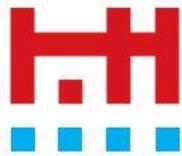




## 2030 Climate Neutrality Commitments



**BRATISLAVA**

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# 1 Introduction

Bratislava is proud to be part of the **EU Mission 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030 (EU Cities Mission)**, which confirms our ambition to play a leading role in the transition to climate neutrality in the European and Slovak contexts. Our participation in the Mission is not only a recognition of our goals but a unique opportunity to leverage global and European innovation, local talent, and robust community engagement to accelerate this transition. Building on a foundation of strong political leadership and growing climate expertise, Bratislava envisions the coming decade as a chance to reimagine the city as climate-resilient, accessible, and caring for the needs of all citizens, especially those most vulnerable to climate change. In our view, this group includes children and young people, who face disproportionate risks from the long-term effects of climate change, while not yet participating in the political process.

Before joining the Mission in 2022, the city focused primarily on building resilience through adaptation. Key initiatives included revitalising parks, rejuvenating public spaces, halting commercial logging in city forests, and expanding blue-green infrastructure. In parallel, significant investments in public transport laid the groundwork for sustainable mobility choices among residents. The Mission has acted as a key catalyst for Bratislava to strengthen and formalise its climate governance. Since 2022, the city has institutionalised climate leadership through the establishment of a dedicated Climate Office, new leadership roles, and integration of climate and sustainability priorities across municipal planning and investment processes.

In April 2024, Bratislava adopted its first Climate Plan, with a strong focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The plan was developed by the Climate Office as the coordinating body, in close cooperation with municipal departments and relevant stakeholders, and was validated through the political process. Priority actions include boosting energy efficiency, co-creating a roadmap to decarbonize the heating sector, scaling up renewable energy deployment, enhancing sustainable transport infrastructure, and aligning urban planning with accessibility, the 15-minute city principle and decarbonization requirements.

The Climate City Contract (CCC) builds on this foundation as a strategic extension of the first climate plan. Together, they form a unified climate governance and policy framework that streamlines planning, implementation, and monitoring. The CCC adds particular value by placing stakeholder and citizen engagement at the centre of Bratislava's climate strategy, working towards a robust city-wide coalition led by the Mayor. The city now acts as a coordinator and accelerator, bringing together businesses, institutions, residents (especially young people), and civil society in joint commitments and shared learning to drive climate action forward.

The EU Cities Mission has provided an unparalleled opportunity to reinforce Bratislava's efforts and help to turn our climate vision into reality. Through it, Bratislava gains access to technical support, targeted funding, and a platform for peer exchange with Europe's leading cities. These resources will help refine strategies, deploy cutting-edge solutions, and deepen collaboration with citizens and stakeholders. The Mission Label can further boost Bratislava's credibility and investment appeal, unlocking additional funding to advance the city's climate ambitions.

## 2 Goal

### Context, Target and Approach

Bratislava is not starting from scratch in its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2022, the most recent year for which complete data is available, 1.67 million tCO<sub>2</sub>e of greenhouse gases were emitted within Bratislava's territory, representing 3.51 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per capita. Compared to the baseline year of 2005, emissions per capita were reduced by nearly 37%. This progress reflects strong efforts by residents and businesses, particularly in improving building energy efficiency.

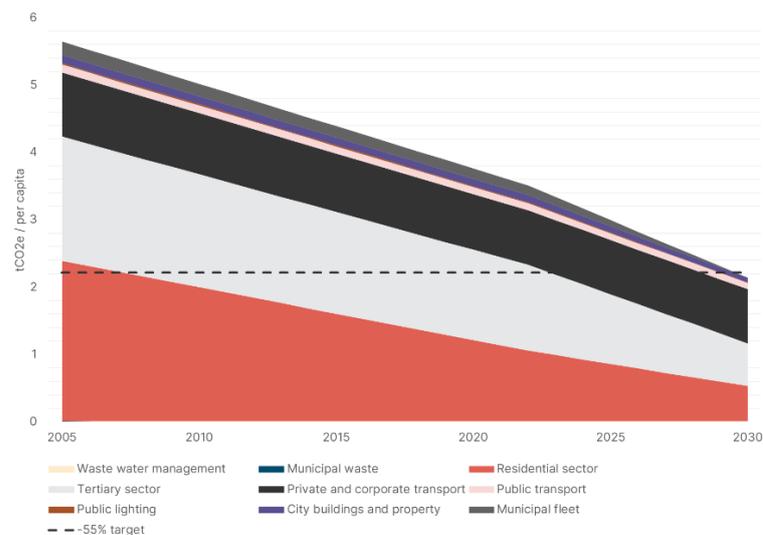
Building on this foundation, Bratislava aims to reduce emissions to 2.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per capita by 2030—a 63% reduction from 2005 levels. In absolute terms, this represents 57% reduction compared to the baseline. While this target does not fully meet the EU Mission's definition of climate neutrality, it is both ambitious and achievable, laying the groundwork for full neutrality on an accelerated timeline and well before 2050. The CCC Action Plan outlines key levers to support this accelerated transition.

Bratislava directly manages around 11% of emissions, primarily through municipal buildings, public services, and mobility. Rather than viewing this as a limitation, the city embraces its role as a coordinator and convener. The CCC process has reinforced this responsibility, positioning Bratislava to align diverse stakeholders—from national agencies to local businesses—in joint climate action. This evolving collaborative model is essential. Emissions in sectors like heating and transport depend on decisions beyond the city's legal authority. Bratislava is therefore focused on influencing and supporting action by others—through policies, partnerships, and pilot projects.

While the CCC does not yet commit Bratislava to full neutrality, it sets a clear path forward, as it enables the city to secure technical assistance and funding, engage citizens and businesses more effectively, learn from leading European cities, and develop a science-based neutrality roadmap aligned with EU goals.

In future iterations of the CCC, Bratislava aims to build on this momentum, scale up partnerships, and deepen cooperation across all levels of governance to unlock the city's full transformation potential. The Climate Action Plan also proposes several pathways for accelerated action that could open up if the support of the national government for the Mission work is secured in the future.

**Figure 1: Greenhouse gas emissions 2005 – 2030**





## **Structural Challenges to Climate Action**

Despite its ambition, Bratislava faces several systemic barriers that limit the full implementation of its climate neutrality pathways.

One major challenge is the city's limited fiscal autonomy. Slovakia remains one of the most centralised countries in Europe in terms of local government spending. Bratislava relies heavily on central government transfers, lacks the authority to adjust local taxes, and is legally bound to maintain balanced budgets and comply with strict debt ceilings. These constraints prevent the city from engaging in strategic borrowing for large-scale climate investments.

Another key barrier lies in national-level regulation. Critical emission sectors such as energy, buildings, and transport are governed at the national level, leaving Bratislava with limited power to initiate structural reforms. The city cannot mandate a phase-out of natural gas nor adopt stricter local building codes beyond national standards. Heating poses a particularly significant challenge, accounting for approximately 40% of the city's emissions. The district heating network is almost entirely dependent on natural gas and is largely outside municipal control. Nonetheless, Bratislava is leveraging instruments such as the local heating plan to encourage decarbonisation, particularly in new developments.

A further complication stems from fragmented governance. In the transport sector, responsibilities are divided among national, regional, city, and city district levels. This division of competencies hampers the creation of an integrated, efficient transport system and underscores the broader need for administrative reform and stronger metropolitan coordination.

Despite these constraints, Bratislava has made tangible progress in key areas of urban sustainability and climate adaptation. Since 2019, the city has launched a large-scale tree planting initiative and revitalised public spaces to enhance green infrastructure and improve quality of life. Urban forest management has been reformed to support biodiversity and climate resilience. The city has also significantly expanded its public transport system, investing in modern tram infrastructure and new vehicles with support from European Structural and Investment Funds. To further reduce emissions, Bratislava has introduced parking regulations to better manage car use and has improved waste management by establishing reuse centres and implementing a modern organic waste collection system.

These measures show that Bratislava is capable of decisive action within its current mandate. They also serve as a foundation for broader, more transformative climate action—should enabling conditions and multilevel cooperation improve.

## **Stakeholder and Citizen Engagement as a Lever for Systemic Change**

The Climate City Contract builds on and extends Bratislava's climate efforts by placing stakeholder and citizen engagement, including children and young people, at the centre of climate governance. In line with the core principles of the EU Cities Mission, we envision the CCC is a platform for raising challenges to higher levels of government, promoting reform, and mobilising the broader ecosystem.

Since joining the Mission, Bratislava has established a Vice Mayor for Climate, created a Climate Office, including senior energy experts, and has started implementing climate actions integrated into the climate action plan developed through a data-driven, participatory process. Engagement efforts are already showing results. Ten major companies have joined the Bratislava Mayor Climate Challenge to improve energy efficiency, marking an important step in private sector involvement. In parallel, the city is preparing voluntary standards for developers aimed at reducing both operational and consumption-based emissions, encouraging circular construction practices and the use of low-carbon materials. A stakeholder platform Climate Leaders Forum, participating in the Climate Plan co-creation and monitoring have been operational since 2023.



Bratislava recognises the need to significantly step up its efforts to engage all citizens in meaningful and inclusive ways. Public participation is crucial not only to ensure social acceptance of climate measures, but also to harness local knowledge, build ownership, and promote behavioural change. In addition, a comprehensive communication strategy is being developed within the Climate Office to support the city's climate initiatives, with a focus on children and young people as future residents, whose opinions the city aims to listen to from the outset.

In this regard, the city plans to build on its existing experience, strong communication channels and participation tools. For example, it aims to expand its annual Climathon event—now in its fifth year—to engage more secondary school students, while focusing on social innovation. The city also plans to work closely with the Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava (MIB), which since 2020 has operated a dedicated participation department. MIB supports public engagement in revitalisation projects through diverse and inclusive formats such as focus groups, workshops, round tables, neighbourhood events, interviews, and participatory walks or rides. Vulnerable groups such as children, seniors, and people with limited mobility are actively included, guided by Bratislava's *Manual of Participatory Planning and Socio-Spatial Mapping*.

These actions represent the first steps toward building a strong, city-wide coalition for climate neutrality.

### **Administrative Boundaries and Scope**

Our 2030 target encompasses the entire administrative territory of the City of Bratislava, including all urban districts. This comprehensive coverage ensures that every part of our city is involved in the collective effort to reduce emissions and enhance sustainability.

The 2.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per capita by 2030 target excludes industrial emissions, which fall under the European Union Emissions Trading System (ETS). The City of Bratislava's most recent GHG inventory, which was developed with 2022 data, excludes IPPU and AFOLU.

### **Co-Benefits of Climate Action**

Bratislava's commitment to sustainable transformation by 2030 brings a multitude of co-benefits that will enhance the quality of life for our residents, support economic development, and protect our natural environment. Key co-benefits include:

- **Improved Air Quality:** Reducing reliance on fossil fuels will significantly decrease air pollution, leading to better respiratory health and overall well-being for our citizens.
- **Stronger Local Economy:** Investing in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency will stimulate job creation and innovation in green technologies, bolstering our local economy.
- **Enhanced Public Health:** Promoting active transportation modes such as cycling and walking, alongside cleaner public transit options, will encourage healthier lifestyles and improve health outcomes.
- **Energy Security:** By increasing our use of locally produced renewable energy, Bratislava will enhance its energy independence and resilience against global energy market fluctuations.
- **Biodiversity and Green Spaces:** Expanding green infrastructure and sustainable urban planning will protect local biodiversity, enhance urban ecosystems, and provide recreational spaces for residents.
- **Climate Resilience:** Comprehensive climate action plans will improve the city's resilience to climate impacts, such as heatwaves and extreme weather events, ensuring a safer and more adaptable urban environment.
- **Social Benefits:** Sustainable climate solutions will enhance the quality of life in Bratislava by creating a healthier and more desirable living environment, strengthening local communities.



through adaptation efforts, reducing energy poverty among vulnerable populations, promoting active transport to improve health, and fostering community cohesion through engagement in climate action, and empowering children and youth to take an active role in shaping a sustainable future.

By pursuing our climate ambition, Bratislava aims to create a caring, accessible, and resilient city for current and future generations – as defined in our key roadmap, Bratislava 2030. Our efforts will serve as a model for other cities in Slovakia and beyond striving to achieve similar goals, demonstrating that ambitious climate action is both necessary and beneficial.

### 3 Strategic priorities

Bratislava is committed to paving the way toward climate neutrality through a set of clear, actionable strategic priorities. These priorities focus on areas where the city can lead by example and activate broader systemic change: municipal assets, waste and wastewater, sustainable transport, and private building efficiency.

#### 1. Municipal Assets: Leading by Example

Bratislava is taking direct responsibility for decarbonising its own operations. The city aims to:

- Renovate and upgrade municipal buildings to reduce energy consumption by 35% by 2030.
- Roll out comprehensive energy management systems to achieve a 20% energy savings across all city-owned companies.
- Replace all public lighting with LED luminaires featuring smart intensity controls.
- Install renewable energy systems to cover at least 20% of annual electricity demand in municipal buildings.

These actions are central to Bratislava's leadership role in climate action, demonstrating what is possible and setting a standard for other sectors.

#### 2. Municipal Waste and Wastewater: Turning Waste into Value

Bratislava intends to modernise its waste and wastewater systems to align with circular economy principles:

- Upgrade the Waste-to-Energy (WTE) facility to increase heat and electricity recovery from residual waste.
- Construct a new composting plant and biogas facility to treat biodegradable waste and generate renewable energy.
- Meet a target of 65% recycling and sorting, less than 5% landfilling, and treat remaining waste through energy recovery by 2035.
- Conduct feasibility studies on recovering residual heat from wastewater systems.

These investments will support both emissions reductions and energy security, while minimising reliance on landfilling.

#### 3. Sustainable Transport: Expanding Clean and Active Mobility



To reduce emissions in the transport sector, the city will accelerate the shift toward clean and active mobility options envisioning to increase the modal share of sustainable transport (public transit, walking, cycling) to 70% by 2030. To do support this shift, we will:

- As a flagship initiative funded from the European Structural and Investment Funds, build or modernise 10 km of tram lines to strengthen the backbone of the public transport system.
- Transition 50% of the municipal fleet to zero-emission vehicles and deploy 400 new EV charging stations.
- Construct at least 42 km of new cycling infrastructure, including bike racks and shared mobility support.

This comprehensive approach will reduce car dependency and improve urban air quality and accessibility.

#### 4. Private Buildings: Unlocking Emissions Reductions at Scale

Improving energy performance in residential and tertiary buildings is essential for Bratislava's climate targets, as the residential sector produces 31% of the city's Overall Emissions.

Key Residential Sector Goals are to:

- Reduce household energy consumption by 23%.
- Reach a renewable energy production target of 226,000 MWh in residential buildings.

City Support and Catalysing Actions include:

- Coordinate with distribution companies, permitting offices (including for heritage buildings), and technology providers to facilitate the installation of photovoltaics.
- Support residents through energy-saving awareness campaigns and advisory services

#### 5. Tertiary Sector Goals

The tertiary sector (including services, retail, education, healthcare, and public administration) is responsible for 36% of the overall city emissions and needs to contribute by:

- Achieving a 38% reduction in energy use across
- Increasing renewable energy production in the tertiary sector to 380,000 MWh.

City Support and Catalysing Actions:

- Launch and **expand the Business Climate Challenge** to engage companies in energy efficiency improvements.
- **Introduce voluntary energy and emissions standards for developers**, targeting both operational and consumption-based emissions, with the vision of updating standard spatial planning tools to prioritise decarbonisation and adaptation
- Advance district heating decarbonisation by **engaging private heating providers through the local heating plan** and encouraging the transition away from natural gas.
- **Develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy** to raise awareness and engage all stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and academia, with a special focus on children and young people, in Bratislava's climate and energy initiatives.



Together, these measures create a strategic framework that aligns direct action, regulation, and engagement to drive Bratislava's climate transformation. They will serve as the backbone of the next phase of the CCC, as Bratislava builds on early successes to accelerate implementation and partnership-building citywide.

## 4 Process and principles

To achieve our 2030 targets, Bratislava has adopted a comprehensive and integrated systemic work process involving internal and external management and coordination structures.

### **Internal Management led by the Climate Office and the Vice Mayor for Climate and:**

- **Climate Implementation Groups:** These teams, composed of key senior or professional staff from the municipality and municipal organisations, are being established around the strategic priorities outlined above. They will guide and implement actions in their respective areas, ensuring coordinated efforts across different sectors.
- **Climate Steering Committee:** A strategic team that includes relevant stakeholders has been formed to provide high-level oversight over the city's climate action.

### **External Coordination and Stakeholder Engagement: Building a City-Wide Climate Coalition**

The first iteration of the Climate City Contract (CCC) positions city-owned companies as foundational partners in Bratislava's climate efforts. Their active involvement is crucial for demonstrating municipal leadership and showcasing what is possible within the city's operational remit.

However, achieving long-term climate neutrality requires action far beyond the city's direct control. The next phase of the CCC focuses on expanding this coalition by engaging a diverse array of stakeholders—from research institutions and government bodies to private sector actors and civil society. These partners will be invited to co-develop solutions, shape policy recommendations, and contribute to implementation as formal CCC signatories or members of advisory structures.

- **Research, Academia, and Expert Communities** play a key role in shaping evidence-based, locally relevant climate strategies. Bratislava collaborates with institutions such as the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Slovak University of Technology, and the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Comenius University, as well as with NGOs and local experts through consultations, research partnerships, and thematic initiatives.
- **Government Institutions** are essential for enabling systemic change. While formal cooperation with national ministries has not yet been secured, Bratislava seeks to engage key institutions where common goals can support progress—such as analytical units at relevant ministries, the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency, and the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute. These bodies can provide data, technical guidance, and policy alignment at the national level.
- **The Business Sector** is a growing partner in climate action. Bratislava is onboarding private companies through the Bratislava Mayor's Climate Challenge, a voluntary initiative that encourages emissions reductions and energy efficiency. Developers are also involved through voluntary urban planning standards and pilot projects focused on creating low-carbon neighbourhoods.



- **The Energy Sector** is critical to decarbonisation, especially in electricity and heating. Bratislava is working with the main electricity provider, ZSE, to improve permitting processes for photovoltaics and grid integration. In parallel, the city is coordinating with district heating operators to revise the local heating plan and support the transition away from fossil fuels.
- **Civil Society and Communities** are central to Bratislava's climate transition. The city will build on established participatory practices to further engage citizens, especially children and youth, through co-creation workshops, community dialogues, and thematic events that integrate environmental, planning, and social perspectives, alongside innovative communication activities to raise awareness and foster active participation.

To formalise this engagement and strengthen governance, Bratislava has created two new stakeholder bodies:

- **The Climate Advisory Committee**, a small, expert-driven group providing technical guidance and strategic direction, with flexibility to involve additional stakeholders as needed.
- **The Climate Leaders Forum**, a broader participatory platform designed to gather diverse perspectives, foster collaboration, and ensure the inclusivity of climate implementation efforts.

Together, these mechanisms reflect Bratislava's commitment to an inclusive, structured, and expert-led climate governance model. By growing and sustaining this network of partners, Bratislava aims to build a whole-of-society coalition for climate neutrality—anchored in shared responsibility, trust, and long-term cooperation.

### Monitoring and Updating the Climate City Contract

The Climate Office, established within the Urban Strategies and Analysis Unit in 2023, will be responsible for the strategic coordination and regular monitoring of the CCC. This includes:

- **Regular Reporting:** At least once every two years, a report will be submitted to the Bratislava City Council ensuring transparency and accountability in the political process.
- **Data Collection and Evaluation:** The Climate Office will focus on collecting detailed data on energy consumption and emissions to monitor the impact of implemented measures accurately. Quality data is essential for effective monitoring and to document successes and share best practices.
- **Learning:** Regular stock-taking and strategy adaptation based on new learnings and stakeholder/citizen feedback.

### Guiding Principles

The implementation of the Climate City Contract will be guided by the following key principles:

- **Climate Justice:** Ensuring that climate actions do not deepen existing inequalities but rather create opportunities for comprehensive solutions to related social issues, focusing on data collection and monitoring.
- **Co-Creation, Learning and Flexibility:** Engaging citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of climate measures to ensure that the solutions are inclusive and widely supported. Ensuring that the process is iterative and flexibly reflects lessons learned and new developments.



- **Multi-Level Governance:** Striving to coordinate efforts across different levels of government and sectors to align policies and maximise the impact of climate actions.
- **Stakeholder and Citizen Engagement:** Continuously involving the community in the climate action process to effectively reflect their needs and priorities. This includes organising regular meetings, feedback sessions, and collaborative projects with various stakeholders.

By adhering to these principles and processes, Bratislava aims to mainstream climate action and climate targets into all aspects of city governance, communications, and participation processes.



## 5 Signatories

The table below enlists the signatories<sup>1</sup> who are committing to this CCC, and thereby to help the city achieve its goal to reach climate neutrality by 2030.

Name of the signatory (organisation)	Sector / Domain / Level of operation <sup>2</sup>	Legal form	Name of the responsible person	Position of the responsible person
City of Bratislava	Municipality	City	Matúš Vallo	Mayor
Odvoz a likvidácia odpadu	Municipal Waste Company	Akciová spoločnosť (joint-stock company)	Ivan Sokáč	CEO & Chairman of the Board
Bratislavská vodárenská spoločnosť	Municipal Water Company	Akciová spoločnosť (joint-stock company)	Ladislav Kizák	CEO & Chairman of the Board
Technické siete Bratislava	Municipal Public Lighting and Networks Company	Akciová spoločnosť (joint-stock company)	Juraj Nyulassy	CEO & Chairman of the Board

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<sup>1</sup> Climate City Contract signatories may be individuals or organisations. They ideally include national and/or regional governments, for example concrete agreements/ commitments made through the multi-level governance engagement processes supported by NetZeroCities, CapaCities, and other emerging national level initiatives.

<sup>2</sup> Please mention if the organisation is active at local, regional, national, or international level.