



PRESS RELEASE

FEMACT-cities network...on the way to 8 action plans !

REMINDER / The fundamentals of FEMACT-cities action planning network:

A European network of 8 partners...

FEMACT-Cities is a network of 8 European cities and territories selected as part of the URBACT IV Action Planning Network programme. URBACT is a cohesion policy instrument financed by the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) :

- Clermont Auvergne Métropole / France
- Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association / Romania
- Comune di Torino / Italy
- Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região de Coimbra / Portugal
- Krakow / Poland
- Länsstyrelsen Skane / Sweden
- Municipality of Postojna / Slovenia
- Szabolcs 05 Regional Development Association of Municipalities / Hungary

...To promote gender equality at the local level, to capitalize and innovate at the European level :

Gender equality has been enshrined in EU law for nearly 25 years, however, implementation on a local level remains uneven. The role of gender equality as a cross-cutting topic which is vital to all policy areas remains poorly understood and work on gender equality implementation on a local level continues to be hampered by knowledge and data gaps, lack of dedicated personnel, lack of awareness, lack of political support and both active and passive resistance.

The FEMACT-Cities network is therefore focusing on the implementation gap in gender equality policy across a wide range of topics. The network's goal is twofold: to improve the implementation of gender equality on a local level and to increase innovation and knowledge sharing in gender equality in topics shared by the partners.

To do this, the bespoke network curriculum focuses on both factors which help and hinder implementation, from plans to data to political support, and sharing knowledge from best

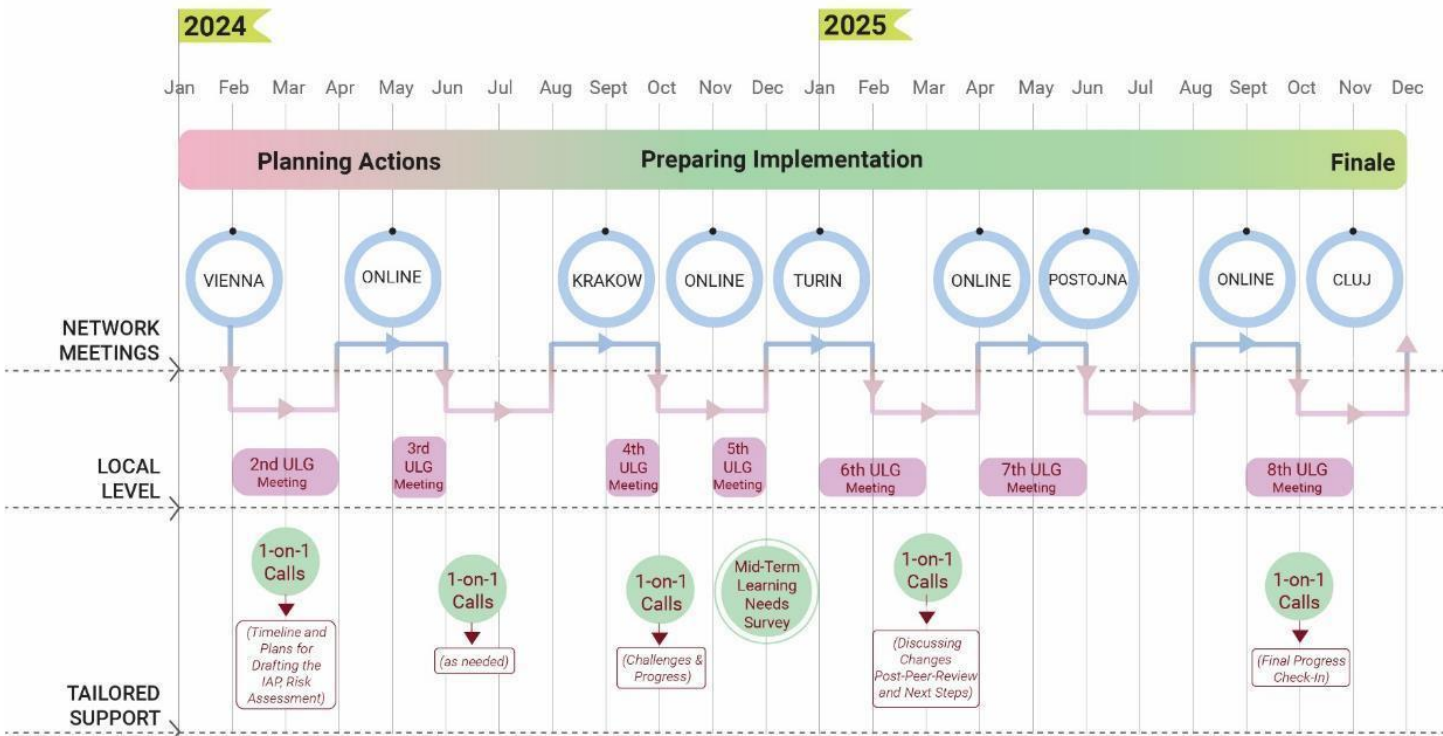
practices outside the network and between the network partners. The goal is to empower the partners and a wider audience not only in the “what” but also the “how” of gender equality on a local level.

The FEMACT-cities journey, a path to more equality

The 8 partners have embarked on a two-year journey – from 2024 to 2025 – of learning, sharing, and testing in order to create integrated action plans for their local policy challenges.

Over the course of the network journey the partners meet at nine transnational meetings, which give them the topical inputs, peer learning and exchange, and methodological tools to be able to move towards the network vision in their local context.

Beside, each partner coordinates an “Urbact Local Group” (ULG) which actively contributes to writing the local action plan for gender equality.



Key learnings from transnational meetings

After a « ready for action » transnational meeting in Coimbra from 5th to 6th December 2023, the partners met in the framework of 3 transnational meetings :

22nd to 23th February 2024 in Vienna (AT) – Transnational meeting#2

- **Get inspiration**

The first FEMACT-Cities network meeting was a groundbreaking event that not only highlighted the importance of gender-responsive urban development but also Vienna’s role as a pioneer in this area. This significant event brought together experts and interested parties

from all over Europe to talk about gender-responsive urban development. This meeting served as a platform for exchanging knowledge, experiences, and best practices in order to jointly address challenges across the EU.

Among the speaker's contributions and the interactive formats, the walk through the Sonnenwendviertel led by Eva Kail - recognized as an icon of gender planning in Vienna - was an unforgettable experience for all participants.

Lessons learnt in Vienna :

1. Change takes time

The journey of Vienna journey started more than 35 years ... real change takes time and patience, and iterative working that constantly explores impact and effectiveness.

2. Change takes champions

The example of Vienna shows that real change takes champions, people who are dedicated to the change they want to see in the city (and the world) and who are prepared to work for it every day, even though it takes time and effort.

3. Change takes communication

The Viennese model uses pilot projects to test new spatial theories and then clever communication strategies to gain support within the city administration and normalise gender approaches for a wider public.

4. Change takes courage

Vienna showed us that real change takes courage: the courage to take the first step, but also to continue when the political or publicity winds change.

4th to 5th June 2024 Online – Transnational meeting#3

➤ **Get tools**

How to start the action planning process ?

This second transnational meeting focused on giving the partners the tools and inspiration to get started. It offered the partners a solid base and a range of tools, inspiration and structures to embark on their action planning journey:

- Examples of Good Gender Equality Plans (Agglomération de la Rochelle (FR), Umea (SE), Frankfurt am Main (DE))
- Deep dive into the Action Planning Cycle, with Mary Dellenbaugh-Losse:
The lead Expert of the FEMACT-Cities network, dug into the action planning cycle and process, laying the groundwork for the partners' elaboration of the eight Integrated Action Plans over the next 18 months.
- Learning more about testing actions and participation, with Christophe Gouache:
How to shape and evaluate an action to assess its relevance within the integrated action plan ? Which place should be given to citizen participation ?
- Focus on Data, with Béla Kézy and Karin Schönplflug:
On the one hand, choosing which data to collect, understanding where to get it, and figuring out what to do with it once you have it, on the other hand, creating arguments with Data

12th to 13th september 2024 in Krakow (PL) - Transnational meeting#4

➤ Get into the action plan

As FEMACT-cities partners get to know each other better, the path towards the action plan is accelerating, with the need to produce a first draft by early 2025.

This transnational meeting allowed us to enter into the concrete constructions of the action plan and explore urban issues such as safety for girls and young women and women entrepreneurship.

The « feminist city tour » in old Krakow was an exciting way to experience an initiative to promote women in the city.

Step by step, the rise of enthusiastic local groups

Adopting a **participatory approach**, the **Urban Local Group (ULG)** played a pivotal role in shaping Turin's Gender Equality Policy. This inclusive governance model ensures decision-making is collaborative, efficient, and reflective of diverse perspectives.

Since the GEP primarily addresses the needs of municipal employees, staff from various departments were actively involved in co-designing actions and objectives. While the leadership retained final authority over the inclusion of proposals, the process struck a balance between **bottom-up participation** and **top-down decision-making**.

The ULG included stakeholders representing multiple administrative divisions, with consistent participation from **30–35 members** per session. Invitations were sent via internal mailing lists, ensuring voluntary and diverse attendance. Each session featured:

- **Progress updates** shared by the coordination team.
- **Expert-led introductions** on thematic areas to empower participants and foster informed discussions.
- Collaborative brainstorming in smaller groups, culminating in plenary sessions for action development.

The ULG sessions centered around the **five thematic areas of the Horizon Europe guidelines**, avoiding potential disempowerment through well-structured discussions. The schedule was as follows:

1. **March 19, 2024: Work-life balance** and organizational culture.
2. **June 14, 2024: Gender equality in recruitment** and career progression.
3. **September 25, 2024: Gender balance in leadership** and decision-making bodies.
4. **November 28, 2024: Combatting gender-based violence**, including sexual harassment.

Each meeting reinforced the GEP's commitment to inclusivity and actionable change, heading to a more equitable workplace.

FEMACT-Cities / Next steps

Almost half way to the end of the program

12th to 13th November 2024 / online - Transnational meeting#5
29th to 31st January 2025 / Torino (IT) - Transnational meeting#6
March 2025 / online - Transnational meeting#7
21st to 22nd May 2025 / Postojna (SI) - Transnational meeting#8
Sept 2025 / online - Transnational meeting#9
Nov 2025 / Cluj (RO) - Transnational meeting#10

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