

Group Study Visit in Pécs, Hungary Climate Governance, Circular Economy and Urban Decarbonisation

With a population of 140,000 inhabitants, Pécs has been committed to climate policy for almost a decade, building a structured and institutionalised approach to climate action that supports long-term delivery beyond individual projects or political cycles. Through the implementation of its Sustainable Energy Action Plan, the city achieved a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 2011, demonstrating early progress through coordinated municipal action. Currently, transport represents the largest share of emissions (35%), followed by electricity (32%) and heating of buildings (25%).

Key Climate Actions to discover

Municipal climate governance and organisational systems: Pécs has established an institutionalised municipal climate governance system that embeds climate policy into its formal organisational and operational regulations. The Climate Protection Steering Committee, Climate Platform, and Mayor's Climate Advisory Group provide legal and operational continuity, ensuring climate action remains effective beyond political cycles.

Circular economy and waste reduction through citizen engagement: A local initiative that focuses on promoting the removal of single-use plastic bags at the Pécs Market Hall. The aim is to **reduce plastic waste**, increase the **use of reusable packaging**, and encourage environmentally **conscious behaviour among consumers and vendors**. Through conscious communication, practical alternatives, and incentive programmes, this initiative combines waste reduction with awareness raising and active community involvement.

Building sector decarbonisation: Urban heating and cooling decarbonisation requires a step-by-step, building-specific approach, where **coordination of renewable heat production and building-side energy efficiency** ensures sustainable savings. Examples include the PÉTÁV model house on Páfrány Street and the LEGOFIT project, enabling the measurement and comparison of savings through complex energy modernisation of a municipal residential building wing. Energy modelling under the MODENT project shows that different building types have distinct optimal decarbonisation paths and that sustainable cooling requires integrated heating and cooling management.

Mobility Smart Data Collection and Monitoring: Under the ZERO MOVE project, Smart Sensors will be deployed in the city to enhance urban mobility, reduce emissions, and improve quality of life. Real-time data on traffic patterns, environmental conditions, and urban freight movements will support informed decision-making and sustainable planning, helping identify peak congestion times and areas requiring intervention.

Learn from these enabling factors

- **Governance and policy** - The city's climate organisation system provides a strong governance and policy lever, ensuring long-term continuity, strategic coordination, and integration of climate objectives into everyday municipal operations.
- **Social innovation and citizen engagement** - Initiatives such as the plastic bag reduction campaign at the Market Hall rely on citizen engagement, awareness raising, and behavioural change.

Learn about the collaboration with local stakeholders

- **Mayor of Pécs** – Attila Péterffy
- **Municipal companies and local market actors:** Tüke Busz Zrt, Urban Development Company of Pécs, PÉTÁV Pécsi Távfűtő Kft. – District heating provider
- **Non-governmental organisations** – Civil society groups supporting the implementation of the city's Citizen Engagement Strategy and community involvement.