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European Economic and Social Committee
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EUROPEAN DAY OF
**SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES**



ECOLISE
EUROPEAN NETWORK
FOR COMMUNITY-LED
INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE
AND SUSTAINABILITY

Civil society and municipalities: building sustainability through collaboration
La société civile et les municipalités: construire la durabilité grâce à la collaboration

20/09/2018 | 9:00 - 17:00 | JDE 52

EESC/CESE | Rue Belliard, 99 | 1040 Brussels/Bruelles

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#collaboration4better #EDaySC2018

Exploring collaboration between civil society and municipalities

20th September, 2018

Civil society representatives from across Europe who are taking action on climate change and sustainability are bringing their challenges and inspiration to the heart of Brussels today at the '[Civil society and municipalities: building sustainability through collaboration](#)' conference.

The conference is co-hosted by [ECOLISE](#), the European Network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability, and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), which represents organised civil society in Europe, in collaboration with the Committee of the Regions, the EU's assembly of local and regional authorities, and [Transition Network](#), a charity which supports communities to come together to reimagine and rebuild our world.

The conference aims to facilitate a discussion around collaboration between municipalities and the dynamic, grassroots movement of thousands of communities who are designing and testing new economic, social and environmental innovations.

"Collaboration is absolutely essential if we are to tackle the most pressing challenges of our time. It's part of the DNA of community organising and so, as a network of communities across Europe, we are delighted once again to be collaborating with the EESC and bringing communities and the grassroots to the heart of Brussels," said Robert Hall, president of ECOLISE.

Speakers at the conference include EESC members Peter Schmidt and Brenda King, Andrew Cooper from the CoR, and Rudolf Niessler and Višnar Malinovská from the European Commission's DG REGIO and DG CLIMA respectively as well as those already involved in dynamic collaborations between communities and municipalities across Europe and beyond. In particular there are representatives from Italy, Spain, Portugal and Hungary who are developing a framework that supports collaboration between community-led initiatives and municipalities as part of the Municipalities in Transition (MiT) project.

"We know that social, environmental and cultural change is not easy. We also know from our experience and research that peer support, the sharing of experiences and connection between people tackling similar challenges, can make an important difference for success. Thus we are delighted to be

bringing our learnings to today's wider conversation on collaboration for systemic change," said Ana Huertas, [MiT](#) Coordinator and vice-president of ECOLISE.

Other speakers from the community-led movement include Lucia Aboutaouf, of the VILCO project in Brussels, which is exploring how citizens and municipalities can collaborate for local environmental resilience; Ana Adzersen, of the [Fearless Cities](#) global municipalist movement, which aims to radicalise democracy, feminize politics and stand up to the far right; and Katrien Rycken, coordinator of Leuven 2030, the Belgian project aiming to make Leuven a climate-neutral city in a socially just way.

In keeping with ECOLISE's culture of so-called blended meetings, which include both in-person and remote participation, which allow people to connect online in a low-carbon way (with no travel footprint), the conference is being live-streamed and remote followers can engage in the plenary discussions via the online audience interaction technology sli.do.

The conference is organised within the context of the second edition of the [European Day of Sustainable Communities](#) (EDSC), which is being celebrated on 22nd September 2018 in 21 countries across Europe - from Sweden to Serbia and from Ireland to the Ukraine.

The EDSC celebrates the efforts and achievements of the thousands of local communities across Europe who are taking action for a more equitable, sustainable and decarbonised world and raises awareness among policy makers - from local to European level - of the potential of citizens and communities to contribute to global climate and sustainability goals.

EDSC events include festivals, open days, guided tours, university workshops, shared harvests, seed swaps, film screenings, community meals and conferences. For further information please see [here](#).

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