



International Conference
Cities & Water

OCTOBER 25, 2016 | BRATISLAVA | SLOVAK REPUBLIC

City Hall

Primaciálne námestie 1

Bratislava | Slovakia

9:00 - 17:00

Organiser: Mayor of Bratislava

Under the auspices of UNESCO, SK PRES and
Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic

The advancement of urbanisation in Europe predetermines the need for a fast response in order to maintain a good quality of life for European citizens. Water is essential in supporting the existence of life and vital for providing good health, prosperity and economic development. With more than two thirds of Europeans living in urbanized areas, cities have a leading role in pushing water higher in the political agenda along with the themes of energy efficiency of the Covenant of Mayors and climate change adaptation of the Mayors Adapt.

Bratislava is taking over the lead from Dutch city of Leeuwarden in organising the second *Cities & Water* conference during the period of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The aim of the conference is to address topics such as water security, access to water resources and overcoming challenges related to water and urban development, sharing examples of good practice and innovation, and to emphasise the importance of water not just as an economic good, but rather as a public commodity essential for human health. We believe the conference will serve as a platform for increasing political engagement and focus on Mayors as key actors in securing sustainable and innovative approaches to water management, which positively contribute to many aspects of urban development.

With this event we would also like to raise awareness of the Urban Water Agenda 2030, which should serve as a political commitment for cities to declare support for fair distribution of water and access to safe drinking water, exchange of information and good practices in water management between European cities.

Draft programme of the conference

October 24, 2016

18:00 – 20:00 Evening reception and excursion of the Bratislava Waterworks museum (on invitation only)

Waterworks museum, Devínska cesta 1, Bratislava,

October 25, 2016

08:15 – 9:00 Registration

Primatial palace, Bratislava, Foyer of the Hall of Mirrors

09:00 – 9:45 Welcome by the Mayor of Bratislava & key note speeches

(Ministry of Environment, European Commission, UNESCO)

10:00 – 11:15 I. Session: Cities & Water security (presenting cities: Bratislava, Vienna, Mannheim)

Water security can be defined as the capacity to safeguard sustainable access to water in adequate quality and quantity to sustain human well-being, socio-economic development and protection against pollution as well as negative impacts of climate change, such as water scarcity or floods. The leadership of cities is needed for addressing the challenges of urban water management. To overcome these challenges cooperation in broader water management of Europe's river basins is needed.

11:20 – 11:45 Message from the Slovak panel of Experts on Bratislava and Water

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch break

12:45 – 14:00 II. Session: Cities & the River management (presenting cities: Bratislava, Prague, Nijmegen – tbc.)

In the recent past, urban rivers were often suffering from industrialization and urbanisation processes. However urban water spaces have potential to provide multiple benefits, including a higher quality of environment as well as increasing the quality of life. By restoring and revitalising rivers and deteriorated water spaces (including industrial zones and technical infrastructure) we can create more attractive public spaces with a positive impact on local identity, culture and biodiversity. Green areas on the river banks can serve as a more sustainable alternative for protection against floods than man-made flood barriers. Rivers are waterways and can serve for the purpose of public transport.

14:00 -14:30 Coffee break

14:30 - 15:45 III. Session: Cities & Smart water (presenting cities: Porto, Leeuwarden, Aarhus - tbc.)

Nature based solutions and innovative technological approaches help cities to manage their water resources more efficiently and to create more resilient urban communities. Examples include application of the circular economy concept, innovations in waste water management

and ecosystem based solutions. By adopting approaches for better water management, cities can contribute to fulfilling the key objectives of the European Union’s water policy and overcome the challenges of climate change – especially by increasing water catchment and mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events such as periods of draughts and floods.

15:45 - 16:30 Panel discussion with Mayors of invited cities (to be announced)

16:30 Closing message by the Mayor of Bratislava

17:00 Network drink

17:30 Buffet

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