Urban policy in Flanders

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The recognition of local authorities as the policy level closest to the citizen is an important pillar within the Flemish **integrated approach** to urban policy. In addition, the concept of urbanity is equally guiding. The philosophy behind urbanity – making use of urban qualities that allow tackling the **complexity and multidimensionality** of societal challenges – is illustrated through the **holistic** Flemish urban renewal approach.

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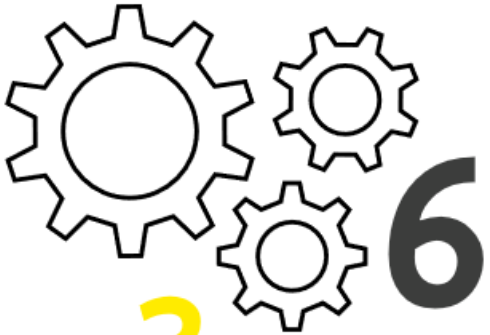
01 Agency for Home Affairs

Agency for Home Affairs (in numbers)



6 Policy fields

3 ministers

15 websites

+5500 subscribers on external newsletters

392 employees

56% female

44% male

Urban Policy

Annual budget of 60 M euros

2 main tracks

- Grants
  Urban renewal, rural fund, metropolitan challenges
- Sharing knowledge and (open) data
  GSM, cities post covid, smart cities, cybersecurity

Urban Policy

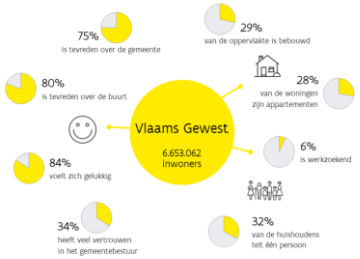
stad na corona

City post corona

SMART FLANDERS

Vlaanderen is sterke steden

Smart Flanders



Municipality-City Monitor

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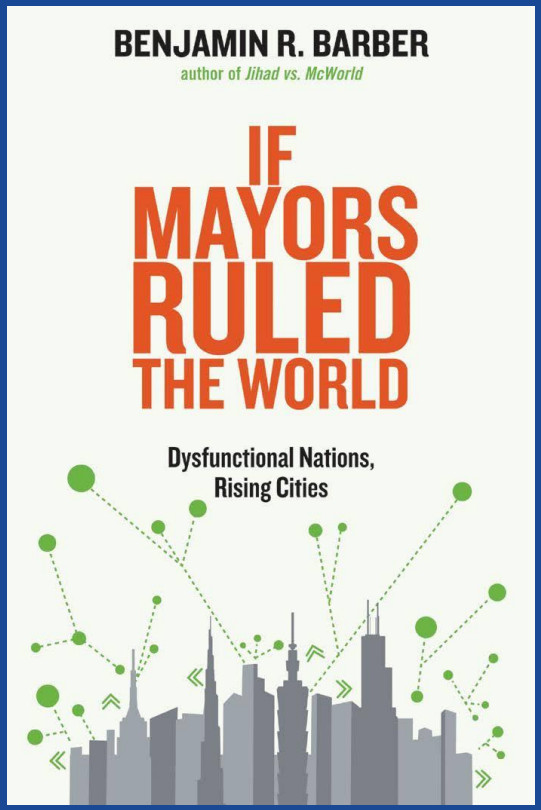
01 Urbanity

“We’re the level of government closest to the majority of the world’s people. While nations talk, but too often drag their heels—cities act.”
Michael Bloomberg



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Why a specific 'Urban Policy'?

To improve the quality of life in the cities

- 36 % of the population living in 34 biggest cities in Flanders, on the other hand 85 % living in urbanized territory;
- Cities = places where new challenges occur first and the strongest
  Laboratory function + possible leverage; room for experiment
- Therefore cities most suited to offer answers to complex challenges and transitions

How? Integrated; holistic approach tackling different challenges

- Importance multilevel governance - cities taking the lead with other public and private partners; team and experts facilitating
- Ecosystem building (facilitating role)
- Systemic solutions

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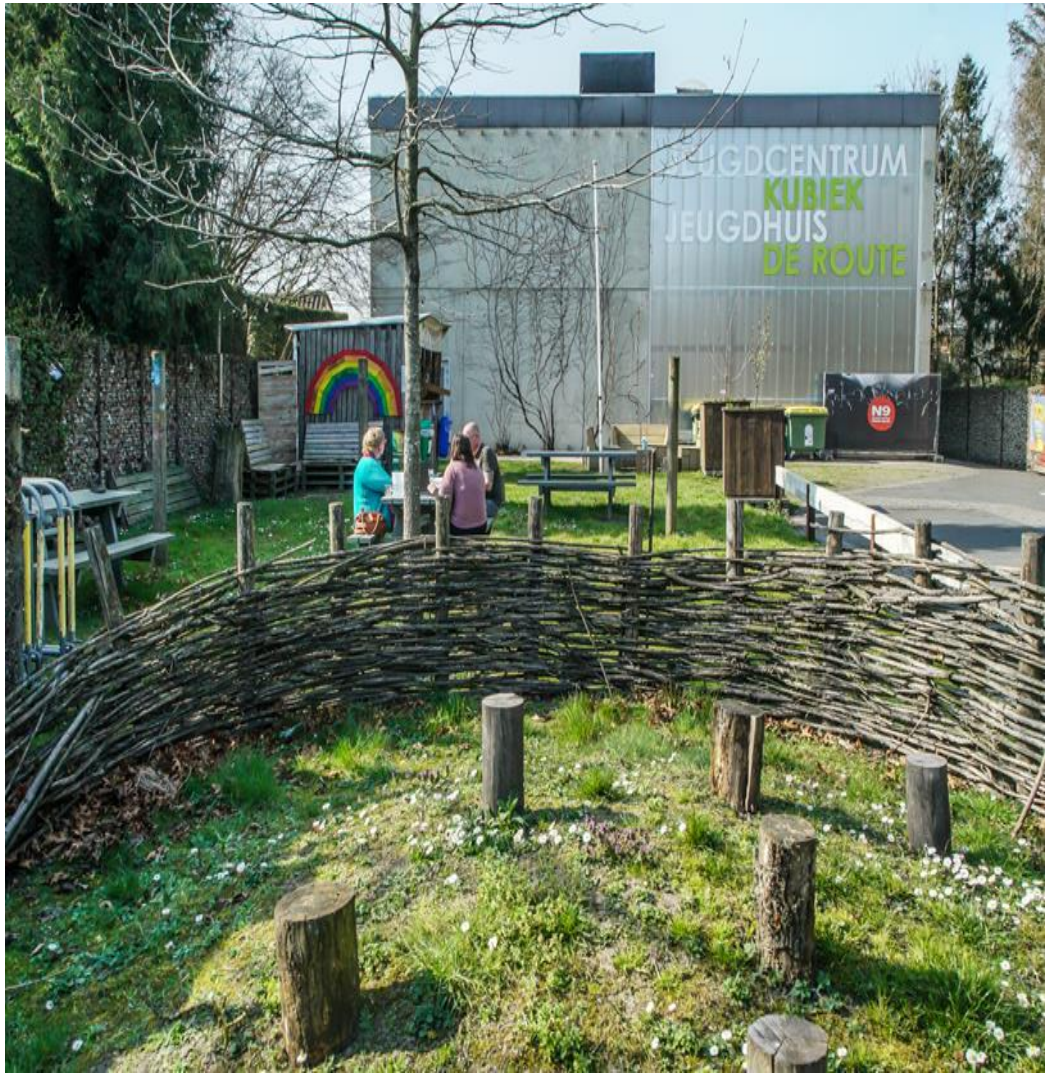
Concept urbanity (stedelijkheid)



The concept describes characteristics of living together in cities based on the 5 D's (in Dutch):

- Density (dichtheid)
- Diversity (diversiteit)
- Sustainability (duurzaamheid)
- Democracy (democratie)
- Digitalization (digitalisering)

+ Sixth D: Services (dienstverlening)

→ related to idea of proximity, as a way of strengthening the relations between cities, governments and the people in cities

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Case study 1 – Urban Renewal projects

- **Urban renewal in general**
  - Placebased
  - Integrated & multidimensional
  - Social-spatial approach (not only bricks)
  - Annual call
  - Investments as leverage: innovative, ambitious, economic leverage

- **Case Louvain**
  - Several projects near station
  - Housing, green park, bicycle friendly, culture, creative economy, energy, climate neutral (EU Mission), meeting places, innovation

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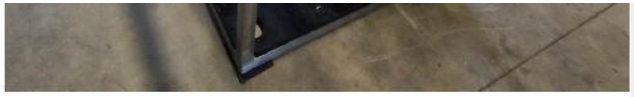
g 2018 ‘Groen en blauw in de stad’.



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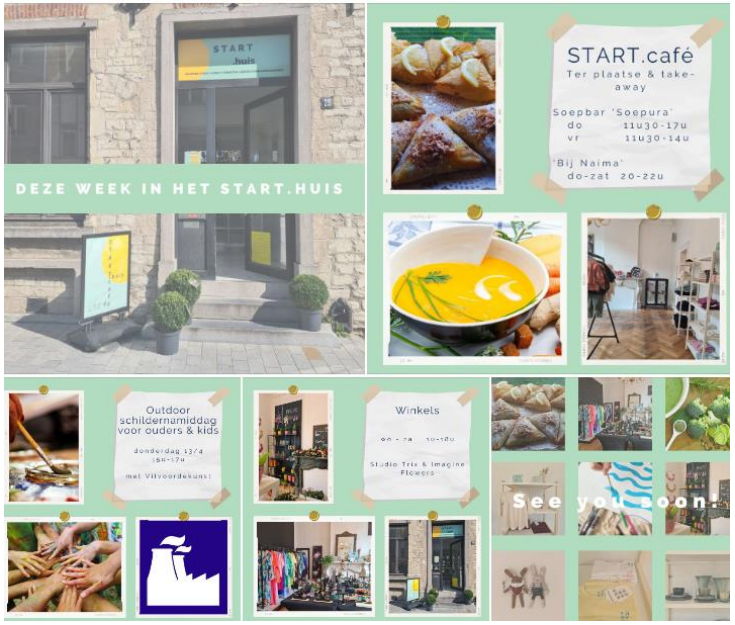
Case study 2 - Neigbourhood Improvement Contracts

- NIC in general
  - Call towards vulnerable neighbourhoods dealing with multi-challenges/complexity
  - Room for experiment /derogation rules (temporarily)
  - Multilevel governance: commitment local & Flemish authorities

- Case: City center Vilvoorde

  Neglected core shopping area
  - Use local potential & diversity
  - Starters' home as center & motor of emancipation
  - Breaking negative spiral of degraded buildings by guiding owners



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