



CITY
OF KRANJ



The Future of Cities: EU Initiatives and Smart Solutions

3 February 2026 | 09:30 – 12:30

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

Discover how cities can transform into **smarter, more sustainable, and connected communities** at this interactive conference on urban innovation. Through presentations, platform demonstrations, and expert discussions, including **upcoming European Commission initiatives**, the event will explore key achievements in **smart city development**, the **role of data and technology in urban transformation**, and the opportunities and challenges cities face in creating intelligent, citizen-centered environments. Participants will gain practical insights, learn from real-world projects such as the **UrbanMind** initiative – a successful example of fostering sustainable and innovative urban practices – and engage in a dynamic discussion on the future of urban communities, providing inspiration and actionable strategies for building the cities of tomorrow.

Programme

09:00 – 09:30 Registration of participants

09:30 – 09:40 Welcome and Opening remarks

- **Draško Veselinovič** – Director and Member of the Management Board, Slovenian Business & Research Association (SBRA)
- **Biljana Prinčič** – Project Manager of UrbanMind at Riko d.o.o. - UrbanMind implementation partner

09:40 – 10:00 Smart City Transformation in Practice: The Experiences of Kranj (Slovenia) and Pula (Croatia)

- **Matjaž Rakovec** – Mayor of the City Municipality of Kranj
- **Peđa Grbin** – Mayor of the City Municipality of Pula

10:00 – 10:25 EU Funding Opportunities for Cities and Regions in 2026

- **Radka Konstantinova** – Policy Officer, European Commission, DG REGIO

10:25 – 10:35 **European Cities at the Heart of EU Policy: Priorities, Funding, and the Road Ahead**

- **André Sobczak** – Secretary General, Eurocities (TBC)

10:35 – 11:05 **Presentation of the UrbanMind project: Overview of key achievements and contribution to the development of smart communities**

- **Tomaž Lanišek** – Head of the Smart Communities Department, City Municipality of Kranj
- **Dražen Stepanov** – Head of the Smart Communities Department, City Municipality of Pula

11:05 – 11:20 **Demonstration of the UrbanMind platform: Interactive presentation of the platform's functionality and support for cities in transforming into smart communities**

- **Andraž Logar** – Director of 3Fs d.o.o. - UrbanMind technological partner

11:20 – 11:40 **Key insights and latest developments in smart and sustainable urban communities from the Data Space for Sustainable and Smart Cities and Communities (DS4SSCC) consortium**

- **Thimo Thoeve** – Tech Lead, Open & Agile Smart Cities & Communities

11:40 – 12:20 **Roundtable “Lessons Learned” – Discussion on challenges and opportunities for the future**

- **Moderator:**
 - **Draško Veselinovič** – Director and Member of the Management Board, Slovenian Business & Research Association (SBRA)
- **Speakers:**
 - **Radka Konstantinova** – Policy Officer, European Commission, DG REGIO
 - **André Sobczak** – Secretary General, Eurocities (TBC)
 - **Matjaž Rakovec** – Mayor of the City Municipality of Kranj
 - **Peđa Grbin** – Mayor of the City Municipality of Pula
 - **Janez Škrabec** – Director of Riko d.o.o. - UrbanMind implementation partner
 - **Andraž Logar** – Director of 3Fs d.o.o. - UrbanMind technological partner
 - **Thimo Thoeve** – Tech Lead, Open & Agile Smart Cities & Communities
 - **Flavio Fuart** – Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia

12:20 – 12:30 **Concluding remarks**

12:30 **Networking Luncheon**