

The Urban7 Impact Report

2022

Introduction	3
About the U7	3
Recent Activities	4
Declaration	6
U7 Mayors Summit	7
G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on Climate, Environment, Peace and Security	8
G7 Development Ministers' Meeting Communiqué	9
G7 Climate, Energy and Environment Ministers' Communiqué	9
U7 at the World Urban Forum	10
Heads of State Communiqué	11
SUDO Meeting in Mannheim	11
G7 Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Urban Development	12
Urban Development Ministers' Communiqué	13
Impact	14
U7 National City Networks	15

Introduction

The G7 is a forum of seven leading liberal democracies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as the European Union (non-enumerated member). G7 members are united by both their shared values and their economic might. These values set the group apart from other multilateral fora, enabling its members to commit to ambitious policies.

The decisions made by the G7 – on subjects ranging from trade to the environment to public health – have a significant impact on cities around the world. The Urban7 was established based on the shared conviction of its members that policies developed together –

by all levels of government – will be better able to address global challenges. Too often, national governments set international agendas, leaving the potential of cities untapped. The Urban7 is working to establish a system of true multi-level governance by engaging directly in the G7 process.

Since its launch in 2021 by Core Cities UK, the U7 has advocated for a continuous dialogue between the G7 nations and municipal actors. This report will outline the remarkable success of the Urban7 in 2022 and explore what this progress could mean for other multi-lateral processes in the future.



Source: Henning Schacht

About the U7

The U7 is led by a strong urban alliance, comprising Deutscher Staedtetag (Association of German Cities), the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. The national city networks of the G7 members are at the heart of the U7's work, driving the group's vision and priorities. Throughout Germany's G7 presidency in 2022, the Urban7 was supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Service Agency Communities in One World of Engagement Global.

Recent Activities

Throughout 2022, the Urban7 actively pushed to make the voices of cities heard in the G7 process.

June 2021

- First U7 meeting organized by Core Cities UK

January 2022

- Germany takes over G7 Presidency and publishes programme

May 2022

- Urban7 publishes U7 Mayors Declaration
- Urban7 Mayors Summit
- G7 Foreign Ministers commit to sharing experience and expertise across national and subnational government departments
- G7 Development Ministers acknowledge important role of cities and multi-level governance
- G7 Climate and Environment Ministers encourage better coordination across all levels of government and acknowledge key role of cities in just climate and energy transition

June 2022

- Urban7 Event at the World Urban Forum
- G7 heads of state commit to developing a joint understanding of good urban development policy and to fostering exchange with cities

July 2022

- Sustainable Urban Development Officers gather in Mannheim to plan first meeting of G7 Ministers for Sustainable Urban Development

September 2022

- Mayor Peter Kurz joins first-ever meeting of G7 Ministers for Sustainable Urban Development on behalf of the Urban7



Declaration

In order to send a clear message to the G7 about the needs and demands of local governments, the Urban7 developed the U7 Mayors Declaration. This declaration was drafted by the partner organizations and national city networks of the G7 members. The U7 also invited mayors from the Global South to contribute. Their feedback was important given the impact that the decisions of the G7 have around the world.

In the Declaration, the mayors:

- 1 Invited the G7 to recognize the U7 as an official engagement group;
- 2 Committed to engaging in G7 ministerial meetings;
- 3 Invited the G7 to consider and promote urban diplomacy in foreign and development policies;
- 4 Invited the G7 to embrace local self-government;
- 5 Urged G7 countries to work with local governments to reach commitments set in international agendas like the Paris Climate Agreement and New Urban Agenda;
- 6 Invited the G7 to facilitate debt relief and accelerate sustainability investments globally;
- 7 Invited the G7 to increase national budgets supporting municipal investments and increase sustainable urban development spending in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and climate funds;
- 8 Committed to supporting local solidarity, multilateralism, and action by establishing a strong connection with the U20;
- 9 Commended cities in Europe for demonstrating solidarity and support for cities in Ukraine and invited the G7 to join the U7 in establishing a post-war development strategy to redevelop and rebuild Ukrainian cities;
- 10 Committed to providing input for the G7 Heads of State Summit in June 2022.



Source: photothek

“Cities are the drivers of change for peace, democracy and sustainability. The war in Ukraine shows once more that freedom, democracy and human rights cannot be taken for granted. City diplomacy is a glimmer of hope. That is why the urban perspective needs to be taken into account when discussing global challenges. The U7 Mayors Summit today sends out a clear signal: Cities are ready to do their share.”

Markus Lewe, Mayor of Münster (Germany) and President of the Association of German Cities

“The strong unity among U7 local government networks; firm and ambitious positions at the U7 Mayors Declaration; interest and recognition from the G7 Presidency, and solidarity with our partners in the Global South, provide clear evidence of this remarkable progress. ICLEI is committed to supporting the momentum of G7 and connecting with other relevant advocacy opportunities throughout the year, in order to elevate sustainable urban development and critical multi-level cooperation in the global efforts on peace, democracy and sustainability.”

Frank Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines (USA), and President of ICLEI’s Global Executive Committee

“The Urban7 welcomes the unprecedented recognition of the importance of cities, urban development, and multi-level governance in the G7 Presidency Programme. We see this as a historic opportunity. However, the transformative power of cities, as invoked in the Programme, can only be harnessed if the global political system changes to truly include cities, viewing them not primarily as an administrative implementation level, but as a political level in their own right, co-developing policy programs on an equal footing.”

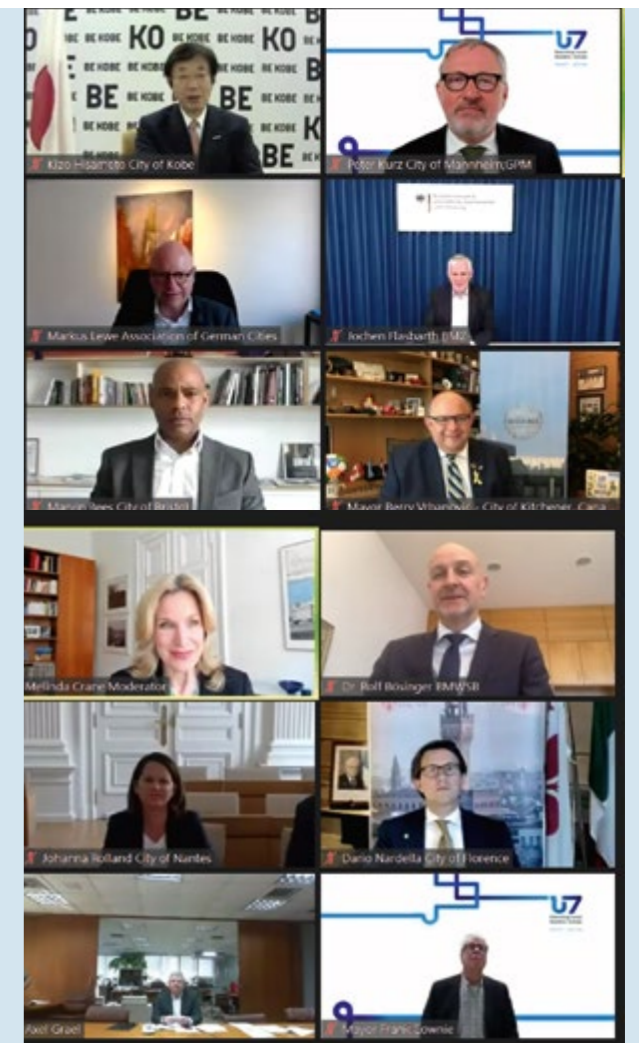
Peter Kurz, Mayor of Mannheim (Germany), Chair of the Global Parliament of Mayors and G7 Special Envoy of the Association of German Cities



U7 Mayors Summit

On May 3, 2022, mayors came together with high-level representatives of the German G7 Presidency to present their declaration and discuss the decisive role of cities in achieving the G7 Presidency’s vision of “progress towards an equitable world.”

Mayors from each of the G7 members, as well as the Global South, formulated their expectations for the G7 Presidency. German State Secretaries Jochen Flasbarth (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) and Dr. Rolf Bösiinger (Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building) reflected on the mayors’ vision and committed to working closely with the cities in the G7 process.



G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on Climate, Environment, Peace and Security

Throughout the G7 process, ministers from the member countries meet to establish common priorities and make shared commitments. The outcomes of these meetings are reflected in ministerial statements and communiqués.

Excitingly, several key priorities laid out by city leaders in the U7 Mayors Declaration were included in these ministerial statements. In May, the G7 foreign ministers addressed the importance of multi-level cooperation. They committed to, "sharing experience and expertise (internationally and across national and subnational government departments) to shape and deliver coordinated policies and practices that are inclusive, context and conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive, and tailored to local conditions and needs of stakeholders."

This acknowledgement of the importance of working across all levels of government marks significant progress toward the Urban7's goal of working at eye-level with national governments.



Source: Henning Schacht

G7 Development Ministers' Meeting Communiqué

On May 19, the G7 development ministers gathered in Berlin. In their final communiqué, the ministers acknowledged, "the important role of cities and local governments in championing a just climate and energy transition, as they are pivotal in accelerating the transition and making it socially compatible according to local needs."

The ministers also recognized, "the importance of cities in developing and financing sustainable infrastructure as well as municipal, local and regional governments' processes for the transformative shift, collaboration among them and the significant role of central governments in supporting their initiatives."

Finally, the ministers addressed the core governance priorities of the Urban7 by expressing support for, "effective multi-level governance, international knowledge sharing, and stronger financial and planning capacities at the local level."

G7 Climate, Energy and Environment Ministers' Communiqué

On May 27, the G7 ministers for climate, energy, and environment emphasized the importance of cooperation with cities in order to achieve shared climate goals. The ministers encouraged, "ambitious, Paris-aligned action and collaboration and coordination across all levels and sectors of government, involving all cities, regions, communities, stakeholders, citizens and business sectors." At the same time, they acknowledged, "that the necessary transformation to net zero and climate resilience will be driven and implemented to a large extent at local level, including through initiatives developed by local governments, city networks such as the Global Covenant of Mayors, ICLEI and C40, as well as civil society and private sector-led initiatives."

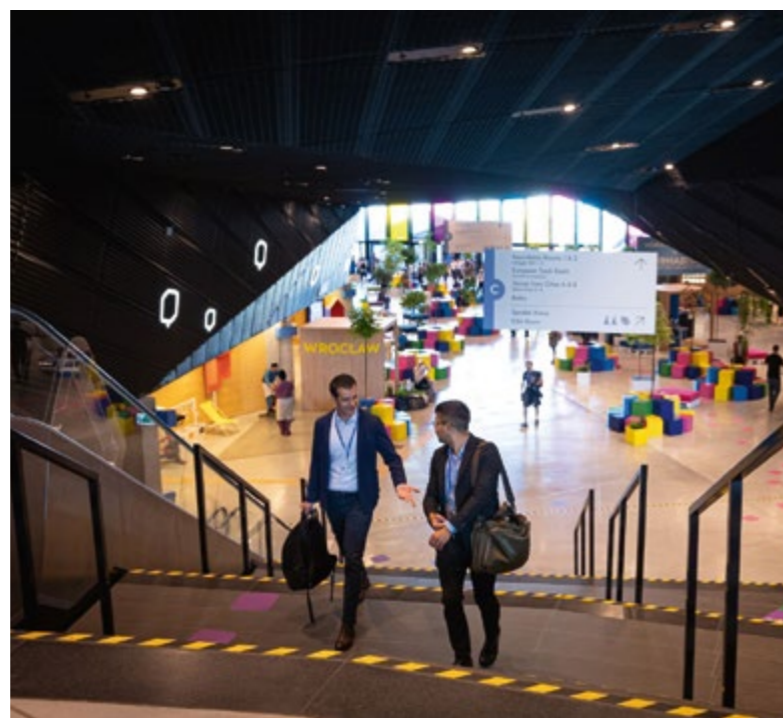
The U7 Mayors Declaration outlined the critical role that cities must play in the climate and energy transitions. The ministers' communiqué reflected this message clearly: "We acknowledge the important role of cities, regions and local governments in implementing a just climate and energy transition and in making the transition socially acceptable in the context of local needs and environmental conditions. We acknowledge cities and urban areas are critical global systems to combat the triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. At the same time, cities and their residents are vulnerable to climate change impacts, and we acknowledge the need to reduce vulnerability by increasing adaptive capacity. Smart, sustainable and resilient cities can act as a laboratory for a future with net zero emissions, through the development of innovative and sustainable energy solutions based on the key role of renewable energies, sustainable mobility, demand side management and the active participation of energy consumers."

U7 at the World Urban Forum

Supporters of the U7 came together at the World Urban Forum (WUF) in Katowice, Poland in order to share their message and vision with a broader audience of urban stakeholders. The WUF is convened by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and brings together city leaders, national government representatives, NGOs, academics, and other urban experts to discuss pressing issues related to cities.

At the World Urban Forum, the U7 Group held a panel discussion about the Urban7 and the group's vision and expectations for the coming months and years. Speakers included Mayor Peter Kurz (Mannheim, Germany) as well as representatives of the German federal government. Two mayors from the Global South, Mayor Jefferson Kojee (Monrovia, Liberia) and Mayor Manuel de Araújo (Quelimane, Mozambique), joined the conversation to discuss the broader impact of the G7 and the U7. They spoke about the importance of the G7 for their communities, and priorities of cities in the Global South. The conversation was moderated by Lina Furch (Association of German Cities).

Source: City of Mannheim



Mayor Peter Kurz was also invited to speak at the official opening of the German Pavilion as a representative of the Urban7. He joined German Federal Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Building Klara Geywitz on stage and outlined the U7's mission and the importance of multi-level governance in the G7 process.

The World Urban Forum offered the U7 the opportunity to share the group's messages widely with a larger public.

Heads of State Communiqué

The Heads of State of the G7 nations came together in Bavaria, Germany in June 2022. Their communiqué included groundbreaking recognition of cities and the importance of working together with cities to address global challenges.

The leaders recognized, "Cities are places of diversity and identity, exchange and integration, creativity, and solidarity. They are crucial to driving prosperity and ensuring equal opportunities for all. We acknowledge the significant role of cities, their associations, and networks as actors in our transformation towards sustainable development."

The heads of state committed to "foster[ing] exchange among and with cities." Critically, they acknowledged that cities and urban issues are not only in the purview of ministers for urban development. They tasked, "relevant Ministers to develop a joint understanding of good urban development policy to be adopted at the first ever G7 Ministerial Meeting for Sustainable Urban Development, and to decide on joint initiatives for unlocking the full potential of cities to promote social, cultural, technological, climate-neutral, economic, and democratic innovation for the common good."



Source: GIZ - Peter Jülich

Sustainable Urban Development Officers (SUDO) Meeting in Mannheim

In order to prepare for the G7 Urban Development Ministers Meeting, officers from the ministries of the G7 states joined representatives of the Urban7 in Mannheim, Germany. The group planned the G7 Sustainable Urban Development Ministers Meeting and worked to draft the Urban Development Ministers' Communiqué. Mayor Peter Kurz welcomed the group to Mannheim with a dinner and exchange about the important role of cities in the G7 process. Furthermore, two representatives from the Urban7, from ICLEI and the Association of German Cities, participated in the planning sessions themselves. The inclusion of the Urban7 in the planning process for the ministerial meeting demonstrated the progress that the group has made in pushing for real multi-level governance.

Source: Germany at WUF



Historic Inclusion of Cities in the G7 Process

G7 Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Urban Development

One of the Urban7's most remarkable achievements occurred when, for the first time, a mayor participated at eye-level with ministers in the G7 process. Mayor Peter Kurz represented the Urban7 at the Meeting of G7 Ministers for Urban Development on September 13, 2022.

Mayor Kurz was one of only three participants (along with Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, and OECD Deputy Secretary-General Yoshiki Takeuchi) in the meeting who was not a representative of a G7 member. At the meeting, the mayor exchanged intensively with the ministers on topics ranging from climate change to the rebuilding of Ukraine's cities.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz traveled to Potsdam to speak with the group and discussed the importance of active exchange to strengthen urban governance.



Source: Henning Schacht



Source: Henning Schacht

Urban Development Ministers' Communiqué

The Urban7 Alliance actively contributed to the Urban Development Ministers' Communiqué, which was published directly after the ministers meeting and lays out exciting new priorities and commitments. The ministers committed to "continuing and intensifying dialogues" with urban partners, specifically naming the Urban7 as a key example. Furthermore, the ministers committed to "increasing the involvement of cities in the development and implementation of urban development policies" and acknowledged that, "good multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation and the participation of all concerned inhabitants at the local level create the preconditions for successfully addressing global challenges."

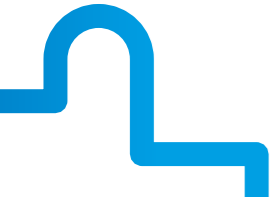
Mayor Kurz noted that, "The final Communiqué of the ministerial meeting highlights the role of resilient, sustainable, climate-friendly and public good-oriented cities. The Urban7 Mayors' Declaration and many of our key messages were particularly recognized in the communiqué. We are pleased that the U7 Alliance was also named in the text by the ministers as an important partner. Urban development policy must be strengthened, and cities must be at the table when international agreements are reached. "Potsdam sends the clear signal that only with the cities - with the local level - will international policy be able to affect change decisively on the ground."



Source: Henning Schacht

„This is an important milestone, since it will only be possible to find solutions to the global challenges of our time if cities are involved.“

Peter Kurz, mayor of Mannheim



Source: Henning Schacht



Impact

The Urban7 brought mayors from across the G7 and around the world together with a common vision for the involvement of cities in the G7 process. This vision guided the group's engagement throughout the German G7 Presidency, and enabled it to achieve remarkable progress toward multi-level governance.

Source: Henning Schacht

The group's key accomplishments include:

- 1 Mayors had a seat at the table in the G7 Process.
- 2 Several G7 ministries made written commitments to engage with cities and include cities as partners in addressing global challenges.
- 3 Japan, which is taking over the G7 Presidency in 2023, has committed to continuing the urban development ministerial track, and committed to engaging cities in this process.
- 4 Cities now have a groundbreaking model that they can refer to when pushing for multi-level governance and co-decision in future multilateral processes.



U7 National City Networks

Federation of Canadian Municipalities
(FCM)

France Urbaine
(Urban France)

Deutscher Städtetag
(Association of German Cities)

Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani
(ANCI, National Association of Italian Municipalities)

Japan Designated City Mayors' Association
(JDCMA)

Core Cities UK

The United States Conference of Mayors
(USCOM)

Eurocities



www.g7u7.org

The City of Mannheim is solely responsible for the content of this publication; the positions presented herein do not reflect the views of Engagement Global or the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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2022 G7 Urban7 Group



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