



Leuven 2030: A transition that leaves no one behind

Leuven, Belgium

IN A NUTSHELL

The medieval city of Leuven in Belgium has adopted an ambitious transition programme to address the climate emergency. Its goal is to lower CO₂ emissions by 67% by 2030 and to achieve neutrality by 2050. To do so, Leuven 2030, an NGO based on a shared governance model between local authorities, businesses, knowledge institutions and civil society organisations, has agreed on a roadmap that aims to ensure an ambitious and fair transition.



Mohamed Ridouani, Mayor of Leuven in the Mayors' Voices session "Create a meaningful local social and climate contract to reach climate neutrality" at Energy Cities' annual forum 2022.

Citizen participation in the policy-making process: Building legitimacy

One of the challenges for Leuven 2030 is to involve citizens in the transformations necessary to achieve the goal of climate neutrality by 2050. The NGO quickly identified that citizens must be part of any decisions that will have an impact on their living conditions and environment.

To involve citizens, Leuven 2030 uses shared governance tools like citizens juries or a General Assembly where citizens and NGOs have one-fifth of the votes, with the remainder distributed among other stakeholders.

Leuven 2030's vision of legitimacy building relies on horizontal collaboration between actors and on the fact that any citizen can take part in debates and decisions. As an example of what can be done, the "Straten vol Leuven" project aimed to remove cars from the city centre, creating more room for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. The traffic plan was a joint decision made by the citizens and city of Leuven, giving an additional democratic foundation and legitimacy to this project.

LEUVEN



Population 101,032	Area 56.6km ²
Signatory to the Covenant of Mayors since: 2011	CO₂ emissions reduction target: 67% by 2030, 80% by 2050

Part of the



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Raising public awareness

Leuven 2030 has two main levers to communicate the commitments made. The first relies on the communication team and a specialized agency to reach an audience used to the internet through a well-designed website that presents commitment documents, documentation and roadmaps. Digital tools are essential to spread information widely as well as to develop innovative ways of engaging citizens, such as the use of interactive apps. The “Eco Food Map” is one of these tools, giving citizens, experts and other actors information about Leuven’s food system.

The second lever is peer-to-peer. This is based on the idea that information spreads more effectively through informal discussions, reaching segments of the public that do not receive information through conventional means of communication.

Ensuring social justice

It was agreed early on that Leuven’s 2030 transition had to be achieved in a way that was socially just. The objective is to bring everybody along and to ensure a fair transition that includes vulnerable groups. For example, some groups suffer from energy poverty, or cannot afford to retrofit their homes as required by the Leuven 2030 objectives. To tackle this issue, Leuven 2030 ensures social justice at every step of its roadmap. For instance, the L.E.U.V.E.N (Lower Energy Use Via Extraordinary Network) programme aims to retrofit buildings to improve energy efficiency. A partnership has been made with social housing companies so that socially-vulnerable groups can benefit from a retrofit and spend less energy, improving carbon performance all round. In its sustainable food strategy, Leuven 2030 developed locally-supplied social restaurants and food retail outlets to make sustainable food accessible.

KEY FIGURES

600+ inhabitants, organisations and businesses are part of Leuven 2030

80% GHG emissions reduction objective by 2050



FINANCING THE PROJECT

- + **Financing sources:**
Up to 50% from the City of Leuven and 50% from other partners
 - ELENA (EIB): €1.5m
 - EIT Climate-KIC: €1m
- + **Total amount:**
€50m

USEFUL LINKS

- ▶ [Leuven2030 website](#)
- ▶ [“Local PACTs: how cities create their own COPs”](#)



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