

# NEWSLETTER



## Word of the editor

Dear readers,

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of our HARMONMISSIONS project Newsletter!

As we move closer to the equator of 2026, the HARMONMISSIONS project enters a defining phase with our Final Conference approaching and a wealth of European Mission-oriented work to celebrate. This May 2026 edition brings together concrete examples of how EU Missions are taking shape across the Danube Region and beyond, under the European Mission 1 "Adaptation to Climate Change".

Inside this edition, you will find a closer look at an inspiring project within Horizon Europe programme – MountResilience, advancing transformative adaptation in Europe's mountain regions. We also delve into the M100 Innovation Studio, which is helping Romanian cities overcome governance bottlenecks on their path to climate neutrality. Reflections on the importance of integrating urban and rural adaptation into strategic and spatial planning documents has proven to be a central issue regarding building resilient territories in the Danube region.

This edition also highlights key upcoming opportunities, including the HARMONMISSIONS Final Conference in Bratislava (Slovakia) on 16-17 June 2026 and the 13th European Urban Resilience Forum (EURESFO 2026) in Guimarães (Portugal) on 17-19 June 2026. Both events underline the value of dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange in shaping Europe's climate transition.

We invite you to explore this edition and continue working with us towards climate-neutral and climate-resilient future across the Danube region.

**Ukrainian Institute for International Politics**

## ● Announcements

Join the Harmonmissions Project Final Conference!

Explore climate-focused opportunities within Horizon Europe at the Missions Forum & Brokerage Event. Connect with researchers, innovators, policymakers, and potential project partners while discovering the key outcomes and future opportunities emerging from the Harmonmissions project.

Date: 16 - 17 June 2026

Venue: Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (CVTI SR), Bratislava, Slovakia & online

Be part of shaping climate solutions through collaboration, innovation, and international partnerships.

More information will be available soon at [harmonmissions.eu](https://harmonmissions.eu) (<https://harmonmissions.eu/>)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The 13th European Urban Resilience Forum (EURESFO 2026) will take place on 17-19 June 2026 in Guimarães, Portugal, the European Green Capital 2026. The event is one of Europe's leading forums dedicated to climate adaptation, disaster risk management, and urban resilience.

The forum will bring together city representatives, researchers, policymakers, climate experts, NGOs, and regional stakeholders to exchange experiences and discuss integrated approaches to resilience and sustainable urban transformation. Particular attention will be given to the role of small and medium-sized cities, community-based approaches, and innovative climate adaptation solutions.

More information and registration: <https://urbanresilienceforum.eu/>

Author: RDA Banat

# Integration of Urban & Rural Adaptation into Strategies and Spatial Planning Documents

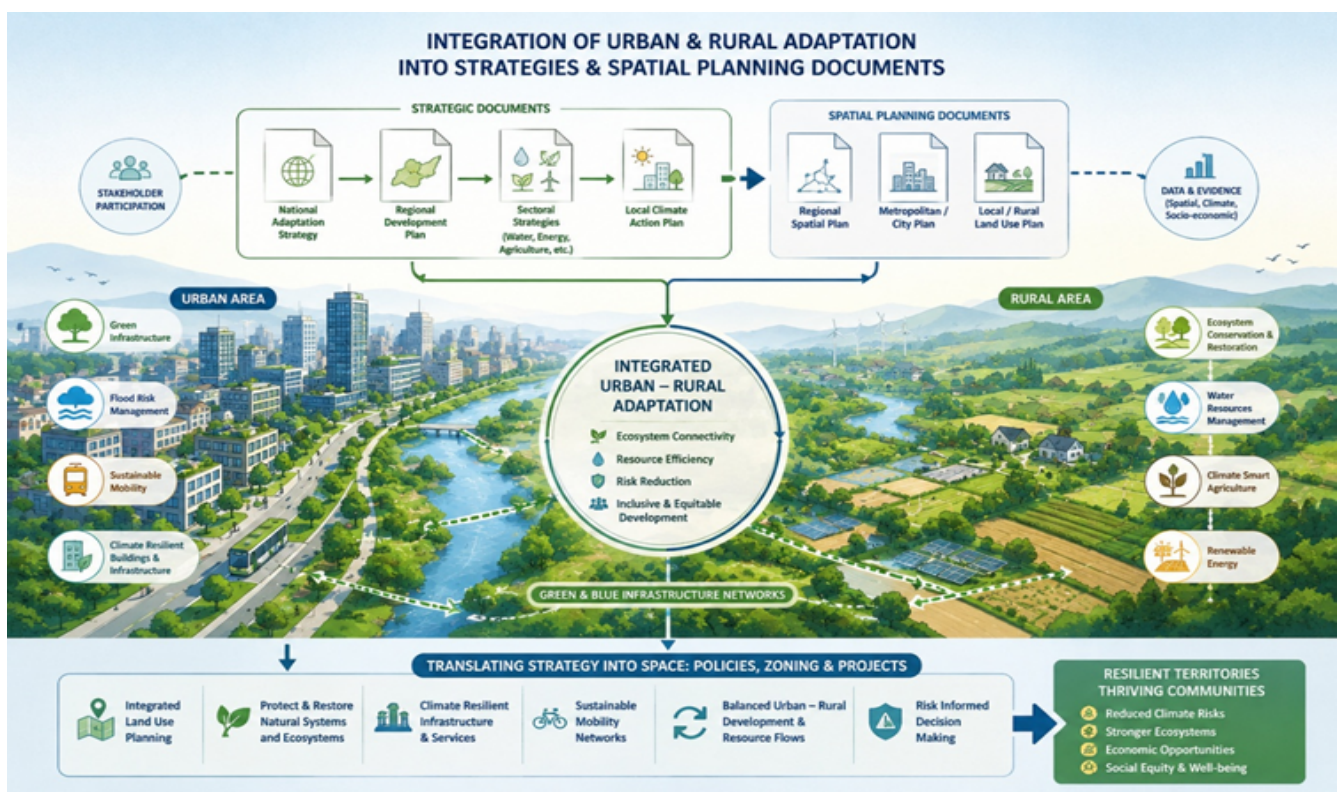
Climate change, environmental degradation, and socio-economic changes increasingly affect both urban and rural areas. Even though cities and rural regions are closely connected, adaptation measures are often planned separately. Integrating urban and rural adaptation into strategic and spatial planning documents is therefore essential for creating resilient and sustainable development.

Urban areas face challenges such as heat islands, flooding, pollution, and pressure on infrastructure, while rural areas deal with droughts, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, and depopulation. These problems are strongly interconnected. Cities rely on rural areas for food, water, energy, and ecosystem services, while rural communities depend on cities for markets, services, and investment. Integrated planning helps strengthen this relationship and encourages coordinated solutions.

Strategic documents, including climate adaptation strategies and regional development plans, should define shared goals for both urban and rural territories. Spatial planning documents can then turn these goals into practical measures, such as green corridors, flood protection zones, sustainable transport networks, renewable energy areas, and nature-based solutions that benefit entire regions.

Successful integration requires cooperation between governments, local communities, farmers, researchers, and civil society, supported by reliable climate and spatial data. Planning systems should also remain flexible to adapt to future environmental and socio-economic changes.

By integrating urban and rural adaptation into planning and policy documents, decision-makers can improve resilience, reduce regional inequalities, and promote more balanced and sustainable territorial development.



Author: UEFISCDI

## M100 Innovation Studio: Unlocking the Governance Shift for Climate-Neutral Cities in Romania

Romanian cities are making increasingly visible efforts to advance their climate neutrality objectives, supported at national level through the M100 platform. At the same time, local administrations continue to face significant challenges in translating sustainability ambitions into concrete urban transformation projects. These difficulties are often not related to technology or financing, but rather to fragmented governance, complex administrative procedures, limited coordination between institutions, and the need for broader behavioural change.

In this context, the proposal to launch the M100 Innovation Studio came at exactly the right moment. The initiative developed by [NetZeroCities](#) (NZC) and [Dark Matter Labs](#), in collaboration with the national M100 platform, supports Romanian cities in identifying and overcoming governance bottlenecks that slow down the implementation of solutions for climate neutrality.

The process began in September 2025 and runs for approximately ten months, concluding in June 2026. The Innovation Studio is based on a structured, multi-step approach focused on delivering concrete outcomes.

Initially, cities and working themes were selected, starting from the 10 cities in the M100 platform and the 3 Romanian cities included in the EU Mission “100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.” Among these, Alba Iulia and Bucharest—through the Bucharest City Hall and Sector 2 City Hall—assumed the role of “lead cities,” proposing concrete challenges to be addressed within the Studio.

This was followed by a series of preparatory online meetings, during which the challenges were defined in detail, relevant stakeholders were identified, and existing decision-making processes were analysed. These steps enabled the mapping of real system bottlenecks—from administrative procedures to informal decision-making mechanisms.

The process continued with the organisation of workshops that brought together representatives of local and national public administrations, experts, organisations, and other relevant stakeholders. These workshops aimed to build a shared understanding of the problems and co-create applicable solutions.

In Alba Iulia, discussions focused on the question: what decisions are needed to increase the use of existing and new cycling infrastructure? The process explored multiple decision-making levels, from safety and law enforcement to education and behaviour change, navigability and usage, as well as infrastructure design and implementation.

In Bucharest (Sector 2), the challenge was framed around a key question: how can a functional coordination and decision-making mechanism be created to enable the implementation of cycling infrastructure in the context of fragmented governance? Discussions addressed coordination between authorities, standardisation of permitting procedures, and the integration of technical solutions adapted to the urban context.

Through its methodology, the Innovation Studio aimed to make governance bottlenecks visible, understand how decisions flow between institutions, and identify where quick local interventions are possible and where alignment or reform is needed at national level. The outcome consists of a set of concrete interventions, action plans, and recommendations that can be replicated in other cities as well.

Thus, the M100 Innovation Studio becomes not just a one-off exercise, but a collaborative working model that brings together actors from multiple administrative levels to accelerate the transition towards more sustainable and better-connected cities.

At a time when cities are expected to play a decisive role in achieving Europe's climate objectives, initiatives such as the M100 Innovation Studio demonstrate that the transition to climate neutrality depends not only on infrastructure and technology, but also on the ability of institutions to work together more effectively. By creating spaces for dialogue, experimentation, and shared problem-solving, the Studio contributes to building a stronger foundation for more connected, resilient, and sustainable Romanian cities.

### **About M100 Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania**

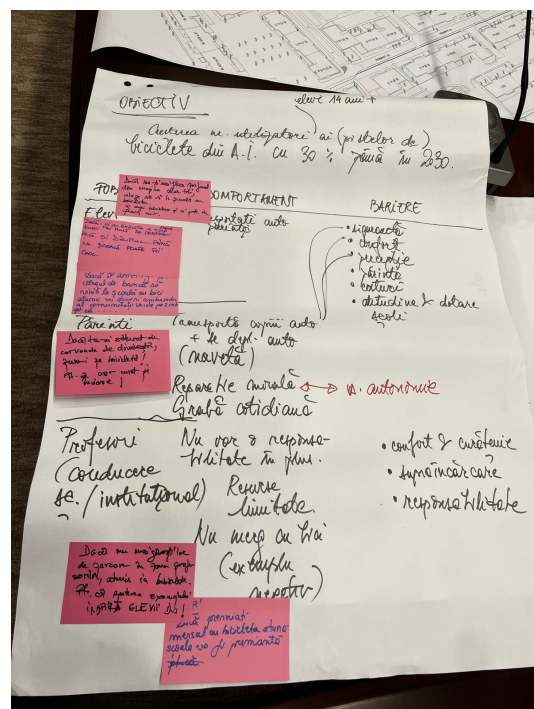
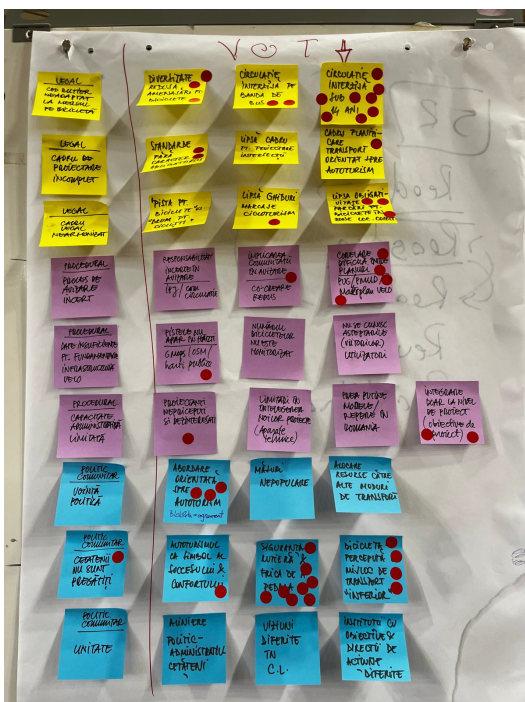
M100 is Romania's national "Mirror Mission," aligned with the European Union Mission "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030." Developed under the principle "No city is left behind," the platform promotes collaboration and inclusion across all levels of governance and society, bringing together local administrations, citizens, academia, civil society, and the private sector to support the green transition.

The initiative represents a unique model at European level, built around a systemic approach designed to help Romanian cities advance their climate neutrality ambitions in an integrated and coordinated way. Its development reflects both the growing maturity of Romanian cities in addressing urban transition challenges and the increasing recognition that climate neutrality requires long-term cooperation, institutional capacity, and multi-level governance.

Beyond supporting the three Romanian cities already selected in the EU Mission — Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest Sector 2, and Suceava — M100 has also extended its support to 10 additional cities committed to advancing towards climate neutrality. In this sense, M100 aims to create a broader ripple effect of sustainability, innovation, and collaboration across Romania, helping cities strengthen their capacities while accelerating the implementation of local climate actions.

The platform is coordinated through an interministerial governance structure, reflecting the understanding that public policies supporting urban climate transitions are among the most effective instruments for systemic change. By connecting local authorities with national institutions, experts, funding opportunities, and international networks, M100 contributes to building a more coherent and collaborative pathway towards climate neutrality in Romania.

M100 also builds on the experience of [UEFISCDI](#) in European initiatives such as [Driving Urban Transitions](#) and [CapaCITIES](#) — a platform supporting national and regional authorities in strengthening the assistance provided to cities throughout the green transition process.



Author: ARC Fund

## Accelerating transformative climate adaptation for higher resilience in European mountain regions

**Acronym:** MountResilience

**Start date:** 1 September 2023

**End date:** 29 February 2028

**Funding Scheme:** HORIZON-IA - HORIZON Innovation Actions

**Coordinator:** University of Milan

The Danube Region is home to numerous expansive mountain ranges – namely the Alps, the Carpathians, and the Balkans. Mountainous regions, apart from their contribution to maintaining the continent's essential biodiversity, are an indispensable source of freshwater, raw materials, and agricultural goods. Hence, as climate change poses severe risks to Europe's mountains, it is imperative that new tools are developed to combat its adverse effects.

MountResilience, funded under the Mission 1: Adaptation to Climate Change topic in Horizon Europe, seeks to enhance the adaptivity and resilience of Europe's mountains through a complex series of activities. With six regional demonstrators (located in Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, Romania, Austria and Switzerland) and four regional replicators (in Spain, Italy, Croatia and Poland), the project addresses both region-specific vulnerabilities and overarching problems. Its ambitious adaptation goals are achieved through numerous key objectives:

- Lay the foundations of transformative climate adaptation in the European mountains,
- Set up local demonstrations to develop and test innovative climate solutions with broad community involvement,
- Share knowledge and practices between project regions and beyond, promoting cross-border learning and the adoption of climate adaptation solutions,
- Raise awareness about climate change adaptation, engage communities, share results, and collaborate with related initiatives,
- Lay the groundwork for expanding the use of climate change adaptation solutions and other valuable project outcomes.

MountResilience foresees the use of nature-based solutions (NBS) – such as a rainwater harvesting system in Bulgaria, or field-scanning drones and effective seeding machines in Romania – to ensure sustainability, resilience and vitality in the face of natural hazards, extreme weather patterns and unpredictable climate conditions. The project uses stakeholder and citizen engagement to propel innovation, participatory decision-making and widespread outreach, while holistically addressing policy gaps, societal needs, governance, technological requirements and mountain-specific climate risks.

With 47 partners participating in this large-scale adaptation initiative, MountResilience ensures that the problems with which mountainous regions are faced receive comprehensive and multi-faceted attention. Thus, it is expected to achieve the intended impacts of region-specific technological and social innovations, practical development, the widespread adoption of sustainable practices, and the acceptance of environmentally conscious solutions.

Sources: Accelerating transformative climate adaptation for higher resilience in European mountain regions | MountResilience | Project | Fact Sheet | HORIZON | CORDIS | European Commission  
 MountResilience | Solutions for Resilient Communities in European Mountain Areas

## SOLUTIONS



Solutions proposed by MountResilience