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THE CREATION OF A EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY ON CITY CENTERS



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Parlement européen

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Europeans have a strong attachment to their city centers, a sentiment that has intensified since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Concerned about making their city centers more attractive, friendly, and lively—with spaces dedicated to pedestrians, culture, and events—elected officials are championing this cause.

The association of elected officials and parliamentarians, Centre-Ville en Mouvement, led by Philippe LAURENT, Mayor of Sceaux, Co-President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, **advocates for the creation of a European Observatory on city centers** in collaboration with MEP Fabienne KELLER.



This idea emerged following the 2nd European Forum on City Center in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Nineteen mayors or their representatives from various EU countries expressed their actions for revitalizing and renewing their city centers during this event. **They wished to continue sharing the best practices by establishing a European Observatory for city centers.** Our association supported this ambition during study trips to European city centers and the production of short videos shown at the 2nd European Forum on City Center.



The proposals that follow are based on the 20 years of experience of the French association of elected officials, Centre-Ville en Mouvement. The association has deployed numerous tools to improve the dynamization of city centers.

A trip to European city centers to prepare short videos to broadcast at the 2nd European Forum on City Center and to meet with elected officials.

Centre-Ville en Mouvement manages the Network of Sustainable and Innovative City Centers, which includes over 670 members. It collaborates with the French government on programs such as Action cœur de ville and Petites Villes de Demain, encompassing 1,643 cities.

This Network is fueled by four National Observatories as well as an annual barometer on consumer's city centers expectations.

Urban sprawl, resulting from economic development, leads to increased sectorization of the city, which gradually loses its centralized character.

Changing consumption patterns, with the surge in e-commerce, significantly impact the commercial attractiveness of city centers, necessitating new marketing strategies and synergies between online sales sites and physical downtown stores.

The need for city center renewal, especially in small and medium-sized cities, requires increased intervention by local authorities. However, **these authorities may lack the necessary expertise and awareness of actions and innovations implemented in other city centers.**



Operating Proposal :

The Observatory aims to bring together elected officials, researchers, and economic stakeholders to disseminate knowledge, exchange best practices, and formulate recommendations based on exemplary experiments that have been sustained.

Operation :

- The plan involves having seven thematic groups chaired and organized by European municipalities, meeting twice a year virtually, focusing on sharing experiences between these municipalities and hearing from specialists.
- Every two years, during the European Forum on City Center, each group will report on its exchanges and work.
- A platform site will be created at www.citycenters.eu, containing all video replays of virtual Observatories.
- Field visits to discover best practices in European city centers will also be organized.

Seven major themes to be addressed :

- **City center management and its tools**
- **Environment and urban life**
- **Commercial and artisanal diversity**
- **Logistics and last-mile delivery**
- **Culture and events**
- **Urban planning and mobility in the city center**
- **Housing and its evolutions**



A study trip was conducted to Ljubljana to explore its city center, which is entirely pedestrianized, with the participation of numerous mayors and elected officials.



Partners of the European Observatory :


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