

Unlocking Opportunities, Creating Momentum: Transformative Urban Reconstruction in Ukraine

Supporting Ukraine and its resilience since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression is a top political priority for Germany. At the European level, the EU is supporting Ukraine in the EU accession process and is committed to accelerating reforms. In terms of urban development policy, the New Leipzig Charter, with its value-based, integrated, and common good-oriented approach, is the defining framework for action in the European context.

The German commitment and pioneering role in the field of urban development within the EU and among the G7 partners is appreciated worldwide. The National Urban Development Policy and in particular its urban development funding programs can provide important impetus, both for the reconstruction of Ukraine and for the ongoing EU rapprochement process. The creation of liveable neighbourhoods, whether in the context of reconstruction or transformation, can only be achieved through strong municipalities with support from the regional and national levels.

After taking place in Lugano in 2022 and London in 2023, on June 11 and 12, 2024, the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) 2024 will be held in Berlin. In preparation, the German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building and the Ministry for Restoration, Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine jointly hosted the urban preparatory conference on March 6-7, 2024 “Unlocking Opportunities, Creating Momentum: Transformative Urban Reconstruction in Ukraine”.

The conference provided a space to discuss the important role of cities for a transformative reconstruction in a multi-level governance approach, and to present concrete projects and funding instruments that demonstrate how cities and the national level can work together based on mutual trust and cooperation.



Objective and strategic dimension

The preparatory conference combined the showcasing of concrete projects and different programs and approaches with a professional exchange involving both, municipalities and national authorities, as well as civil society and academia. Through the joint and critical discussion of selected examples of urban development practice in Germany and Ukraine, Ukrainian partners from different government levels were given the opportunity to critically examine the approaches and programs from Germany for their own needs. This supports Ukrainian partners in sharpening their own role in the joint efforts for a transformative reconstruction of cities but also provided the opportunity to showcase already existing practices. The joint exchange amongst representatives of German and Ukrainian municipalities, municipal umbrella organizations and national authorities provided an opportunity to experience how a system based on trust and subsidiarity can be filled with life. The key results and highlights of the conference are documented and will feed into the preparation process to the URC and the URC 2024 itself.

Target group

The program design focused on the participation of representatives from both the municipal and national levels as well as civil society and academic implementing partners. The participation of the German representatives served to demonstrate the practical implementation aspect within the programs of the National Urban Development Policy and the great potential of trustful cooperation in a multi-level approach. The Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) and the Ministry for Restoration, Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine have co-created the content, the key target group are experts and practitioners, Ukrainian municipalities, academia and civil society.

Strengthening the cooperation

The preparatory discussions also paved the way for the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two ministries, which outlines concrete ways in which the BMWSB in particular, can support Ukraine in its rebuilding efforts. Find more information [here](#) in BMWSB's press release.



Conference Agenda

Dialog on Planning and Building for Resilience, 06.03.2024	
16:00 - 17:30	Site Visit "Former Tempelhof Airport"
18:00 - 19:30	Panel discussion and Q&A with audience: Dialog on Planning and Building for Resilience
19:30	Reception

Conference Day, 07.03.2024	
09:00 - 09:30	Official Opening
09:30 - 09:40	Introduction to the Conference Programme
09:40 - 10:10	Keynote: Rebuilding and creating liveable cities by multi-level governance and finance: The role of National Urban Development Policies and Federal Funding Programs
10:30 - 12:15	Panel Discussion and Q&A with audience: Governance and financial architecture of recovery and transformation
12:15 - 13:45	Lunch
13:50 - 14:20	Interview: Local self-governance and recovery
14:30 - 16:30	Breakout Sessions in parallel (1) How to Plan for Recovery and Transformation in a Multi-Level Approach (2) New Models of Housing for Ukraine (3) Sustainable and energy-efficient construction and renovation
16:35 - 16:50	Musical interlude by Ganna Gryniva
16:50 - 17:20	Wrap Up of Breakout Sessions: Key Statements from each breakout session
17:20 - 17:30	Closing of Conference
17:30 - 19:30	Reception

Trialog on Planning and Building for Resilience

06.03.2024, Conference Kick-Off

The reconstruction process in Ukraine commenced immediately after the first destruction caused by the full-scale invasion by Russia. From emergency projects to attempts to grasp more long-lasting strategies, it is being in constant transformation in order to address the ever-changing challenges of war. Considering existing multiple crises, future contingencies, and accumulated experience, there is a certain tendency towards a qualitative shift.

This shift concerns both processes of urban development, as well as qualities of urban environment. We can see a growing aspiration of local actors to become active participants in such processes. The architectural agenda is changing, with social, non-commercial architecture taking center stage. Given both the threats of war and its consequences, there is an ongoing discussion about the security of urban space, as well as inclusiveness of cities. In this context, the concept of urban resilience emerges as highly relevant, providing a practical framework for integrating architecture and urban planning into a strategic vision. Urban resilience encompasses not only the ability of cities and communities to withstand the multifaceted impacts of war but also their capacity to adapt, transform, and thrive amidst uncertainty. The first day of the conference was therefore dedicated to an „Architects' Trialog on Planning and Building for Resilience“.





First point on the agenda: a guided tour of the conference setting: the former Tempelhof airport



Welcome by Elisabeth Kaiser, Parliamentary State Secretary in the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building



Welcome by Oleksandra Azarkhina, Deputy Minister for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine



Welcome by Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary in the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development



Trialog
with

Oleg Drozdov, Architect,
Founder of the Kharkiv
School of Architecture and
Co-Founder of Ro3kvit:
Urban Coalition for Ukraine

**Prof. h.c. Dr. Philipp
Meuser**, Architect and
Publisher, DOM Publishers

Hubert Trammer,
Architect, Teacher and
Author, Member of the
Roundtable of the New
European Bauhaus

Comment by:
Paola Deda, Director for
Forests, Land and Housing
Division, United Nations
Economic Commission for
Europe



Impressions
Reception



Unlocking Opportunities, Creating Momentum: Transformative Urban Reconstruction in Ukraine

07.03.2024, Conference Day

Official Welcome by Klara Geywitz, Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Building



Official (virtual) Welcome by Oleksandr Kubrakov, Deputy Prime Minister for Restoration of Ukraine - Minister for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine



Keynote Speech by Dr. Jochen Lang, Director General Housing and Urban Renewal, Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing, Berlin

„Rebuilding and creating liveable cities by multi level governance and finance - The role of National Urban Development Policies and Federal Funding Programmes“



Panel Discussion and Q&A with the audience: Governance and financial architecture of recovery and transformation



Recovery and transformation of Ukrainian cities need to be facilitated by robust governance and financial architectures. This panel discussion aimed to delve into the strategies, policies, and collaborative frameworks that nations and cities can employ to navigate the complexities of recovery and transformation. The aspects of recovery and reconstruction range from institutional transformation, to good governance and inclusiveness, financial stability, sustainable development and the path to EU accession. At the centre was the claim that strong cities and a commitment to multi-level-governance hold the potential to combine the strengths of the national, regional and municipal levels.



In this panel, the panelists

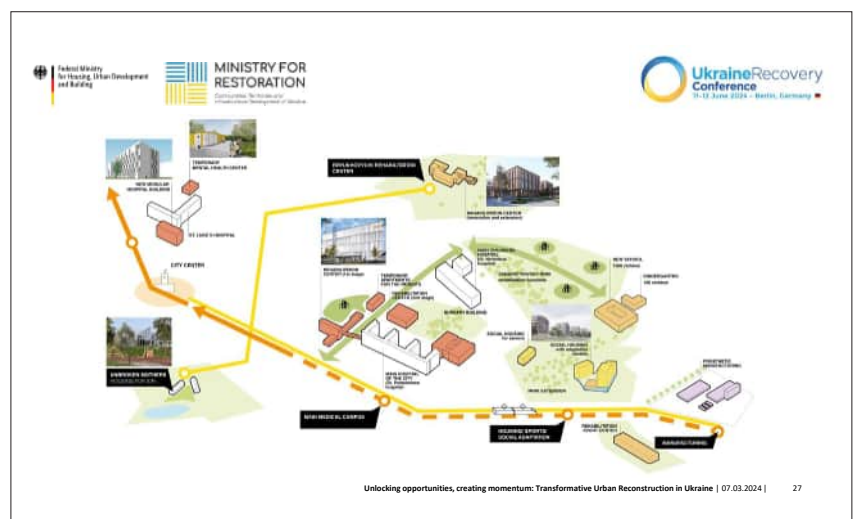
- Dr. Anton Kolomieitsev, City Architect of City of Lviv
- Prof. Dr. Thomas Drachenberg, Head of Heritage Service of the Federal State of Brandenburg
- Gabriel Blanc, Team Leader for Reconstruction of Ukraine, EU Commission, DG NEAR
- Oleksandr Solontay, NGO “Agency for recovery and development”
- Dr. Jochen Lang, Director General Housing and Urban Renewal, Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing, Berlin
- Facilitation: Katja Theise

discussed

- diverse approaches to recovery and transformation across nations and cities, using practical examples from Germany, the EU and Ukraine
- innovative financing models for urban development
- the effectiveness of national and regional policies in fostering sustainable development
- the EU’s contributions and initiatives in supporting member states and neighbouring countries in urban development and Ukraine’s path to recovery and transformation
- key challenges and opportunities in urban development and heritage preservation
- how to support Ukrainian cities as key actors in the transformation and recovery



Excerpt of the presentation „Cities as the core for recovery and transformation“ held by Anton Kolomieitsev as part of the panel discussion



Interview on Local Self-Governance and Recovery with Oleksandra Azarkhina, Deputy Minister in the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine



The interview led by Prof. Dr. Oliver Weigel, Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building dealt with topics such as a recovery in war times - why it is important to think and plan recovery already now; decentralization; the current status of multi-level governance in Ukraine; planning procedures: from post-soviet general plan to a working strategy; Ukraine's EU accession process; as well as outstanding best practice examples.



Breakout Session 1: How to Plan for Recovery and Transformation in a Multi-Level Approach

Background

Reconstruction of infrastructure and cities in Ukraine will not only be about rebuilding in the conventional way but will be driven by the idea of urban transformation, i.e. „recovering forward“ with sustainability and resilience at its core. For this to succeed, the utilisation of an integrated approach focussing on cross-sector collaboration, bringing in all partners necessary to create of livable and mixed-used neighbourhoods, is key. Such an approach, however, can only succeed when cities are strong, and all levels of government are committed to multi-level-governance which combines the strengths of the national, regional and municipal levels.

Germany has a long tradition of subsidiarity, and its strong cities play a major role, e.g. in the transformation process after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Germany's urban development expertise is based on the municipal practice of integrated approaches and integrated urban development concepts, which is reflected also in the National Urban Development Policy with its experimental approaches and integrated urban development support funding programmes. This provides a powerful framework for action oriented towards the common good and the neighbourhood-level, whilst linking municipal and national requirements. At the EU and global level, this approach is strongly embedded in the New Leipzig Charter, the principles of the New European Bauhaus and the New Urban Agenda.

Session objectives

In this session contributors and participants did:

- engage in practical examples of how a system based on trust and subsidiarity can be put into practice with representatives of municipalities, municipal umbrella organizations and national authorities.
- discuss strengths, challenges and concrete opportunities for multi-level cooperation in implementing national priorities that take into account local realities and needs, using practical examples from Germany and Ukraine.
- critically examine selected examples of urban development practice in Germany and Ukraine and derive ideas for joint efforts to transform cities in Ukraine.

Speaker

- Dr. Hanno Ehrbeck, Head of Urban Planning, City of Mannheim
 - Yevhen Plashchenko, Director of Department of Spatial Planning of Territories and Architecture, Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine
 - Hilmar von Lojewski, Councillor for Urban Development, Building, Housing and Traffic, German Association of Cities
 - Alina Saraniuk, Deputy Mayor, City of Bucha
 - Oleksandr Shevchenko, Founder of the NGO Restart Ukraine
- Facilitation & Organisation: Dr. Bettina Silbernagl, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)





Key messages

The development of key messages/demands to be submitted to the URC2024 involved a collaborative process that incorporated inputs from both speakers and audience members in the respective breakout session.

#1: Multi-level funding for urban development is crucial for big urban development projects.

#2: Key priorities and values in recovery planning: economy, society, environment. The recovery process in Ukraine should focus on sustainable development, human-centeredness and climate change aspects.

#3: Cities need more trust than control by central government.

#4: Establish urban planning education in Ukraine - to resource planning actions and knowledge production with skilled professionals.

#5: Focus to involve people to make decisions - participation process.

Breakout Session 2: New Models of Housing for Ukraine

Background

The housing sector is the most damaged sector by the war in Ukraine. The estimated financial needs have reached 80,3 billion USD for the next 10 years. Millions of citizens lost their homes. Ukraine is challenged not only with the reconstruction of housing and provision of temporary shelter but also with the revision of its housing sector and economy with a new legislative framework addressing in particular social and affordable rental housing. The Ukrainian housing market is currently almost exclusively based on private homeownership.

With the Ukrainian commitment to “build back better”, reconstruction and transformation of housing should also be sustainable, resilient, and socially oriented. This task entails physical reconstruction and refurbishment and at the same time transformation of the housing policy and the establishment of new models of housing provision. Diversification of the housing sector and establishment of new structures of governance are also required in order to access international funding.

The German experience of affordable and social housing and the diversified housing market, as well as the post-war reconstruction, represents a relevant example of Ukraine’s recovery of the housing sector. The structures, political approaches and funding instruments of the German housing policy might provide valuable insights for Ukraine’s housing recovery.

This panel is dedicated to understanding Ukraine’s housing sector with its needs and the efforts of the Ukrainian government and cities to transform it, enabling targeted international support and bilateral cooperation. It also focuses on German housing policies and instruments with the aim of identifying the most appropriate approaches for further exchange. The key result was that the local level should become a stronger player in implementing a new housing policy.

Speaker

- Annett Jura, Head of the Department for Housing and Real Estate, Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building: Social Housing Policy in Germany
- Axel Gedaschko, President of GdW Federal Association of German Housing and Real Estate Companies
- Svitlana Startseva, Head of Department for Housing Policy of Ministry for Communities, Territories, and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine: New Housing Legislation

- Oleksandra Kirian, Head of the Sector of Cooperation with International Financial Partners, International Cooperation Department of Kharkiv City Council
- Mariia Smirnova, Leading architect of the Municipal Enterprise „Spatial development agency“, City of Vinnytsia New Housing Projects in Vinnytsia
- Comments from practice: Serhii Komnatnyi, Regional consultant UNECE in Ukraine, Coordinator of Working Group for new housing legislation at the Ministry for Communities, Territories, and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine
- Facilitation: Anastasia Bobrova, Senior Analyst, Cedos think tank, Kyiv
- Organisation: Knut Höller & Team, Housing Initiative for Eastern Europe (IWO) e.V.





Key messages

The development of key messages/demands to be submitted to the URC2024 involved a collaborative process that incorporated inputs from both speakers and audience members in the respective breakout session.

#1: Municipalities should become players in real estate to implement the housing policy.

#2: To address its housing challenges, Ukraine requires a new, socially equitable, and economically viable state housing policy, which should enable a variety of housing provision mechanisms.

#3: International support in the form of experience exchange, as well as financial support, including long-term loans, is crucial for establishing and implementing municipal housing.

Breakout Session 3: Sustainable and Energy-efficient Construction and Renovation

Background

Ukraine has already committed to a green recovery, as declared during previous Ukraine Recovery Conferences. Within the European Union and beyond, communities are actively striving towards climate neutrality, circularity and sustainability. These goals have already been incorporated into the legal frameworks governing urban planning and construction. The urbanization of war as a global challenge adds a new dimension to the question of sustainable urban development, which should not be framed as competing with humanitarian priorities but rather as complementary, increasing sensitivity to social aspects of reconstruction, community recovery, and building local capacities.

While effective steps toward sustainable urban development, planning, and construction have yet to be taken in Ukraine, they have become even more urgent given the current situation: issues such as environmental damage, energy crises, scale of destruction, volume of demolition waste, destroyed urban fabrics and settlements, and potentially significant amount of new construction must be addressed.

Principles of circularity and energy efficiency are crucial for sustainable reconstruction during and after wartime, requiring integration at both the level of architectural design and urban planning. However, their implementation necessitates a critical reconsideration of urban development in Ukraine, which had some deficiencies even before the full-scale invasion of Russia, including a sector-centered approach, regulatory gaps, lack of public participation, market-driven development etc. Even though we could witness numerous local initiatives that emerged in response to challenges of war, many of which are aligned with the principles of sustainability, the shift towards sustainable, community-driven recovery is yet to be accomplished.

Given that reconstruction efforts, initiated by actors at different levels, began immediately after the initial destruction, there is an urgent need for the creation of an integrated approach that could empower municipalities and local communities to drive sustainable reconstruction in productive dialogue with a wide group of stakeholders.

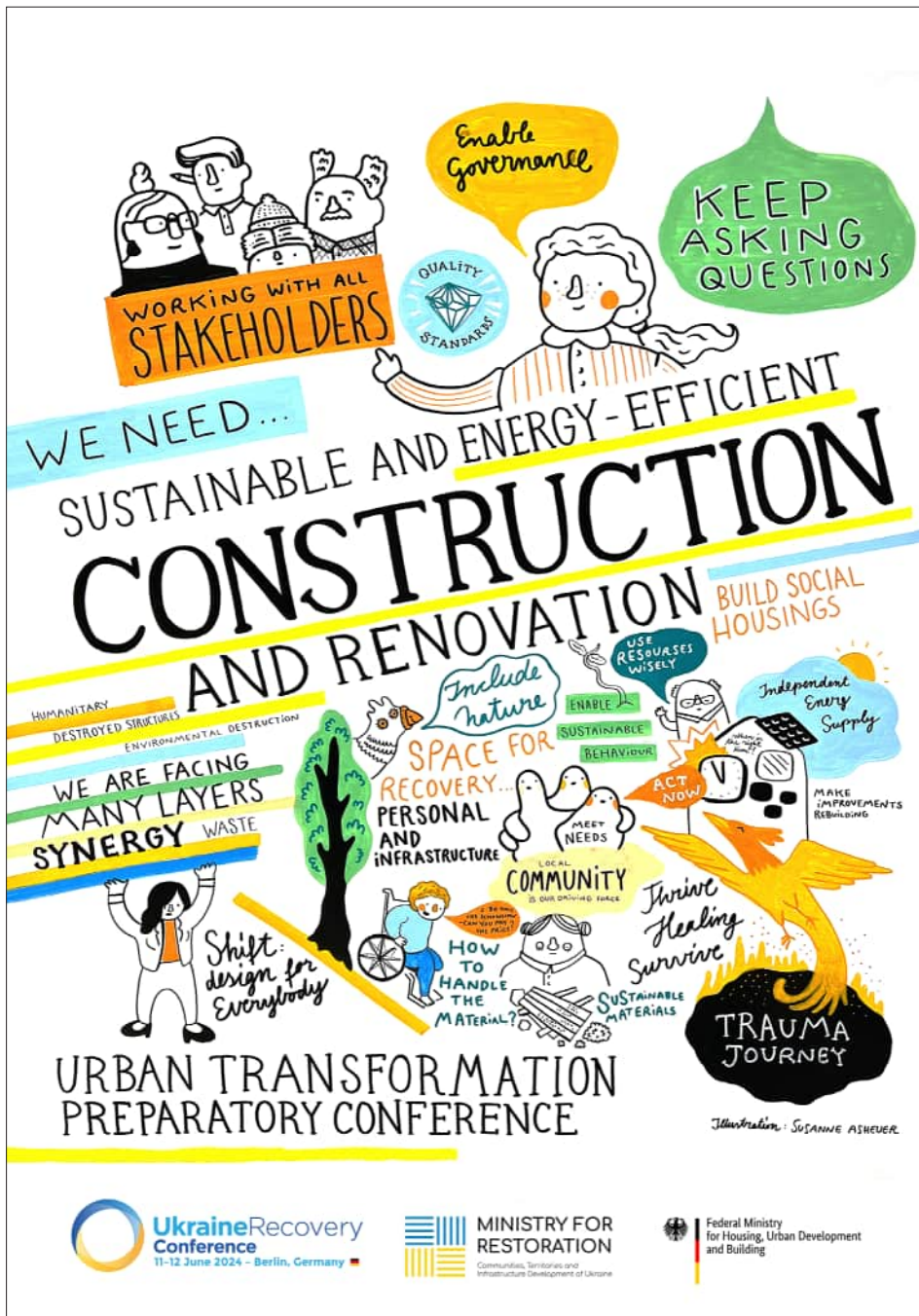
Speaker

- Yegor Farenjuk, Acting Director of the Energy Efficiency Fund of Ukraine
- Joanna Averley, Chief Planner at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, United Kingdom
- Slava Balbek, Architect, founder of Balbek Bureau, Ukraine
- Prof. em. Kees Christiaanse, Architect and urban planner, the founding partner of KCAP Architects & Planners
- Andrii Kopylenko, co-founder of Charitable Foundation „District number 1“

- Comment by: Iryna Lahunova, Ministry for Restoration, Senior Project Manager, Reform Support Team, Ukraine

- Facilitation & Organisation: Nataliia Mysak, Architect and researcher





Key messages

The development of key messages/demands to be submitted to the URC2024 involved a collaborative process that incorporated inputs from both speakers and audience members in the respective breakout session.

#1: Human-centered design should be the basis for recovery. Accessibility and inclusivity is the key. Architecture must help people sustain their trauma, not relive it.

#2: Cities ideally need 30-50% of high quality affordable housing, preferably constructed with government subsidies by housing associations, municipal housing

companies or low-profit organizations.

#3: The construction regulations that are in force in Ukraine were developed back in Soviet times. To speed up the reconstruction process, it is necessary to make changes to the building regulations.

Final Discussions & Official Closing

Sharing the breakout session results in the plenary



Official Closing by **Oleksandra Azarkhina**, Deputy Minister for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine



Closing Words by Prof. Dr. **Oliver Weigel**, Head of the International and European Urban Development Division, Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building



Further Impressions Space for Networking & Informal Conversations





Unlocking Opportunities, Creating Momentum: Transformative Urban Reconstruction in Ukraine

Preparatory Event for the
Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024
06.-07.03.2024, Berlin, Germany



co-hosted by
the Ministry for Restoration, Communities,
Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine
& the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban
Development and Building, Germany

