two most prominent challenges - traffic regulation and infrastructure, and waste disposal management, says Antonija Komazlić, activist and researcher from Right to the City. The city's transport policies have (in a populist manner) for too long been favouring individual motorized traffic, nurturing its ever-bigger demand. This demand was an excuse for not proposing (nor investing in) any sustainable alternatives, and therefore not bothering with the development of public transport infrastructure or a meaningful and truly integrated cycling infrastructure, she explains. Instead, the city has come to a point where two parking lots per apartment are a standard for newly built buildings in urban plans.

With the recent change of the municipal government to the one willing to make changes towards sustainability, the problem is in the large scope of changes that need to be introduced simultaneously in order to provide solutions for the infrastructure that has been neglected far too long, she continues. Additionally, the public company running the transportation system is still burdened with problems related to its internal organization.

Speaking of the waste disposal management, the city is still relying on the open landfill as the final destination of collected waste, and the separate waste collection rate is less than 40%. This may still be the biggest single environmental protection problem of the city, concludes Komazlić.

2.

**Which transformative practices
in your city do you find the
most relevant, sustainable or
inspiring?**



With the perennial experience in struggles for the democratization of urban development in the city of **BELGRADE** (and beyond), the Ministry of Space collective has engaged in creating the instrument – *participatory forum* – that enables more active and inclusive deliberation among diverse interests on the territory of the plan and thus results in higher quality and more legitimate planning solutions. Relying precisely on the model of the so-called deliberative mini-publics or citizens assemblies, MoS is developing and implementing a deliberative tool specifically tailored for the urban planning procedure in Serbia, explains Iva Čukić. By pursuing experimentation with the participatory forum model, its evaluation, and measuring of its results, the collective is aiming to build an evidence-based proposal for its institutionalization, thus contributing to the structural transformation of the development of our cities.

Holding five forums in the last two years proved that citizens are interested in participating; that when they are adequately informed, they can make reasoned and rational decisions, and that this mechanism has great potential to contribute to the democratization of urban planning in Serbia, claims Čukić. From her point of view, these forums are a step forward towards essential participation, bringing social acceptance of plans and improving the quality of urban development, for it to be in public interest.

The most relevant and transformative social experience in **MADRID** in the last years has been the feminist movement, says Ana Méndez de Andrés. In her opinion the work of feminist thinkers and practitioners – such as Yayo Herrero or Amaya Pérez Orozco - to identify the capital-life conflict and the efforts to connect feminism with ecology, commons, social economy and the production and reproduction of community lives and cities carries out a transformation that is not directly visible in the way the city is built or the policies implemented, but that provides one of the most relevant spaces for reflection, inspiration and action in the city. Especially important was the Feminist Strike organised in 2017 by the 8M assembly, which successfully put the question of care and reproduction of life not only on the political agenda, but also highlighted it as a social concern. Apart from that, Ana Méndez de Andrés states that the renaturalisation

of the Manzanares River was recognised as the most beneficial action for biodiversity ever developed in Madrid. It was carried out after the ecologist organisation *Ecologistas en Acción* presented an environmental restoration project to the City Council in 2016 and was part of 'Madrid + Natura', the urban naturalisation strategy aiming to intervene in buildings, neighbourhoods and the city. Before the restoration, the river was a flat, static and smelly water pool. In only one year, it recuperated a dynamic ecosystem of water, plants, animals and mineral elements. Also important, it has shown that it is possible to regenerate areas of the city that seemed voided of life, says Méndez de Andrés.

Most of the push toward transforming **PODGORICA** into a more sustainable and resilient city comes from civic initiatives, says Sonja Dragović. One such initiative is *Biciklo.me*, a non-governmental organization advocating for sustainable urban mobility through community organizing, research, and new policy propositions. Their work has greatly contributed to the beginning of the development of cycling infrastructure in Podgorica and to the formulation and adoption of the city's first Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan. According to Dragović, another important example is the Mediterranean Garden, a community-managed part of Gorica Hill, the park forest located in the very centre of Podgorica. The Mediterranean Garden is the result of a years-long effort that included petitions, protests, and actions aimed at preserving Gorica Hill from major infrastructural and construction projects which would harm its ecosystem. Activists gathered around this cause also took up the task of maintaining the park: between 2014 and 2020, more than 200 actions of clearing and afforesting the area have been carried out, with the participation of over 3000 citizens. It has been planned, managed, and taken care of by activists since 2016, with some support from the local government. The fact that it is one of the first attempts at some form of public-civic partnership in Podgorica adds to the significance of the project.

According to Alma Midžić, the case of Hastahana park initiative in **SARAJEVO** shows the transformative value of civic initiatives. Hastahana Park initiative, she explains, emerged in 2017 as a spontaneous response to the announced "concreting" of the park. Although deliberately neglected,

this space is a gathering place for all generations; a free, public area for leisure and recreation. The revolt was triggered by the decisions of the authorities, which were made in an extremely undemocratic and non-transparent manner with complete disregard for the will of the citizens, accompanied by intimidation and manipulation. The inconsistency of the authorities is reflected in the change of the purpose of the space - from a museum and an underground garage to, as was previously speculated, the location of the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Citizens used all available formal participation mechanisms, as well as different forms of self-organization. Furthermore, she continues, they pointed out the problems with polluted air and suffocation of air corridors by unplanned construction, the lack of green areas and public spaces, and the neglected public interest and social needs in the planning process, but they also offered solutions. In Midžić's point of view, every opportunity was used to call local politicians to accountability and to remind them of broken pre-election promises. A group of young architects and designers created a conceptual solution for the space, tailored to the wishes and needs of the citizens. The key was to demonstrate that the space can be thought of differently and to offer an alternative that is in line with the demands of the citizens.

Similarly, the Alexandrou Svolou Neighbourhood Initiative in **THESSALONIKI** is an autonomous activist group that aims to stimulate new forms of participation through various practices of everyday appropriation and commoning, articulating a municipalist discourse on the basis of direct democracy, and collective governance of common pool resources, says Giorgos Chatzinakos. Over the last eight years, he explains, the Initiative has organised concerts, parades, place-making activities and workshops, tactical urbanism interventions, memory nights, a revival of a local carnival, a picnic for the 'global degrowth day', initiated a network of mutual support due to COVID-19 and other solidarity actions. So far, the most successful transformative projects include the organisation of a collective dinner, the biggest self-organised 'neighbourhood fiesta' in Greece and the creation of a DIY Pocket Park, one of the few recorded cases of effective community-led planning in the country. According to Chatzinakos, the Initiative has developed a model of direct democracy where social relations are organised around 'place', intersectionality and

peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. This experience has introduced new elements in the discussion on the role of bottom-up initiatives in the midst of a ‘more-than-financial’ crisis, opening up new political imaginaries essential for the transformation of urban life.

In **LJUBLJANA**, there are high expectations from new forms of self-organisation. According to Eva Matjaž, there is big potential in the new wave of unionization around the world, which is also bringing change to Ljubljana, primarily through self-organisation of cultural workers. The core union values such as solidarity, cooperation, equality, integrity, community, and the commons are essential for people to embrace if we want to make a shift towards ecological sustainability, well-being and social justice in our cities. For decades, says Matjaž, we have been trained to take care of ourselves (and our loved ones) because nobody else will. But paradoxically, if we want to survive today (or in the very near future), the only answer is to lean on the community we share our life space with. Through the union people gain practical experience on how collective actions can bring changes for the better, changes which would be otherwise impossible to make individually. And what is even more important, the unions teach us that it’s not impossible to confront capital and negotiate better working and living conditions. According to Matjaž, unions are important anchors in each city, a training ground, a polygon for a better, fairer future that each city needs in order to nurture core values required for urgent ecological change. And on top of that, unions are not just fighting for their own causes, they are organizations supporting many other civic actions happening in cities all the time.

In **BUDAPEST**, on the other hand, for a few years already the city has had a municipal policy to maintain parks and lawns in a sustainable way, points out Rebeka Szabo. This means lawns are mowed less and wildflowers are left to pollinators. This is an important step regarding urban biodiversity and ecological sustainability.

Also, in the past few years, small-scale farmers’ markets have been held in different parts of the city, which are managed by local NGOs. These are very popular among citizens, and they create a direct connection between

producers and consumers. Information about sustainable agriculture is also spread, and it helps build the local community, and quality relationships between people who live in the same neighbourhood.

In the case of **SEVILLA**, Felipe Gonzales Gil sees vertical gardens (nomad gardens) as an interesting activist and artistic intervention, from which one neighbourhood was used to develop a prototype. It uses water for air conditioners, he explains, to sow different plants and make wall of plants and flowers. Unfortunately, it has not been replicated, but is still a good example. It shows how we can use adverse systems that are already here for public interest and ecological sustainability. Another example is the bike road infrastructure, where the municipality actively shows alternative ways of commuting and transport. The bike road is a good policy which can be improved by using a higher number of electric public bicycles and scooters, as during high temperatures riding ordinary bikes can be risky in the terms of health.

Yet cities like **ZURICH** are undergoing transformation through big infrastructure projects, says Philipp Klaus. One of them is the „Fernwärme“, where households throughout the city get connected to the heat from the incinerator. Another project will start soon, and will cool the city with water from Lake Zurich. The citizens said yes to both projects with clear majorities. Substantially extending the bike lane system is another Zurich initiative, and will lead to many car parking spaces in the streets disappearing.

In **PULA**, the awareness-raising and referendum campaign organized by members of the local community gathered into the Lungomare Citizen Initiative rose against the unsustainable tourism development direction the city has taken (including corruption in spatial planning and suspicious privatization of coastal land). Their successful self-organization in a referendum initiative against a specific coastal tourism development project strengthened the feeling of belonging to a community, says Dušica Radojčić.

Their fight for the preservation of a unique recreational area, and consequently the quality of life in the city, is inspiring even at the national level,

claims Radojčić. It was the second successful referendum organized upon the request of citizens since the foundation of the Republic of Croatia (30 years ago). This is very hard to achieve due to high turnout conditions and bureaucratic barriers, she explains. The action has also proven that the approval quorum is set too high to reach (the threshold rarely achieved during elections), and that the State has on purpose put serious obstacles to local referendums as an instrument of direct democracy. The referendum campaign for the preservation of the Lungomare proved that citizens are much more aware of the necessity to implement green policies, including climate resilience, nature protection, well-being, and social justice, than the authorities which opposed the referendum, says Radojčić.

In **PRAGUE**, the sustainable practice is surprisingly linked to a public company. The long-term pivotal role of the Prague Transportation Company and the popularity and high quality of public transportation in the sustainability agenda of the city are very important for every person in Prague, explains Vit Masare. Whoever was born in Prague, must have been travelling around by the city's beloved tramways, subway, buses etc. for a big part of their lives. Many people keep this habit for their entire life and the quality of Prague's and regional integrated public transportation is a central interest for them, he says. The Prague Transportation Company is also one of the biggest employers in the country. Its sustainability and social policies have significant instant impact on hundreds of thousands of people from the poorest to the richest across all age groups. When planning any innovations, the Prague Transportation Company is an important partner to discuss it with, for the possible huge impact its adoption of the supposed schemes may have on the market and on the beneficiaries, argues Masare.

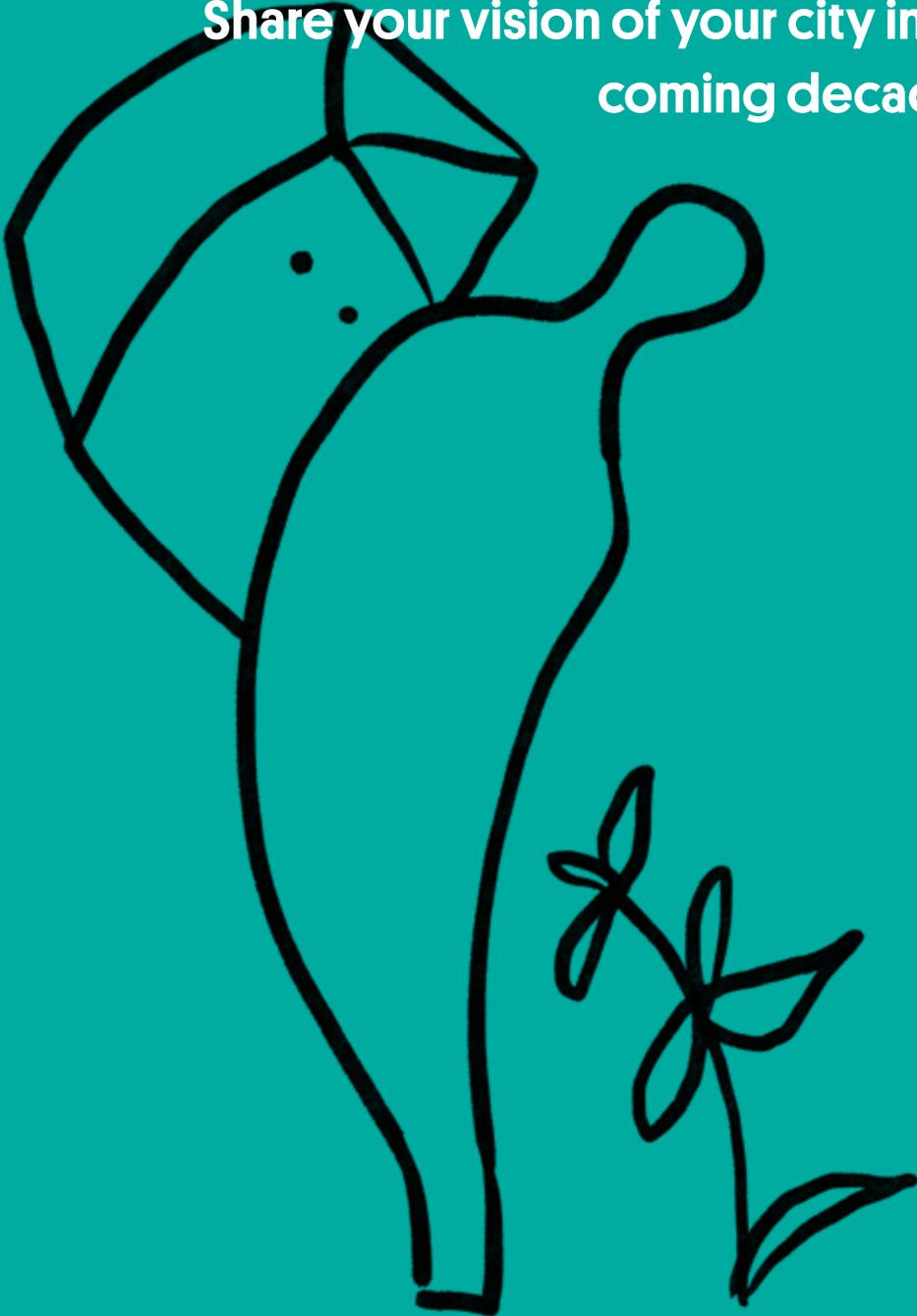
According to Pablo Sanchez, in case of **BARCELONA**, the new municipal energy company has been a good model of an alternative way, though it has an issue with scale. The energy provided a different frame during the current energy crisis, with no disconnection of users and cheaper prices. The issue is that the company has not been able to reach the vast majority of citizens. Also, he adds, the new urbanism that tries to keep cars out

of the city centre and promotes public and more ecological transport is a positive development. Public policy here links with citizen groups and health groups that see the levels of noise and pollution being reduced and make the city more liveable and more sustainable. Greening and less concrete are also major elements to reduce the temperature of the city and not contribute to droughts. The city is now being used as inspiration in other places, which shows the need of greener spaces elsewhere, says Sanchez.

In **ZAGREB**, the civic initiative Parkticipacija has been making pathways towards a more resilient food supply system in the city by thematising urban gardening and growing food within the city, says Antonija Komazlić. This involved advocacy for enabling legal framework for the establishment of officially recognized public urban gardens understood as a commons and secured with long-term permits, pursuing networking among the shareholders, and enabling a platform for citizens interested in taking part in participative design processes of such community spaces in their neighborhoods. The proposed community garden model counted on the free usage of public land and its common maintenance. It included demonstration plots and a forest garden open to the public together with individual allotments, while implying active user participation and consensus-based decision making. As a result of this public advocacy and negotiations with the previous City administration, the City took over the project and established a network of urban gardens in Zagreb, although with limited understanding and implementation of key features and values based on community building, and with a temporary use character. However, this infrastructure can still be transformed to the one in line with the original proposal developed and offered by Parkticipacija.

3.

**The future starts now!
What will make your city resilient?
Share your vision of your city in the
coming decades!**



In **BELGRADE**, it is the people – self-organized in formal or informal movements - who are the main agents of progressive change, says Iva Čukić. Even though these attempts can be fragile and scattered (as sometimes they are), they are our best hope to build the future which is democratic, socially just and ecologically sustainable. In short, the future is a political environment that fosters wide participation and prevents concentration of power and capital, and cities based on solidarity, collectiveness and inclusiveness.

If **MADRID** is going to have a good life and be in a good place in two decades, it will be because of a federated network of mutual aid initiatives able to provide support and care for all inhabitants in the city, says Ana Méndez de Andrés. More than a decade ago, in 2010, “The Chart of the Commons” of the City of Madrid was written as part of the militant research collective Observatorio Metropolitano. In this Chart, she explains, “we envisioned a ‘new citizen statute’ that reinvented public institutions away from bureaucracy, politicians, economic interests and financial markets. The change happened in four stages: first, addressing ‘emergency situations and problems’ through the organisation with local committees to provide mutual support. Second is the recuperation of collective spaces by occupying squares and empty buildings. Third, a re-organisation of essential services that had been privatised and the recuperation of hospitals and schools. Fourth and final, the redistribution of all the collective wealth that had been privatised.”

Local civic initiatives in **PODGORICA** devoted to spatial and social justice gather strength and continue organizing and advocating for a better city for all, says Sonja Dragović. “I share their visions of the future Podgorica as a city that preserves and fully integrates its five rivers, expands its parks so that urban greenery is available in every neighborhood, adopts bicycles as a mass mode of transportation, starts developing affordable housing models, and prioritizes the construction of new public schools, hospitals, and cultural centers”, she elaborates. This cannot be accomplished without rethinking the political economy underpinning the existing urban development model. To achieve sustainability and resilience, the processes of city-making need to be reconfigured in ways that support and integrate communities, rather than treat them as mere customers.

Alma Midžić from **SARAJEVO** thinks that citizens themselves should decide about its future. Sarajevo, she continues, is fortunate to be surrounded by beautiful nature, close to rural areas, but currently, development is dictated by short-sighted, profit-oriented planning. “I would imagine a city in which we make decisions together, we listen to each other, and government and professionals support citizens in decision-making to create adequate policies. The authorities would be dedicated to the protection of key resources such as water and have an investment plan in public infrastructure. The city would have effective and organized public transport, a garbage collection and recycling system, and an improved water supply system under public control. Investments would be made in local food production to shorten the sales chain. Public transport to the surrounding mountains could be organized so all social categories have access to natural goods. In such a city we would all use the benefits of nature, and by its careful protection and development of public infrastructure, we are working towards a sustainable future.”

Greek cities require a new philosophy guiding the management of urban space, says Giorgos Chatzinakos. “I am not suggesting that the solution to the urban-capitalist crisis is necessarily ‘winning the municipalities’ through local elections; but after considering the limits of urban governance, is it still reasonable to argue for permanent popular assemblies and their gradual assumption of local power, challenging the fundamentally reactionary positions taken by the national government?” At present, this fundamental question remains unanswered, he notes. The answer must surely reach further than a romanticised democratisation of politics through the winning of local elections. It requires, above all, a translocal and polymorphic movement that claims more autonomy for the city, historically ruled by the central state. There is currently no movement demanding that kind of change. It also requires a new political discourse and a range of tactics, coupled with, in the words of Bertie Russell, a “variegated spatial strategy of transformation” capable of establishing new collective imaginaries and ways of political participation.

Ten years ago **LJUBLJANA** had numerous alternative and non-profit spaces for people to meet, discuss, reflect, organize, support and revolt if

needed. Now, because of high property prices, there are almost no spaces left for people to meet with no (or little) economical exchange, says Eva Matjaž. In ten years' time, she explains, this should be recovered to at least 2012 levels by high taxation of business properties and secondary private properties by the state to significantly decrease capital ownership of the city. "To make a shift we first have to take our space back!" Eva considers that as most important step in starting the process of taking the city back and implementing a more ecological, sustainable story for all of our cities.

Rebeka Szabo's vision of **BUDAPEST** is that of a city with less car traffic and more bikes, and good quality public transport. To that end, urban development must focus more on „rust areas” located between the city center and the outskirts, thereby reducing the heavy in- and outflow of car traffic. Green areas will be increased and planned in a way that can provide shelter against the heatwaves. Another key aspect of climate adaptation is capturing and harvesting rainwater, as rain in Budapest is becoming less frequent, but more intense. The lower embankment of Pest will be closed from car traffic to create a connection between people and the Danube river (humanization of the river banks). Lacking sufficient funds, small-scale, citizens-driven and even temporary sustainability solutions must be encouraged (e.g. community gardens and urban farming), she concludes.

SEVILLA is known for using public space to gather, says Felipe Gonzales Gil. "As father of two kids I would like to see more places where we can gather which are not mediated by consumption. Increasing share of public spaces with trees and shadows is one of the utmost priorities. The city I would like to be in is one with not only bars and garages, but more spaces for citizens to spend time together in safe and healthy environment (particularly in the context of heat waves)."

In **ZURICH**, Phillip Klaus imagines the new city as a city with many more of the new cooperative projects. The existing ones show solutions for resilient, ecological and solidary cities. Efforts for more greening in the city have to be intensified. Cars need to be banned from most parts of the city, and neighbourhood life should be strengthened. In such a city, the housing market needs to be to a large extent disconnected from profit mechanisms.

In case of **PULA**, Dušica Radojčić sees a city where tourism that doesn't negatively affect the quality of life – with functional waste management, clean drinking water provision that satisfies the needs of the local community, and a reasonable number of tourists. In this resilient future, construction regulations prevent “all concrete” built parcels, soil in urban areas is protected against sealing and loss of organic matter, and public transport is functional, and has significantly reduced the traffic in the city.

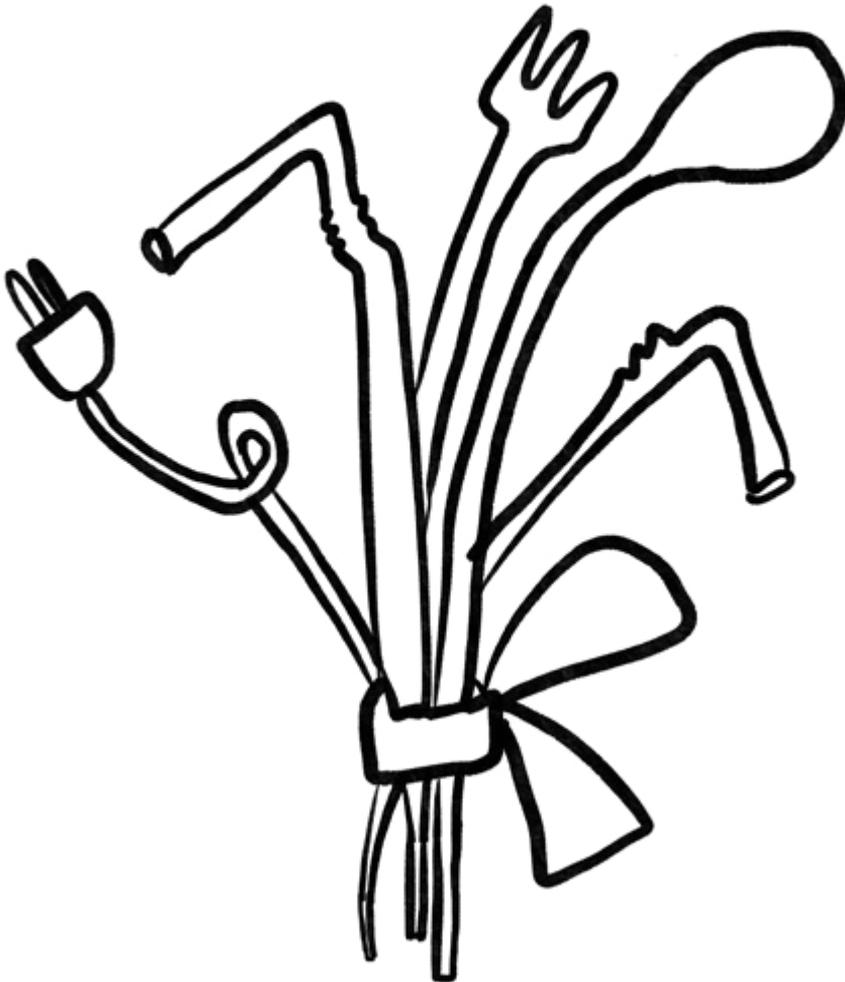
Different economic activities are in place and provide young citizens with job opportunities. Senior citizens have sufficient care homes at affordable prices at their disposal. Public housing is developed; affordable public housing rent prices dictate/affect market rents. Green infrastructure is developed and protected, and all green infrastructure in the city is connected by green corridors. All coastal areas are accessible, and in most parts natural. Agriculture is capable of providing enough healthy food for local markets.

Vit Masare fears that visible changes for better will unfortunately not take place in **PRAGUE** within the coming 3-4 years. But it is enough time for the media and for the civic society and the Greens to point at the contrast between the words, the strategies, and the reality of Prague's unsustainable policy-making and the seriousness with which the same agendas are treated in cities from the Western European the public wants to compare with.

Pablo Sanchez sees new city of **BARCELONA** as place where water, electricity, waste collection and management are all part of a municipal owned utility with citizens and workers involvement. In that city the transport company works with other local companies to provide local bikes. This resilient city is a city that creates jobs with added value and logically rooted in industry and services. Therefore, the profits of the utilities stay within the city to ensure that green and sustainable investment and renovation of housing is a major niche of green employment.

As a ground prerequisite for securing its future resilience, in one or two decades **ZAGREB** should find a way to regain its ability for perceiving its space as a public good instead of a commercial resource in municipal urban

planning, says Antonija Komazlić. The approach to urban development based on public interest and needs would enable the processes of satisfying a series of structural needs in the city such as access to housing, education and healthcare as a right for all citizens, social inclusion of vulnerable populations, introduction of green transition practices, optimization of energy usage and democratization of its supply.



BIO



BARCELONA / Pablo Sanchez was Director of International relations in 2015 and has campaign for water remunipalisation in Barcelona for years.



BELGRADE / Iva Čukić is activist and architect from Belgrade, co-founder of Ministry of Space collective. The areas of her research include urban commons and urban transformation, which she pursues through intersecting academic and practice-based perspective. She actively works with the community – supporting local initiatives in their efforts to address spatial issues and contribute to socio-political change in line with the principles of social justice. Čukić is currently engaged as a guest lecturer at many Universities in Europe and abroad such as TU Berlin, ETH, MIT, Oxford, Architectural Association School of Architecture London, etc.



BUDAPEST / Rebeka Szabó is a biologist and ecologist by profession. Founding member of LMP and Dialogue. Active in Hungarian politics since 2008. Betw. 2014 and 2019, she served as deputy mayor and member of the local council of Budapest's 14th district, working closely together with (then) district mayor Gergely Karácsony. MP

since 2022, formerly on the Committee on Agriculture, current deputy chairperson of the Committee on Sustainable Development. Focuses on nature and animal protection. Dog and cat lover.



LJUBLJANA / Eva Matjaž is independent researcher with BA in Psychology and MSc in Sociology and Social work. Co-founder and programmer of the first creative center in Slovenia Poligon and co-initiator and one of the coordinators of ZASUK, union of cultural and creative workers. Main research (and practice!) topic: workers, cultural and creative sectors, exploitation of new economy models, degrowth, overturism and ...



MADRID / Ana Méndez de Andés is architect and urban planner based in Sheffield and Madrid. She has been involved in activist projects working on metropolitan transformations, urban commons and public spaces. She was part of the municipalist platforma Ahora Madrid where she was advisor to the City Council and she is currently doing a doctoral research n the 'becoming-common of the public' at Sheffield School of Architecture.



PODGORICA / Sonja Dragović is a PhD candidate and a researcher at the Center for Socioeconomic and Territorial Studies – DINAMIACET-Iscte at the University Institute of Lisbon. Her research interests include socially engaged architectural practices, commons, urban social movements, and the interplay between activism and urban governance. Her own activist efforts focus on working with local communities toward improving participatory methods, public policies, and shared spaces. She is a member of activist and research collectives KANA/ko ako ne arhitekt (Podgorica) and Laboratório de Estudos Urbanos (Lisbon), and one of the editors of LeftEast.



PRAGUE / Vit Masare is Czech Green party board member, social and security advisor, manager in sustainability education programs.



PULA / Dušica Radojčić was president of the of the non-governmental environmental organization Green Istria from 2002 to 2022. During her work she focused mainly on strengthening public participation in environmental decision-making program. In 2021 she started a political career in the green-left party Možemo!, becoming a member of its Managing Board. During the 2021 election she was a candidate for the Mayor of the City of Pula, and from 2021 to 2022 she held the position of the President of the City Council. Today she is a councilor of the Pula City Council.



SEVILLE / Felipe G. Gil works at ZEMOS98, a 25 years old non-profit organization dedicated to cultural mediation and based in Seville (Spain). Felipe currently coordinates Commonsopoly: an open source board game that fosters a culture of cooperation. He also coordinates Concomitentes UCI Pediátrica, a 4 years project on how arts can help in an Intensive Care Unit for Children in a hospital. He also writes at elDiario.es about Internet culture and digital and socially engaged creativity. He plays any sport which implies using a racquet and he is a Star Wars fan.



ZAGREB / Antonija Komazlić holds a double Master degree in Sociology and Spanish philology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. In the organization Pravo na grad (Right to the City Zagreb) she works at the research of public policies and public resource management related with the advocacy for social, economic and ecological sustainability in the fields of housing, urban planning and public infrastructure. She published several articles in the respective areas and has a certificate in sustainable site conversion and urban regeneration of public spaces.



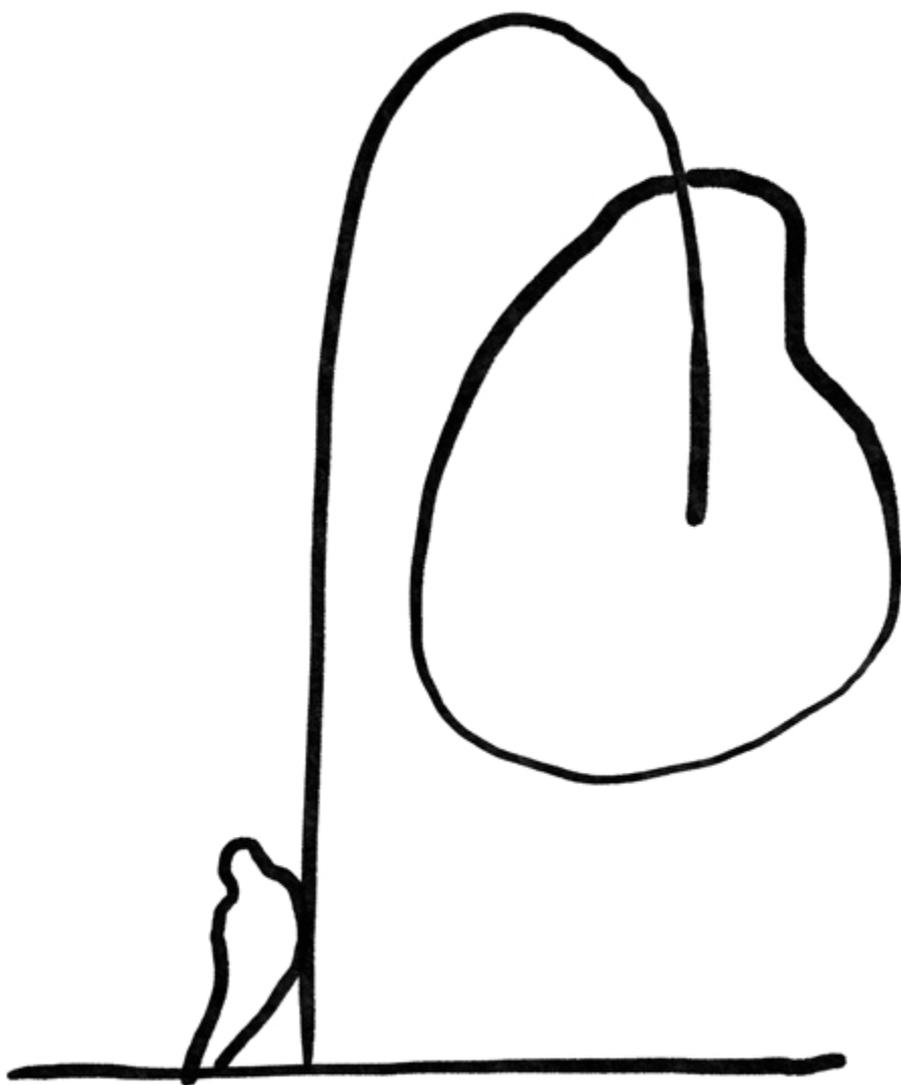
SARAJEVO / Alma Midžić is researcher and activist, working on the topic of social movements and common goods. She has many years of experience working in local and international organizations. She published articles, essays, and commentaries in collections, magazines, and digital editions covering topics of common and public goods, social control of resources, and participation. She designed policies in the field of environment, sustainable development, communication, and participation. She worked as an engaged researcher on several tasks related to resource management, rural development, corruption, and participatory mechanisms with a focus on civic initiatives and local communities.



THESSALONIKI / Dr. Giorgos Chatzinakos is a Human Geographer, specialised in action research and community-building. He was born and raised in Thessaloniki. He did his postgraduate studies in Urban Cultures at four European universities. In 2021, he received his Doctoral degree from Manchester Metropolitan University. His dissertation examines the contemporary role of suburban communities, focusing on the relationship between everyday life and suburban culture. His research interests, among others, include the commons, participatory planning, cultural mapping, community festivals and place-making. He has co-organised various participatory planning workshops for the appropriation of public space and urban experiments, such as the "Spring's Dinner" and the "Pocket Park" of Alexandrou Svolou neighbourhood in Thessaloniki.



ZURICH / Philipp Klaus, Dr. sc. nat., is a social and economic geographer. Since 1999 he coordinates the activities of the International Network for Urban Research and Action INURA. As senior researcher and lecturer at ETH and University of Zurich he focused on competition among cities, gentrification and regeneration, sociospatial segregation and cultural economies. As co-president of the housing cooperative Kraftwerk1 and member of the strategic building committee, he is committed to the realization of progressive, solidarity-based and ecologically built environments.



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