



SIO R[®]

**EUROPEAN REGIONAL
CHAPTER**

Round-up of COP26 Cities, Regions & Built Environment Day

The much-awaited Cities, Regions and Built Environment Day took place on 11 November, rounding off two intensive weeks of COP26 and highlighting the big role that the built environment – which is responsible for 40% of carbon emissions – can and *must* play in delivering on global net zero ambitions.

We were encouraged to see a number of notable take-aways, announcements and conversations emerging from the day's focus on our industry:

- Overall, the reaction from UK, European and global industry participants and leaders has shown a real recognition of the scale of the climate crisis, and a determination to find solid solutions and take collaborative action to transition into a green future for the sector; but it was stressed that good intentions must turn into fast and concrete action to be able to mitigate the potential ramifications of climate risk
- We heard about the significance of cities – not only in their contribution to climate change but how they are impacted by it – shedding light on how the planning of cities must be approached and managed differently in order to ensure that the critical solutions discussed at the conference are taken forward to cultivate clean cities, buildings and transport networks
- London Mayor Sadiq Khan delivered a speech calling for governments to make sure that cities have the funding and authority they need to enable effective climate action, citing what he sees as “delayers” at the national levels being a potential roadblock and encouraging more concerted and immediate action
- At the international level, the UK Government unveiled an **Urban Climate Action Programme (UCAP)**, committing £27.5 million to cities across developing nations (at least fifteen cities in Latin America, Africa and Asia) to provide a financial boost for the regions that are most acutely affected by climate change, help them build greater resilience in fighting the climate emergency and implement decarbonisation and sustainability initiatives to become carbon neutral by 2050
- Very positively, to coincide with Built Environment Day, a consortium of climate champions, business and government leaders (featuring discussions on the stage with, among other key names, Nigel Topping and Gonzalo Muñoz, High-Level Champions for Climate Action) revealed an impressive 26 climate initiatives with the goal of transforming our market for good; further, 1,049 cities and local governments representing 722 million people have joined the Race to Zero – they have the potential to reduce global emissions by 1.4 gigatonnes per year by 2030, which now also has \$1.2 trillion of real estate assets under management
 - Further, the **World Green Building Council** revealed that 44 organisations have signed up to its **Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment**. This means that they are dedicated to reducing embodied carbon in new developments by 2030, as well as working to limit operational emissions for both new and existing buildings, make appropriate compensations for any emissions that they are unable to manage, and act as advocates for the industry to make a positive climate impact through reporting standards



SIOR[®]

EUROPEAN REGIONAL CHAPTER

- A stand-out development on the day was the **UK Green Building Council's** launch of a **Whole Life Carbon Roadmap** for the UK's entire built environment industry, providing specific guidance on measuring and decreasing embodied carbon, with clear-cut road maps and tools on reaching a net zero industry by 2050. The plan has the support of over 100 companies within the sector, plus the British Property Federation
- Similarly, in Italy, **Bocconi University** in Milan launched the **Sustainable Urban Regeneration** Lab in collaboration with real estate developer and fund manager **Hines**, real estate company **Prelios**, Italian bank Intesa Sanpaolo and major regeneration project **MilanoSesto**. The lab will aim to study, analyse and promote the development of sustainable urban regeneration
- If we look to the construction sector, the **Construction Leadership Council** (CLC) produced and showcased its new programme, '**Building a Greener Britain**', outlining what has been done so far by the industry to mitigate the crisis, and the further actions required to meet important targets
 - Methods to instill greater sustainability include CLC's Construct Zero initiative, and its announcements on the day of a number of priorities, including moving the construction industry towards zero emission vehicles, limiting waste on-site through the use of MMC, new infrastructure developments required to facilitate these changes, collaborating with the government to optimise the energy efficiency of existing real estate through retrofitting and other measures, and promoting enhanced operational energy efficiency for existing and new schemes industry-wide (i.e. through effective carbon measurement and championing innovation in low carbon manufacturing and distribution solutions)
- The **Construction Industry Council (CIC)**, meanwhile, made a significant announcement with its **Carbon Zone action plan**, which has already gained signatures from over 40 industry organisations to strive towards 72 objectives to deliver meaningful and solid climate-related deliverables, with tangible steps and specific responsibilities set out
- At an organisational level, **Multiplex**, the global construction company owned by **Brookfield**, declared plans to power all of its European sites with renewable energy. By committing to a renewable energy power purchase agreement, it has secured a long-term supply from a dedicated renewable energy producer, which has the benefit of reducing risk associated with energy price fluctuations and their impact on development costs

Over the course of COP26 SIOR members shared their views about climate change impact. You can read them here:

<https://sioreurope.com/members-and-industry-insights/>

<https://sioreurope.com/members-and-industry-insights-part-two/>

Our hope, as in the case of many in the industry, is that the game-changing initiatives and solid commitments made at the COP26's Built Environment Day will translate into real, long-term, positive momentum and progress for the industry across Europe and far beyond. Now that the conference is over, it is our collective responsibility to take the key learnings and implement them across our own operations and beyond. We would also hope to see accelerated, clear-cut advice and measures at policy level, and greater government action, as a further impetus and layer of accountability for the creation of a sustainable built environment for the benefit of all.