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Foundations' actions for the EU Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.

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Introduction

The EU Mission “Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities” is one of five missions under the Horizon Europe program, designed to address one of Europe’s most pressing challenges: achieving climate neutrality in cities by 2030. A total of 112 cities - known as Mission Cities - have been selected to participate, including 100 cities from all 27 EU member states and 12 from Horizon Europe-associated countries. These cities are taking the lead in showcasing how urban areas can make a transformation towards climate neutrality. To formalize their commitment, participating cities are required to sign the Climate City Contract (hereinafter: CCC), a strategic roadmap outlining their actions and investments. Being a living document, the CCC is built around three key components: the Commitment, the Action Plan and the Investment Plan. Once submitted, the EU Commission assesses the quality of each CCC and may award the city the **EU Mission Label** - a certification that helps unlock synergies with other EU funding opportunities and other financial resources.

As of today, 53 European cities - out of the target of 100 - have earned the EU Mission Label, as part of the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities. This recognition has been awarded in several phases:

OCTOBER 2023

10 cities

received the label



MARCH 2023

an additional 23 cities

were awarded



OCTOBER 2024

another 20 cities

obtained the recognition

bringing the total to

53 cities

**from 17 European states
and 2 non-EU states**

Against this background, this booklet provides a snapshot of the current involvement of European foundations within the EU Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the 52 CCCs available at the [Net zero Cities](#) portal reveals that a total of **58 foundations** are referenced across **22 cities in 11 EU member states**. Of the two sections here presented: **the first** explores the wide range of actions and commitment of the foundations involved in the CCCs, while **the second** broadens the investigative scope to identify and analyze additional philanthropic actors whose initiatives, though not formally acknowledged in the contracts, significantly advance urban climate neutrality objectives.

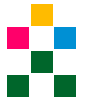


Philanthropy's engagement through the Climate City Contracts

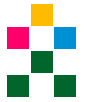
The analysis of Table 1 highlights the diverse and evolving role of foundations in supporting European cities on their path to climate neutrality. Foundations engage with Climate City Contracts (CCCs) at varying levels, both as formal signatories and as external partners, contributing expertise, financial resources, and project implementation.

TABLE 1: LIST OF FOUNDATIONS CITED IN CLIMATE CITY CONTRACTS AND THEIR ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES RELEVANT FOR EU MISSION GOALS
 Non-signatory foundations are **marked in green**. Capital letters in brackets in column 3 refer to the greenhouse gas emission domains that the action is relevant for (also known as *Field of Action within the Impact Pathway framework* and include: **(A)** energy systems, **(B)** mobility and transport, **(C)** waste and circular economy, **(D)** built infrastructure and **(E)** nature-based solutions.

City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Sonderborg, Denmark	ProjectZero Foundation	The Foundation is committed to set an Energy Masterplan to 2029. (source, p 18 and 22) (A)	ProjectZero is a public-private partnership established in 2007 with the goal of making Sønderborg Municipality's energy system carbon-neutral by 2029.
Tampere, Finland	Tampereen Vuokratalosäätiö (VTS)	Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.	Tampereen Vuokratalosäätiö is part of the Tampere Region Climate Partnership, a partnership that encourages organisations to focus on areas such as energy efficiency, sustainable procurement, and staff engagement in environmental initiatives. (source)
	Tammenlehväsäätiö foundation	Involved in these actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting sustainable travel to work [...]. Enabling the charging of electric cars. Introducing the electric car in work-related travel. (source, p 129) (B) Investigation of the potential to introduce a solar power system to serve as the energy source for Tammenlehväkeskus. (source, p 141) (A) Minimising the use of disposable tableware and disposable packaging. Replacing the disposable packaging and tableware in use with biodegradable packaging. (source, p 144) (C) The compilation and introduction of environmental induction material. The launch of the Ekotsemppari activity and training of Ekotsemppari experts. Annual sustainable development campaigns [...]. (source, p 151) (C)	
Turku, Finland	TYS (Turku Student Village Foundation)	Involved in Carbon Neutral Energy System: intervention aimed to produce heat, cooling, steam and electricity in a carbon-neutral manner in Turku region by 2029. (source, p 32) (A)	TYS is part of the Climate changemakers Campaign aims to highlight the day-to-day climate work done in companies and organisations in the Turku region.



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Turku, Finland	Forum Marinum Säätiö	<p>Forum Marinum Säätiö (Forum Marinum Foundation) is a Finnish organization dedicated to preserving and showcasing maritime heritage, with a strong focus on the history of Finnish seafaring. In addition to signing the climate pledge, Forum Marinum Säätiö is implementing environmental initiatives to contribute to this goal. The organization is adopting the Ekokompassi environmental management system, which provides a clear process and tools for organizations to enhance their environmental efforts. This system aims to promote and verify the environmental work undertaken by Forum Marinum Säätiö.</p>	
Heidelberg, Germany	Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (DKFZ)	DKFZ is a leading research institution dedicated to cancer research. Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Pfälzer Katholische Kirchengemeinschaft	The Pfälzer Katholische Kirchengemeinschaft is a Catholic church managing ecclesiastical affairs and properties. They both signed the CCC, but they are not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC. (source, p 18)	
	The Stiftung Mercator	<p>The Stiftung Mercator is a German foundation committed to fostering climate action and supporting the transition to a climate-neutral society. Their strategy focuses on making Germany greenhouse gas-neutral by 2050 and assisting the European Union in assuming a global leadership role in climate action. In 2023 in Heidelberg, a cooperation has been set up at the district level to analyse the effects of the Rational Use of Energy funding programme on low-income households. The Framework is the ICLEI-project INCLUDE, which is financed by the Mercator Foundation. For example, opportunities for improvement in the promotion of solar balcony modules for low-income households were identified. (source, p 84) (D)</p>	
Kozani, Greece	Life Terra Foundation	Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.	<p>The Life Terra Foundation is a European environmental initiative dedicated to combating climate change by facilitating large-scale tree planting and fostering environmental education. Its primary goal is to plant 500 million trees across Europe, engaging citizens, businesses, and governments in reforestation efforts to sequester carbon and restore ecosystems. The Life Terra Foundation is indirectly involved in Kozani CCC through the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH), a member of Life Terra and of the Project Management Office responsible for developing and carrying out the CCC.</p>



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Miskolc, Hungary	MiskolcÉrt Community Foundation	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	In 2023, the Foundation announced the winners of its first “Belvárosi Alap” (City Center Fund) competition , which included projects aimed at revitalizing urban spaces and promoting sustainable practices. The initiative align with the broader effort to support climate-neutral objectives.
	Miskolc Women Have a Chance Foundation	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Next Generation Foundation	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Compass for Sustainability Foundation	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
Bergamo, Italy	Fondazione Cariplo	Actions in CCC: Support to the Climate Transition Strategy (STC) of the Bergamo Municipality (ca. 1.2 mln €), including designing new renewable energy communities (CER); and CER management. (source, p 88) (A) The STC was strategic since it allowed Bergamo to reach the requirements to be considered as one of the 100 cities by the EU mission.	
	Fondazione Civiltà Bergamasca	Action for CCC: “Aver Cura della Casa Comune” project: awareness initiatives and calls for tenders dedicated to protecting the environment. (source, p 58) (E)	
	Fondazione Casa Amica	Action for CCC: Educational actions regarding energy consumption, aimed at families living in houses with rent control and managed by the Foundation. (source, p 57) (A)	
Bologna, Italy	Fondazione Golinelli	Planned actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle replacement for company transport. (source, p 277) (A) • Young Digital Entrepreneurship Camp project, a free training course oriented towards entrepreneurship in the “digital” innovation sector. (source, p 278) (T) • Purchase of green energy to cover to consumption of the entire Golinelli factory. (source, p 278) (T) • Climate change Teacher Academy project, Partner in Erasmus+ project aimed to educate teachers on climate change. (source, p 278) (T) • Big Data & Climate change School Program Project, Free student workshops on Big Data and climate change, fostering future skills. (source, p 278) (T) 	



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Bologna, Italy	Fondazione per l'Innovazione Urbana, Rusconi, Villa Ghigi	<p>The Fondazione per l'Innovazione Urbana, Rusconi, Villa Ghigi is dedicated to promoting urban innovation, citizen engagement, and environmental sustainability in Bologna. As part of the city's CCC: zovernance and participatory processes, it provides tools and analysis to enhance stakeholder engagement in climate initiatives. (T)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to urban greening and environmental education, particularly through Villa Ghigi Park, where it promotes biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions to support Bologna's sustainability goals. (E) • Organised "Bologna Innovation Ecosystem" event, a social innovation annual event (T) aimed to activate an innovation ecosystem for climate neutrality. • Develops and manages Bologna climate mission website (formerly chiara.eco project), aimed to disseminate the city climate neutrality mission and empower citizen to collaborate. (T) 	
	Fondazione Carisbo	<p>Fondazione Carisbo is a philanthropic organisation that has provided financial support for the Big Data & Climate change School Program project, a CCC initiative in collaboration with Fondazione Golinelli aimed to organise workshops on Big Data and climate change for students. (T)</p>	<p>The Carisbo Foundation maintains a 10-hectare experimental chestnut grove in Alto Reno Terme in the Bologna Province, entrusted to the National Academy of Agriculture. This site, officially designated as a National Center for Forest Conservation and Biodiversity Studies by ministerial decree, conducts vital research while offering educational guided tours to the public. The center demonstrates how biodiversity preservation can enhance urban resilience, provide green educational spaces, and develop nature-based solutions for climate adaptation. By connecting research, education, and community engagement, this model exemplifies the integrated approach essential for developing sustainable, intelligent urban environments where natural ecosystems and smart technologies coexist harmoniously.</p>
Firenze, Italy	Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze	<p>It is a bank-origin foundation and one of the signatory parties. Its involvement in the CCC is through financial support to the Fondazione per il Clima e la Sostenibilità.</p>	<p>Fondazione CR Firenze is involved in various projects aimed at urban regeneration and sustainability (supporting the development of Renewable Energy Communities - CER).</p>



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Milan, Italy	Fondazione Cariplo	<p>Cariplo has offered technical support to the call “<i>Territori Virtuosi</i>” aimed to improve energy efficiency of school buildings. (source, p 109) (A, D)</p> <p>Furthermore, it has offered financial and technical support on other projects listed in the CCC, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ClimaMi</i>, a climate monitoring initiative aimed at informing local policies and actions. (source, p 110) (A) • <i>Metropoli Agricole</i>, an annual conference focused on agriculture and climate crisis. (source, p 113) (E) 	<p>Cariplo’s thematic branch “<i>Area Ambiente</i>” is involved in multiple interventions beyond those mentioned in the CCC, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ForestaMi</i>: an urban forestry project aimed at planting 3mln trees by 2030. • <i>Sinergie in Azione</i>: initiative aimed to strengthen sustainability and impact of environmental non-profits in local territories. • Support other Cities (e.g. Bergamo) join Climate Neutral and Smart Cities mission.
	FAI - Fondo per l’Ambiente Italiano	<p>FAI supports CCC by providing feedback on climate policies, mobilizing citizens, collecting data, and aiding decision-making. Actions listed in the CCC include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility Study for a Renewable Energy Community, aimed to install solar panel on FAI hq to generate and share energy. (source, p 121) (A, D) 	<p>FAI is involved in various initiatives of advocacy, public sensibilisation, fundraising and restoration aimed to promote and protect Italian landscape and cultural heritage.</p>
	Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell’Amore	<p>The Foundation has committed to the development of impact investing and social innovation, and supports initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by providing expertise and patient capital for entrepreneurial projects, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “bella Dentro” (C) • Agrobotica (E) • REVO (B) • Vesti Solidale (C) • EcoMill, a crowdfunding platform focused on energy transition and sustainability (source, p 111) (A) 	
	Fondazione Assolombarda, Milano Smart City Alliance	<p>Initiative promoted to co-design the city of the future by leveraging the opportunities and challenges of the present through the development and experimentation of shared and innovative initiatives between public and private sectors. Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC</p>	
Parma, Italy	Fondazione Cariparma	<p>Fondazione Cariparma is an Italian philanthropic organisation established in 1991, dedicated to supporting social, cultural, and environmental development in the Parma region. It funds initiatives in areas such as education, healthcare, arts, scientific research, and sustainability.</p> <p>Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.</p>	<p>As part of its environmental commitment, Fondazione Cariparma launched <i>Bando Ambiente 2023</i>, a €2 million initiative supporting projects on biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and public awareness of climate and energy issues. The program also included work on Energy Communities (CERs), with expanded funding in 2025 to cover preliminary actions and, from that year onward, the installation of energy infrastructure. Since 2024, the foundation’s Strategic Plan has adopted a more integrated approach, with sustainability efforts cutting across different areas. This shift is reflected in the launch of the <i>Bando Comunità Sostenibili</i>, further reinforcing its commitment to fostering resilient and environmentally responsible communities.</p>



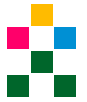
City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Prato, Italy	Fondazione Ami Prato	<p>The Foundation is among the signatory parties involved in the city of Prato's CCC, summoned for its ability to provide economic-financial support to the Ecological transition in the city-region. (source, p 13 and 88)</p> <p>Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.</p>	<p>The Foundation is involved in the project Prato Forest City, an innovative urban planning strategy developed by the Municipality to enhance urban green spaces through a digital platform which facilitates the participation of citizens to the green transition of their city. The Ami Foundation, particularly, is involved in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising funds for the project "Prato Green Hospital" with the aim to create green spaces that benefit patients, visitors, and medical staff; • Supporting the Municipality of Prato and the Tuscany Health Authority to support urban forestation efforts as part of the project Prato Forest City; • Promoting collective well-being educating families on the role of a healthy environment for healthy lifestyles.
	Fondazione Opera Santa Rita	<p>The Foundation is among the signatory parties involved in the city of Prato CCC, summoned for its ability to provide economic-financial support to the Ecological transition in the city-region. (source, p 13 and 88)</p> <p>Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.</p>	<p>Since 2017, the Foundation promotes "The Blue Trail", an yearly event and trekking route through Tuscany which engages local communities to break down barriers around autism.</p>
	Metastasio Theatre Foundation of Prato	<p>Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.</p>	
	Politeama Theatre Foundation	<p>Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.</p>	
	Prato Textile Museum Foundation	<p>Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.</p>	



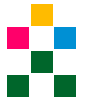
City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Torino, Italy	Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo	<p>The “CLICC” project, a collaboration between the City of Turin, Compagnia di San Paolo, and the Energy Center of the Polytechnic University of Turin, aims to develop a HW and SW infrastructure platform for urban modeling and mirroring, focusing on energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, enabling “what if?” scenario analysis for policy impact evaluation. (A) Fondazione CSP committed with an effort of 1 million € to support the implementation of the CLICC project.</p> <p>As part of the “Torino 2030” strategy and recognising the importance of mobility for achieving carbon neutrality targets, Compagnia di San Paolo supported the creation of the “TPL Carbon Free” Innovation Center, with an effort of 1,2 million €. This joint initiative involves GTT, the local public transport company, and the LINKS Foundation. The centre focuses on three main themes: energy and ecological transition, service innovation, and operational model innovation. Eleven projects have been launched, including six operational ones and five collaborative research projects.</p> <p>Operational projects involve support for GTT in areas like photovoltaic energy production, digital upgrades for the metro system, and compliance with safety regulations. Collaborative research aims to explore scenarios for achieving climate neutrality, accessibility, equity, and service efficiency, including a study to develop alternative paths toward a “net-zero emissions energy system.”</p> <p>(T)</p> <p>In addition, in 2025 the Foundation has started a process of evaluation and reduction of its own ecological footprint. (D)</p>	<p>To be more effective and better serve the local community, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo was To be more effective and better serve the local community, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo was the first Italian foundation of banking origin to promote a strategic and operational alignment with the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).</p> <p>Following the European approach to the global environmental challenges, the Foundation launched in 2020 a specific goal addressing the overarching challenges facing the future of the planet and future generations, through effective action to cope with environmental protection, sustainable economy (local) and carbon reduction strategies. Planet Goal and its key dimensions (Support to Research, Fostering Innovation, Healthcare & Well-being, Environment) led to a series of actions, including calls for proposal aimed at selecting projects that contribute to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. Among these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • calls to support project on environmental restoration, such as <i>Restauro Ambientale Sostenibile, Mutamenti, and Simbiosi</i>; • <i>Re:Azioni</i>, a call for NGOs to promote more sustainable lifestyles in their communities; • <i>Sinergie</i> or the development of Renewable Energy Communities (CER) with a social impact, through a multi-tools approach; • Next Generation We aiming at offering a dedicated support to cities (located in the north-west of Italy) involved in the PNRR (Italian recovery and resiliency plan), specifically in relation to the mission “Green revolution and ecological transition”; • <i>Techstars Torino</i> initiative supporting companies that are shaping the future of mobility and urban living, while creating a lasting change in the world of tomorrow; • The Foundation is involved in a series of strategic custom projects led by the City of Torino. One worth mentioning is the restoration of a large portion of a public park (formerly devoted to plant growth) for the valorisation of the Po river.



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
	Fondazione CRT	<p>Fondazione CRT (Cassa di Risparmio di Torino Foundation) is a private non-profit organisation, established in 1991.</p> <p>Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.</p>	<p>Fondazione CRT is actively engaged in promoting climate neutrality in the city of Turin and Piedmont Region through various initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fondazione CRT is actively engaged in promoting climate neutrality in the city of Turin and Piedmont Region through various initiatives: Fondazione CRT collaborates with Techstars to run the "Torino Cities of the Future Accelerator" program. This initiative supports startups developing innovative solutions for smart cities, including areas like sustainable mobility, energy efficiency, and urban infrastructure. The Lagrange Prize recognises outstanding contributions to the study of complex systems and data science. The prize is awarded annually to scientists who have made innovative advancements in applying complexity science and data science principles at the highest levels. In 2024 the prize was won by Marta C. Gonzalez whose research focuses on analysing digital traces to improve urban livability, particularly in energy and mobility sectors.
	Fondazione Collegio Einaudi	The foundation is recognised in the CCC as supporter or contributor to initiatives aimed at achieving climate neutrality, although it is not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fondazione Links	The foundation is recognised in the CCC as supporter or contributor to initiatives aimed at achieving climate neutrality, although it is not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fondazione Piemonte Innova	The foundation is recognised in the CCC as supporter or contributor to initiatives aimed at achieving climate neutrality, although it is not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini	The foundation is recognised in the CCC as supporter or contributor to initiatives aimed at achieving climate neutrality, although it is not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fondazione della Comunità di Mirafiori ONLUS	The foundation is recognised in the CCC as supporter or contributor to initiatives aimed at achieving climate neutrality, although it is not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Porto, Portugal	Fundação António Cupertino de Miranda	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fundação Ilídio Pinho	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fundação Casa da Música	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fundação de Serralves	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fundação Manuel António da Mota	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
Bucharest, Romania	Bucharest Community Foundation	<p>The foundation supports the Platforma de Mediu pentru Bucuresti (Environment Platform for Bucharest) a comprehensive environmental initiative aimed at fostering participatory development for a sustainable vision of Bucharest, identifying the city's environmental challenges and proposing solutions from civil society.</p> <p>Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.</p>	
Kranj, Slovenia	Vincenc Draksler Foundation	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	<p>The Vincenc Draksler Foundation primarily focuses on the reintegration of former drug addicts into society. One of their notable initiatives, however, is the establishment of a social enterprise that operates reuse centres at two locations. In these centres, participants engage in collecting, cleaning, repairing, and refurbishing used items such as furniture, lighting, and technical equipment. These activities provide work therapy and skill development for former addicts but also contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing waste and promoting the reuse of materials.</p>
Barcelona, Spain	BIT Habitat Foundation	<p>BIT Habitat Foundation is the urban innovation agency of the Barcelona City Council. In the CCC, the Foundation is responsible for the action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Boosting urban innovation” (the strategy for boosting innovation in the city so that it becomes a lever for transformation and acceleration at the service of improving people’s quality of life, combating climate emergency and fostering urban resilience. The measure organises the instruments available to Barcelona City Council to accelerate this change, innovate services, processes and governance, and accelerate innovation in the city and with the city. (source, p 180) (T) • Barcelona Urban Innovation Platform, a Space for dialogue, reflection and consensus that brings together the players in the innovative ecosystem of the The city. (T) • “The Proactive City” a call for proposals for urban innovation projects. (T) 	<p>In 2023, the foundation awarded grants to seven innovative projects aimed at improving coexistence in public spaces, contributing to the city’s sustainability objectives. Additionally, in 2024, the foundation presented six winning projects in the fifth edition of the “La ciutat proactiva” grants, dedicated to tackling drought, further demonstrating its commitment to urban innovation and climate resilience.</p>



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Barcelona, Spain	BCN Vocational and Education Training Foundation	<p>BCN Vocational and Education Training is promoted by the City Council of Barcelona with the aim of providing vocational training and support students' transition to business. Involved as actor in the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Neutral Economic Opportunities and Adaptation programme to foster a sustainable economy through green jobs, circular economy, and sector transformation. (T) • Industrial decarbonisation programme of the metropolitan area through sustainable production cycles and resource optimization. (C) 	
Madrid, Spain	Laudes Foundation	<p>The Laudes Foundation is dedicated to fostering a green, fair, and inclusive economy by supporting innovative initiatives that address climate change and inequality. In 2021, Laudes Foundation collaborated with EIT Climate-KIC and other partners to advance sustainable urban development in European cities, focusing on reducing embodied carbon in construction. This collaboration highlighted best practices from urban regeneration projects in Madrid, aiming to inspire positive climate action across Europe. Additionally, Laudes Foundation launched the "Built by Nature" initiative, a multi-million euro grantmaking fund and network designed to accelerate the transition to sustainable construction in cities. This initiative promotes the use of timber in building projects, aiming to decarbonize the built environment by working with nature. In the CCC, they are mentioned as funders of the action Healthy, Clean Cities: European Cities for Climate-Neutral CO₂ (research and prototype solutions that reduce emissions in the construction sector. In particular, the project focuses on promoting circularity and the use of natural and low-carbon materials. (source, p 78) (D)</p> <p>Laudes Foundation also organises "Madrid Zero Emissions" open events every year, aimed involve citizens. (C)</p>	



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Valencia, Spain	Valencia Clima i Energia	<p>Municipal foundation pertaining to Ayuntamiento de València, working on information and education on climate change and boosting the energy transition.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation of the Municipal Sustainable Energy Company, a public-private energy company to boost renewables, efficiency, and energy equity. (A) • implementation of the Neighbourhood Energy Community to produce, share, and manage local renewable energy. (A) • Energy Offices: one-stop shops to give citizens guidance on efficiency, renewables, and energy rights. (T) • Energy Culture: Empowering citizens through awareness, action, and engagement for a fair, renewable energy transition. (T) <p>València City Council, Las NAVES Foundation (local innovation agency) and València Climate and Energy Foundation (local Climate and Energy agency) have created their own Mission Teams working since 2021 in the Mission Community (source, p 44). Involved in the action Carbon-neutral district. (source, p 244)</p>	
	Las Naves Foundation	<p>A municipal foundation operating as a Centre for Social and Urban Innovation. Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missions València 2030: to promote innovation-driven policies for health, sustainability, and urban well-being. (T) 	
	Oceanografic Foundation	<p>Foundation created to support the Oceanografic of Valencia in its goal to protect marine environment. Action involving OF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable and quality food, aimed at strengthening local agri-food system through sustainable production, fair value chains, etc. (E) 	
Valladolid, Spain	Castilla y León Natural Heritage Foundation	<p>The Foundation works together with the City Council of Valladolid on the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop circular economy ecosystems and zero-waste solutions in Valladolid. (C) • Strengthen European Mission collaboration for climate neutrality and adaptation. (T) • Implement urban renaturalization in Valladolid's public schools. (D) • Enhance the Environmental Resources Centreas (PRAE) as a hub for biodiversity and climate resilience. (E) 	
	CARTIF Foundation	<p>Involved in the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrification and decarbonisation of public transport. (B) 	<p>The CARTIF Foundation is dedicated to reaserch, development and innovation of technologies and solutions related to energy efficiency, circular economy and waste management, food and natural resources.</p>
	INEA Fundación	<p>Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.</p>	<p>The Inea Foundation manages urban and ecological gardens, as a part of its community engagement and educational environmental program.</p>



City	Foundation	Climate actions in CCC	Climate actions beyond CCC
Valladolid, Spain	EXECyL Foundation	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	The EXECyL Foundation is focused on empowering young leaders and professionals by providing educational opportunities, resources, and a platform for growth.
	INTRAS Foundation	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	
	Fundación Secretariado Gitano	Not involved in specific action or commitment within the CCC.	Fundación Secretariado Gitano advocates for inclusive policies that ensure marginalized communities are included into climate actions and programs.
Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain	Hazi Foundation	Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.	HAZI Foundation performs the functions of technical secretariat for the Basque Bioeconomy Alliances, an initiative arose in response to the need to diversify the economy towards a model based on the use of biological resource.
Umea, Sweden	Ellen MacArthur Foundation	Not involved in specific actions or commitments within the CCC.	The Ellen MacArthur Foundation is a non-profit organisation that creates evidence-based original research on the benefits of a circular economy, and how it can contribute to solving global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss. While located in the UK, the Foundation's efforts align with broader EU strategies, such as climate neutrality and sustainable growth. Through programs like the Circular Economy 100 (CE100) , the Foundation collaborates with various EU companies and organisations to scale up circular practices, ultimately contributing to the EU's long-term climate neutrality targets. The Foundation is also indirectly involved in Umeå CCC, as the city has been appointed by the OECD as leader in driving the transition to a circular economy.

Firstly, foundations' **formal involvement** varies considerably. **A total of 38 foundations have signed CCCs (in 22 cities of 9 EU states)**, demonstrating their commitment to the climate neutrality mission, while 20 other foundations (in 11 cities of 7 EU states) are not signatories but are mentioned as key actors, partners, or project leads within the CCC framework. This distinction reflects different modes of engagement, where some foundations make explicit contractual commitments, while others operate as strategic enablers of urban climate action.



Secondly, foundations' **practical engagement** within CCCs differs significantly. Some provide institutional support without specific operational commitments - for example, Fondazione CRT (Torino, Italy) is included for its potential role in relevant actions, while Fondazione Cariparma (Parma, Italy) is recognised for both its institutional position and broader climate-related activities. Others, like Life Terra (Kozani, Greece), are not CCC signatories but actively contribute to nature-based solutions beyond the CCC framework. At the other end of the spectrum, some foundations take a highly operational role, committing to multiple actions within CCCs. Fondazione Golinelli (Bologna, Italy), Fondazione Cariplo (Milan, Italy), and Valencia Clima i Energia Foundation (Valencia, Spain) stand out for their hands-on contributions, often spanning different thematic areas, from education and innovation to energy efficiency and urban greening.

This range of foundations' engagement reflects the independence of the field as well as its **diversity**: foundations can run their own programmes, provide grants or technical assistance and mobilise their resources and expertise depending on their mission, relations and needs of civil society. This diversity is also captured in the different types of **support schemes and actions** that they engage in. **Financial support** remains a defining characteristic of many philanthropic organisations, particularly Laudes Foundation (Madrid, Spain), Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo (Turin, Italy), Fondazione Cariplo (Milan and Bergamo, Italy), and Fondazione Social Venture Giordano dell'Amore (Milan, Italy), which allocate funding to energy transition, sustainability projects, and impact-driven investments. **Citizen and community engagement** is another major focus, with organisations like Valencia Clima i Energia (Valencia, Spain), Bucharest Community Foundation (Bucharest, Romania), and Fondazione per l'Innovazione Urbana, Rusconi, Villa Ghigi (Bologna, Italy) leading public participation efforts in urban sustainability projects. Other contributions include **education initiatives** (e.g., Fondazione Golinelli in Bologna, Italy; BCN Vocational and Education Training Foundation in Barcelona, Spain; ExcecyI Foundation in Valladolid, Spain), **energy efficiency in housing and industry** (e.g., TYS in Turku, Finland; Fondazione Casa Amica in Bergamo, Italy; Stiftung Mercator in Heidelberg, Germany and Tammenlehväsäätiö in Tampere, Finland), **green area management** (e.g., Inea Foundation in Valladolid, Spain), and urban innovation (e.g., Las Naves in Valencia, Spain and BIT Habitat in Barcelona, Spain). This breadth of involvement confirms that foundations are not merely financial backers but active contributors shaping the transition to climate-neutral cities.

Another key finding from Table 1 is the alignment of foundations' work with the **emissions field of actions** outlined in CCC impact pathways. Foundations are most engaged in the **energy system transformation** (such as Fondazione Casa Amica, Bergamo, Italy, Valencia Clima i Energia, Valencia, Spain, TYS, Turku, Finland), with dedicated actions focused on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and decentralized energy models. Other actions are focussed on **waste and circular economy** projects (such as BCN Vocational and Education Training Foundation, Barcelona, Spain, Tammenlehväsäätiö foundation, Tampere, Finland) **nature-based** solutions (such as Castilla y León Natural Heritage Foundation, Valladolid, Spain, Fondazione per l'Innovazione Urbana Rusconi Villa Ghigi, Bologna, Italy), **built environment** improvements (such as The Stiftung Mercator, Heidelberg, Germany, Laudes Foundation, Madrid, Italy), and **transport and mobility** (such as Cartif Foundation, Valladolid, Spain, Fondazione Social Venture Giordano dell'Amore, Milano, Italy, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Torino, Italy). Additionally, **transversal actions** - such as Fondazione Golinelli's Young Digital Entrepreneurship Camp in Bologna, Italy, BIT Habitat Foundation, Barcelona, Spain - impact multiple fields, bridging sustainability, education, and business innovation. While some actions may not fall neatly into a single category, this overview broadly highlights a focus on energy-related projects, possibly reflecting both philanthropic funding trends and the complexity of financing infrastructure-heavy sectors like mobility and the built environment, which require larger-scale public-private collaboration.



Funding is a crucial aspect in the achievement of Climate Neutrality goals. Funding information is included in the Investment Plan, one of the 3 key documents (along with the Action Plan and Commitments) of the CCCs. The Investment Plan describes sources of investment to support the actions planned to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. However, this section is not currently included within the publicly available CCC documents. As such, the economic effort of Foundations towards climate neutrality actions within the CCCs is currently unavailable. Publicly available funding information is limited to an overview of the costs of planned actions in various sectors (e.g. energy, waste, transport, buildings) and their impact. For example, operational costs estimated in Valencia's CCC total 4.2 billion€, with an estimated impact reduction of 1035 kt CO₂e.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that foundations are essential players in the climate neutrality transition. Their contributions extend beyond traditional grantmaking to include technical expertise, citizen engagement, urban experimentation, and policy innovation. Going forward, it remains important to describe economic efforts of Foundations towards climate neutrality actions.





Philanthropy’s contribution to climate-neutrality

This second part explores other foundations active for climate neutrality goals that contribute - either directly or indirectly - to the mission of climate neutral and smart cities. Their contributions include actions and programs that align with and complement the objectives and long-term goals of the CCCs. As a dynamic network, they help shape a unified trajectory and vision, aligning diverse stakeholders toward achieving the 2030 goals.

TABLE 2: LIST OF OTHER FOUNDATIONS ACTIVE FOR CLIMATE NEUTRALITY GOALS AND THEIR KEY INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

City	Foundation	Actions relevant to achieve climate neutrality goals
Guimaraes, Portugal	The Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)	The FCT is Portugal’s primary agency for funding and evaluating scientific and technological research. Its mission is to advance knowledge in science and technology, fostering innovation and contributing to societal well-being. FCT is actively involved in the Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETP), a European initiative under Horizon Europe aimed at accelerating the transition to clean energy and achieving climate neutrality by 2050. Through the CETP, FCT supports transnational research and innovation projects across various energy technologies and system solutions.
Firenze, Italy	Fondazione Capellino	The Fondazione Capellino is an organisation committed to promoting innovative solutions to address climate change and improve urban biodiversity. Against this backdrop, the foundation launched an experimental project called "Firenze Climate Change" in January 2023. This project aims to design, implement, and monitor nature-based solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change in the city, promote urban biodiversity, and improve citizens' health. Additionally, Fondazione Capellino has invested 4.5 million euros for the period 2023-2032 in a project that transforms ten areas of the city into open-air laboratories. The goal is to study the impacts of climate change, such as heat islands, air quality, biodiversity, and CO ₂ emissions, to develop effective solutions to counter these effects.
	Fondazione per il clima e la sostenibilità	The Fondazione per il Clima e la Sostenibilità (FCS) of Florence is an organisation committed to promoting scientific research programs in various sectors, including climatology, agronomy, forestry, renewable energy production, environmental monitoring, and natural resource protection. In 2023, FCS joined the <i>Firenze per il Clima</i> initiative, a participatory process promoted by the Municipality of Florence to involve the entire city in the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2030. In this initiative, FCS chose to participate as a "teller," meaning an entity engaged in promoting awareness and training activities on climate change issues.
Cluj-Napoca, Romania	/	The M100 Hub is a national initiative in Romania, coordinated at the interministerial level, aimed at supporting Romanian cities in their green transition. It serves as a platform to disseminate knowledge relevant to achieving climate neutrality across various cities in Romania and to identify funding sources to support both the European Mission and the Mirror Mission. In December 2023, the M100 Hub was launched in Cluj-Napoca, bringing together representatives from the European Commission, national and regional authorities, cities, academia, NGOs, and urban communities from Romania and Europe. The event focused on discussing the progress of implementing the Horizon Europe Mission for 100 smart and climate-neutral cities by 2030 at the national level. The M100 Hub aims to support the implementation of the "100 Climate-Neutral Smart Cities by 2030" Mission by facilitating access to European funding sources for climate change mitigation actions and accelerating efforts to limit global warming. It also seeks to replicate European policies at the national level and assist other Romanian cities in achieving the carbon reduction targets set by the European Green Deal.



City	Foundation	Actions relevant to achieve climate neutrality goals
Reeuwijk, The Netherlands	Adessium Foundation	The Adessium Foundation is a private, independent grantmaking organisation based in the Netherlands, established in 2005. Adessium supports initiatives and organisations in the Netherlands and Europe that are committed to an open and just society, healthy ecosystems, and equal opportunities for everyone. The Adessium Foundation joined the European AI & Society Fund as funding partner in June 2023, to support public-interest AI policies in Europe (source). The Adessium Foundation supports climate neutrality through its People & Nature program , supporting initiatives like Rewilding Europe to restore ecosystems and enhance carbon sequestration.
Flint, Michigan, US	Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation , established in 1926, is a private philanthropic organisation based in Flint, Michigan with the mission to support non-profit organisations that strengthen communities worldwide. The Foundation joined the EU AI Fund in 2020. Through its Environment program has been advancing climate change solutions such as increasing the use of renewable energy in developing countries, particularly in regions like the Amazon and sub-Saharan Africa (source).
New York, US	Ford Foundation	Funded in 1936 by Hedsel Ford and Henry Ford, Ford Foundation is a major philanthropic organisation committed to social justice and human rights worldwide. Through the Natural Resources and Climate Justice Program the Foundation works to recognise and dismantle the unjust system deriving from the extraction of natural resources and promote energy transition processes that are fair and inclusive and that priorities the needs of historically disadvantaged communities and land-connected peoples from the Global South. In 2010, the Ford Foundation co-founded the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA) alongside the ClimateWorks Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. This alliance coordinates grantmaking activities to promote sustainable land use as an essential part of the global response to climate change. In 2019 the Foundation established the Natural Resources and Climate Change International Strategy (NRCC-I) which supports efforts to ensure that natural resource governance and climate change actions serve the public interest. The Foundation has been a partner of the EU AI Fund since 2020, integrating AI-powered environmental monitoring tools to track deforestation, biodiversity loss, environmental changes, and carbon emissions also in support of its programs.
Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Porticus	Porticus is a philanthropic organisation committed to fostering a just and sustainable future, with a significant focus on climate neutrality. Through the “Caring for the Earth” sector , among other actions, it supports cities in transitioning to regenerative post-carbon economies, with positive impacts on marginalised communities. In this context, the Clean Energy initiative was born, which focuses on providing renewable electricity to communities that are most affected by climate change but are least responsible for it. Porticus is also an EU AI fund member, and has been researching innovative technologies, financial tools and business models to benefit communities in energy poverty.
Geneva, Switzerland	Oak Foundation	The Oak Foundation is a private philanthropic organisation established in 1983, dedicated to addressing pressing social and environmental issues worldwide. Its mission is to support innovative solutions that promote social change and environmental sustainability. Through the “Environment” program it employs a global-system transformation approach with a focus on energy, food and nature. Action in support of reaching climate neutrality in 2030 include: supporting a rights-based clean energy transition, scaling clean energy technologies, promoting universal access to renewable energy, reducing plastic pollution, advancing circular economies, and transforming financial systems to support clean energy over fossil fuels. The Oak Foundation joined the EAISF in 2020, to address the discriminatory impacts of AI on vulnerable communities.



City	Foundation	Actions relevant to achieve climate neutrality goals
Stuttgart, Germany	Robert Bosch Foundation	The Robert Bosch Stiftung , one of Europe's largest foundations linked to a private company, is dedicated to driving progress in health, education, and global challenges. In the realm of smart cities, the foundation has put in place a people-first approach, supporting initiatives in 2019 that placed residents at the heart of urban development. By funding research that fosters community-driven planning, it has helped shape smart city solutions that reflect the daily lives, needs, and aspirations of local populations (source). Beyond urban innovation, the foundation is deeply committed to sustainability. With a bold vision to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, it actively works to shrink its own carbon footprint (source). Since 2020, it has made Climate Change a core funding priority and strengthened its impact by joining the EU AI Fund, reinforcing its dedication to tackling the world's most pressing challenges (source).
Paris, France	Fondation de France	Fondation de France is one of France's largest philanthropic organizations, established in 1969 to support projects that address pressing social, environmental, and cultural issues. It serves as an umbrella foundation, managing funds and endowments for various charitable initiatives while also financing its own programs. Through its " Environment " sector projects that focus on energy transition, environmental conservation, and the development of low-carbon technologies. To this end it joined the EAIFS in 2020. In the realm of smart cities, Fondation de France has collaborated with organizations like the Palladio Foundation and Agorize to launch challenges encouraging innovative projects in urban development. For example, the " Make the City " challenge invited students to propose ideas in categories such as human and inclusive cities, low-carbon and sustainable cities, and smart and connected cities.
Menlo Park, California, US	William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	Funded in 1966, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is a private philanthropic organization committed to addressing climate change and the acceleration of climate neutrality. Through its Environment Program , the foundation funds initiatives that work toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving natural resources, and accelerating the transition to clean, renewable energy sources. One of the foundation's core strategies for achieving climate neutrality is its focus on policy advocacy , working with governments, businesses, and other stakeholders to implement ambitious climate policies at both national and global levels.
Helsinki, Finland	Kone Foundation	The KONE Foundation is a Finnish private foundation established in 1995, with the goal of supporting scientific research, culture, and education. The KONE Foundation funds research and projects that promote environmental sustainability, paradigmatic changes through art and culture and address global challenges such as climate change . It supports initiatives related to the development of sustainable technologies, green innovation , and climate action, in line with its commitment to improving the world for future generations (source).
Bologna, Italy	Fondazione Unipolis	Fondazione Unipolis is the corporate foundation of the Unipol Group, dedicated to supporting innovative ideas and projects that foster the growth of individuals and communities. Through initiatives like the Città 2030 campaign , in partnership with Legambiente, the foundation is driving conversations around zero-emission mobility and urban sustainability in Italy. Additionally, the 2023 event Cities Never Sleep celebrated grassroots projects that enhance the livability of cities, fostering a more sustainable and inclusive future. With its Bando ACT initiative, Fondazione Unipolis is further supporting projects that focus on sustainable mobility, social inclusion, and improving welfare. The MOB initiative aims to involve the youngest generation in contributing to sustainable mobility in their city through creative solutions.



City	Foundation	Actions relevant to achieve climate neutrality goals
The Hague, The Netherlands	European Climate Foundation	The European Climate Foundation (ECF) is a leading philanthropic organisation committed to tackling climate change by driving the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy. With a clear focus on fossil-free energy and clean transport, ECF is shaping the future to a greener world. In the energy sector, it's spearheading initiatives like <i>ReNew2030</i> , a collaborative platform that unites experts, civil society, and fellow philanthropies to turbocharge the shift to wind and solar power (source, p 23). On the transport front, ECF is accelerating the transition to clean mobility through campaigns like <i>Drive Electric</i> and advocating for the widespread implementation of the <i>Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR)</i> across Europe (source, p 33). These efforts are helping pave the way for a cleaner, smarter, and more sustainable future.
Padova, Italy	Fondazione Cariparo	Fondazione Cariparo is a non-profit organisation dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and promoting sustainable development in the provinces of Padua and Rovigo (source). Through the strategy outlined in the new multi-year programmatic document " <i>Promoting actions for a fair and inclusive ecological transition, climate change adaptation, and mitigation</i> " and the Quality of life area of intervention, Fondazione Cariparo has launched several initiatives committed to climate neutrality. Two calls are worth mentioning: the Bando CER (Comunità Energetiche Rinnovabili) which aims to assist local entities in the creation of renewable energy communities and other self-consumption configurations, in line with the objectives set by the EU; the Bando GreenUp! which aims to promote environmental protection and foster active citizenship by supporting initiatives which safeguard ecosystems, promote soft mobility (such as walking and cycling), improve urban environmental quality (i.e creating urban gardens and farms); and the Bando Luoghi non comuni , an initiative aimed at supporting territorial regeneration projects in the provinces of Padua and Rovigo. The program seeks to revitalize underutilized or neglected public spaces, enhancing their cultural and environmental value. It encourages collaboration between public entities and non-profit organizations, fostering community participation in the design and implementation of projects. In addition, the foundation is supporting the Centre for Critical Studies on Climate Change Impacts , a research institution established by the University of Padua in Rovigo which focuses on studying the effects of climate change through interdisciplinary research, data analysis, and risk assessment. It provides climate services to policymakers, researchers, and local communities, helping them develop informed strategies for climate adaptation and mitigation.
Budapest, Hungary	Greenbridge Family Foundation	The Greenbridge Family Foundation is dedicated to combating climate change through strategic philanthropy and impact investing (source). Their environmental initiatives focus on supporting organizations that develop innovative solutions to reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainability. They prioritize science-backed and innovative approaches to create a more sustainable and resilient planet.



The analysis of Table 2 reveals that **structured commitment** to environmental sustainability and climate action defines the strategic approach of many foundations, with 8 out of 16 having developed dedicated programs or missions explicitly addressing these issues. The *People & Nature program* of Adessium Foundation, the *Natural Resources and Climate Justice Program* of Ford Foundation (New York, USA), the *Caring for the Earth sector of Porticus*, and the *Quality-of-life area of intervention* of Fondazione Cariparo exemplify this deep engagement. This long-term commitment to sustainability is reflected in a wide array of short-term actions.

Among the **fields of activity** covered by these foundations, the recurring ones are **Research and Innovation** (e.g. Kone Foundation in Helsinki, Finland), **Citizen and community engagement** (e.g. Fondazione Capellino in Genoa, Italy, Fondazione per il clima e la sostenibilità in Florence, Italy), **Ecosystem restoration through Nature-based solutions** (Fondation de France in Paris, France), **Energy transition** (e.g. The Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) in Guimares, Portugal; Oak Foundation in Geneva, Switzerland; European Climate Foundation in The Hague, The Netherlands), and **Advocacy** (e.g. William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in Menlo Park, California and Fondazione Cariparo in Padova, Italy). A recurring emphasis across these initiatives is a **holistic approach to climate justice**, one that integrates social and environmental concerns while empowering local communities to become active agents in the pursuit of climate neutrality and the broader decarbonization process in their cities. Rather than addressing climate action as a purely technical challenge, many of these foundations adopt an inclusive framework that recognises the disproportionate impacts of climate change and seek to promote equitable and socially responsible transitions. An illustrative example is the *FCS Firenze per il Clima* initiative, a participatory process which involves citizens, businesses, and institutions in collective decision-making to make climate neutrality in the Municipality of Firenze a shared civic mission. Another example is the *Bando ACT* initiative by Fondazione Unipolis (Bologna, Italy) which stimulates the search for innovative solutions, ensuring people-centred mobility and promoting virtuous behaviors that contribute to improving urban life and environmental sustainability.

In addition to the mentioned foundations, Table 2 also highlights the [*M100 Hub*](#), a Romanian initiative that stands out as a pivotal force in shaping the future of climate-neutral and smart cities. Serving as a dynamic platform for collaboration, the M100 Hub catalyses innovation by uniting thought leaders, tech pioneers, and urban visionaries to reimagine sustainable urban landscapes. Its relevance lies in its ability to bridge thematic areas such as green technology, circular economies, and social equity, creating a comprehensive approach to urban sustainability, making it an exemplary practice for cities and city-regions aiming to achieve climate neutrality and build resilient, inclusive communities.

It's also worth mentioning a Spanish initiative, called [*citiES 2030*](#), a multi-stakeholder space for collaboration and innovation aimed at supporting the transition of 17 Spanish cities towards climate neutrality, within the framework of the European Missions. The platform develops activities and offers services to facilitate the transformation towards healthier and more sustainable cities. The members of the citiES2030 include cities, academic institutions, representatives of the private sector and civil society organisations, among which some Foundations (Porticus Foundation in Amsterdam, Netherlands - mentioned above, Fundaciones por el clima, Oxafam Intemon...).

A final observation regarding Table 2 pertains to the ongoing **digital transition** and the expanding role of technology in addressing climate change. Notably, as the intersection of artificial intelligence and climate governance emerges as a critical strategic domain, it is worth highlighting that many of these organisations, including the M100 Hub, are actively involved in the [*EU AI Fund \(EAI SF\)*](#). This initiative seeks to empower civil society to influence AI policies, ensuring that AI serves the public good with a strong focus on environmental sustainability and climate neutrality. AI-driven technologies have the potential to optimize energy efficiency, enhance urban mobility, improve climate modeling, and support more informed decision-making processes through early-warning systems and predictive models. By committing to ethical, transparent, and socially responsible technological development, philanthropic foundations contribute to the fair use of AI, ensuring that it fosters inclusive and sustainable progress. Their involvement highlights how technology, when leveraged effectively, can drive systemic change, making cities more efficient, resilient, and climate neutral.



Overall, the strategic engagement of philanthropic foundations in climate action underscores a multidimensional approach to climate neutrality - one that merges mitigation, adaptation, and systemic transformation through specific funding programs and targeted actions. Their investments in participatory governance, technological innovation, and multi-stakeholder ecosystems exemplify a paradigm shift where philanthropy catalyses just, science-based, and scalable pathways toward net-zero emissions.

BOX: PHILANTHROPY AND MISSION CITIES: ZOOMING IN ON THE ITALIAN CLUSTER

There are nine Mission Cities in Italy. Seven of them have already obtained the Mission Cities label, while two - Rome and Padova - have yet to achieve this. The Italian context is unique, as each of these cities hosts one or more philanthropic institutions (bank-origin Foundations), potential ideal partners for cities striving to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

Although the involvement of foundations has been limited in terms of numbers - only four cities have foundations as signatories (Turin who has two, Milan, Bergamo, and Florence) - their impact has been critical. In Turin, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo is considered a main partner due to the financial support it has provided to some of the most significant action plans of the CCC, as well as its contribution of knowledge and expertise. In Bergamo, the Climate Transition Strategy funded by Fondazione Cariplo, is a core and highly valued element of the city's CCC. Florence has also greatly benefited from the substantial support of Fondazione Capellino, which backed the Firenze Climate Change project, and from the expertise and network of Fondazione per il Clima e la Sostenibilità, which receives regular funding from Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze.

In these cases, it can be said that the role of foundations and philanthropy has been crucial in enabling the drafting and approval of the CCCs. However, for the other cities, there is no available information. In Parma, Prato, Bologna, and Padua (the last city has not yet received the EU Mission Label, so that its CCC is not available), philanthropic foundations do not appear among the signatories and do not have an official or formal role. Nevertheless, the commitment of these institutions - particularly the foundations in Parma and Padua - toward addressing the climate crisis makes them important stakeholders who should not be excluded from the process. It is possible to envision actions aimed at encouraging their involvement.



Conclusions

In conclusion, the study reveals a partial view of the current situation, still incomplete as it is limited to a restricted number of experiences – 53 European labeled cities out of target of 112. Moreover, not all 53 cases have been considered, as not all CCCs have included a comprehensive list of signatories. However, the emerging picture illustrates that no-profit foundations are present and play a significant role, albeit in different forms and modalities. Foundations are numerous and diverse: some operate through grant-making, while others offer a non-financial support (expertise, time, human resources, knowledge, experience, network...) to the city's projects. Their initiatives contribute to enhance the six key levers outlined in the [NetZeroCities Theory of Change](#) - technological innovation and infrastructure, finance and funding, social innovation, democracy and participation, governance innovation, and learning, capacity, and capability building - acting as critical entry points for broader, interconnected urban transformations.

The main driving force behind the involvement of foundations, and philanthropy in general, in CCCs lies within the municipality. It is the local government that acts as a catalyst, activating foundations within its territory with varying intensity and approaches depending on specific circumstances and priority and, above all, the willingness to share and design a common path. Foundations participate as signatories, take responsibility for key CCC projects, or operate in parallel, creating an enabling environment for the development of climate neutral initiatives.

The study distinguishes foundations in relation to their involvement with CCCs: those that are signatories, those involved in specific projects, and those that, while not playing a central role, are part of the broader ecosystem and could interact (or potentially do so in the future) with the CCC project. This suggests a large and diverse potential that remains to be fully activated.

Some notable cases stand out due to their operational maturity or the significant impact they have generated. These examples provide valuable lessons and insights on how to further engage foundations in climate neutrality projects and enhance their contribution to achieving European climate goals.



Methodology

The methodology employed to examine the foundations (including both philanthropic foundations and no-profit entities registered as foundations) and their activities and commitments in relation to the EU Mission Climate Neutral and Smart City involved an extensive mapping process, beginning with an analysis of the 52 Climate City Contracts. From these contracts, Foundations were identified based on their inclusion as signatory parties of the CCC Commitment. In addition, the study incorporated Foundations that were either explicitly mentioned or listed as partners within the framework of the CCCs and proceeded by scouting other relevant Foundations through the EU AI Fund. This choice allowed to expand the scope of the analysis to include also non-European Foundations that nonetheless contribute to the achievement of the European carbon neutrality goals. These organizations, indeed, provide support either through their direct actions or through specific funding initiatives aimed at advancing these objectives. Additional foundations were identified through the EAISF fund network, a collaborative platform that brings together foundations dedicated to ensuring that AI aligns with societal and public interests. This network plays a pivotal role in advancing climate neutrality by fostering the responsible development and deployment of AI technologies to support sustainable, equitable, and informed climate actions.

The results of this mapping process are shown in [TABLE 1](#) and [TABLE 2](#).

[TABLE 1](#) lists all foundations that result from the analysis of the 52 CCC. For each foundation, a summary of the actions is included in column 3, as extracted from the CCC (when present). For each action, the Field of Action was also reported. This refers to the main domain of greenhouse gas emissions as reported in the *impact pathway* and includes 5 domains: energy systems, mobility and transport, waste and circular economy, built infrastructure and nature-based solutions. The classification of each action into a field of action was present in the CCC or was or deduced from the action description otherwise. Additional activities relevant for climate-neutrality goals but not mentioned in the CCC were obtained through web search on Foundations webpage and social media and are included in column 4.

While the categorization was straightforward for the foundations directly involved in CCCs, it proved more nuanced for the organizations in [TABLE 2](#). To address this, the organizations were grouped into five overarching categories: Research and Innovation, Citizen and Community Engagement, Ecosystem Restoration, Energy Transition, and Advocacy. These categories echo the framework outlined in the Climate City Contracts, aligning with its broader rationalization. Foundations are organized according to their city and country of origin, while column 3 provides an overview of their programs and activities and, where applicable, their participation in the EU AI Fund.



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