

Proposal for dialogue session

Title: Standardisation for smart cities – facility or burden?

Session hosts: Gudrun Haindlmaier, Monika Heyder (on behalf of Urban Europe Research Alliance (UERA) thematic subgroup: Sustainable and holistic smart cities)

Over the past decade, the smart city idea has been popular amongst architects, city planners and political decision-makers on the one hand, and entire industries on the other, as well as the huge real estate development industry. The term sparked visionary future scenarios and soon found its way into the everyday use of language by elite circles, and later the general public. Imposing and dazzling buzzwords and terms such as autonomous, innovative, intelligent, efficient, flexible, networked and even self-regulating are associated with the term smartness. It is hardly surprising that the term quickly developed into a must-have label for cities.

Originating in the innovative use of new information and communication technologies (ICT) and the focus on a networked, ICT-controlled form of urban development it implies to optimize decision-making in the short and long term and efficiently manage, operate and control the city through detailed real-time data. However, in recent years, the technically or economically pre-formed core of the smart city idea has been broken up and expanded with thoughts regarding an inclusive society, sustainable urban development and an increase in quality of life with behavior changes and modern governance¹.

Today, there is no common definition of the term. Different attempts to develop a unified understanding on European, national and local level exist, but eventually many cities have their own understanding of Smart City and accordingly concepts and actions differ.

Consequently, the central question for the proposed dialogue session will be based on the different approaches to a standardised understanding of the concepts and terminology for “smart city” in Europe as well as the value for standardisation for smart cities and the sustainable transformation:

- What could be common points of the smart city concepts mentioned above - are different positions rather a challenge or an enrichment?
- Is a standardized approach to smart cities possible?
- How does the term smart city relate to the sustainable development and transformation of our cities?
- To what extent does standardization support social innovation and, subsequently fostering sustainable urban transformation? Which degree of standardization is helpful in which phase of the transformation?
- Different stakeholders in different countries - who needs what and who can contribute to the standardization effort?

¹ A common operationalization by researchers from the Vienna University of Technology in 2007 distinguishes six central development areas of a smart city: (1) smart economy, (2) smart residents, (3) smart governance, (4) smart mobility, (5) smart environment, as well as (6) smart living. This concept has been also taken up by the European Commission and followed up by numerous researchers (vgl. Caragliu et al. 2011; Vanolo 2014; Meijer und Bolívar 2015; Bassi 2017, Libbe 2018 and others).

The dialogue session not only focuses on technical aspects, but also governance and social issues and a holistic approach. The dialogue session will consist of 3 thematic inputs from the UERA subgroup, followed by a structured discussion:

- 1) Overview on smart city concepts from a scientific perspective: State of the art in Europe
- 2) Smart cities and standardisation: insights from UERA members questionnaire (will be conducted in April 2020) as well as interviews with members of the European mirror committees in the technical committee in ISO on sustainable cities and communities (ISO/TC 268)
- 3) Perspective of cities (tbd, statement and experiences from cities involved in European Smart city projects)