



THE CIVITAS INITIATIVE
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PRESS RELEASE

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International delegation of politicians and mobility experts comes to Antwerp for inspiration and expertise

From 8-10 May, a delegation of transport experts and politicians from over 20 cities across Europe is coming to Antwerp (Belgium) for a visit organised by the CIVITAS PORTIS project and CIVITAS Initiative.

This will demonstrate the city's approach to sustainable urban mobility and reveal the transport solutions that have earned Antwerp its reputation as a European leader in the field, particularly with regards to port cities.

Such cities in Europe often struggle with the same central issue: how can sizeable flows of residents, visitors, commuters and freight be managed so that the city (and port) remain accessible and liveable for all?

Koen Kennis, Antwerp Alderman for Mobility, commented that "we are proud of Antwerp's enterprising spirit and how its innovative mobility measures inspire others. Yet the cities visiting us also have their own insights to share. We have much to learn and benefit immensely from our interaction with others during such activities and in CIVITAS PORTIS."

The three-day study visit starts in the Port of Antwerp, an important partner of both the City of Antwerp and CIVITAS PORTIS. During their tour of the port, the group will see solutions enhancing port-city accessibility and mobility. These include the Water Bus across the river Scheldt and a Bike Bus that brings commuters and their bicycles to the other side. The study visit then zooms in on the CIVITAS PORTIS approach, focusing on port-city cooperation arrangements and governance and innovation.

After this, the focus shifts to Smart Ways to Antwerp (SWtA), the city of Antwerp's sustainable mobility initiative, in the spotlight. The group will be introduced to how SWtA operates, discover what aspects of its work are transferable, and learn the importance of a behavioural change strategy to moving towards sustainable mobility.

Antwerp Alderman for the Port, Annick De Ridder: "The visit of this international delegation is a beautiful recognition for the Port of Antwerp as a motor for innovative mobility solutions. As a community builder, we work together on an accessible port and we implement several interesting transport alternatives for both passenger and freight transport. European cooperation projects, such as CIVITAS PORTIS, highlight and support initiatives such as the Waterbus, which is very good."

The CIVITAS Political Advisory Committee (PAC) also meets in Antwerp on the morning of 8 May. This group of leading local level politicians, which currently comprises 15 members from across the EU, provides towns and cities with a strong voice in EU-level discussions on and policy formulation related to transport. Koen Kennis is a current member.

Dejan Crnek, Vice-Mayor of Ljubljana and Chairperson of the CIVITAS PAC, remarked: "Meetings like the one in Antwerp are vital to the PAC's work. Coming together with my colleagues and seeing how a fellow city does things acts as the best basis for our main task: providing the platform that ensures the local level perspective sits at the heart of European-level policy and action to promote cleaner, better transport."



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On 7 May, the CIVITAS PAC and current CIVITAS SATELLITE Coordinator and Secretary General of Polis, Karen Vancluysen, met European Transport Commissioner, Violeta Bulc. They discussed the future of CIVITAS and presented the CIVITAS DESTINATIONS declaration for livable cities.

The group also outlined the need to maintain CIVITAS as a focal point for urban mobility and their ambitious strategies to achieve more sustainable mobility, ranging from enforcement of low emission zones and new cycling infrastructure to the integration of modes and access to alternative fuels.

See the full study visit programme [here](#).

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About CIVITAS PORTIS

CIVITAS PORTIS involves 33 partners from five port cities working together on sustainable mobility solutions. It is one of three Living Lab projects under the European Commission's CIVITAS Initiative. Alongside Antwerp, Aberdeen (Scotland), Constanta (Romania), Klaipeda (Lithuania) and Trieste (Italy) act as Living Labs for the implementation of mobility measures that support their multifunctional role as cities, ports and gateways to inland areas.

All cities collaborate on effective, innovative and sustainable solutions to improve access to their cities and ports. Antwerp is the project's coordinator. Aside from the five European cities, the Chinese port city of Ningbo is involved as a PORTIS follower city. CIVITAS PORTIS also aims to show that sustainable mobility can increase functional and social cohesion between city centres and ports, while driving economic growth and boosting the appeal of urban environments. [Read more](#) (in English) and watch the [project video](#).

About the CIVITAS Political Advisory Committee

The CIVITAS Political Advisory Committee (PAC) is a small group of leading politicians that acts as the steering group of the CIVITAS Initiative and network of cities. The current PAC



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comprises 15 members from across the EU, and its Chairperson is Dejan Crnek, Vice-Mayor of Ljubljana (Slovenia). [Read more](#) (in English).

About the CIVITAS Initiative

CIVITAS is a network of over 320 cities committed to cleaner, better transport in Europe and beyond. Having started in 2002, CIVITAS currently supports three Living Lab projects where a range of sustainable mobility solutions are being implemented and 13 research projects under the European Commission's Horizon 2020 funding programme. [Read more on CIVITAS](#).