

# Utrecht and Europe

Sharing Horizons, Connecting People

Utrecht's Europe Strategy  
for the period 2014 - 2020



Gemeente Utrecht

Utrecht.nl/english

For Utrecht, the next few years will be devoted to strengthening the innovative power of the city and the region. We will do this by bringing together the ambitions of Utrecht and those of Europe and linking them together. We can encapsulate our European ambitions for the years to come as follows: **Sharing Horizons, Connecting People**.

## Smart and sustainable growth

Increasingly, organizations and companies in the city are players on the European or international fields. Utrecht recognizes the cross-border aspirations of the city's partners and their important role in growth and development. The municipality, too, understands that it is essential for the city to become involved in developments at the European level and seize the opportunities that these offer. This is one way in which we can contribute to smart and sustainable growth, and ensure that this growth is for everybody.

## The ambitions of a strong city

Utrecht's European strategy aims to build on the qualities of the city and the region, in terms of quality of life, economic strength, academic achievement, and flourishing technological and cultural sectors.

**This has led us to the following objectives for the period 2014-2020:**

- **Utrecht enjoys a good quality of life, enabling people to live, work, study and invest well in the city.**

The municipality is working hard to make Utrecht a more sustainable city. We want to intensify our pioneering role as an innovative and sustainable city. Utrecht is famous in Europe for its quality of life. The city is among the top three European cities of the future in terms of 'quality of life'. We want to strengthen this quality.

## Utrecht's themes in Europe

- **Knowledge** a knowledge-based economy, smart cities, big data, open data, game-based learning.
- **Traffic and transport** innovation in logistics, bicycle parking, pedestrian policies, mobility and dynamic traffic management.
- **Sustainability** energy efficiency in housing and public space, renewable energy production, energy data platforms, resource efficiency.
- **Sustainable economy** small and medium-sized businesses, internet-based service innovation, public procurement for a circular economy, youth employment.
- **Urban Development** green infrastructure and biodiversity, reuse of vacant buildings, conservation of historic features.
- **Social City** local human rights, social inclusion, diversity, empowerment, emancipation, social public procurement.
- **Health** environmental data platform, noise reduction, equality between neighbourhoods, e-health, air quality, healthy lifestyle.
- **Culture** creative industries, cultural enterprise, cultural heritage, diversity.

- **Utrecht is among the most competitive regions in Europe.**

Innovation and an international outlook will be essential in retaining this position. We are also committed to making the most of our 'competitive position' and developing a green and sustainable economy.

- **Utrecht is a city of knowledge and culture**

Utrecht's knowledge-based economy makes it an important and attractive region, and we aim to strengthen this position. We are also committed to innovation in the creative and scientific sectors.

## Cooperation

Achieving these goals will require the municipality to work in a collaborative and focused manner. To this end, objectives will be identified on an annual basis in consultation with internal and external partners.

With these partners, we will work on the following areas:

- Influencing European policy
- Acquiring European subsidies
- Promoting Utrecht as a city of knowledge and culture
- Collaborating with - and facilitating - stakeholders with international ambitions
- Exchanging knowledge and experience about initiating innovative projects
- Identifying and exploiting opportunities and developments
- Embedding Europe in the municipal organization and the city

## Serious gaming: innovation with European funding

**The Dutch Game Garden (DGG)** is a key player in the Dutch games industry. It provides business accommodation, guides young entrepreneurs, organizes games-related events and brings together students and professionals, funders, research institutions and governments. The DDG was set up with funding from the municipality of Utrecht, the province of Utrecht and the Kansen voor West (Opportunities for West) programme (EU Structural Funds). Since January 2014, the Dutch Game Garden has been playing an important role in Jam Today: the EU's foremost network for games-based learning. Utrecht School of the Arts is the coordinator of this network and the City of Utrecht is a partner.

## Networks

To achieve its goals, the City of Utrecht makes use of its office in Brussels, European grants, European publications, as well as facilitating international conferences, European Awareness programmes and the Europe portal. We work in a number of different partnerships, which are dynamic in nature. We are active in EUROCITIES, in our thematic networks, and within the open and flexible Connected Cities Network (CCN). This latter is open to partners in the city and region.

## Sustainable urban mobility: a European issue

Utrecht makes use of EU funding opportunities to share knowledge and finance innovation in the field of **sustainable urban mobility**. One example is the development of the electric 'beer boat' in the city centre, which was co-financed by the EU project CIVITAS. The EU project SEGMENT has brought Utrecht valuable knowledge about social aspects of mobility. Utrecht is active in the Board of the EUROCITIES Mobility Forum, which acts as a representative of Europe's 140 largest cities. The Forum helped to ensure that

there was an urban angle in the European Commission's White Paper on Transport and Urban Mobility Package. And Utrecht's work on mobility has not gone unnoticed outside the city: In 2011, Utrecht won the EU CIVITAS Award for its freight transport policy (for its beer boat and cargo hopper schemes) and in 2014 it won the Intermodes award for the largest bicycle parking facility in the world (under construction). The new facility will soon be able to accommodate 12,500 bikes at Utrecht Centraal railway station.

## Utrecht and Europe, some figures\*

- 1 Utrecht is number one in these listings:  
**Most competitive** region in Europe,  
**Most innovative province** of the Netherlands,  
**Most sustainable region** of the Netherlands,  
**Best and biggest university** in the Netherlands.
- 3 Utrecht is listed in Top 3:  
**Festival City** in the Netherlands,  
European **City for Quality of Life**.
- 10 Utrecht is listed in Top 10:  
European **City of the Future**
- 900 Over 900 **foreign companies** in the Utrecht region. They account for 23,000 **jobs** in the City of Utrecht, A for 10% of **employment opportunities** in the city.
- 56 Utrecht has a highly **educated and multi-lingual workforce**: 56% are educated to **Bachelor's or Master's level**, 77% speak more than two **languages**.

**2,850** Every year, 2,850 **international students** from  
**136** **countries** at Utrecht **University** and **HU**  
**3,000** **University of Applied Sciences**, 3,000 at  
Utrecht **Summer School**.

\*Data August 2013



## Colofon

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