11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities and human settlements
inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

EU internal action

Overview and challenges

While European cities and communities provide opportunities for employment, economic and cultural activity, many inhabitants face environmental and social challenges. Housing issues, pollution (air, water, noise, waste), and crime are some of the most serious challenges faced in urban areas.

The EU supports transitions with the core objective of being socially inclusive, in order to leave no one and no place behind, by offering funding, capacity and knowledge-building support. Cities have an essential role to play in taking this process forward, in innovating, investing and mobilising, together with other levels of governance, in order to make urbanisation sustainable and ensure territorial cohesion.

The share of people overburdened by their housing costs or facing severe housing deprivation have fallen since 2015. In 2020, 4.3 % of the EU population faced severe housing deprivation (compared to 5.3 % in 2015) and 7.8 % of the EU population were overburdened by their housing costs in 2020 (compared to 9.4 % in 2019). In order to become climate-resilient and tackle the energy crisis, cities have to renovate and equip housing construction with renewable and clean energy sources and adopt sustainable waste management.

Cities and urban areas are home to almost 75 % of EU citizens. Worldwide, cities account for more than 65 % of energy consumption and for more than 70 % of CO_2 emissions. For the EU to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 55 % by 2030 and to become climate neutral by 2050, cities will have to transition to sustainable consumption modes and work towards the EU circular economy targets. In order to tackle pollution and halt biodiversity loss, cities will also have to accelerate their green transformation and reach the ambitious targets under the European Green Deal. At the same time, cities will also have to fully endorse sustainable urban mobility, including through widespread deployment of innovative solutions that cut emissions as well as through a much-increased focus on public transport, walking and cycling.

Urban road safety in the EU (which also links to SDG 3) is improving overall, but the pace is slowing. While EU roads are among the safest in the world, around 20 000 lives are lost in road-related crashes in the EU every year and up to six times the same number are seriously injured. On urban roads, around 70 % of those killed are vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists).

People's safety is also compromised by experiences of harassment (also linked to SDG target 11.7 on access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces) – 29 % of people in the EU have experienced harassment in the previous 12 months, according to a survey carried out by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

2030 targets and trends at EU level

Target and policy reference	Trends
Significantly reduce total waste generation and halve the amount of residual (non-recycled) municipal waste by 2030 **A New Circular Economy Action Plan** **A Circular Cities and Regions Initiative**	505 kg of municipal waste per capita were generated by EU residents in 2020, corresponding to 225 million tonnes of municipal waste. Since 2015, the waste generated per capita per year has increased by 25 kg. Despite this increase, the EU has clearly shifted to more recycling.
Reduce landfill to a maximum of 10 % of municipal waste, by 2030 Circular Economy Action Plan	The amount of landfilled municipal waste has diminished, although more waste was generated. Indeed, it fell from 121 million tonnes in 1995 to 54 million tonnes in 2021 (-55 %), corresponding to an average annual decline of 3.0 %. The landfilling rate in the EU dropped from 61 % in 1995 to less than 23 % in 2021.
Recycling or preparing for re-use 60 % of municipal waste by 2030 **Waste Framework directive**	Although there was an increase in municipal waste generated, the EU has shifted to more recycling. Indeed, the recycling rate of municipal waste has been increasing, from 27.3 % (in 2000) to 49.6 % (in 2021).
At least 30 million zero-emission vehicles in operation on European roads by 2030 and more than 3 million recharging points deployed **Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy**	In 2022, 3.39 million battery-electric vehicles and more than 4 000 hydrogen-fuel cell electric light-duty vehicles were registered in the EU. While considerable progress remains to be made to reach the target, market registrations of battery-electric vehicles have seen significant growth over the past 2 years and manufacturers report heavy investments.
35 million building units renovated by 2030 **At least double the annual energy renovation rate of residential and non-residential buildings by 2030 and to foster deep energy renovations** **A Renovation Wave for Europe**	About only 11 % of the EU building stock undergoes some level of renovation each year. However, renovations of buildings very seldom also address buildings' energy performance. The weighted annual rate of energy renovations across the EU is low at 1 %. Besides, deep renovations reducing energy consumption by at least 60 % involve only 0.2 % of buildings per year. In some regions, energy renovation rates are virtually absent.
Reduce the share of people chronically disturbed by transport noise by 30 % **EU Action Plan: Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil**	Despite some improvements in perceived exposure to noise (20.6 % of the EU population in 2010, 17.6 % in 2020), 77 million people still suffered from noise disturbance in 2020. 70 million people from EU urban areas were estimated to be exposed to road traffic noise at 55 decibels or higher on annual average for day, evening and night in 2017.

More details on indicators and trends for SDG 11 can be found in the statistical and analytical annex and Eurostat's monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs.

Key initiatives

The EU has a wide range of policies and initiatives in place addressing or touching upon the different aspects of SDG 11.

In 2016, EU Member States adopted the **Urban Agenda for the EU** which delivers on the UN New Urban Agenda at EU level and is supported by the European Commission. It tackles issues and challenges that are particularly impactful in cities by building multi-level governance partnerships. The first phase (2016-2021) produced 139 actions through 14 action plans, while the implementation of 46 % of actions was finalised. The second phase (2022-2026) identified new priority themes in the **Ljubljana Agreement and Multiannual Working Programme**, namely: cities of equality, food, greening cities and sustainable tourism.

The new **European Urban Initiative** finances actions to experiment and develop transferable and scalable innovative solutions to urban challenges, improve cities' capacities to design and implement sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way, and promote knowledge sharing and capitalisation for the benefit of urban policy makers and practitioners.

The EU's New Urban Mobility Framework, adopted in December 2021, is designed to support EU cities in their efforts to reduce emission and improve mobility in a sustainable way. It aims to create an enabling framework for Member States, regions and cities to develop safe, accessible, inclusive, smart, resilient and zero-emission urban mobility well ahead of 2050. In this context, the framework promotes an increased uptake of high-quality sustainable urban mobility plans in cities, and paves the way for better monitoring of urban mobility policies.

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme enabling cities to work together to develop new, pragmatic and sustainable solutions to major urban challenges.

The **affordable housing initiative** is part of the Commission's **Renovation Wave** for Europe, which aims to promote greener buildings, create jobs and improve lives. In addition, principle 19 (Housing and assistance for he homeless) under the **European Pillar of Social Rights** is working towards ending homelessness in the EU. Principle 19 has also provided the impetus for the launch of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness.

The **Green City Accord** is a movement of European mayors committed to making cities cleaner and healthier. It aims to improve the quality of life for all Europeans and accelerate the implementation of relevant EU environmental laws. By signing the Accord, cities commit to addressing five areas of environmental management: air, water, nature and biodiversity, the circular economy and waste, and noise. The **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030** sets a target for all cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants to have an urban greening plan, with measures to create biodiverse and accessible urban green areas.

EU funding such as the Connecting Europe Facility, Cohesion Funds, Horizon Europe and the Recovery and Resilience Facility provide support to Member States in addressing sustainability challenges and improving road safety performance.

Overall, the European Green Deal is the blueprint for Europe's green transition, where all 27 EU Member States are creating new opportunities. The **Zero Pollution Action Plan** sets 2030 targets to reduce pollution of air, water and soil, and covers numerous policy initiatives with direct impacts on the urban environment. These include, for instance, the revision of the Ambient Air Quality Directives and the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, but also a dedicated flagship on supporting urban zero pollution action.

The **New European Bauhaus** initiative connects the European Green Deal to the everyday life and living spaces. It is an environmental, economic and cultural movement, aiming to combine design, sustainability, inclusion (from valuing diversity to securing accessibility and affordability) and investment

in order to help deliver on the EU's ambition for the green transition.

The **European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews** provides policy makers, urban practitioners and experts with a consolidated method and examples of indicators that European local and regional governments can use to monitor the achievement of SDGs and accordingly design sustainable urban development policies.

EU space services provided under the **EU space programme** are key enablers for smart cities, making urban planning more efficient. By using Galileo and EGNOS for navigation, positioning and timing, city services that are essential, for instance, for operating and managing public transportation, power supply, connectivity, waste management can be considerably improved at a lower cost. Copernicus, the EU's Earth observation system, provides valuable satellite images and insights about urban areas.

Selected enablers

Cohesion policy plays a central role in bringing Europe closer to its citizens and connecting local development needs and potential with EU and global objectives. Altogether Cohesion policy is the main EU financial instrument to support investments in sustainable urban development.

In particular for SDG 11 around EUR 30.7 billion of cohesion policy funding were invested in projects targeting the various dimensions of urban life – environmental, economic, social, and cultural – tackling issues ranging from improving air quality to providing cycle tracks and footpaths.

For the period 2021-2027 under the EU Cohesion Policy, more than EUR 19 billion will support place-based investments via more than 2 150 integrated territorial development strategies with enhanced ownership and the participation of local stakeholders and communities. Almost two thirds of this allocation is planned for investment aimed at fostering integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security within urban areas, while one third will pursue such objectives in non-urban areas. For example, 2 million m² of public buildings will be energy renovated, 33 km² of open space will be created or renovated in urban areas, and around 3 800 cultural or tourism sites will be supported.. Also in 2021-2027, the European Urban Initiative will support innovation, capacity and knowledge-building in urban areas of all sizes. In addition, the model financial instrument to support the New European Bauhaus aims to assist managing authorities in setting up financial instruments to support New European Bauhaus projects and to leverage public and private resources.

Portugal's 'Instrumento Financeiro para a Reabilitação e Revitalização Urbanas' (IFRRU 2020) provides a notable

example of a national-level financial instrument intended to support urban renewal across the country. It targets the improvement of buildings that are more than 30 years old, abandoned industrial spaces and units, social housing (including private units within a social housing building) and public space. IFFRU uses EUR 102 million of European Structural Funds resources to mobilise EUR 1.4 billion of public and private financing for urban development, with the aim of generating a total investment of around EUR 2 billion.

In Lithuania, the recovery and resilience plan supports the green transition through reforms and investments of EUR 185 million in energy efficiency renovations of buildings in order to foster a sustainable urban environment and EUR 293 million in generation and storage of renewable energy. Furthermore, EUR 293 million will be invested in sustainable mobility supporting the replacement of polluting road transport vehicles, improving public transport services and establishing charging/refilling infrastructure for vehicles using alternative fuels.

The Climate-neutral and Smart Cities Mission under **Horizon Europe**, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation, will invest a total of around EUR 350 million in research and innovation actions linked to the Mission's goal in the period 2021-2023, addressing clean mobility, energy efficiency and sustainable urban planning. The Mission has selected 100 cities from all EU Member States and 12 additional cities from countries participating in Horizon Europe to become climate neutral by 2030 and to act as experimentation and innovation hubs that enable all European cities to follow suit by 2050.

Driving Urban Transitions (DUT) is a European partnership of more than 60 partners from 27 countries, involving national and regional policy makers, funders and urban-related policy agencies to invest in urban R&I and strengthen a European innovation eco-system for urban transitions. DUT aims to create a strong community around urban transitions

and to establish a well-known research and innovation platform that will help cities become more sustainable, inclusive and liveable.

EIT Urban Mobility, a Knowledge and Innovation Community supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology since January 2019 aspires to become the largest European initiative transforming urban mobility and encourage positive changes in the way people move around cities in order to make them more liveable places.

Another example is the 'Developing innovative mobility solutions in the Brussels-Capital-Region' project supported by the Structural Reform Support Programme under the call for 2020. The objective of the project was to assist the Brussels-Capital Region in developing a regulatory framework for 'mobility as a service'. The region has recently established 'Good Move' — a sustainable urban mobility plan to address congestion and pollution. Developing shared mobility integrated with public transport was a key part of the strategy. Its success depends among others on establishing an efficient 'mobility as a service' system under an effective regulatory framework.

The EU, through the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) cooperated with a group of Human Rights Cities and practitioners from civil society and academia to develop a **Framework for Human Rights Cities in the EU**. The Framework, released in 2021, looks at the foundations, structures and tools that can help cities integrate human rights in a holistic and sustainable way in their work. FRA is rolling out a **practical guidance** on the framework in all EU languages to help local authorities to design and implement their own step-by-step policies and strategies of the framework.

Stakeholder engagement

The European Week of Regions and Cities is the biggest annual event in the EU dedicated to regional policy. The latest

edition in 2022 welcomed around 20 000 participants. During this four-day event, regions and cities showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs, implement EU cohesion policy, and prove the importance of the local and regional level for good European governance.

The European Mobility Week is the European Commission's flagship awareness-raising campaign on sustainable urban mobility culminating in the popular Car-Free Day. It promotes behavioural change in favour of active mobility, public transport, and other clean, intelligent transport solutions. The EUROPEANMOBILITYWEEK Award is presented to local authorities which have excelled in raising awareness about sustainable urban mobility.

The **Cities forum** is a biennial event which brings together urban stakeholders for exchanges and dialogues, particularly around the Commission's framework for enabling sustainable urban development as part of cohesion policy, and other relevant urban initiatives.

The **CoP-CITIES** is an initiative open to stakeholders (cities and networks of cities, international and intergovernmental organisations and research bodies) to share practices, tools and knowledge over sustainable urban development.

The **Intelligent Cities Challenge** is a Commission initiative that supports 136 cities in using cutting-edge technologies to lead the intelligent, green and socially responsible recovery.

The European Commission's **Green capital and leaf award**s recognise and reward cities across Europe for their efforts to improve the environment, and thus also the quality of life, in cities.

CIVITAS is one of the flagship innovation initiatives that supports cities in making smart and sustainable urban mobility a reality. CIVITAS fosters political commitment and boosts collective expertise, equipping cities to put mobility at the centre of decarbonisation and providing peer exchange, networking and training opportunities.

Urban Mobility Days is a biennial conference that provides a unique forum for policymakers, academia, civil society representatives and urban transport practitioners to discuss the way forward for a sustainable, innovative and equitable urban mobility in Europe.

Multi-level approach

SDG delivery requires ambitious action at all levels. Some good practices in implementing SDG 11 include the following:
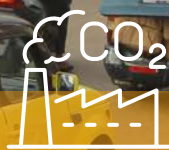
Sweden has put in place a dedicated Council to support municipalities in the implementation of SDG 11. The Council for Sustainable Cities is a forum consisting of 12 government agencies, administrative boards and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. Its task is to support the municipalities in their work, with the aim of spreading knowledge and creating opportunities for collaboration on sustainable urban development.

In Spain, the Federation of Provinces and Municipalities (FEMP) works, in cooperation with authorities at multiple levels, to advance in the process of to implement locally the 2030 Agenda at the local level. This includes the development of the 2030 Agenda 2030 Localization Handbook, which is the basic tool for local entities In Spain to work under the same parameters for the localization of the SDGs in local initiatives involving a range of local actors.

In the German region of North Rhine-Westphalia, the 'Global Sustainable Municipalities' project has since 2016 led 39 local authorities to systematically draw up and implement local sustainability strategies and reports. Some of these were presented at the 2022 High-Level Political Forum as voluntary local reviews. To complement SDG-driven sustainability management and achieve impact-oriented monetary control, five local authorities have connected their budget with the SDGs. 172 localities are involved in this project today from across Germany.

Based on current targets and actions, GCoM cities and local governments could collectively reduce global emissions by 1.9 GtCO$_2$e annually in 2030 compared to a business-as-usual (BAU) trajectory.

EU external action

Global trends

Many of the EU's partner countries are facing rapid urban expansion. By 2050, an estimated **seven out of ten people will live in urban areas**. While cities can be drivers of economic growth and lead to a more efficient use of resources, rapid, often unplanned, urbanisation creates multiple challenges. In 2020, approximately one in four urban dwellers, approximately 1 billion people, lived in slums with inadequate access to basic services. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than half the urban population live in slums. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing disparities in urban settlements.

Internal/external coherence including policy coherence for development

With regard to the external dimension of EU policies addressing SDG 11, in September 2022, the EU contributed actively to G7 Ministers' adoption of the first G7 communiqué on urban development. It provides for a common understanding around the key principles and actions needed for urban development policy, extending the principles established at EU level under the **New Leipzig Charter**, and promoting integrated and sustainable urban development.

Further, at UN level, on the occasion of the adoption of the **New Urban Agenda at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016**, the EU and its Member States pledged to extend their action on international urban and regional cooperation.

The EU also presents the European mission on climate-neutral and smart cities as a commitment. The EU aims to support 100 cities as hubs of experimentation and innovation for the green and digital transition by 2030 and for an inclusive post-pandemic recovery. In turn, these cities will model and inspire similar transformations for cities around the world. This is complemented with the dedicated Urban Transitions Mission which aims to deliver at least 50 large-scale, integrated demonstration projects in urban environments around the world, by 2030. A key EU-led platform that addresses both SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 11 is the **Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate Action** (GCoM). The European Commission and UN-Habitat co-chair this initiative, which is the largest global alliance for city climate leadership, built upon the commitment

of over 11 500 cities and local governments. These cities hail from 6 continents and 142 countries and in total represent more than 1 billion people. Based on current targets and actions, GCoM cities and local governments could collectively reduce global emissions by 1.9 GtCO$_2$e annually in 2030 compared to a business-as-usual trajectory. Reducing CO$_2$ emissions also implies the reduction of pollutant emissions, which is co-beneficial for SDG 11 targets and indicators.

On pollution and waste at municipal level, the EU has started implementing several waste-oriented initiatives, such as the circular cities and regions initiative, the EU Action Plan: Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil and the circular economy action plan (see SDG 12).

EU and Member States external financial support for SDG implementation and results

In 2021, EU institutions reported to OECD EUR 3.7 billion in commitments for projects contributing to SDG 11. The biggest share of the EU contribution to SDG 11 is accounted for by projects that target SDG 11 as the main SDG. These projects also contribute to other interlinked SDGs, with the largest contributions going to SDGs 5, 9 and 13. Other SDGs also contribute to SDG 11 as a significant objective, with the main contributors being SDGs 1, 8 and 13. When taking into account other official flows, private funds mobilised through public intervention and support to international public goods, the Total Official Support to Sustainable Development (TOSSD) of the EU to SDG 11 amounted to EUR 7.7 billion in 2021. In terms of selected results of assistance, [29] in the period 2018-2021, 234

countries and cities developed climate change and/or disaster risk reduction strategies with EU support. and 125 countries and cities implemented them with EU support.

Collectively, the EU and those Member States that reported on SDGs to the OECD in 2021, contributed EUR 7.4 billion to SDG 11. EU and Member State flows to SDG 11 in 2021 were distributed across all regions with projects in Africa (34 %), Asia (26 %), other countries in Europe (19 %) and America and the Caribbean (14 %).

Main policy orientations and initiatives for external engagement

In the context of SDG 11, the EU recognises that sustainable urbanisation is an essential tool to make sustainable development a reality at local and urban levels and has embraced the principles of the New Urban Agenda. At the occasion of the UN high-level meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in April 2022, the EU undertook a voluntary commitment to enhance support to external cooperation and international partnerships in the field of urban development.

In the EU's international partnerships, urban development contributes to achieving a range of high-level strategic objectives and initiatives, in particular Global Gateway and the external dimension of the Green Deal.

In this context, and in line with partner countries' own policies and plans for making human settlements and cities sustainable and inclusive globally, the EU's priorities for its external actions contributing to SDG 11 and interlinked SDGs include:

[29] For the methodology on results, see the same section under SDG 2.

Examples of EU actions (with a focus on Global Gateway and Team Europe initiatives)

In addition to pursuing SDG 11, making cities and human settlements inclusive and sustainable is closely interlinked with various SDGs, including SDG1 on fighting poverty, SDG8 on sustainable growth, SDG10 on reducing inequalities, SDG9 on innovation and resilient infrastructures and SDG13 on climate action.

Linked to the twin green and digital transition and hence contributing to SDGs 9 and 13, the EU launched the Smart Green ASEAN Cities (SGAC) programme. This will help ASEAN Member States anticipate the substantial pressure from the high urbanisation by focusing on green and smart solutions through digitalisation and the use of technologies. It is part of the EU-ASEAN Global Gateway investment package.

In a similar vein, the EU and Member States are implementing the '**Sustainable Rwandan cities fit for the digital age**' Team Europe initiative. The initiative supports the Global Gateway African-Europe Investment Package priorities on transport by seeking to promote green urbanisation models, green private investments, e-government and digital services and new data collection models and monitoring processes in urban areas. The objective of this TEI is to tap into the potential of Rwandan cities to drive innovation and spur the creation of jobs fit for the 21st century. Furthermore, the 'Flood prevention and informal settlement upgrading in the city of Kigali' programme will contribute to improving climate adaptation and inclusive urbanisation in the city of Kigali.

The European mission on climate-neutral and smart cities supports 100 cities as hubs of experimentation and innovation for the green and digital transition by 2030 and for an inclusive post-pandemic recovery. In turn, these cities will model and inspire similar transformations for cities around the world through initiatives such as the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM).

Further, the **Partnerships for sustainable cities** programme was launched in 2018 and now counts in a total of 57 city-to-city partnerships ongoing in 34 countries. The cities hail from EU Member States and partner countries. The programme's aim is to promote integrated urban development through partnerships built between local authorities of EU Member States and partner countries in accordance with the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. Partnerships address the same specific objective.

On a global level, the **International Urban and Regional Cooperation Programme** (IURC), a joint programme launched in 2021, supports cooperation between cities and regions to work on sustainable solutions to common urban and territorial challenges, with particular attention being paid to the green and digital transitions and the inclusive post-pandemic recovery.

▸ to ensure that EU support to cities and urban development is effectively framed in the context of wider initiatives, in particular Global Gateway, the European Green Deal and Team Europe;

▸ to contribute to mobilising finance for investment in sustainable urban development, in particular in the context of the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) and wider efforts aimed at strengthening the eco-system for urban finance;

▸ to advance an integrated approach to urban development, encompassing productive, sustainable and inclusive patterns of urbanisation.

Following the programming exercise for the 2021-2027 period, partnerships with more than 30 countries in national programmes and/or within Team Europe initiatives target urban development and cities, either as a priority on its own or as part of a wider priority, e.g. the Green Deal. This is a major shift compared to the EU's last programming period (2014-2020), where only one country had a specific reference to urban development (Haiti in the context of reconstruction).

Mobilisation of funds for investments in urban infrastructure remains a major challenge. EFSD+ is structured in what are called 'investment windows', with one of these targeting sustainable cities. The EFSD+ will support the mobilisation of finance through guarantees, seeking to mobilise additional sources of finance and blending, which will make lending more affordable. Thus, blended finance may facilitate investments in urban infrastructure that may have large social or environmental benefits but not necessarily the capacity to generate revenue. Other avenues of engagement include the Partnership for sustainable cities programme and the Global Covenant of Mayors initiative.

In Tanzania, the EU is supporting a large urban national programme which will, among other objectives, seek to advance investments in a number of secondary cities, offering blending/guarantees combined with a budget support component, which will foster a policy dialogue on subnational funding arrangements.

In relation to SDGs 1, 8 and 9, several initiatives link urbanisation and infrastructure to people's living conditions and sustainable growth for businesses. For example, the EU4 Integrated Territorial Development in Georgia budget support programme is a Team Europe Initiative supporting Global Gateway investment priorities which promotes more balanced territorial development and aims at improving living standards and conditions for the inhabitants of four focal regions. The programme targets different areas such as basic infrastructure, SME development, and human capital.

In addition, urbanisation is one of the main drivers of disaster risk. The EU is strengthening disaster preparedness in urban contexts with its humanitarian partners, with urban preparedness indeed being one of the 2021-2024 funding priorities in the field of disaster preparedness.

Actions by the EU and its Member States are mutually reinforcing and coordinated to ensure complementarity and impact in support of the SDGs. In addition to acting together with the EU through joint programming and Team Europe Initiatives, EU Member States carry out their own projects in support of the 2030 Agenda including SDG 11. A few such initiatives are set out below for illustrative purposes.

Romania actively supports cities by a range of initiatives, such as undertaking feasibility and design studies and developing action plans for the improvement of waste-water treatment, public transport systems and public lighting systems in several cities in Moldova; participating in the development of tourism in Alexandria, Egypt; participating in the development of smart, secure and sustainable urban development in Lusaka, Zambia; and in smart metropolitan development for social and family housing in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Germany supports sustainable urban development projects in Ecuador reinforcing the capacity of local, regional and national governance bodies to steer sustainable urban development and promoting good local governance and civic engagement. Germany is also supporting projects to make cities climate smart in other countries, such as Bangladesh, Chile, India and South Africa among others. Projects focusing on local authority financing, urban mobility and sustainable urban infrastructure and services such as waste processing and disposal, water supply and sanitation are being undertaken in countries such as Mexico, India, Tunisia and Albania.

Looking ahead

To support SDG 11, in 2022 the Commission proposed to implement a new provision called Supporting Affordable Energy (SAFE) — allowing a more flexible use of cohesion policy funds allocations for 2014-2020 to help Member States, regions and territories to support vulnerable households and companies and to preserve jobs. SAFE is part of REPowerEU which is the European Commission's plan to make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030, in light of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Other issues under discussion include:

- focusing on building an innovative environment to ensure the most effective development of regions and cities
- communicating the importance of sustainable development with local stakeholders, including municipal councils, officers and citizens, and promoting deliberative tools
- continuing to reduce regional disparities and supporting economically and socially vulnerable areas

- encouraging cities and regions to apply the SDGs to their local areas and promote greater engagement in SDGs Voluntary Local Reviews.

On the external side, the EU will continue to take determined action to accelerate the implementation of SDG 11 globally, including through the roll-out of a range of multiannual indicative programmes with partner countries, with sustainable cities, human settlements and/or transport are a shared priority. A tangible contribution to SDG 11 (and other interlinked SDGs) will be the deployment of Global Gateway at regional and national levels. This is to be undertaken in a Team Europe approach, e.g. targeting through Global Gateway flagships projects urban transport infrastructure, including on electric mobility and on sustainable public transport. The EU and its Member States also continue to implement their **Voluntary Commitments to deliver on the New Urban Agenda**.