**Transforming Urban Governance in a Post-Pandemic World**

**The “New Normal” in Planning and Participation**

**Organisers: Aalborg University and Urban Europe Research Alliance**

**Dates: 20-21-22 October 2021**

**Place: Aalborg / Virtual / Denmark**

This conference is planned as a hybrid in-person and virtual event. The in-person event will be held at Aalborg University, CREATE building in Aalborg city center, Denmark.

Venue: Rendsburggade 14, 9000 Aalborg

**Abstracts: 15 June 2021**

**Abstract Submission Form**

**Urban Europe Research Alliance:** the conference is organized in the context and with the support of the **Urban Europe Research Alliance**

Key Note Speakers: to be announced **Call:**

The world is facing unprecedented risks. In just a few weeks, the Covid-19 pandemic has swept across the world and caused tremendous human tragedy and a historical economic setback for which we still do not know the full impact. The pandemic has also given rise to the notion of an emerging “new normal”, reflecting changes in attitudes and behaviours. The pandemic has also propelled cities and citizens through a decade of digital transformation overnight. Cities across Europe and the world are now facing a common challenge in planning for a deeply uncertain future to deliver carbon neutrality whilst transitioning towards the post-pandemic “new-normal”. Both climate emergency and Covid-19 have thrown into sharp relief the limitations of urban governance, demonstrating the urgency for new solutions, given EU commitments to define decarbonization pathways for cities by 2050.

Transforming and revising the priorities and the substantive goals of planning as well as the silos-thinking and the disciplinary divides, are issues once again up for discussion in relation to governance and participation across local and international scales. New models of cities are taking form in the mind of urban experts to deal with the ‘new normal’. However, inclusive future responsible citizenship require new types of professionals, that not just think and apply innovative models but also mediate and negotiate power ethics for a just and sustainable urban future. In order to transform urban democracy for more sustainable cities and communities, it is important to question the role research can play to cross borders of representative democracy and disciplinary divides and to recreate alliances for deliberative democracy in our future urban world.

The pandemic has taught everyone that early actions are necessary to deal with unexpected events. But unforeseen consequences are impossible to prevent in ‘the risk society’. Planning as ‘to think in action’ might need to revise its substance, but also the processes in situations of climate change and biodiversity loss. Future governance models depend largely on our understanding of how the ‘new normal’ means not just to contrast, but to adapt and learn on how to navigate persisting challenges. These challenges require an inclusive urban democracy as participation will be essential to develop future forms of governance for societal harmony and solidarity. The pandemic reminds all of us that societal change can be fast, even occur overnight and that events can accelerate transition processes. The ambition to build an urban harmonious society requires a new planning orientation to understand participatory processes based on human capabilities, and, beyond social distances to join forces to act upon common issues of health, climate and ecological crisis over the sense of (un)safety and (un)security for the future.

The aim of the UERA Conference 2021 is to advance new urban participatory planning and governance perspectives and strategies for Europe’s city-regions, generating a debate on challenges and opportunities in the context of the “new normal”, promoting potential pathways for EU’s spatial policy by scrutinizing critical aspects. Emerging lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic will provide a forum for partnership and consolidation of collaboration for the upcoming Horizon Europe calls and future Urban Europe policy.

The UERA Conference aims to promote diverse approaches to the understanding and framing of problems generated from experience of the pandemic in cities, and to address the transformation of paradigms of participation, collaboration, governance, creation of urban commons, in order to rethink urban research alliances for urban governance and participation.

The Conference invites scholars, researchers and practitioners to engage with issues related to citizens engagement, participation and governance in a post-pandemic era. The Conference will highlight frameworks and case studies of large and small cities across the EU and globally, and promote networks of peer-to-peer-cities, institutions and laboratories operating across topics including the green transition, the digital transformation, stimulating economies and creating jobs, dealing with conflicts and co-producing welfare.

**Themes and Disciplines:**

The Conference aims to promote pluri-disciplinary and interdisciplinary as well as transdisciplinary research on urban studies and sciences across planning, design, management, geography, the built environment, technology, data and digital innovation, ecosystem services, artistic creation, sociology and politics.

Themes can be proposed on the relations between the pandemic and the digital transformations of cities, the creation of mini publics and deliberation after social distancing, climate change and citizen participation in the ‘new normal’. The issues on capacity building and sense of community are particularly challenged in a future ‘new normal’ after the post-pandemic era. Lessons and experiences across thematic issues on energy, food, mobility, biodiversity, and new forms of partnership and participatory strategies for urban justice and inclusiveness, are much needed as well as issues of conflict and potentials of mediation in creating urban solidarity.

Focus areas include but are not limited to:

* Urban participatory methods and innovative governance forms
* Urban planning and integrated models for cross-sectoral understanding for sustainability and resilience
* Urban smart and data driven urbanism, participatory data platforms and technologies for citizens-policy interaction
* Urban innovation hubs and labs for digitalization, accessibility and connectivity
* Urban transformative economies and welfare models for innovative governance

The Conference welcomes proposals from colleagues across all sectors of urban research and practice, including:

* Academia (including post-grads and early career researchers)
* Private sector / Business / Industry
* Public sector / Government / Policy
* Third sector / NGO / Civil society
* Consultancy

**Formats:**

The conference offers both virtual and in-person options:

**Zoom:**  Delegates are encouraged to present via Zoom. Invitation to join the Zoom virtual room will be sent as a reply to the registration form.

**In-person:** Delegates are also welcome to attend the event in person and present directly.

**Written papers:** Delegates are welcome to submit full written papers based on their abstracts and presentations to the conference for possible inclusion in the conference publication with Springer as follow-up of the conference (read key date below). Full written papers are not obligatory for presenting at the conference.**Key Dates:**

15 June 2021: Abstract Submissions

1st July 2021:  Abstract Feedback

2nd July 2021-31st September:  Conference Registration opens

**Conference: 20-22nd October, 2021**

8th January 2022: Full Paper Submissions (where applicable)

March 2022: Feedback from review round

May 2022: Full Paper re-submission

Autumn 2022: Publication volume book by Springer

Submit: UERA@plan.aau.dk

**Publications:**

Delegates are given the option to present their work at the conference submitting an abstract submission form (see forms and registration). Selected authors will be invited to develop longer versions of their papers for inclusion in a volume book by Springer.

**Forms and Registration:**

Download: **Abstract Submission Form**

Download: **Registration Form**

The document must be in Microsoft Word and correspond to the abstract submission form.

Contact and submissions: UERA@plan.aau.dk

**Delegate fee:**  Participation at the event is free of charge, but registration is compulsory. The registration opens **2nd July**, deadline to submit registration: **31st September 2021.**

**Scientific Organization Commitees:**

**Scientific organization committee**: Urban Europe Research Alliance (UERA) Working Group on Urban Governance and Participation: Enza Lissandrello (Aalborg University, Denmark), Pia Laborgne (EIFER, Germany), David Ludlow (University of the West of England, Bristol, UK), Jolanta Dvarioniene (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania).

**Scientific staff at Aalborg University**: Enza Lissandrello (Associate Professor), Kristian Olesen (Associate Professor), Janni Sørensen (Post-Doc Researcher), Rasmus Nedergård Steffansen (Post-Doc Researcher), Lasse Schytt Nørgaard (Research Assistant)

Further information about the Conference can be obtained by the chair of the conference Enza Lissandrello (enza@plan.aau.dk).