UrbanMind

The Future of Cities:
EU Initiatives and Smart Solutions

3 February 2026 I 09:30 – 12:30

Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the EU
Rue Joseph II 14, 1000 Brussels

Conference Conclusions

1. URBANMIND as a Model for European Cities

- *URBANMIND represents a pioneering EU initiative combining innovation, data-driven urban planning, and citizen engagement.*

- *The project serves as a transferable model, demonstrating practical approaches to complex urban challenges and inspiring other cities to adopt similar smart and sustainable strategies.*

2. Stimulating New Opportunities and Businesses

- *Smart city projects like URBANMIND are catalysts for economic and technological growth, generating opportunities for startups, SMEs, and established companies.*

- *Participants highlighted examples of companies, such as Riko d.o.o., exploring emerging markets linked to smart city initiatives.*

- *Investment in such projects strengthens local entrepreneurship and fosters cross-sector collaborations.*

3. EU Financing and Strategic Support for Smart Cities

- *Securing EU funding is essential for sustaining and expanding smart city initiatives.*

- *Existing funding instruments include traditional EU calls, the New European Bauhaus, and EU Missions.*

- *The upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF 2028–2034) is expected to emphasize startups, SMEs, breakthrough innovations, and industrial and service transformation.*

- *Ensuring continued support for smart city projects within EU financial priorities is crucial for long-term urban innovation and competitiveness.*

4. Developing Europe's Own Data Space Ecosystem

- *Europe must proactively build a competitive data infrastructure rather than relying solely on regulation.*

- *Strategic investment in digital platforms, services, and secure data environments is required to close the gap with the USA and China.*

- *A robust European data ecosystem will enhance sovereignty, enable innovation, and strengthen Europe's global technological position.*

5. Recommendations and Next Steps

- *Foster knowledge exchange among EU cities implementing URBANMIND-type projects to share best practices.*

- *Encourage collaboration between public institutions, private enterprises, and academia to maximize socio-economic impact.*

- *Advocate for EU funding streams dedicated to long-term urban innovation, data infrastructure, and citizen engagement.*

- *Promote coordinated development of Europe's data ecosystem with emphasis on privacy, interoperability, and innovation capacity.*