

15. LJUBLJANA **2025**
FORUM



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FUTURES OF **CITIES**

SUSTAINABLE – SMART – INCLUSIVE – RESILIENT

CITY OF WELL-BEING
SPORTS & RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE



Synthesis Report

Strategic Foresight Report

2nd-3rd of October, 2025 • Ljubljana Castle, Slovenia

Conference



Synthesis report on
FUTURES OF **CITIES**

SUSTAINABLE - SMART - INCLUSIVE - RESILIENT
CITY OF WELL-BEING
SPORTS & RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE



About Ljubljana Forum 2025

On 2nd and 3rd October 2025, the 15th Ljubljana Forum took place in Ljubljana. The theme of this year's Forum was City of well-being: Sports & recreation infrastructure.

Organizers and partners of Ljubljana Forum 2025

- GoForeSight Institute
- City of Ljubljana
- City of Vienna
- Energetika Ljubljana
- European Investment Bank
- International Association for the Advancement of Innovative Approaches to Global Challenges
- Libelium
- Ljubljana Castle

- The Millenium Project
- Slovenia Nigeria Chamber of Commerce
- Sproule ERCE
- T2
- TIA Summit
- 4sing
- AAMI Corporation
- Antiq Palace

Participating cities

- City of Ljubljana
- City of Vienna
- City of Dubrovnik
- City of Sarajevo
- City of Nova Gorica

Welcome to the 15th edition of Ljubljana Forum Report

For fifteen years, Ljubljana Forum has stood as a proud platform where ideas, partnerships, and long-term visions for sustainable urban development come together. As Mayor of Ljubljana, it is my honour to welcome you to this special anniversary edition, that present debates and outcomes of the 2025 forum hosted in the heart of our city at the Ljubljana Castle.



Mayor of the City of Ljubljana
Mr. Zoran Janković

Ljubljana has always believed in cooperation, innovation, and the inclusive spirit that defines European urban culture. Over the years, the Forum has grown into one of Europe's most recognised gatherings for shaping the future of cities. Exchange of views on futures for cities concrete work and shared commitment have helped Ljubljana remain a city of openness, ambition, and well being. As I always emphasize - Ljubljana is a city of solidarity and tolerance, in which diverse people live together with mutual respect. For me, Ljubljana is the most beautiful city in the world!

Our vision has always been simple: to create a city where everyone feels welcome, respected, and empowered to contribute. This aligns deeply with the Forum's mission, bringing together leaders, experts, and citizens to build cities that support quality of life for all.

As we celebrate this 15 year journey, I want to express my sincere appreciation to all partners, speakers, organisers, and participants. Their dedication ensures that Ljubljana remains at the forefront of sustainable, smart, and people centred urban development.

I wish you an inspiring reading and fruitful future developments as we continue shaping the future of cities together.

Zoran Janković

Mayor of the City of Ljubljana

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Introduction

Fifteen years ago, Ljubljana Forum began as a bold experiment, a meeting of minds envisioning how cities could become smarter, greener, and more humane. Today, it stands as a mature European platform that connects vision with action. Over a decade and a half, the Forum has evolved from discussing “smart cities” and providing solutions for it, into shaping the “City of Well-Being” a city that anticipates change, empowers participation, and measures its success through the happiness and empowerment of its citizens and visitors.

The 15th anniversary edition marked a milestone in this evolution. City leaders, planners, and innovators from across Europe and beyond came together to reflect on what the Forum has built: a living ecosystem linking foresight and planning, governance and creativity. Panels explored the transformation of Ljubljana, Dubrovnik, Sarajevo, and Nova Gorica into examples of inclusive, sustainable, and culturally vibrant cities. From visionary Ilirija Sports Citadel swimming pool stadium, which turned architecture into highly competitive world class city infrastructure, to the roundtable of mayors redefining cooperation across borders, the Forum confirmed that well-being is now the core of urban policy not a luxury, but a necessity.

Each session unveiled a new dimension of the City of Well-Being. Experts discussed how foresight bridges the gap between technology and humanity; how digital innovation and civic trust must advance together; how sport, culture, and nature form the foundations of resilient urban life. The European Investment Bank (EIB) underscored that sustainable urban futures depend on bankable, well-prepared projects which prove that finance, strategic foresight, strategy design and projects creation are inseparable.

The highlight of this year’s Forum was the Ljubljana Forum Award 2025, presented to architect Peter Lorenz for transforming a century-old vision into a symbol of democratic urban renewal. His Ilirija complex stands not just as a sports facility but as a manifesto of well-being—where architecture, community, and sustainability converge under one roof. His work embodies what Ljubljana Forum has pursued since its inception: creating spaces that unite people and inspire individual and collective progress from world records in sport competition to accessible recreation for all generations.

With the “Anticipate Workshop” participants challenge and designed possible scenarios for the “Ideal City in 2045.” This interactive participatory foresight exercise together with session on foresight, business development and new projects creation showed that the Forum has fully embraced its new role: turning planning into anticipation, and ideas into strategies for cities that thrive. As we look ahead into the following pages of the report, Ljubljana Forum remains a lighthouse for Europe’s urban future where foresight, city challenges, knowledge, NGOs advocacy, industry solutions, finance, and humanity meet to build the cities we all deserve. 2025 Strategic Foresight Forum was concluded with eight conclusions and Ljubljana Forum Manifesto 2025 which focus on three main areas first “Act together” second “Plan ahead” and third “Deliver Well-being”.

Blaž Golob
Chairman of Ljubljana Forum



Ms. Marta Bon
Assoc. Professor;
University of
Ljubljana & Sport



Mr. Luka Rep
President of
YBC Youth
Business
Group
Slovenia



Ms. Mara DiBerardo
Director of
Communications
at the
Millennium
Project



Mr. Blaž Golob
Chairman of
Ljubljana Forum



Mr. Fred Uduma
President of
Slovenian - Nigeria
Chamber of
Commerce



Ms. Rasha Abd El Mawgoud
Senior
Manager at
Sport Arena
Wien



Mr. Mathias Behn Bjørnhof
Facilitator & Founder
of Anticipate,
Copenhagen
Anticipate
Consultancy



City Leaders at Ljubljana Forum 2025



**Mr. Dejan
Cernak**
Vice Mayor of
Ljubljana



**Mr. Mato
Franković**
Mayor of Dubrovnik



**Mr. Samir
Avdić**
Mayor of
Sarajevo



**Mr. Samo
Turel**
Mayor of Nova
Gorica



Speakers at Ljubljana Forum 2025



Mr. Peter Lorenz
Innsbruck – Trieste –
Vienna – Ljubljana

**Ms. Rasha Abd El
Mawgoud**
Senior Manager at Sport Arena
Wien



Ms. Marta Bon
Assoc. Professor;
University of Ljubljana &
Sport

Mr. Brendan McDonagh
Senior Adviser at EIB's Advisory
– Public and Infrastructure
Finance Division – European
Investment Bank



Mr. Miran Gajšek
State Secretary, Ministry
of Natural Resources and
Spatial Planning

Mr. Vangeli Anastas
Assis. Professor in
International Business
University of Ljubljana



**Mr. Kyriakos
Kakouris**
Vice President of the
European Investment
Bank (EIB)

Mr. Jose Jacob Kayil
Founder and Director Future
ICT Forum Bangalore



Mr. Ibon Zugasti
Director Prospektiker, San
Sebastian

Mr. Luka Rep
President of YBG Youth
Business Group Slovenia



Mr. Lorenzo Madrid
President of Smart City
Business Institute America

Mr. Jonathan Buhl
Senior Consultant at 4Sing
GmbH, Hamburg



Mr. Gašper Žerovnik
Director of Digital
Transformation at T-2
Ljubljana

Mr. Miha Murn
Painter – President AAMI
Corporation



Mr. Simon Delakorda
Director of the Institute
for eParticipation

Moderators



Ms. Mara DiBerardo
Director of
Communications at the
Millennium Project



Mr. Jan Künne
CEO Grundig Academy
Nürnberg



**Mr. Aleksander
Vujović**
Architect CEO SUPA -
Ljubljana



Mr. Frane Šesnić
CEO of Zagreb Innovation
Centre

Moderators & speakers



Mr. Blaž Golob
Chairman of Ljubljana
Forum



**Mr. Mathias Behn
Bjørnhof**
Facilitator & Founder of
Anticipate, Copenhagen
Anticipate Consultancy



Mr. Tijs Beek
Principal - Energy
Insights Sproule - Erce,
Rotterdam

About the agenda

Thursday, 2nd October 2025

Place of venue: **Ljubljana Castle**

Welcome speeches & official Opening of Ljubljana Forum 2025

Moderated by: Mr. Jan Künne, CEO Grundig Academy Nürnberg

9.00 - 9.30	Mr. Blaž Golob, Chairman of Ljubljana Forum, Mr. Zoran Jankovič, Mayor of the City of Ljubljana, Mr. Miran Gajšek State Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, Mr. Kyriacos Kakouris, Vice President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), Mr. Miha Murn, President & CEO of AAMI International
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Session I: **The City of Well-being: 15 Years of Progress and towards the Urban Futures of 2040**

Moderated by: Mr. Blaž Golob, GFS Institute

Time	Session	Speaker
9.40 - 9.55	Sport & Recreation Infrastructure for the Cities of Wellbeing	Architect Mr. Peter Lorenz, Innsbruck – Trieste – Vienna – Ljubljana

Session II: **Round Table of Mayors City of Well-being Challenges – Strategies – Projects**

Mr. Jan Künne, CEO Grundig Academy Nürnberg

10.00 – 11.00	Mr. Zoran Jankovič, Mayor of Ljubljana, Mr. Mato Frankovič, Mayor of Dubrovnik, Mr. Samir Avdić, Mayor of Sarajevo, Mr. Samo Turel, Mayor of Nova Gorica
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Session III: **Cities for the future's – City as negotiator**

Moderated by: Mr. Aleksander Vujović, Architect CEO SUPA – Ljubljana

11.15 - 12.30	Future of Wellbeing – Reducing inequalities	Mr. Ibon Zugasti, Director Prospektiker, San Sebastian
	Understanding and navigating transition	Mr. Tijs Beek, Principal – Energy Insights Sproule – Erce
	Sports & Recreation for Wellbeing	Ms. Marta Bon, Assoc. Professor; University of Ljubljana & Sport
	Smart Sports Infrastructure: The Case of Sport Arena Wien	Ms. Rasha Abd El Mawgoud, Senior Manager at Sport Arena Wien
	Anticipating the City of Wellbeing	Mr. Mathias Behn Bjørnhof, Facilitator & Founder of Anticipate, Copenhagen

Session IV: **City Challenges - Industry solutions – NGOs participation & Finances for cities**

Moderated by: Mr. Frane Šesnić, CEO of Zagreb Innovation Centre

14.00 - 15.00	Governance of Cities to Become Smart Cities	Mr. Lorenzo Madrid, President of Smart City Business Institute America
	T - 2 Smart City Platform for Governance of Cities	Mr. Gašper Žerovnik, Director of Digital Transformation at T-2 Ljubljana
	Challenges of Digital transformation and the role of NGOs	Mr. Simon Delakorda, Director of the Institute for eParticipation
	Consulting & Finance solutions for Cities	Mr. Brendan McDonagh, Senior Adviser at EIB's Advisory – Public and Infrastructure Finance Division – European Investment Bank

Session V: **Centers of relevance for the future: Cities thriving Europe and World by 2040**

Moderated by: Mr. Frane Šesnić, CEO of Zagreb Innovation Centre

15.00 - 16.00	Africa – Europe	Mr. Fred Uduma, President of Slovenian - Nigeria Chamber of Commerce
	China - Europe	Mr. Vangeli Anastas, Assis. Professor in International Business University of Ljubljana
	India - Europe	Mr. Jose Jacob Kayil, Founder and Director Future ICT Forum Bangalore
	Latin America – Europe	Mr. Lorenzo Madrid, President of Smart City Business Institute America & Mr. Ibon Zugasti, Director Prospektiker, San Sebastian

Session VI: **Ideal City for the Future – Vision 2045: City of Wellbeing (Three Horizons workshop) – Introduction of Gen - Z challenges in 2025**

Mr. Mathias Behn Bjørnhof, Facilitator & Founder of Anticipate, Copenhagen Anticipate Consultancy & Mr. Luka Rep, President of YBG Youth Business Group Slovenia

Friday, 3rd October 2025

Place of venue: **City Hotel & Ilirija Sports Center**

8.15 - 9.00	Strategic Foresight for Cities Challenges & Opportunities Examples of Geneva and Rotterdam	Mr. Tijs Beek, Principal – Energy Insights Sproule – Erce, Rotterdam & Mr. Jonathan Buhl, Senior Consultant at 4Sing GmbH, Hamburg
9.00 - 10.00	City Projects Development	B2B and B2C
11.00	Study tour to Ilirija Sports Center	Mr. Lorenzo Madrid, President of Smart City Business Institute America



Mr. Dejan Crnek (Vice Mayor of Ljubljana)

At the opening of the Ljubljana Forum 2025, Vice Mayor Dejan Crnek welcomed participants on behalf of Mayor Zoran Jankovič and the City of Ljubljana, expressing pride that the Forum had become one of Europe's leading gatherings on sustainable urban development. He highlighted that such events contribute greatly to Ljubljana's identity as the most beautiful city in the world, not just for its aesthetics but for its spirit of inclusion, cooperation, and respect for diversity. Reflecting the city's slogan "Let's live together, respecting all differences," he emphasized that everyone is welcome in Ljubljana provided they bring goodwill and a desire to contribute to the community's well-being. Crnek underlined the importance of teamwork, thanking the organizing committee and the partners whose dedication made the Forum possible. He concluded by recalling that both Ljubljana and Slovenia carry "love" in their names, symbolizing a city and country built on openness, kindness, and shared purpose, and invited guests to feel that love and energy throughout the Forum as a foundation for creating better, more caring cities.

At the opening of the Ljubljana Forum 2025, Mr. Miran Gajšek one of the Ljubljana Forum's co-founders and a leading urban planner delivered a message centred on the meaning of well-being in cities and the vital role of planning and foresight in shaping the future.

Speaking on behalf of Slovenia's Ministry for Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, he emphasized that well-being goes beyond physical comfort to include social, economic, and emotional security of the feeling of being safe and thriving in one's city. He argued that despite the growing aversion to the word planning in European discourse, planning the future and programming urban development remain essential if cities are to anticipate change rather than merely react to it. Ljubljana, he said, stands as a lighthouse city a model of good spatial and architectural practice whose experience can inspire others. Gajšek concluded by calling for cities to align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, reminding participants that foresight and responsible planning are indispensable to ensure resilience, solidarity, and well-being in an increasingly unpredictable world.



Mr. Miran Gajšek (State Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning)





Mr. Kyriacos Kakouris (Vice President of the European Investment Bank (EIB))

Vice President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), extended congratulations on the Forum's 15th edition and reaffirmed the EIB Group's long-standing partnership with Ljubljana and Slovenian cities.

He emphasized that smart, sustainable, and climate-resilient cities are at the heart of Europe's vision for a competitive and inclusive future. Kakouris underlined the EIB's dual role not only as a financial partner but also as a strategic advisor supporting municipalities in developing projects that advance the green and digital transitions. He highlighted Slovenia's strong record in innovation, urban sustainability, and green transformation, noting that the EIB had already helped Ljubljana achieve recognition as one of Europe's greenest capitals. Looking ahead, he announced that recent legal reforms now enable the EIB to finance Slovenian municipalities directly, opening new opportunities for long-term, affordable investments in housing, technology, and energy efficiency. Concluding his remarks, Kakouris stressed that the development of sustainable cities is essential for the well-being and safety of future generations, and reaffirmed the EIB's commitment to helping Slovenia and Europe to build a smarter, greener urban future.



Serving as the event's moderator, set a dynamic and engaging tone for the Forum, inviting participants to interact, reflect, and co-create ideas for the City of Well-Being.

In his introduction, he reminded the audience that well-being begins with connection and participation, encouraging everyone to engage actively rather than simply listen. Describing the Forum as one of Europe's most prestigious platforms for sustainable urban development, Kühne framed the day's discussions as a journey from planning and foresight to action and implementation. He celebrated the Forum's 15-year legacy as a space where visionary ideas become real projects, crediting the collaboration between the City of Ljubljana, partners, and thought leaders. With warmth and humour, he bridged speakers and sessions, highlighting themes of love, resilience, and the human side of urban life. Kühne concluded his opening remarks by positioning the Ljubljana Forum as not only a professional conference but also a community of shared purpose a place where experts, policymakers, and citizens come together to shape cities that truly nurture the well-being for all.



Mr. Jan Kühne (CEO Grundig Academy Nürnberg)



Session I:



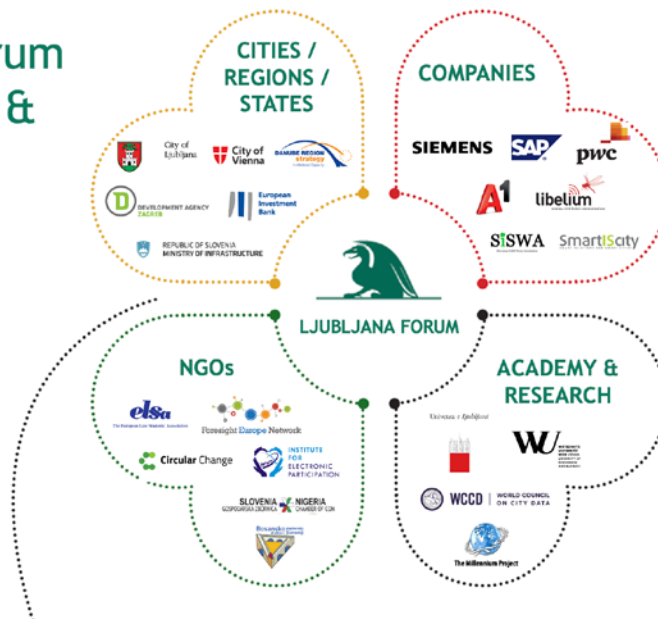
Blaž Golob, Chairman of Ljubljana Forum

*“Cities used to plan; now they
they are able to anticipate.”*

The City of Well-Being: 15 Years of progress and towards the Urban Futures of 2045

Ljubljana Forum demonstrates 15 years of shaping the future development of cities towards a holistic model of the Ideal City that integrates planning, foresight, projects creation, advocacy of values, and business development. Over fifteen editions, the Forum has matured into a multi-stakeholder ecosystem connecting different stakeholders with different views on city challenges and futures developments.

Ljubljana Forum Stakeholders & impact



Picture: Ljubljana Forum sample of Stakeholders engagement 2011-2025

Over fifteen years, Ljubljana Forum has built a collaborative ecosystem connecting cities, regions, companies, academia, NGOs, and global foresight institutions. This multi-stakeholder platform bridges short-term urban planning with long-term strategic foresight, transforming dialogue into policy-ready concepts and concrete projects. Through partnerships such as the City of Vienna, Millennium Project and European Investment Bank, the Forum has enabled cities to co-create solutions that link innovation, finance, and governance, reinforcing its role as a European lighthouse for sustainable, inclusive urban futures.

From Planning to Foresight & New Business Development Models

The Forum's reflection identified three enduring priorities: aligning master plans with human needs and EU sustainability goals; applying strategic foresight to navigate geopolitical, technological, and climate uncertainty; and empowering different stakeholders and age groups such as Generation Z to shape governance and innovation. These priorities drive new business development models that combine foresight, project design, financing, and civic participation. Cities must move beyond siloed planning to anticipatory governance turning foresight into bankable projects, inclusive partnerships, and resilient, well-being-oriented urban systems.

Ideal City



Picture: Ljubljana Forum evolving model of “Ideal City”



Different Scenarios for the Future – one of them “Ideal”

Exploring multiple future scenarios, Ljubljana Forum promotes anticipation as a tool for shaping preferred outcomes rather than reacting to crises. Emerging technologies AI, IoT, and digital platforms serve as enablers, but the ultimate objective remains human-centred progress: well-being, resilience, creativity, a just development, and social coherence. The “Ideal City” scenario represents a balanced system where innovation, sustainability, and equity converge, guided by European values and sustained by participatory governance and shared responsibility.

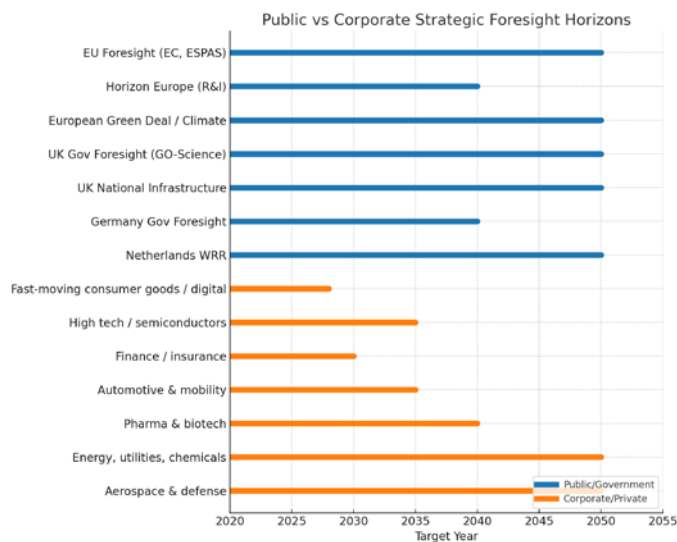
Key messages:

- **Collective Action as the Foundation of Urban Success** – Cities thrive when different stakeholders, public authorities, businesses, academia, and citizens unite around shared challenges and common goals.
- **Foresight-Driven Planning for Resilience** – Anticipatory governance must guide investments and policies, enabling cities to manage uncertainty and harness innovation.
- **Well-Being as the Core Urban Outcome** – Future cities must balance sustainability, technology, and inclusion to create coherent systems that empower people.
- **Youth as Co-Creators of the Future** – Different age groups and Generation Z must be actively engaged in governance, entrepreneurship, and cultural development to ensure inclusive urban futures.
- **Co-Creation Through Anticipation** – Transforming foresight into action requires participatory processes that connect technology, policy, and community into a shared urban vision.

European Cities Between Planning and Foresight: Time Horizons to 2050



Graph 1: European Cities Master Plans



Graph 2: Public and Corporate Strategic Foresights

Graph 1: Author's synthesis based on official European city master plans (October 2025)
Graph 2: Author's synthesis based on international public and corporate foresights (October 2025)

City planning and strategic foresight are increasingly interdependent, yet a structural gap remains between long-term public planning horizons and shorter corporate innovation cycles. Public master plans often extend toward 2040–2050, reflecting infrastructure lifecycles and climate commitments, while corporate foresight typically operates within 3–15 years driven by markets and technology innovation. In Central European cities such as Vienna and Ljubljana, a cultural shift is emerging toward two different options either Scenario 1 iterative planning combined with foresight-based project pipelines where strategy identifies projects or Scenario 2 planning becomes more adaptive and project-driven. In such us scenario strategic documents try to legitimize selected projects.

Towards an Inclusive and Anticipatory Futures for Cities in 2050

By embracing city planning and foresight cities can transform uncertainty into opportunity and deliver a future defined not only by technological progress, but by well-being, resilience, and shared prosperity. Bridging these approaches through anticipatory governance enables cities to align long-term visions with agile investment and innovation, translating strategies into bankable projects that support resilient, inclusive, and well-being-oriented urban development.

Sport & Recreation Infrastructure for the Cities of Well-Being



Peter Lorenz - Architect and Founder, Lorenz Atelier Vienna

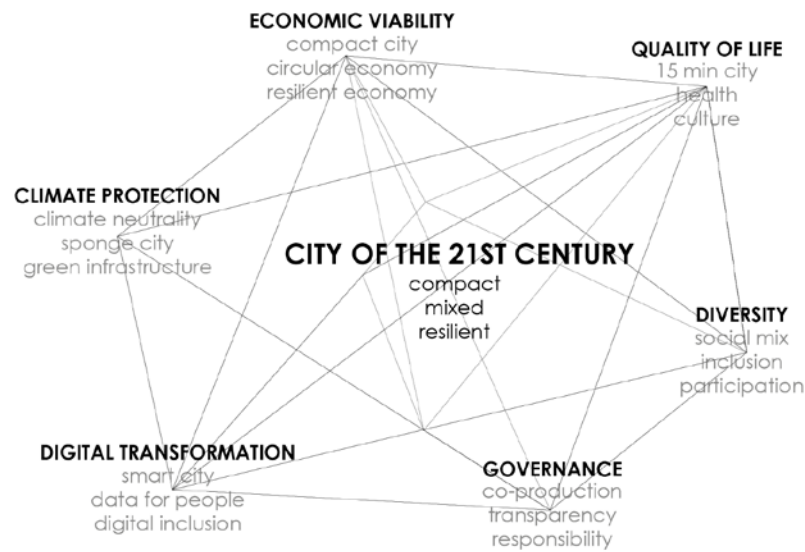
“Well-being is no longer a goal – it is survival.”

Peter Lorenz warned that Europe’s pursuit of comfort has contributed to climate imbalance and urban sprawl. Humanity grew from 2.5 billion to nearly 10 billion within a century, while urban populations exploded from 800 million to 7 billion.

Against this background, Lorenz argued that architects and planners must rethink democratic cities to ensure their survival. He traced the historical shift from feudal masterplans to complex democratic urbanism, emphasizing that participation and transparency now define quality planning. Democratic processes are slow and demanding, yet they remain the only way to achieve legitimate, lasting results. Drawing on Habermas and Hannah Arendt, Lorenz described cities as political spaces where democracy becomes visible a living dialogue between citizens, not a static blueprint. Lorenz praised Ljubljana Forum as a unique European platform fostering this dialogue among planners, mayors, and citizens. He contrasted Europe’s past focus on beautified historic cores with today’s neglected peripheries and warned that without revitalizing suburban belts, European capitals risk turning into “Disney parks for Asia.”

Milestone of Ilirija Swimming Pool Sport Citadel 1995 – 2025 / 30 years

- 1995:** City of Ljubljana, led by Mayor Dimitrij Rupel, decides to build an Olympic-standard 50 m swimming centre.
- 2000–2001:** First international architectural competition; Lorenzateliers wins. Preliminary project developed under Mayor Viktorija Potočnik.
- 2002–2006:** PPP model advanced under Mayor Danica Simšič with José Anderlič, adding commercial and retail areas.
- 2006–2011:** Project redefined through meetings with Nestor Mankoč, Dejan Crnek, and Janez Sodržnik.
- 2007:** Mayor Zoran Jankovič converts the project into a city investment, removing commercial areas.
- 2011:** Bloudek building listed as a protected structure, reshaping the planning process.
- 2012:** New development plan approved and enters into force.
- 2018:** Lorenzateliers leads urban design; Elea iC appointed general planner.
- 2022–2025:** Construction led by Makro 5.
- March 2025:** Official opening of the Ilirija Swimming Centre – Ilirija Sport Citadel



Picture:
Complexity of Democratic Urban Development in the 21st century

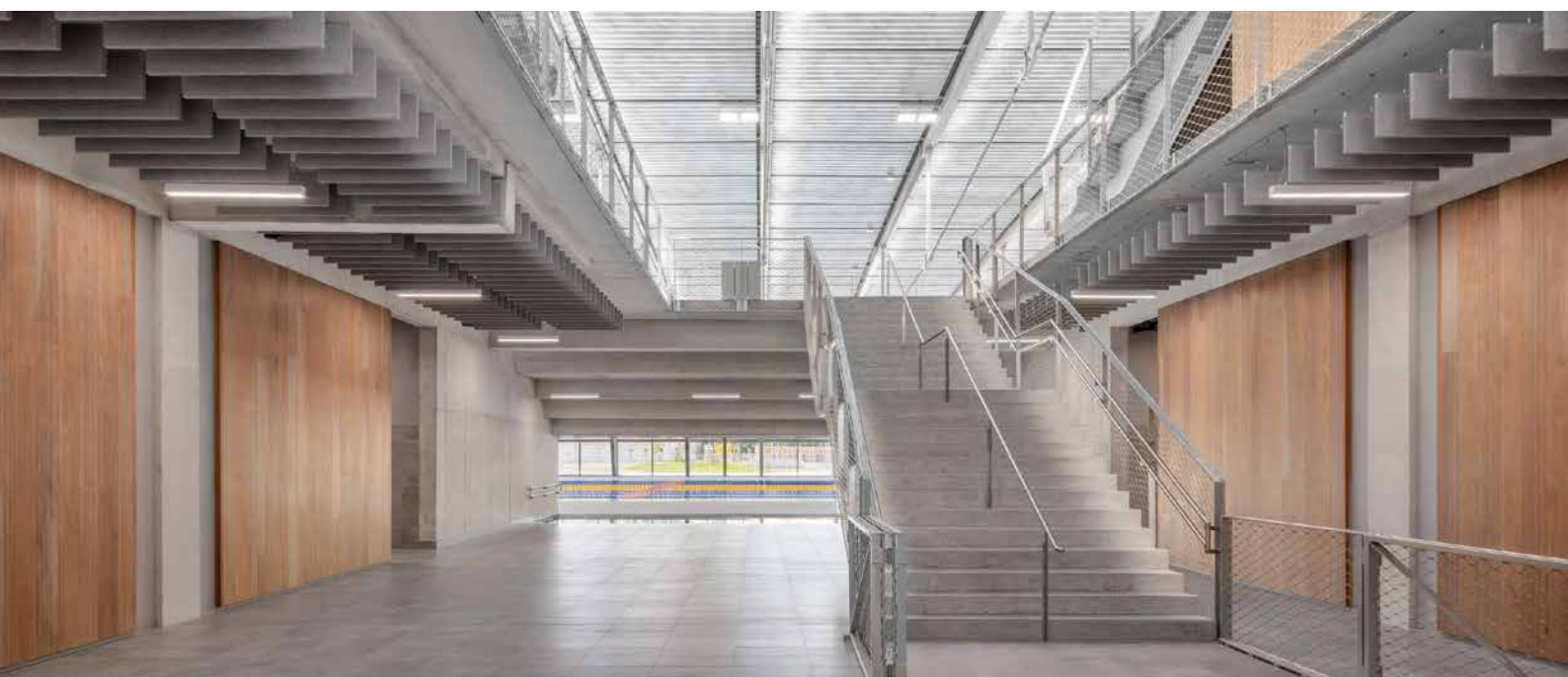
The Ilirija Sports Citadel and Lessons for Future Cities

Lorenz presented the Ilirija Sports Citadel (1929 – 2025) as a living case study of integrated urban regeneration. Born from Stanko Bloudek’s 1929 swimming pool design and decades of political perseverance, the renewed Ilirija complex reunites the city with Tivoli Park under a 12 000 m² roof a contemporary “city within the city.” The project reconnects separated urban tissues, re-opens Latterman Avenue after eighty years, and transforms an old sports ground into an urban stage blending culture, nature, and recreation. The architect underlined that sports and culture must coexist at the heart of cities, not on their outskirts. The Ilirija project demonstrates how architecture can act as a social catalyst zero-energy, transparent, multifunctional, and emotionally engaging. Its “spatial explosion” offers visual connections, diverse volumes, and creative stimuli, especially beneficial for children and community interaction. Lorenz concluded that Ljubljana’s achievement exemplifies the potential of Europe’s “small and big cities”: compact enough to remain human, yet ambitious enough to innovate. “Ilirija is not just a building it is a democratic act of urban renewal.





Ilirija Pool - Stanko Bloudek 1929



SPATIAL DIVERSITY “spatial explosion” – varied spaces, multiple views, and fluid transitions



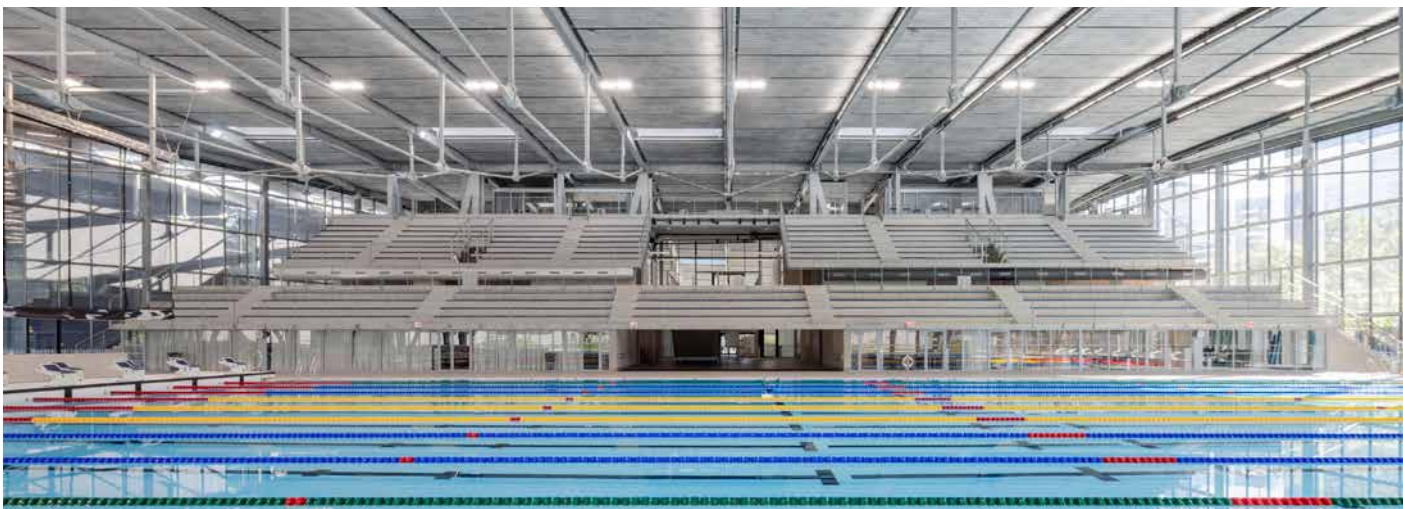
URBAN CONCEPT ROOF 2025



URBAN CONCEPT LATTERMANN 2025



URBAN CONCEPT PIAZZA - Peter Lorenz 2025



SPATIAL DIVERSITY - especially important for the development of children

Session II:

Round Table of Mayors & City leaders



Mr. Jan Kuhne - CEO Grundig Academy, Mr. Dejan Crnek - Vice Mayor of Ljubljana, Mr. Samir Avdić - Mayor of Sarajevo, Mr. Samo Turel - Mayor of Nova Gorica

City of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Mr. Dejan Cernak, Vice Mayor

Ljubljana integrates sports, culture, and sustainability into a single city vision. Building on its historic Sokol physical-culture movement, it developed the "Vision Ljubljana 2025" strategy based on more than 5 000 citizen proposals. Key initiatives – Ilirija Swimming Complex, Tivoli Gymnastic Hall, and riverside open-air fitness areas – are powered by renewable energy and smart-water systems. The city's aim is to ensure recreation within walking distance of every neighbourhood while protecting the Ljubljanica River ecosystem. Ljubljana demonstrates how long-term vision, citizen inclusion, and ecological design can together create a truly "green capital" model for Europe's mid-sized cities.

Challenges: Climate adaptation, flooding control, and maintaining compact growth.

Vision 2030: Carbon-neutral recreation network and full data-driven monitoring of public sports use.

City of Dubrovnik, Croatia

Mr. Mato Franković, Mayor

Dubrovnik shifted from crisis to innovation by combining digital governance and sustainable tourism. Facing UNESCO warnings, it introduced the Dubrovnik Pass and Bus Web Shop, regulating visitor flow through real-time data. To balance tourism with residents' needs, the city is investing €65 million in a multi-purpose sports and concert hall, opening a new season of sports

and cultural events and enabling year-round urban vitality. Dubrovnik's strategy shows how digital transformation and cultural investment can redefine a global heritage site into a resilient, living city for its citizens.

Challenges: Tourism pressure, housing affordability, and coastal climate risks.

Vision 2030: A "City 365" model—digital regulation, diversified economy, and sports-driven community life.



Mr. Mato Franković, Mayor of Dubrovnik

City of Nova Gorica, Slovenia

Mr. Samo Turel, Mayor

As European Capital of Culture 2025 (together with Gorizia, Italy), Nova Gorica promotes the "Go Borderless" concept bridging nations through sport and culture. The city repurposes industrial and railway areas into inclusive spaces such as the cross-border basketball court on Europe Square, symbolically divided between Slovenia and Italy. Urban plans include modular, energy-efficient sports facilities co-developed with the University of Nova Gorica and powered by solar micro-grids. Each new facility also serves as rain-water retention space, combining recreation with flood resilience. Nova Gorica proves that cooperation beyond borders and shared urban identity can transform post-industrial areas into sustainable spaces of unity and creativity.

Challenges: Limited land, historical division, and dual administration.

Vision 2030: Joint Slovenian Italian sports-education cluster and shared green mobility system.

City of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Samir Avdić, Mayor

Sarajevo builds on its Olympic legacy to rebuild trust and infrastructure. Projects such as "Clean Miljacka River", renovation of the Scenderija Hall, and cycling and marathon routes reconnect citizens with nature while stimulating tourism. The city uses culture and sport to promote European integration and environmental renewal. Despite complex governance and financial limits, Sarajevo demonstrates strong community engagement and partnerships with EU programs. Sarajevo's blend of heritage, youth energy, and environmental ambition represents the city's path from recovery to regional leadership in urban regeneration.

Challenges: Traffic congestion, outdated facilities, and river pollution.

Vision 2030: An eco-recreational riverfront district and modernized Olympic venues forming a Balkan model of urban resilience.

Conclusions from panel discussions:

- **Sports as Core Urban Infrastructure** - Cities now view recreation as a civic right equal to mobility, housing, and culture as fundamental to physical and mental well-being.
- **Sustainability + Resilience by Design** - New sports facilities double as climate tools water-retention zones, solar-energy sites, and biodiversity corridors.
- **Citizen Participation and Cross-Border Co-Creation** - From Ljubljana's public consultations to Nova Gorica's binational cooperation, participatory planning strengthens ownership and unity.
- **Digital Transformation for Quality of Life** - Smart data systems, from Dubrovnik's visitor-flow analytics to Ljubljana's energy dashboards, prove that AI-enabled management improves both transparency and urban comfort.
- **Culture, Peace, and Health as Future Urban Values** - The four cities collectively frame sport and culture as instruments of peace, inclusion, and human resilience as the foundation for the European model of the city for the future.

Session III.

Cities for the futures

The City as Negotiator

Aleksander Vujović reframed the role of the city in the 21st century as that of a negotiator a living system that mediates between conflicting interests, timeframes, and visions of progress. He described the modern city as a platform for survival and well-being, where foresight, planning, and participation must converge to balance economic, environmental, and social imperatives. For Vujović, negotiation is not just a governance tool, it is the core DNA of democratic urbanism.



Mr. Aleksander Vujović,
Architect &
Urban Planner,
Director of
SUPA Studio



“The city of the future is not built; it is agreed upon.”

Key introductory messages to the session:

- **Cities Are Mediators, Not Machines** – Urban planning today requires mediation among actors namely citizens, investors, governments that are seeking equilibrium between social well-being and economic dynamism.
- **Negotiation Capacity Defines Urban Quality** – The most resilient cities (like Vienna) embed negotiation into planning systems; those that rely solely on regulation risk rigidity and exclusion.
- **Foresight and Dialogue Build Legitimacy** – Long-term success depends on participatory foresight of citizens co-creating the vision of their city and transforming conflict into shared progress.

Future of Wellbeing: Reducing Inequalities

Building a Fairer Future Economy



Mr. Ibon Zugasti - Director, Propektiker & The Millennium Project Spain | Founder, ASETT Social Economy Think Tank

Mr. Ibon Zugasti delivered a powerful address on the future of wellbeing through social economy and foresight, warning that global income inequality has become a structural challenge for cities and nations alike. While global poverty is decreasing, income gaps are widening, creating what Zugasti calls “the paradox of progress.” According to Millennium Project foresight data, the 21st century is witnessing the rise of “employmentless economic growth,” where automation and technological shifts decouple GDP expansion from job creation. Zugasti presented the Basque model as a blueprint for inclusive growth namely a region that maintains 25% of GDP in industry while achieving one of the world’s best Gini indexes for equality. Unlike traditional welfare models relying primarily on taxation, the Basque case shows that social cohesion and competitiveness can coexist through industrial cooperatives and social entrepreneurship. The Mondragon Corporation, with its 1:6 salary ratio and democratic governance (“one person, one vote”), remains a global symbol of this alternative economy.

Announcing the creation of ASETT – Arizmendiarieta Social Economy Think Tank, Zugasti introduced a new platform combining foresight, research,

and practical projects to connect social innovation, academia, and public policy. Its mission is to turn anticipatory knowledge into real economic transformation aligning competitiveness, equality, and sustainability.

ASETT
Arizmendiarieta
Social Economy
Think Tank

Structure
3 fundamental pillars



1. THINK TANK



2. FORESIGHT INSTITUTE






3. SOCIAL LAB



Picture: **ASET**T
Arizmendiarieta
Social Economy
Think Tank

Key messages:

- 
A New Economic Paradigm Is Inevitable – Wealth concentration and automation demand rethinking traditional capitalism; social economies must provide human-centered alternatives.
- 
Social Cohesion Requires Competitiveness – Equality is not created by redistribution alone but by productive ecosystems that blend entrepreneurship, cooperation, and innovation.
- 
Foresight + Action = Transformation – The future of wellbeing depends on anticipatory governance connecting foresight, social enterprise, and city partnerships to reduce inequality.

Understanding and Navigating Transitions

Mr. Tijs Beek invited cities, governments, and companies to rethink how they plan and invest in a world that has reached the limits of unconstrained growth. After a century of industrial and social expansion, he argued, the 21st century demands systemic intelligence and the ability to manage interlinked physical, technological, and socio-political systems under pressure.

Tijs described that managing a constraint system moves the challenge from optimizing or solving single issues to navigating a complex interrelated web. He explained his foresight and systems thinking based outside-in approach, where organizations first examine what they least understand and control, geopolitics, social drivers, technological disruption, to look for change accelerators, blockers and unintended consequences before building internal strategies. This process requires iterative loops of learning, scenario design, and multi-stakeholder coordination. He also highlighted the paradox of data abundance: while AI and machine learning offer new decision tools, the quality and trustworthiness of data are rapidly declining by those same tools. His team's digital framework integrates AI-driven scenario planning with quantitative system modelling, enabling real-time, adaptive strategy for governments and industries. The goal, he said, is not to predict the future but to stay synchronized with change, ensuring that each investment, reform, and policy aligns with the shifting logic of the global transition.

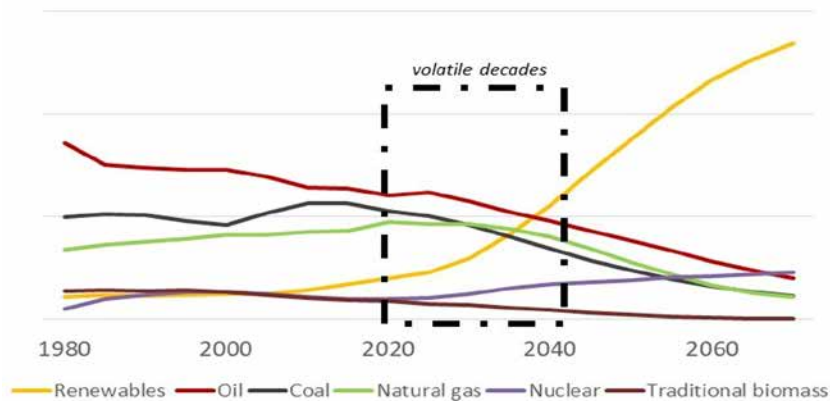


Mr. Tijs Beek
- Head of
Energy Insights,
Sproule-
ERCE (The
Netherlands)



*“We can no longer ask
Can we build it? or Can we
be efficient? The question
now is What should we
build—and why?”*

Global energy sources - now and in the future



Picture: Transition risk in changing systems comes from disconnects in time and space

Key messages:

- Growth Under Constraint Requires Systems Thinking Approach** – The 21st century is defined by societies increasingly feeling limits; sustainable progress demands managing interdependencies across socio-political, techno-economic and physical systems.
- Strategy Must Be Built from the Outside-In** – True foresight starts with what we don't control, external shocks, global forces, and societal dynamics, to build resilient, adaptive responses.
- Quality Over Quantity in the Age of AI** – Data alone is not foresight. In a noisy digital world, the ability to filter signal from noise, and translate insights into policy, is the new foundation of governance.



Ms. Marta Bon - Professor, Faculty of Sport - University of Ljubljana | Member of Ljubljana City Council

Sport & Recreation for Wellbeing

In her contribution Ms. Marta Bon examined the evolving relationship between sport, wellbeing, and urban development, presenting Ljubljana as a living laboratory where municipal policy and academic research align to improve citizens' quality of life. Since launching the Strategic Plan for Sport (2008–2028), the City of Ljubljana has invested in a network of modern, inclusive facilities from the Ilirija Swimming Pool and Kodeljevo Hall to the Athletics Center and Vevče Pool – accompanied by 100 city-funded coaches working across local communities. These infrastructures serve as more than venues for competition; they are platforms for health, education, and social connection.

At the Faculty of Sport, Bon's team leads multiple studies linking sport to wellbeing and civic engagement:

“The city that cares for movement cares for its citizens’ future.”

- 1. Quantitative research on the “Let’s Exercise” programme (Dervišević 2025) demonstrates measurable psychological and social benefits.**
- 2. Municipal investment analyses (Bon & Vučkovič 2025) show that sport spending yields high returns in public health and youth development.**
- 3. Recent research on Slovenian adolescents confirms that 76 % perceive their municipal environment as supportive, proving the value of accessible sport spaces for mental resilience.**



Quoting new psychological evidence (Peris-Delcampo et al., 2024), Bon stressed that intrinsic motivation remains the most powerful driver of performance and personal satisfaction. Wellbeing, she concluded, is no longer a by-product of sport – it is its core mission.

Picture: **Elements of Psychological Well-Being**

Key messages:

- Sport Is Urban Infrastructure for Wellbeing** – Modern cities must treat sport and recreation as core public services equal to mobility, education and health.
- Evidence-Based Policy Delivers Impact** – Strategic investment and academic research together prove that sport improves social cohesion and mental health, especially among youth.
- From Performance to Fulfilment** – The future of sport lies in intrinsic motivation, education and inclusive participation not just in records or medals, but in daily wellbeing for all.

From Asphalt to Active Living

In her keynote, Ms. Rasha Abd El Mawgoud presented Vienna's Sport.Wien.2030 Strategy as a model of how cities can turn sports infrastructure into engines of wellbeing, inclusion, and climate action. She argued that as urban populations grow and physical activity declines, public space must move people toward health and connection transforming asphalted, car-oriented spaces into vibrant arenas of movement. The Sport.Wien.2030 plan was co-created with over 70 federations, experts, and political actors, embodying Vienna's commitment to accessibility, affordability, and sustainability. It redefines sports facilities as multifunctional community hubs that balance professional sport with recreation and education.

The flagship project, Sport Arena Wien, replaced the outdated Ferry Dusika Stadium (1976) through sustainable deconstruction reusing 80 tons of materials, achieving a 95% recycling rate, and creating 3,300 hours of social employment. The new energy-neutral facility features a vertical, three-level design (ball sports, gymnastics, athletics) offering +134% more sports area with 20% less land footprint and 50% more green space. With 38,000 hours of annual use for schools, clubs, youth, seniors, and parasport, it exemplifies inclusive, barrier-free design for the 21st-century city. Abd El Mawgoud emphasized that true sustainability extends beyond buildings to social systems shared responsibility, co-management, and civic ownership. Through participatory planning, users become co-creators of the spaces they inhabit, ensuring long-term value and care.



Ms. Rasha Abd El Mawgoud - Senior Manager, Business Development & Strategy, Wien Holding Sports, Vienna



“Sports infrastructure is not about walls and roofs, it’s about creating healthier, greener, and more inclusive cities.”

From Vision to Strategy:

Sport.Wien.2030

- 200 outdoor public sports facilities
- 500,000+ annual training hours in public indoor sports facilities
- Developed with 70+ federations, experts & political consensus
- Focus: accessibility, affordability, sustainability



Key messages:

- **From Asphalt to Wellbeing** – Cities must transform car-dominated spaces into active, green, and social environments that encourage everyday movement.
- **Sustainable Design is Now Standard** – Energy neutrality, material reuse, and social employment are no longer luxury add-ons but baseline criteria for responsible urban development.
- **Participation Builds Ownership** – Engaging citizens, clubs, and communities in planning and operations fosters shared responsibility, care, and pride in urban spaces.

Anticipating the City of Wellbeing



Mr. Mathias Behn Bjørnhof
- Founder,
Anticipate |
Futurist and
Strategic
Foresight
Consultant,
Copenhagen

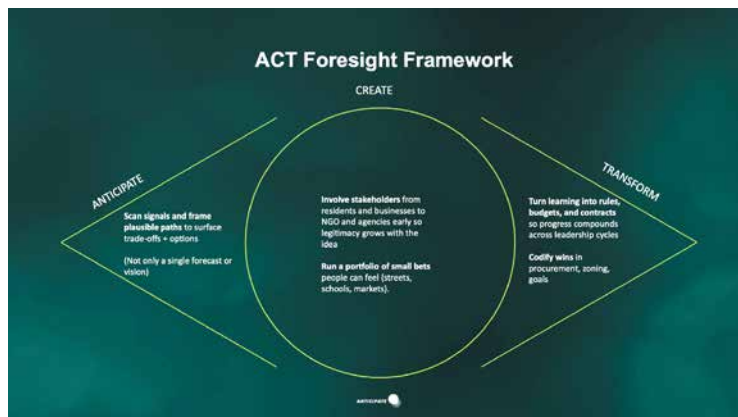
“Foresight must move beyond reports into tangible urban experiments “small bets that people can feel.”

Mr. Mathias Behn Bjørnhof concluded Session III with a forward-looking presentation on how anticipation and civic foresight can help cities design more inclusive, liveable futures.

Defining anticipation as “to imagine, prepare, and act for potential changes before they happen,” he introduced the ACT Foresight Framework, built around three steps: Anticipate, Create, and Transform. This approach challenges traditional linear planning. Instead of fixed masterplans, cities should scan signals, test small-scale innovations, and turn learning into rules and contracts that endure across political cycles. Foresight, he explained, must move beyond reports into tangible urban experiments “small bets that people can feel.”

Using Copenhagen as a case study, Bjørnhof illustrated how decades of anticipatory action transformed a declining industrial city into a global model of wellbeing. Forty years ago, Copenhagen faced bankruptcy and depopulation. Today, through long-term investment in mobility, waterfront renewal, and social participation, it ranks among the world’s most liveable cities. He emphasized that such progress arose not from one vision, but from collective civic capacity citizens, NGOs, and planners working continuously toward human-centred design. In the coming decades, megatrends like climate change, mental health, and urban loneliness will reshape cities. To meet these challenges, he urged participants to see participation itself as infrastructure the civic equivalent of energy grids or transport systems. Building wellbeing,

he argued, requires building trust, agency, and foresight literacy. “Cities of wellbeing are not designed once they are co-created through anticipation and participation.”



Picture: **Foresight Framework** by **Mathias Behn Bjørnhof**

Key messages:

- **Anticipation Is a Civic Skill** – Cities must cultivate the shared capacity to imagine and act before crises occur—linking foresight with daily governance.
- **Participation Is Infrastructure** – Citizen involvement is not decorative; it is structural, creating legitimacy, ownership, and social resilience.
- **Transform Learning into Policy** – The ACT model turns foresight into action by embedding insights into budgets, zoning, and contracts that outlast election cycles.

Session IV:

City Challenges – Industry solutions – NGOs participation & Finances for Cities



**Mr. Frane
Šesnić - CEO
of the Zagreb
Development
Agency**



In his role as moderator of Session IV, Mr. Frane Šesnić, brought a clear and pragmatic focus to the discussion on City challenges. His key message centered on the idea that cities must evolve from managing change to leading it, by fostering innovation, cross-sector collaboration, and sustainable financing models. Šesnić framed the session as a bridge between governance, technology, civic engagement, and finance highlighting that the transformation of cities depends on partnerships among local authorities, businesses, and citizens. He underscored that challenges such as digitalization, mobility, and resilience should not be seen as obstacles but as opportunities for creativity and economic growth. Throughout the discussion, he encouraged speakers and participants to link visionary ideas with concrete implementation, stressing the importance of aligning city strategies with access to finance and smart governance tools. Concluding the session, Šesnić emphasized that the most successful cities of the future will be those that connect innovation with inclusion creating environments that are not only efficient and technologically advanced but also centred on people's well-being and shared prosperity.

Smart City Platform: Lessons from Implementations



Mr. Gašper Žerovnik
- Director
of Digital
Transformation,
T-2 d.o.o.

“Smart City Implementation Lessons - Technology enables. Mayors decide.”




Mr. Gašper Žerovnik presented T-2's practical experience from implementing smart city platforms in Slovenian and regional cities, focusing on lessons learned from projects in Logatec, Kranj, and Ljubljana. His central message: technology alone does not create a smart city leadership. Žerovnik emphasized that the mayor's office, not the IT department, must own digital transformation. Smart city projects succeed when driven by a clear strategic vision focused on citizen experience and measurable social value, not by technology procurement. “Smart cities are not IT projects they are leadership decisions about people.”

Five main obstacles cities face in implementing smart city solutions:

- 1. Slow and complex tendering processes due to lack of expertise.**
- 2. Insufficient funding and fragmented financing.**
- 3. Data silos and resistance to internal data sharing.**
- 4. Weak project ownership when IT leads instead of city leadership.**
- 5. Outdated organizational structures unfit for digital services.**

To overcome these, Žerovnik proposed a “discovery phase” before tenders a period of three to four months for mapping citizen journeys, verifying data access, and conducting legal reviews on privacy and GDPR compliance. He advised defining 80% of project goals in advance (focused on citizen improvements) and leaving 20% flexible to learn during implementation. Success depends on setting clear KPIs for business value and citizen satisfaction. The T-2 Smart City Platform approach is incremental: start small with one improved citizen service, measure its success, and then scale. Sustainable funding comes from mixed models combining municipal budgets, EU grants, and public-private partnerships, ensuring accountability and continuity. Finally, Žerovnik highlighted data governance and communication as pillars of trust. Cities should inventory their data assets, define privacy and access rules, and maintain continuous dialogue among citizens, departments, and vendors. Monthly leadership meetings, transparent reporting to city councils, and shared ownership across departments are key. “Define success before you start. Measure it continuously. And make sure citizens feel the difference.”

Key messages:

-  **Leadership Before Technology** – Smart cities thrive when led by mayors with clear visions of citizen wellbeing IT is an enabler, but not the driver.
-  **Preparation Defines Success** – Invest time before tendering: understand user journeys, secure data access, and define outcomes that matter to citizens.
-  **Start Small, Scale Wisely** – Pilot one citizen service, prove its impact, and build momentum that will provide success of the project through visible, measurable results.

Challenges of Digital Transformation and the Role of NGOs

Mr. Simon Delakorda addressed one of the most overlooked dimensions of smart city transformation: citizen trust and the role of civil society. As the Director of the Institute for Electronic Participation (INePA), he argued that digital transformation without public trust is an illusion, and that NGOs are key intermediaries for building legitimacy, inclusion, and accountability in smart governance. Drawing on OECD's 2024 Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions, Delakorda showed that only around 45% of Slovenians express confidence in their government's evidence-based decision-making—a figure below the OECD average. This “trust gap,” he said, explains why many smart city initiatives fail to connect with citizens' real needs. To illustrate the risks of technology without participation, Delakorda introduced the metaphor of the “Potemkin Villages of Smart Cities.”

These are projects that appear innovative but lack citizen input, impact measurement, or genuine usability. His example of “SuperCity Logatec” — a top-down platform developed without resident consultation or strategy — highlighted how political showmanship can replace real progress.



Mr. Simon Delakorda
- Director,
Institute for
Electronic
Participation
(INePA),
Slovenia



“Trust is the foundation of every smart city. A smart city without citizens is just a smart façade.”

Drivers of trust in Public Institutions		
Public Governance Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions - Values		
Values	Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide open and accessible information so the public better understands what government is doing. Consult, listen, and respond to stakeholders, including through citizen participation and engagement opportunities that lead to tangible results. Ensure there are equal opportunities to be part of and participate in the institutions of representative democracy.
	Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align public institutions with ethical values, principles, and norms to safeguard the public interest. Take decisions and use public resources ethically, promoting the public interest over private interests while combating corruption. Ensure accountability mechanisms between public institutions at all levels of governance. Promote a neutral civil service whose values and standards of conduct uphold and prioritise the public interest.
	Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve living conditions for all. Provide consistent treatment of businesses and people regardless of their background and identity (e.g. gender, socio-economic status, racial/ethnic origin).

Source: An updated OECD framework on drivers of trust in public institutions to meet current and future challenges (2021)

NGOs bridge the gap between technology and people. Their participation ensures that digital tools are accessible, user-friendly, and socially legitimate. Through advocacy, education, and co-design, NGOs enhance human competencies, foster digital inclusion, and help cities develop ethical frameworks for technology use. Three public governance drivers of trust identified by the OECD: openness, integrity, and fairness. Embedding these values in smart city projects, he argued, transforms digitalization from a technical agenda into a civic partnership.

Key messages:

- Smart Cities Need Social Intelligence** – Technology must serve people; NGOs help translate digital innovation into social value and community trust.
- Trust Is Built Through Openness and Fairness** – Transparency, integrity, and citizen engagement are the real foundations of digital governance.
- Participation Prevents “Potemkin Cities”** – Co-creation with NGOs and residents ensures digital solutions are accessible, inclusive, and genuinely useful.



Mr. Brendan McDonagh - Senior Advisor, European Investment Bank (EIB), Luxembourg

“Good projects will find money but only if they are well prepared. The challenge is not money. The real challenge is to making projects credible enough to deserve funding.”

European Investment Bank - EIB Supporting Cities: Financing and Advisory for Cities

Mr. Brendan McDonagh presented how the European Investment Bank (EIB) supports cities through a combination of finance, advisory, and capacity building, highlighting the Bank’s role as both a lender and knowledge partner for sustainable urban development.

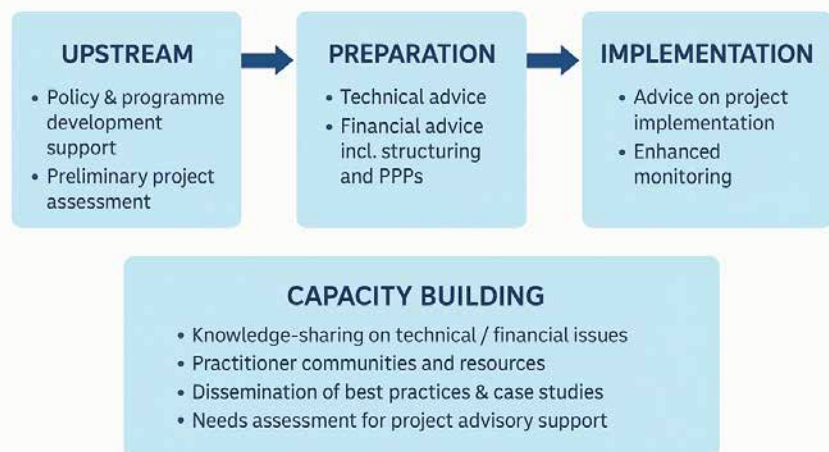
Speaking as the EIB’s Senior Advisor, McDonagh emphasized that “finance follows preparation” –the key barrier for most municipalities is not the lack of funds, but the lack of well-structured, investment-ready projects. The EIB, as the EU’s Climate Bank, supports over €284 million of annual investment in Slovenia alone, focusing on energy efficiency, innovation, and digitalization. Its integrated model combines:

- **Lending (direct or through intermediaries such as SID Banka),**
- **Blending (combining EU grants and loans), and**
- **Advising (free technical and financial assistance for public sector entities).**

European Investment Bank - EIB Advisory Programme’s three pillars:

1. **Preparation – early technical, legal, and financial guidance.**
2. **Implementation – monitoring and procurement support.**
3. **Capacity Building – training public authorities to design bankable, resilient projects.**

Advisory support available throughout the project cycle



Examples of European Investment Bank - EIB advisory work:

- **Croatia** – helping five cities structure social housing projects and a decarbonisation plan for Zagreb’s public bus fleet.
- **Greece** – supporting six cities under the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities to plan mobility, energy, and circular economy projects.
- **Slovenia** – congratulating Ljubljana, Kranj, and Velenje for joining the EU’s Climate-Neutral Cities Mission, with access to up to €2 billion in tailored EIB lending and advisory support.

A key instrument, ELENA (European Local Energy Assistance), provides grants covering up to 90% of project preparation costs for energy efficiency and renewable energy investments. Slovenia ranks among the top users per capita of ELENA funding, showcasing how early preparation accelerates local investment. McDonagh concluded that EIB financing is not only about loans but partnerships transforming vision into viable implementation. The Bank’s growing advisory services aim to empower cities to lead the green transition through knowledge, trust, and structured investment planning.

Key messages:

- **Preparation Unlocks Finance** – Investment readiness and strong governance attract funding faster than any grant or loan programme alone.
- **Finance and Advice Must Work Together** – The EIB’s integrated approach blends technical expertise with funding, ensuring cities move from vision to implementation.
- **Cities Are Europe’s Green Engines** – Climate-neutrality and smart city missions will succeed only if local governments strengthen project design, risk management, and capacity building.

Why Having a Cloud-First Policy is Important for the Future of Cities



Mr. Lorenzo Madrid - President, Smart City Business Institute Americas

Mr. Lorenzo Madrid opened Session IV by addressing a key enabler of digital transformation in cities the Cloud-First Policy. Drawing on 15 years of experience advising cities from Istanbul to Bogotá and Manila, he explained that the fundamental obstacle to smart city innovation is not technology itself but fragmentation: siloed data, slow procurement, and limited interoperability among departments. The Cloud-First approach, he said, represents a paradigm shift in urban governance moving from local, hardware-dependent systems toward flexible, scalable, and collaborative digital ecosystems. Madrid outlined how cloud computing helps cities deliver faster, safer, and more citizen-centric services. It allows real-time data sharing across agencies, 24/7 access for residents, and rapid deployment of new applications from smart mobility to public safety and energy management. He emphasized that cloud adoption enables governments to “pay as they grow”, replacing costly infrastructure with scalable, on-demand computing power. “The cloud changes everything: speed, security, cost, and cooperation.” Globally, more than 20 countries now use Cloud-First strategies from the U.S. federal government (since 2010) to the U.K., Singapore, and Chile showing that it is not just a technical upgrade, but a governance model. To succeed, Madrid highlighted the need for robust governance structures: steering committees, regulatory frameworks for GDPR compliance, cybersecurity, and clear accountability lines between IT, legal, and procurement departments. He also addressed challenges data sovereignty,

workforce skills, and vendor lock-in recommending training programs, multi-cloud strategies, and transparent data residency rules to mitigate risk. Ultimately, he framed the Cloud-First transition as a strategic investment in trust, efficiency, and resilience the digital foundation for cities of wellbeing.

“Cloud transforms cities from fragmented systems into connected intelligence.”




Current Challenges in Managing City IT Needs

1. **Siloed information** hinders efficient data utilization across departments
2. **Difficulty deploying new systems** slows down digital transformation
3. **Lack of integration** causes operational inefficiencies and duplicated efforts
4. **Limited data sharing** impacts collaboration and decision making
5. **Procurement delays** stall modernization and upgrades
6. **Legacy infrastructure struggles** to support growing demand and innovation
7. **Budget constraints** impact timely IT investments and maintenance



Picture: **City Challenges related to Information Technologies, Lorenzo Madrid LF 2025**

Key messages:

- 
Cloud-First Is a Governance Revolution – Beyond technology, it is about interoperability, transparency, and data-driven collaboration across city departments.
- 
Efficiency Enables Equity – Scalable, low-cost cloud infrastructure allows even smaller municipalities to deliver digital services with the same quality as global capitals.
- 
Trust and Security Must Lead Innovation – Data sovereignty, cybersecurity, and public transparency are essential to make citizens confident in smart city transformation.

Session V:

Centers of relevance for the future: Cities thriving Europe and World by 2040



Mr. Fred Uduma
- President,
Slovenia-Nigeria
Chamber of
Commerce
| Founder,
Nigeria-Slovenia
Chamber of
Commerce
(Lagos)



Africa and Europe: Building Bridges for Urban Futures

Mr. Fred Uduma presented dynamic relationship between Africa and Europe and the potential for stronger cooperation in sustainable urban development. Representing the Slovenia-Nigeria Chamber of Commerce, Uduma described how bilateral networks founded in Ljubljana (2013) and Lagos (2021) aim to bridge trade, education, and cultural exchange between the two continents. The mission is simple: to translate partnerships into shared prosperity through trust, collaboration, and knowledge. He identified four key opportunity areas shaping Africa's urban future: **1. Digital transformation** – improving governance and transparency through technology. **2. Renewable energy** – investing in solar, wind, and small hydro power for energy independence. **3. Urban agriculture** – ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods. **4. Youth and women empowerment** – building inclusive economies that harness Africa's demographic advantage. Drawing a comparative insight between Ljubljana and African cities, Uduma noted that while their contexts differ, they share a common goal to balance urban growth with wellbeing and sustainability. Uduma called for a joint platform between Slovenian and African cities to exchange best practices, connect investors, and co-create solutions in housing, green infrastructure, and education.

“Wherever there are challenges, there are also opportunities. Africa’s growth story will be written through partnerships not isolation.”

Key messages:

- Africa’s Urban Boom Is a Global Opportunity** – Rapid growth brings risk, but also vast potential for investment, innovation, and collaboration with Europe.
- Partnership Is the New Infrastructure** – Stronger Africa-Europe networks in trade, education, and technology can build sustainable, inclusive urban economies.
- Ljubljana as a Learning Model** – Europe’s small yet successful cities like Ljubljana offer governance lessons adaptable to Africa’s dynamic urban realities.



Mr. Anastas Vangeli Cities Assistant Professor, School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana

Pericentric Municipalism: Ideas, Heartware, and the Future of Cities

Mr. Anastas Vangeli brought a deeply philosophical and humanist perspective to *Session V: Centres of Relevance for the Future Cities*, arguing that cities are not just physical spaces they are ideas embodied in form. He introduced the concept of “Pericentric Municipalism”, a framework that redefines how cities think about belonging, solidarity, and governance. Drawing inspiration from both Chinese and Yugoslav traditions of urban thinking, Vangeli presented a “City Stack” of three layers:

- Hardware (器) – the physical infrastructure: roads, housing, vehicles, sensors.
- Software (法) – the institutional infrastructure: rules, services, and schedules.
- Heartware (心) – the social and emotional infrastructure: trust, belonging, and solidarity.

Drawing on Chinese urban governance wisdom, he outlined several practical lessons:

- Land softly: provide first-90-days newcomer services to help migrants settle quickly.
- Live locally: design 15-minute life circles to minimize commuting and strengthen neighbourhoods.
- Work plug-ins: integrate small businesses into local and global value chains.
- Micro-renewals: prefer continuous, community-driven improvements over disruptive gentrification.

Vangeli concluded that “Europe’s heartware pact” must rebuild the emotional core of urban life ensuring homes are stable, time is abundant, and communities are inclusive.

His central question to city leaders was both simple and profound: “Do our policies turn strangers into neighbours?”

“The City Stack: Hardware-Software-Heartware. Do our policies turn strangers into neighbours?”

Key messages:

- 1. **Cities Are Communities of Spirit** – Beyond infrastructure, true progress depends on trust, belonging, and shared meaning the “heartware” of urban life.
- 2. **Use-Value Before Exchange-Value** – Public policies should prioritise social purpose and accessibility over profit-driven design and speculation.
- 3. **Municipalism at the Periphery Builds Global Resilience** – Empowering local communities to experiment, adapt, and co-create is Europe’s best buffer against global uncertainty.

India–Europe Connections: Technology, Inclusion, and the Future of Cities

Mr. Jose Jacob Kayil presented India’s digital transformation as a model for inclusive urban growth. He described the country’s evolution from fragmented development to a dynamic balance between government, people, and markets a “growth spiral” driven by collaboration. Central to this transformation is Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), integrating identity, payments, and governance through mobile technology. In less than a decade, banking access rose from 8% to 80%, achieved by bringing banking to phones rather than building banks. Jacob highlighted how AI and conversational tools will deepen inclusion enabling, for example, street vendors using voice-enabled devices to access instant micro-loans in local languages. This “flow-based finance” turns data into collateral and trust into capital. With \$300 billion in small-ticket loans envisioned for 300 million citizens, India’s Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) ensures consent-based data sharing and transparency. He framed this as a new capitalism based on trust, respect, and technology, inviting Europe to learn from India’s living laboratory of digital inclusion: “Come to India to feel the action and to Europe to reflect and relax.”






Mr. Jose Jacob Kayil - Founder and Director, Future ICT Forum Bangalore | Organizer, The India Advantage Summit



“When government, people, and market work together, everyone wins.”

Key messages:

-  **Digital Infrastructure Builds Social Trust** – Mobile-first public systems can democratize access to finance, governance, and opportunity.
-  **Data Is the New Collateral** – Flow-based finance empowers individuals through transparent, consent-driven use of personal data.
-  **Cooperation Between India and Europe Is a Two-Way Street** – Europe offers policy and ethics; India offers scale, speed, and innovation, together they could define the future of urban inclusion.

Mr. Lorenzo Madrid & Mr. Ibon Zugasti – Latin America and Europe: Trade, Transformation & City Cooperation



Mr. Lorenzo Madrid - President, Smart City Business Institute Americas

Mr. Lorenzo Madrid and Mr. Ibon Zugasti highlighted how digitalisation and foresight are redefining Europe-Latin America relations. Madrid presented Brazil as a regional pioneer of digital transformation. With 1.8 mobile phones per inhabitant, digital identity and banking now connect citizens directly to government services. Brazil may soon become the first country with a national digital currency (the Drax), combining inclusion with transparent governance. He linked this progress to the long-negotiated EU-Mercosur agreement, opening trade and innovation flows between continents. “Banks have become the new gateways of trust between government and citizens.” Zugasti broadened the view, noting that while EU-U.S. trade dominates at €400 billion, Latin America’s €100 billion partnership offers higher growth potential. The region is the most urbanised in the world, cities like São Paulo and Mexico City anchor innovation yet struggle with mobility and housing. Drawing on experiences in Colombia and Chile, he stressed that long-term planning and foresight-based urban strategies are key to inclusive growth. He concluded that city-to-city cooperation through networks such as the *Strategic Urban Development Platform* should link European and Latin American cities in joint planning for climate resilience, digitalisation, and equity.



Mr. Ibon Zugasti - Director, Prospektiker & The Millennium Project Spain | Founder, ASETT Social Economy Think Tank

“Cities are the real engines of cooperation between Europe and Latin America. Europe and Latin America share not only history, but a future built on planning, innovation, and people-centred cities.”

Key messages:



Digitalisation Drives Inclusion – Brazil shows how mobile identity and e-governance empower citizens.



Cities Lead Cooperation – Urban partnerships are central to EU-Latin America relations.



Foresight Builds Shared Futures – Economic ties must pair with planning, climate, and social innovation.

Ljubljana Forum 2025 Award presentation



Members of International Award Committee and the winner of 2025 Ljubljana Forum Award Competition Architect Peter Lorenz.

International nomination & selection committee (4 chairs & GenZ representative) selected out of 5 candidates (participating cities & speakers at 15th Ljubljana Forum) the winner of 2025 award competition.

The Ljubljana Forum Award 2025 is presented to Mr. **Peter Lorenz**, architect and founder of Lorenz Ateliers, for his outstanding contribution to the development of the **Ilirija Sports Citadel** in Ljubljana. Peter Lorenz received 21 out of 25 possible votes. Architect Peter Lorenz is the second architect in the history that received Ljubljana Forum Award.

“Through his visionary work, Peter Lorenz has transformed a century-long saga, dating back to Stanko Bloudek’s original Ilirija pool of 1929, into a contemporary landmark for the 21st century. His design honours the historic layers of Tivoli Park and Jože Plečnik’s promenade, while projecting Ljubljana’s urban identity boldly into the future.

The Ilirija Sports Citadel is not merely a sports facility, it is a democratic public stage, a place where sport, culture, and community converge. Its innovative roof design, open piazza, and sustainable zero-energy concept redefine the role of recreation in the life of a city. By creating a multifunctional space that inspires creativity, health, and togetherness, Peter Lorenz has given Ljubljana a new symbol of urban well-being.

For his vision, innovation, and dedication to shaping cities of the future, the Ljubljana Forum proudly honours Peter Lorenz with the Ljubljana Forum Award 2025.”

The Winner architect Mr. Peter Lorenz

Session VI:

Future Generations and Anticipation



Mr. Luka Rep - Head of Diplomacy Department, Youth Business Group Slovenia

“Our voice is essential for building safe, inclusive and vibrant cities.”

Gen Z Challenges and Views for the Cities of the Future

Representing Generation Z, Mr. Luka Rep brought a youthful, research-based perspective to the Voice of the Young Generation. Speaking on behalf of the Youth Business Group Slovenia a community of 350+ young professionals he outlined how urban wellbeing must evolve to meet the expectations and anxieties of a new generation.

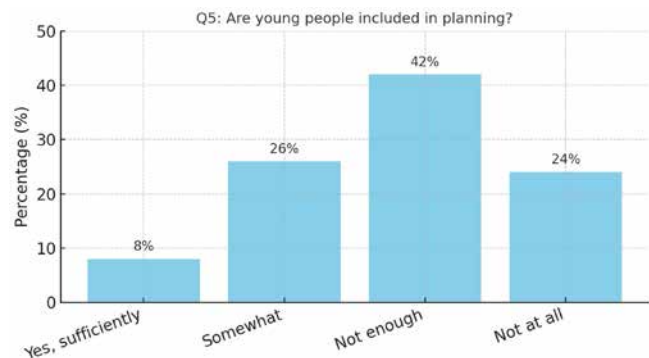
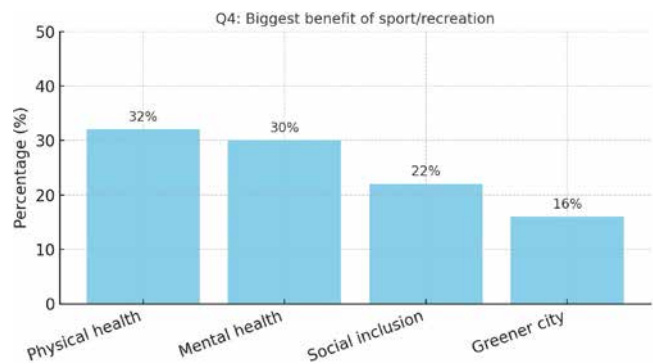
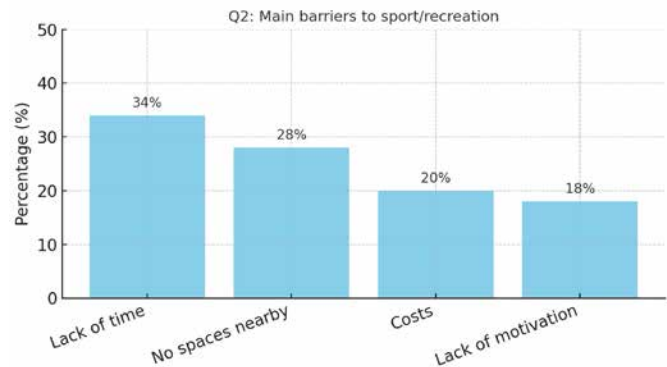
IDEAL CITY FOR THE FUTURE

Rep identified three main challenges shaping Gen Z life in cities:




1. Mental health and digital overload, worsened by stress and uncertainty.
2. Social exclusion, as many young people still lack access to affordable spaces for participation and growth.
3. Climate anxiety, caused by unsustainable urban expansion and lack of green infrastructure.

He argued that the next decade must transform these concerns into opportunities through inclusive, youth-led urban policies. “Sports and leisure must be recognised as core city infrastructure that are essential for both mental and physical wellbeing.”

Presenting survey data from over 300 respondents, Rep revealed that 38 % of young people use sports facilities weekly, yet 42 % feel underrepresented in city planning. The main barrier to participation: lack of time, reflecting the intense pace of Gen Z life. His proposed solutions combine green spaces, digital tools, and participatory design. Cities, he said, must integrate recreation, technology, and sustainability to build inclusive spaces where young people feel ownership. By engaging youth councils, innovation hubs, and public feedback platforms, municipalities can embed the Gen Z voice directly into urban decision-making.



Key messages:

- 
Wellbeing Is Infrastructure – Sports, leisure, and mental health facilities are essential elements of a city’s resilience.
- 
Youth Participation Matters – Young people must co-create policies, not just inherit them.
- 
Design for Balance – Smart cities should merge green, digital, and social innovation to foster inclusion and hope.

Workshop

ANTICIPATE



Mr. Mathias Behn Bjørnhof
- Founder,
Anticipate |
Futurist and
Strategic
Foresight
Consultant,
Copenhagen

Ideal City for the Future – Vision 2045: Anticipating the City of Well-Being

Facilitator: Mr. Mathias Behn Bjørnhof, Founder of ANTICIPATE | Futurist and Strategic Foresight Consultant, Copenhagen

Concluding the 15th Ljubljana Forum, the Anticipate Workshop invited participants to imagine the **City of Well-Being 2045** through a collective foresight exercise.

After two days of keynotes and city case studies, this final session shifted focus from expert presentation to interactive reflection, turning the audience itself into a generator of insight. Using the **Three Horizons Foresight Model**, Mathias Behn Bjørnhof guided over 40 participants through a structured exploration of:

Horizon 1: Current realities and pressures,

Horizon 3: Desired futures and values,

Horizon 2: Transitions and bold moves that bridge the two.

The workshop formed the experiential culmination of Ljubljana Forum 2025's theme "From Planning to Anticipation". It demonstrated how foresight can be practiced as a civic capacity, a method for connecting imagination with strategy and empathy with evidence.

Horizon 1 – Today’s Urban Pressures:

Participants identified 53 signals of stress and transformation that characterize today’s cities:

Domain	Typical Pressures and Examples
Housing & Affordability	Soaring prices, shrinking middle-class access, persistent inequality (“A housing crisis that never pops.”)
Mobility & Infrastructure	Car-centric layouts, aging transport systems, energy inefficiency
Social Fabric	Mental-health strain, loneliness, weak community ties amid digital isolation
Governance	Short political cycles vs. long-term vision; slow and exclusive decision processes
Culture & Identity	Loss of authenticity and diversity through globalisation
Environment	Pollution, climate adaptation deficit, weak policy courage

Together these signals portray overstretched systems and eroding trust of a landscape that demands new forms of collaboration and foresight.

Horizon 3 – Visions of the Ideal City 2045:

Twenty-six visions were collected from 17 participants, revealing a shared yearning for balance, respect, and meaning. Six vision clusters emerged:

- 1. Green and Respectful Cities** – Urban ecosystems that restore rather than exploit nature, living within planetary boundaries.
- 2. Inclusive and Human-Centred** – Safe 15-minute cities with affordable housing and strong community bonds.
- 3. Tradition and Values** – Reaffirmation of identity, belonging, and slower rhythms amid global flux.
- 4. Playful and Surreal** – Humorous, provocative visions (“plugged into the Matrix,” “free beer for all”) as creative social critique.
- 5. Resilient Basics** – Priority on clean water, food security, and safety under climate stress.
- 6. Small-Scale and Decentralised** – Return to human-scale governance, distributed towns, and direct civic agency.

These visions express an optimistic yet realistic search for dignity and connection as the true foundations of urban well-being.

Horizon 2 – Leverage Points and Transitions:

Participants voted on 42 transition ideas. The most-supported actions were:

1. **Nature-Connected Urban Living** – Deep integration of biodiversity and circular design in daily life.
2. **More Conversations, Less Screen Time** – Re-humanising the city through public dialogue and trust.
3. **Civic or Community Service for Empathy** – Inter-generational programs to build solidarity and co-responsibility.
4. **Education Reform for Values and Care** – Embedding empathy and sustainability literacy in schools.
5. **Institutionalise Foresight** – Making anticipation a permanent function of city governance.

Other emerging ideas included ethical AI, risk readiness, radical disarmament, and “modern agora’s” for public deliberation. The Forum’s spirit of plurality and constructive friction was on full display as a proof that progress arises from dialogue, not consensus.

Survey Results – Collective Signals of Change

Category	Share of Mentions	Illustrative Themes
Sustainable Urban Living	34 %	Renewable energy, circular economy, green transport
Connection to Nature & Community	29 %	Urban gardens, 15-minute cities, public commons
Education & Values Reform	18 %	Empathy-based curricula, citizenship training
Security & Resilience	12 %	Trust-based safety, inclusive governance
Digital Transformation & AI	7 %	Ethical AI, participatory platforms

Analytical Insights into workshop:

Foresight as Democratic Practice - The exercise equalised voices across generations and disciplines, showing how anticipation can function as real-time participatory governance.




Optimistic Realism - Participants balanced hope with pragmatism, arguing that credible futures require acknowledging limits while sustaining vision.

Cities as Laboratories of Empathy - Well-being was redefined as emotional and social resilience such as trust, time, and togetherness as public resources.

Collective Agency under Uncertainty - Foresight transforms uncertainty from threat to creativity by enabling shared learning loops and adaptive action.



Key messages:

- 
Imagination is Infrastructure – Cities must treat creativity and foresight as core governance functions.
- 
Vision Needs Empirical Grounding – Evidence-based planning turns idealism into strategy.
- 
Dialogue Builds Resilience – Diverse voices and continuous conversation sustain coherence in transition.

The ANTICIPATE Workshop embodied Ljubljana Forum’s mission to link foresight with action. It showed how structured anticipation can translate collective values into policy direction and design principles. Rather than producing a single prediction, participants left with a shared capacity and with the ability to think together about what comes next. In this sense, the workshop did not close the Forum; it opened a new cycle of learning toward “Vision 2045 – the City of Well-Being.”

Breakfast

BUSINESS



Mr. Jonathan Buhl, Strategic Foresight Advisor, Anticipate & Futureproof Cities Initiative,
Mr. Tijs Beek, Head of Energy Insights, Sproule-ERCE

*“In a constrained world,
good strategy means
conscious trade-offs.”*

Turning Foresight into Strategy

Facilitators: Mr. Tijs Beek, Head of Energy Insights, Sproule-ERCE

Mr. Jonathan Buhl, Strategic Foresight Advisor, Anticipate & Futureproof Cities Initiative

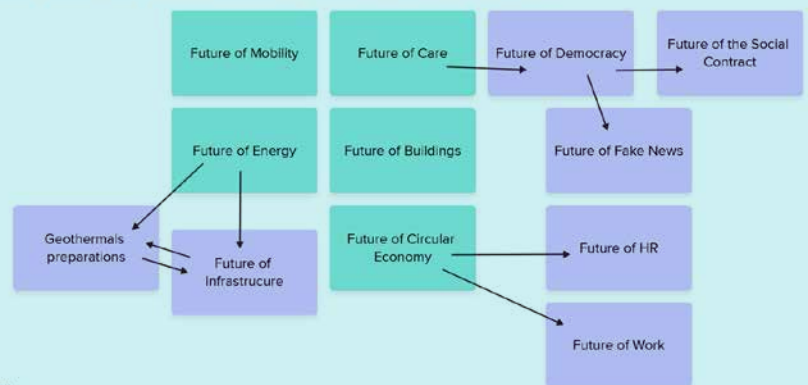
The *Business Breakfast on City Examples* brought together urban planners, industry leaders, and foresight practitioners for an in-depth discussion on how cities can translate long-term vision into actionable strategies. Building on themes from Session VI of the Forum, the session focused on continuous strategizing under constraints political, spatial, technological, and ecological. Beek and Buhl presented real-world foresight-to-strategy projects from Rotterdam and Geneva, showing how cities can link imagination to implementation. The session explored how anticipatory decision frameworks can be institutionalised across governance and business to ensure coherence between ambition, assets, and action.



Follow-up: the city of tomorrow

The city of tomorrow not only needs new skills, but new educational systems, new infrastructure, new systems, new thinking.

As a result of the first set of workshops, follow-up projects were designed:



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Case 1 – Rotterdam: Navigating the Energy Transition

Context & Challenge - Rotterdam and its surrounding industrial delta host one of Europe's largest ports and heavy industries a global logistics hub now under pressure to decarbonise. After early success, the Dutch energy transition reached a paradox: it became *“a technical case without a business case.”* The cost of deep transformation in steel, chemicals, and energy sectors now outpaces current returns, demanding new multi-stakeholder frameworks. **Approach** - Sustainable Industry Lab, and local authorities co-created a Transition Pathway Model integrating:

- Scenario building for energy and circular materials,
- Decision frameworks to align industry, infrastructure, and policy,
- Trade-off analysis between pace, cost, and quality, and
- Stress-testing of strategies against global market shifts and labour constraints.

Outcome:

The foresight exercise produced a cluster-level intelligence platform, enabling stakeholders to visualise the “system of systems” linking policy ambition with feasible project pipelines. The Rotterdam case illustrated how foresight supports cross-sector coherence, helping decision-makers move from pilot projects to sustained investment.

Case 2 – Geneva: Future Skills for Green Jobs

Context & Challenge - Geneva's economy, shaped by international institutions and light industry, faces a different constraint space. As a dense, landlocked city, its climate-neutral ambitions depend on human capacity rather than heavy infrastructure. To reach Switzerland's 2050 carbon goals, Geneva must rapidly train and retain workers for new green sectors in energy, mobility, building retrofits, and circular industries.

Approach - In partnership with The Nomads Foundation, a foresight study titled *"Future Skills for Green Jobs"* identified what competencies would be essential to run the city of tomorrow.

- Sector workshops in mobility, construction, energy, and circular economy created qualitative future scenarios.
- Participants identified skills needed across all futures practices capacity such as digital literacy, systems thinking, social empathy, and collaborative problem-solving.
- The process inspired follow-up projects on educational reform and municipal planning, embedding foresight literacy in city administration.

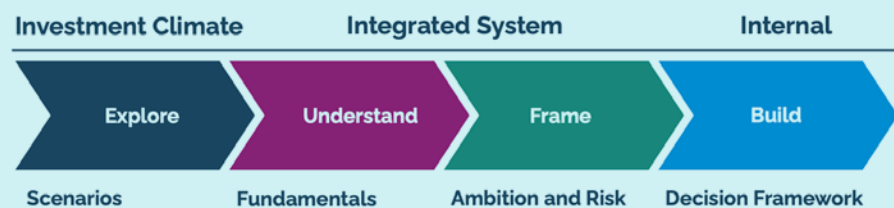
Outcome:

Geneva established a cross-sector learning alliance between schools, employers, and public authorities which could be a replicable model for European mid-sized cities. The project reframed foresight as a tool for workforce planning and social innovation rather than abstract prediction.

Integrated Lessons – From Scenarios to Strategy

"The future is not a single scenario; it's a portfolio of possible paths. Strategy is the art of choosing consciously among them."

Strategic foresight and systems thinking to support continuous strategizing in a complex dynamic world.



Mr. Jonathan Buhl, Business Breakfast 2025



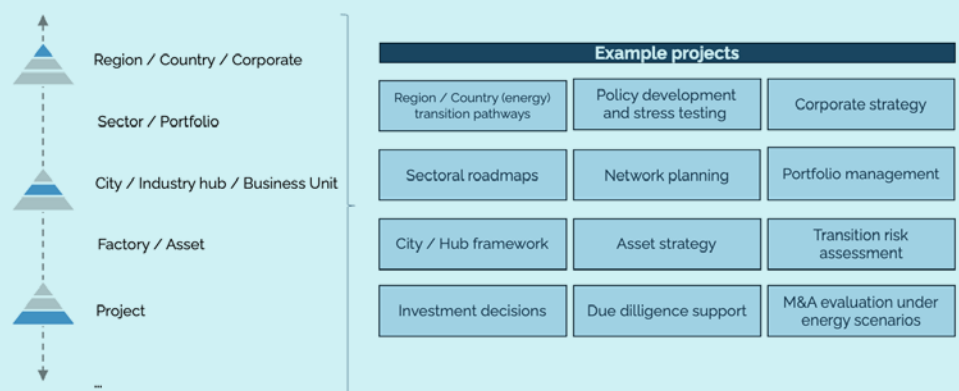
Mr. Kamil Kazim Sari, Futurist, Teach the Future, Istanbul at Ljubljana Forum





Across both case studies, Beek and Buhl emphasized that cities must “strategize continuously”, not in fixed cycles. Their shared framework included four iterative stages: **Explore / Understand / Frame / Build** that translate insights into policy, investment, and adaptive roadmaps. These steps convert foresight into a living strategy that is updated as systems evolve.

We help build your own decision framework applicable across any decision level.



Analytical Insights

- 1. Foresight Strengthens Economic Resilience** - Rotterdam’s energy transition shows how anticipatory planning mitigates financial and political risks.
- 2. Skills Are the New Infrastructure** - Geneva’s model reframes workforce foresight as the foundation of sustainable cities.
- 3. Decision Frameworks Are the Missing Link** - Foresight must feed directly into governance systems, enabling mayors, investors, and citizens to align around shared trade-offs.
- 4. Continuous Strategizing Is the Future of Leadership** - Cities can no longer rely on linear masterplans; they must act as learning systems in motion.

Key messages:

- Plan Beyond the Plan** – Strategy must evolve continuously with new information and realities.
- Integrate Skills, Systems, and Scenarios** – Future-proof cities align human capability with infrastructure design.
- Decide Consciously Under Constraint** – Foresight helps cities face limits with creativity, clarity, and collective ownership.

8 Conclusions

of Ljubljana forum 2025

The **Ljubljana Forum 2025 – City of Well-Being** concluded with a strong and forward-looking message that tied together 15 years of experience, innovation, and collaboration among city leaders, urban planners, futurists, businesses, NGOs, Government and EU institutions.

- 1. From Vision to Action** - The Forum reaffirmed that after 15 years of dialogue, the priority for European and global cities is to move from ideas to implementation. Cities must integrate foresight and planning into concrete projects that improve well-being, resilience, and sustainability.
- 2. City as a Platform for Well-Being** - Well-being was defined as a multidimensional goal combining physical, social, economic, and environmental health. Cities must design spaces that nurture safety, inclusion, and active lifestyles, connecting urban planning, sports, recreation, and public health.
- 3. Integration of Planning and Foresight** - Forum concluded that strategic foresight and spatial planning must work hand in hand. Predicting future scenarios and programming development is essential for managing uncertainty and ensuring long-term stability.
- 4. Collaboration Across Stakeholders** - Cities cannot act alone. The Forum highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder governance partnerships between municipalities, academia, business, NGOs, and citizens as a foundation for effective and democratic city transformation.
- 5. Youth and New Generations** - The Gen Z panel emphasized that the future of cities depends on young people's participation in decision-making. Cities should create platforms for youth engagement, innovation, and entrepreneurship, ensuring that their needs and ideas shape urban policy.
- 6. Sustainability and Financing** - With the European Investment Bank's participation, the Forum underscored that sustainable city projects need innovative financing models combining public funds, EU instruments, and private investment to accelerate climate-neutral and smart urban transitions.
- 7. Resilience through Local Identity** - Speakers from Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik, and Nova Gorica agreed that each city's strength lies in its authentic culture and local values. Urban development should preserve identity while embracing technology and green innovation.
- 8. Global Cooperation and Solidarity** - The international sessions connecting Africa, India, China, and Latin America showed that global cities share common goals of equity, well-being, and smart transition. Ljubljana Forum was reaffirmed as a hub for global urban dialogue.

Manifesto

Ljubljana forum 2025

1. ACT TOGETHER to Define Common Interest on Specific Challenge

This principle highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation bringing together city leaders, experts, businesses, and citizens. It promotes the ideal city to become a model of collaborative urban governance and calls for transparent, participatory decision-making where shared responsibility strengthens community trust. Cities thrive when governance is inclusive, transparent, and driven by partnerships.

2. PLAN AHEAD – From Vision to Anticipation

This calls for strategic foresight and long-term planning to address emerging challenges such as climate change, economic uncertainty, and demographic shifts. It stresses resilience and sustainability through data-driven, anticipatory governance, turning planning into a proactive rather than reactive process. Strategic foresight must guide urban master planning to anticipate risks and opportunities.

3. DELIVER WELL-BEING – Technology for Humanity

The final point centres on impact delivery translating vision into tangible outcomes. It emphasizes technology serving humanity, ensuring that innovation leads to social inclusion, health, sustainability, and happiness. The City of Well-Being becomes a living example of how innovation and empathy can coexist. The Ideal City balances innovation, sustainability, resilience, digital transformation, and equity placing people and communities at the centre.



CALL FOR ACTION

Together, these three principles form the Ljubljana Forum Manifesto 2025 bridging planning and anticipation and defining the European model of the future city that is coherent, inclusive, forward-looking, and centred on human well-being. The Forum concluded with a collective call to action inviting all partners to turn the “Manifesto” into reality through pilot projects, foresight labs, and inter-city cooperation networks. Strategic foresight will guide this shared journey toward creating Cities of Well-Being that safeguard both humanity and nature in the challenging times ahead of us.



About the People

City Leaders

Mr. Dejan Crnek, Vice Mayor of Ljubljana
 Mr. Mato Franković, Mayor of Dubrovnik
 Mr. Samir Avdić, Mayor of Sarajevo
 Mr. Samo Turel, Mayor of Nova Gorica

Moderators of Sessions & Media

Ms. Mara Di Berardo, Communication Director of The Millennium Project
 Mr. Jan Künne – CEO Grundig Academy Nürnberg
 Mr. Aleksander Vujović, Architect CEO SUPA – Ljubljana
 Mr. Frane Šesnić, CEO Zagreb Innovation Agency
 Mr. Blaž Golob, Chairman of Ljubljana Forum

Speakers

Mr. Miran Gajšek State Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning
 Mr. Kyriacos Kakouris, Vice President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) (via video)
 Mr. Architect Mr. Peter Lorenz / Innsbruck – Trieste – Vienna – Ljubljana
 Mr. Ibon Zugasti – Director Prospectiker, San Sebastian
 Mr. Tijs Beek, Principal - Energy Insights Sproule – Erce
 Ms. Marta Bon – Assoc. Professor; University of Ljubljana & Sport LJ
 Ms. Rasha Abd El Mawgoud – Senior Manager at Sport Arena Wien
 Mr. Mathias Behn Bjørnhof – Facilitator & Founder of Anticipate, Copenhagen
 Mr. Lorenzo Madrid - President of Smart City Business Institute America
 Mr. Gašper Žerovnik – Director of Digital Transformation at T-2 Ljubljana
 Mr. Simon Delakorda, Director of the Institute for eParticipation
 Mr. Brendan McDonagh EIB – European Investment Bank
 Mr. Fred Uduma – President of Slovenian - Nigeria Chamber of Commerce
 Mr. Vangeli Anastas, Assis. Professor in International Business University of Ljubljana
 Mr. Jose Jacob Kayil, Founder and Director Future ICT Forum Bangalore
 Mr. Luka Rep, Youth Business Club Ljubljana
 Mr. Jonathan Buhl Senior Consultant at 4Sing GmbH, Hamburg



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 Mr. Matija Kovač; Mayor of the City of Celje
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Mobilnost

- avtobusni promet
- parkirišča in polnilnice
- souporaba koles
- souporaba avtomobilov



Kakovost zraka in vreme

- vremenska napoved
- kakovost zraka



Novice in dogodki

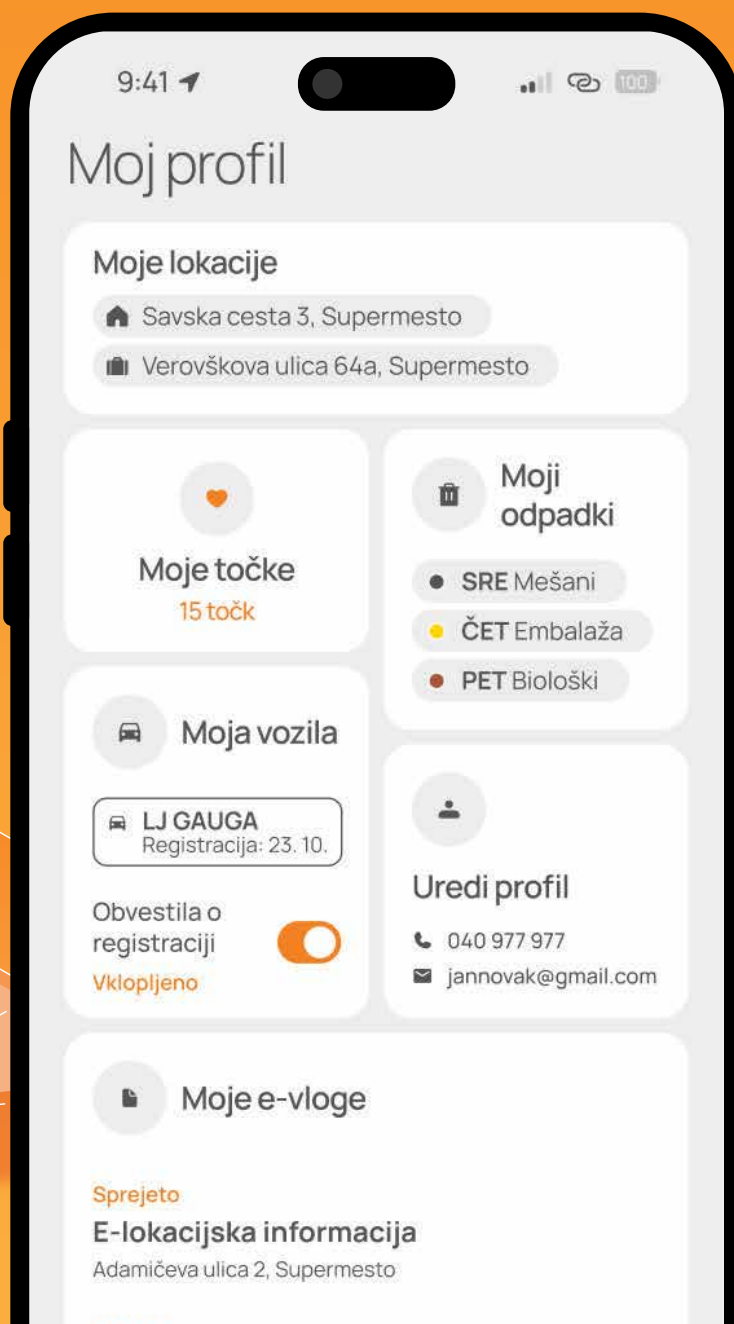
- napovednik dogodkov
- novice in obvestila



Skupnost

- ankete
- komunala
- vrtci
- nagrajevanje

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Impact of Ljubljana Forum

15 Years Of Operation

Key Facts

1.600
people

Participants
coming from
around the
world

€300
MIO

New project
initiatives
with a
total value
exceeding

400
people

Mayors, City
leaders, experts
& projects
designers

700
pages

Corporate
synthesis
Reports &
recommen-
dations

150
solutions

Innovative
governance,
business and
technology
cases

100
examples

Best practice
and failure
(not to be
repeated)
city cases

- (1) Author's synthesis based on official European city master plans (Helsinki Master Plan 2050; Copenhagen Finger Plan; Stockholm Vision 2040; Berlin StEK 2040; Paris PLU/Vision 2040; Amsterdam Structuurvisie 2040; Madrid Plan General; London Plan; Vienna STEP 2025/2030; Warsaw Development Strategy 2030; Ljubljana OPN), October 2025
- (2) International public and corporate foresight frameworks (EU Strategic Foresight, European Green Deal, Horizon Europe, UK Government Office for Science, WRR Netherlands, IEA World Energy Outlook, McKinsey, Deloitte, Airbus, Gartner), October 2025.

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