

# NEWSLETTER



## Word of the editor

Dear readers,

The third newsletter of the HARMONYMISSIONS project is in front of you.

Through the previous two editions, we presented the project and its activities aimed at harmonizing the implementation of Climate-oriented EU Missions in the Danube Region.

In our third edition, which is dedicated to EU Mission 1: Adaptation to Climate Change, we continue to share you updates about the HARMONMISSIONS project, but we also bring you the latest knowledge on Europe's path and cities' efforts to climate neutrality. In this edition you will find also information about the events we organize in near future, as well as information about success stories of other EU Climate-oriented projects.

We hope that you find the information we share with you useful and that you will continue to follow us.

**Regional Agency for Socio-Economic  
Development – Banat**

## ● Announcements

The Applied Research and Communications Fund is organising an in-person training 23-24 April 2025, in Sofia, Bulgaria. The training is focused on project development and participation in the EU Missions 1 and 4 of Horizon Europe. It will bring together appr. 30 participants from research and academia, businesses, public administration and civil society organisations. The training aims to improve the understanding of the participants of Horizon Europe, and of Mission 1 and Mission 4, respectively, and will focus on how to develop competitive proposals under Horizon Europe calls for proposals.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The Interreg VI-A IPA Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro 2021-2027 program has announced its Second Call for project proposals, with a total EU budget of € 29.926.000,00.

The deadline for submission is June 6, 2025.

This call is aligned with both Mission 1 and Mission 4, supporting projects focused on green investments in environmental protection and efficient risk management.

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## EUROPE'S PATH TO CLIMATE NEUTRALITY: SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

(EUROPEAN COMMISSION: COMMISSION NOTICE: Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021-2027)

**Climate change** will continue to increase the frequency and severity of a range of climate and weather extremes, so the EU will pursue the aim to become a climate-resilient society, fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, building up its adaptive capacity and minimising its vulnerability. **It is therefore essential to clearly identify – and consequently to invest in – infrastructure that is prepared for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient future.**

**Infrastructure – our built environment** – is essential for the functioning of our modern society and economy. It provides the basic physical and organisational structures and facilities that underpin many of our activities. Infrastructure is a broad concept, which includes: buildings, nature-based infrastructures, network infrastructure crucial for the functioning of today's economy and society, systems to manage the waste, other physical assets in a wider range of policy areas, and other eligible types of infrastructure. Most infrastructure has a long lifespan or service life. Most of the infrastructure funded over the period 2021-2027 will remain in service well into the second half of the century and beyond.

For this reason, European Commission Notice defines technical guidance on the climate-proofing of investments in infrastructure covering the programming period 2021-2027. The guidance contained in EC Notice meets the following requirements laid down in the legislation for several EU funds, notably InvestEU, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF), and the Just Transition Fund (JTF). In addition, the CE Notice is consistent with the Paris Agreement and EU climate objectives, it follows the principle 'energy efficiency first', and principle 'do no significant harm'.

**The preparation of climate-proofing includes selecting a credible pathway to achieve the EU's 2030 and 2050 GHG emission reduction targets in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the European Climate Law.**

**Climate-proofing** is a process that integrates climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into the development of infrastructure projects. It enables European institutional and private investors to make informed decisions on projects that qualify as compatible with the Paris Agreement. The process is divided into **two pillars (mitigation, adaptation) and two phases (screening, detailed analysis).**

**Climate-proofing** should not be just another additional administrative procedure but rather a tool to support the development of climate-neutral and resilient projects. It is crucial to integrate climate-proofing into the **various phases of project cycle management.** Early-stage and consistent assessment of a project's expected greenhouse gas emissions over the many development stages will help mitigate its impact on climate change. A range of choices, notably during the planning and design stages, may affect the project's overall GHG emissions over its lifespan, from construction and operation until decommissioning.

**Quantifying and monetising greenhouse gas emissions** remain the basis for the cost-benefit and options analysis. The guidance recommends, where applicable, using the **EIB carbon footprint methodology (to quantify GHG emissions) and the EIB shadow cost of carbon method (to monetise GHG emissions).** Carbon footprinting is used not only to estimate the greenhouse gas emissions for a project when it is ready to be implemented, but more importantly, to support the analysis and integration of low-carbon solutions during the planning and design stages.

**It is therefore essential to integrate climate-proofing in the project cycle management from the outset.** Having carried out a thorough climate-proofing process can determine a project's eligibility for funding.

The EC Notice provides a screening list of **project categories that do not require a carbon assessment screening process in two phases**, such as telecommunications services, drinking water supply networks, rainwater and wastewater collection networks, small-scale industrial waste water treatment and municipal waste water treatment, property developments, mechanical/biological waste treatment plants, R&D activities and pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. <sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, there are many more **project categories detected by the EC in the category of screening in 2 phases** like: municipal solid waste landfills, municipal waste incineration plants, large wastewater treatment plants, manufacturing industry, chemicals and refining, mining and basic metals, pulp and paper, rolling stock, ship, transport fleet purchases, road and rail infrastructure, urban transport, ports and logistic platforms, power transmission lines, renewable sources of energy, fuel production, processing, storage and transport, cement and lime production, glass production, heat and power generating plants, district heating networks, natural gas liquefaction and regasification facilities, gas transmission infrastructure, and any other infrastructure project category or scale of project for which the absolute and/or relative emissions could exceed 20 000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> e/year (positive or negative). <sup>2</sup>

In the case of **EU projects that were done for beneficiaries in Međimurje County**, and where the guidelines of this EC Notice had to be followed, there are examples of 2 projects that are currently in the implementation phase:

- **Revitalisation of Feštetić Castle**
- **Interpretation Center “Palace of Međimurje Folk Song“**



**Picture 1. Feštetić Castle**



**Picture 2. “Palace of Međimurje Folk Song“**

[1] COMMISSION NOTICE Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021 – 2027 (2021/C 373/01); Official Journal of the European Union; 2021

[2] Ibid. p. 20-21

The project **“Reconstruction and conversion of the Feštetić Castle into an interpretation center”** (Picture 1.) is investing in infrastructure in the function of valorization of the cultural heritage of the destination (cultural heritage castle under individual protection). Feštetić Castle was built between 1850 and 1870 in the municipality of Pribislavec. Feature of the castle is a polygonal tower on the access façade, built as a glazed bay window with a high pointed arch window frames and rich neo-Gothic architectural plastics. It is a castle that, in addition to the renovated The complex of the Old Town of Zrinski in Čakovec is the only cultural and tourist resource of Međimurje that is historical stories and architectural attractions can be included in national and international tourist attractions.

The project **“Reconstruction of a building for public and social purposes of group 2b - Interpretation Center of the Palace of Međimurje Folk Song”** (Picture 2.), which lasts from 2024 to 2026, will reconstruct the Hirschler Palace, built around 1890 into a representative center of UNESCO heritage, Međimurje Folk Song. The palace was the home of the Hirschler family from its construction, and later it was converted into the Officers’Canteen. The peculiarity of this palace is that it was adorned with a beautiful arboretum. The palace is the legacy of a family that left a great mark on the view of the municipality itself and dictated the social events of the municipality of Donja Dubrava and its surroundings at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

These projects are financed by the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility and had to meet the postulates of the green and digital transition and the DNSH principles in order to be eligible for funding.

### **The results and indicators that must be achieved in these projects are:**

- Savings in annual primary energy consumption achieved through the implementation of the project proposal
- Reduction of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions achieved through the reduction of CO2 emissions through the implementation of the project proposal
- Established infrastructure for charging vehicles with alternative fuels as part of the project proposal
- Exercising the right to support for measures that significantly contribute to the transition to a circular economy, waste prevention, reuse and recycling.

Following the document of the COMMISSION NOTICE, both of these projects had to go through Phase 1 of Screening in their preparation according to the instructions of the document.

### **Taking an additional step - Green urban renewal**

One of the key aspects of sustainable development—focused on preserving natural resources, energy efficiency, and climate resilience—is green urban renewal. This approach is already being implemented in numerous cities and municipalities across the EU, following the European Commission’s strategies and guidelines. There are excellent examples of how strategic thinking at the local level can contribute to energy and climate efficiency, driven by EU-level strategies and guidelines. In **Croatia**, strategic green urban renewal is reflected in spatial and urban planning. Notable examples include:

- **The City of Križevci**, with its [Study and Strategy for the Development of Green Infrastructure](#)
- **The City of Sisak**, which incorporates green infrastructure into spatial planning documentation and [Study and Strategy for the Development of Green Infrastructure of the City of Sisak](#).

By considering all relevant EU documents, such as the European Green Deal, Clean Industrial Deal, European Climate Pact, EU Adaptation Strategy, and Implementation Plans for the EU Missions, the EU demonstrates its commitment to preserving the planet for future generations—not only within the European Union but globally. A healthy planet is essential for the well-being of all its inhabitants. However, the future is not solely in the hands of the EU... Time will tell.

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## Slovenian Regions and Cities Advancing Climate Adaptation and Neutrality Goals

Slovenia is making significant progress in climate adaptation and mitigation through key EU initiatives. Under the EU Mission on Adaptation, the regions of Gorenjska and Goriška are receiving technical support to develop regional adaptation strategies, facilitated by Stritih, Sustainable Development Consulting. Both regions are engaging municipalities in a participatory review, aiming to finalize their strategies in early 2025. Gorenjska has further secured support under the Horizon Europe project Pathways2Resilience to develop a Climate Adaptation Action Plan, expected by spring 2026.

### Slovenian Cities Leading Climate Neutrality

Three Slovenian cities—Ljubljana, Kranj, and Velenje—are at the forefront of the EU Mission on Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, having secured the Mission Label. This designation confirms their completion of Climate City Contracts (CCCs), outlining roadmaps for climate neutrality by 2030. Ljubljana and Kranj received their Mission Labels in October 2024, while Velenje is set to obtain it in May 2025. Each city has developed Investment Plans, with Ljubljana establishing a financial plan and a hub to support businesses and citizens in achieving climate goals.

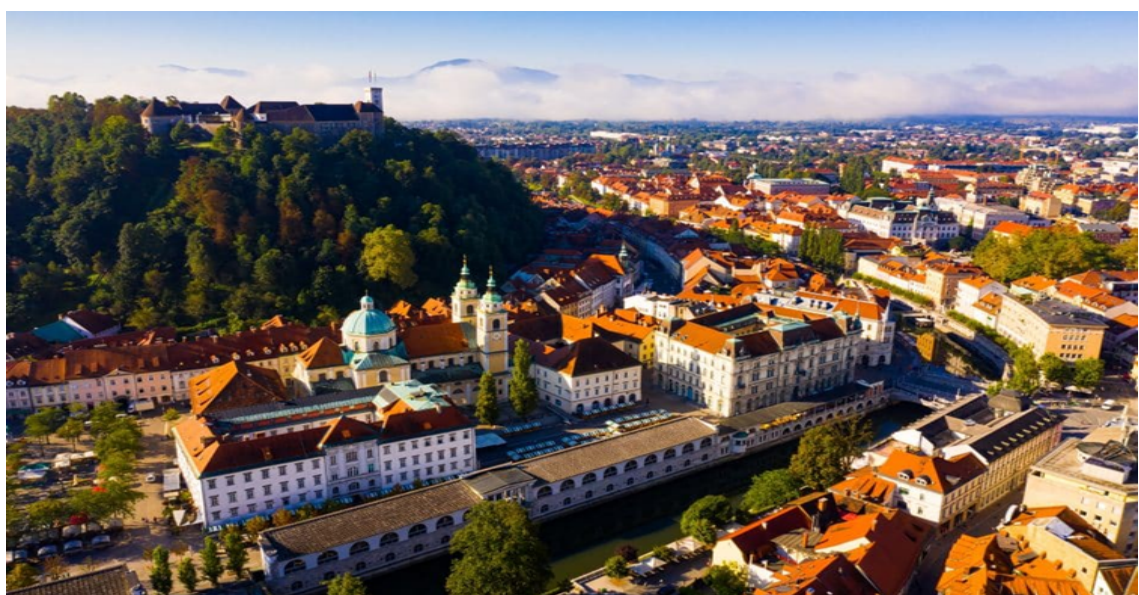
### Strengthening Financial and Technical Support

To support Mission Cities, the Climate City Capital Hub, part of the Cities Mission Platform managed by NetZeroCities, provides technical and financial assistance. Working with the European Investment Bank (EIB), it offers tools for financing urban decarbonization projects.

The EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities has allocated €22.6 million to 48 European cities, including Slovenian Mission Cities:

- **Kranj:** KReACTIVE project (€600,000)
- **Ljubljana:** SHIFT – Shaping Habits for Innovative Future Transformations (€1.5 million)
- **Velenje:** Part of the ZERO-MOVE consortium (€1.5 million total)

The 18-month programme for these projects starts in March 2025. With strong EU support, Slovenian regions and cities are paving the way for climate resilience and sustainable urban development across Europe.



Source: Shutterstock

## Building Power: Reducing Building Emissions and Energy Use in Bratislava and Košice

Call ID: NZC-SGA-HE-202309

**PROGRAMME: Pilot Cities Programme** [Pilot Cities Programme - Testing Rapid Decarbonisation Methods](#)



GRANT PROVIDER:



[Climate-KIC | Leading climate innovation agency and community](#)

**TOTAL COST: EUR 999,865.25**

**This project is co-financed by the European Union in the amount of 100%**

**LEAD PARTNER: City of Košice, Slovakia**  
**PROJECT PARTNERS: The Capital City of Bratislava, Slovakia**  
**ETP Slovakia – Centre for Sustainable Development, Slovakia**

### AIM

The aim of the project is to improve the conditions for reducing energy consumption and emissions in buildings in the city through more efficient management of city buildings, increasing the involvement of other partners in this area and proposing targeted measures to address energy poverty.

### DESCRIPTION

The BUILDING POWER project will create capacities, measures, and impacts in the field of energy efficiency and emission reduction in buildings in Košice and Bratislava. The two largest cities in Slovakia are working together to address the use of energy and related emissions, especially from urban and commercial buildings. To support the reduction of emissions from urban buildings, cities are developing and formalise a new energy governance structure and introducing a user-friendly platform to track and manage energy consumption data. At the same time, they are building capacity to understand this data and prepare innovative financing models for building modernisation.

## Building Power: Reducing Building Emissions and Energy Use in Bratislava and Košice

The BUILDING POWER project is extending its impact to private sector actors and citizens, piloting multi-sectoral approaches that are critically needed to accelerate climate action. Since Bratislava is the economic and commercial centre of Slovakia, the municipality has already launched a voluntary energy efficiency program for companies with large workplaces in the city. To address the growing challenges related to energy poverty, the City of Košice, together with the non-governmental organization ETP Slovakia, is developing targeted interventions based on the key needs of specific vulnerable groups of the population.

### ACTIVITIES

- WP1 Work Package: Implementing energy management in urban buildings. As part of the functioning of the local government, it focuses mainly on the introduction of a management model and data management.
- WP2 Work Package: Capacity Building in the Field of Energy Consumption in Urban Buildings.
- WP3 Work Package: Setting up a model of cooperation with the business sector in the field of reduction. energy consumption and emissions. Piloting an innovative approach for the involvement of commercial companies in energy savings in buildings.
- WP4 Work Package: Finding targeted interventions to address energy poverty for specific vulnerable groups.
- WP5 Work Package: Exchange of experience and knowledge between project partners, with other Slovak cities, with other mission cities and towards national platforms. The project also includes a Twinning programme with European cities, where our twinning city in the project is the Turkish city of Gaziantep, link: [Twinning Learning Programme - NetZeroCities](#).

### OUTPUTS

- Established energy management in buildings owned by the cities, including technology management and internal regulation.
- Developed an investment plan for the modernisation of priority buildings, including the identification of sustainable finance.
- A pilot program of cooperation with the business sector has been launched.
- Identified population groups at risk of energy poverty, including a proposal for specific interventions to help these groups.
- Cross-fertilization of experience to other cities.

**START OF IMPLEMENTATION 05/2024**

**COMPLETION OF IMPLEMENTATION 04/2026**



Source: City of Košice, Department of Strategic Development