

Foreword/InCITIES Welcoming from the Lead Partner

Dear InCITIES community,

We are excited to announce the release of the **third and final issue** of the Newsletter of the InCITIES Horizon Europe funded project. We are pleased to present a fresh look into the latest activities and milestones from the InCITIES project. As we approach the final stages of this dynamic Horizon Europe initiative, we continue to highlight the innovative work of our consortium partners and the impact of our joint efforts across Europe.

Over the past months, InCITIES partners have been active on multiple fronts. From *ISTAR-Iscte's participation at the 2024 Portugal International Smart Cities Summit* to the inspiring two-day *Winter School on Digital Transformation at UNIZA*, we have seen remarkable examples of research, collaboration, and creativity in action. The Blended Intensive Programme "Cities Futures – Interdisciplinary Challenges" brought together students and faculty from four countries, culminating in a hackathon on sustainable urban development. At *Université Gustave Eiffel*, a *high-level policy event* gathered stakeholders to discuss how universities can drive local innovation through collaborative research agendas. Meanwhile, *the Scientific Café series* continued to provide an informal, engaging space for researchers to share knowledge on topics such as energy innovation, urban resilience, and health inclusion. We also celebrate two major recognitions: ISCTE became the first Portuguese university institute to earn *the HR Excellence in Research award*, and *the University of Žilina* followed shortly after, both affirming their commitment to ethical recruitment and researcher development. ISCTE released the online InCITIES Observatory showing indicators of Inclusion, Sustainability and Resilience of InCITIES involved cities.

The final InCITIES consortium meeting in April 2025 at UNIZA reflected on these achievements and mapped out next steps under the PIONEER+ Alliance of ten European Universities. In this sense, the 28th of May 2025 the InCITIES consortium

organised an InCITIES-PIONEER knowledge transfer webinar, that generated valuable dialogue, ensuring the continuity and relevance of InCITIES outcomes.

With strong momentum and shared vision, we look forward to continuing our efforts toward inclusive, sustainable, and resilient cities across Europe.

Catarina Ferreira da Silva, ISCTE

For further information, visit InCITIES website and social media:

Website <https://incities.eu/>



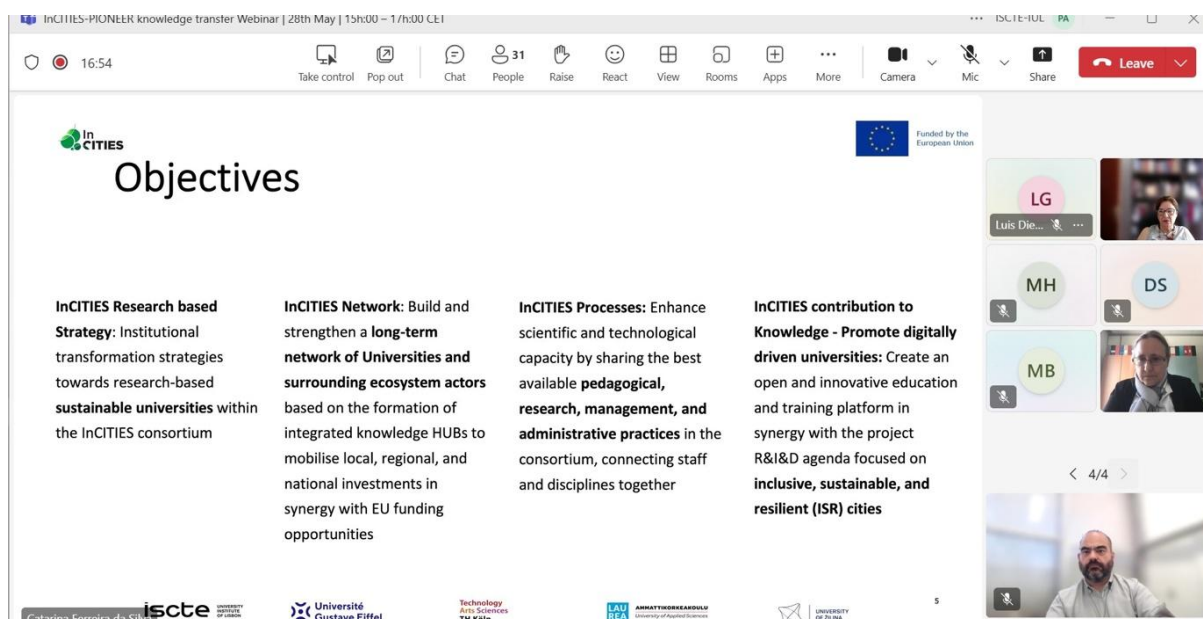
https://x.com/_InCITIES



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/incities-project/>

Core activities between September 2024 and September 2025

InCITIES-PIONEER knowledge transfer webinar



Objectives

InCITIES Research based Strategy: Institutional transformation strategies towards research-based sustainable universities within the InCITIES consortium

InCITIES Network: Build and strengthen a long-term network of Universities and surrounding ecosystem actors based on the formation of integrated knowledge HUBs to mobilise local, regional, and national investments in synergy with EU funding opportunities

InCITIES Processes: Enhance scientific and technological capacity by sharing the best available pedagogical, research, management, and administrative practices in the consortium, connecting staff and disciplines together

InCITIES contribution to Knowledge - Promote digitally driven universities: Create an open and innovative education and training platform in synergy with the project R&I&D agenda focused on inclusive, sustainable, and resilient (ISR) cities

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Figure 1: InCITIES-PIONEER knowledge transfer webinar

The InCITIES has been developed as a preparation to apply to European Universities Initiative, as so, the InCITIES project has worked as an incubator for the PIONEER Alliance. In this context, the 28th of May 2025 InCITIES consortium organised an InCITIES-PIONEER knowledge transfer webinar, where InCITIES activities, methods and results were presented to both InCITIES and PIONEER+ communities. This webinar sessions focused on Education & Ecosystem, Research, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). This event gathered 35 participants from both the InCITIES and PIONEER+ communities and resulted on fruitful exchanges, supporting the sustainability of the InCITIES results.

InCITIES final consortium meeting: a vision for the future

The final consortium meeting of the InCITIES project took place at the University of Žilina on 8–9 April 2025, gathering partners from across Europe to reflect on key achievements and discuss future collaboration within the PIONEER+ alliance. The event served as both a celebration of progress and a strategic platform for shaping the next phase of inclusive, sustainable, and resilient (ISR) urban development.



Figure 2: Final consortium in-person meeting

Kicking off with a welcome by Rector Ján Čelko and Vice-Rector Jozef Ristvej, the meeting featured sessions focused on sustaining InCITIES outcomes and integrating them into long-term educational and research strategies. Presentations from all work packages highlighted interdisciplinary efforts in areas such as transformative education, inclusive urban mobility, and stakeholder co-creation.

Key highlights included the success of BIP pilot courses under the Work Package *Capacity building Actions on Learning by Developing Pedagogical Model in ISR Cities* of the InCITIES project, which showcased the effectiveness of the Learning by Developing model, and productive discussions on institutionalising InCITIES results. Informal networking and a celebratory dinner helped reinforce the strong bonds built throughout the project.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to advancing the InCITIES vision through PIONEER+, marking a confident step toward deeper collaboration and long-term impact.

Scientific Café Series summary

Over the course of several engaging online events, the *InCITIES* initiative hosted a series of Scientific Cafés – informal but content-rich sessions designed to foster interdisciplinary dialogue across key urban challenges. Each café brought together researchers from partner institutions within the *PIONEER Alliance*, focusing on themes such as energy, urban transitions, vulnerability and inclusion, mobility, and sustainable cities.

Scientific Café no.7: Vulnerability, Inclusion, and Health (Oct 28, 2024)

Three thought-provoking presentations examined urban risks and inequalities:

- **Nuno Nunes (ISCTE)** explored air quality monitoring in Lisbon.
- **Mária Lusková (UNIZA)** presented methods for assessing societal vulnerability from transport failures.
- **Michel Behr (UNI-EIFFEL)** discussed potential injuries related to new mobility systems.

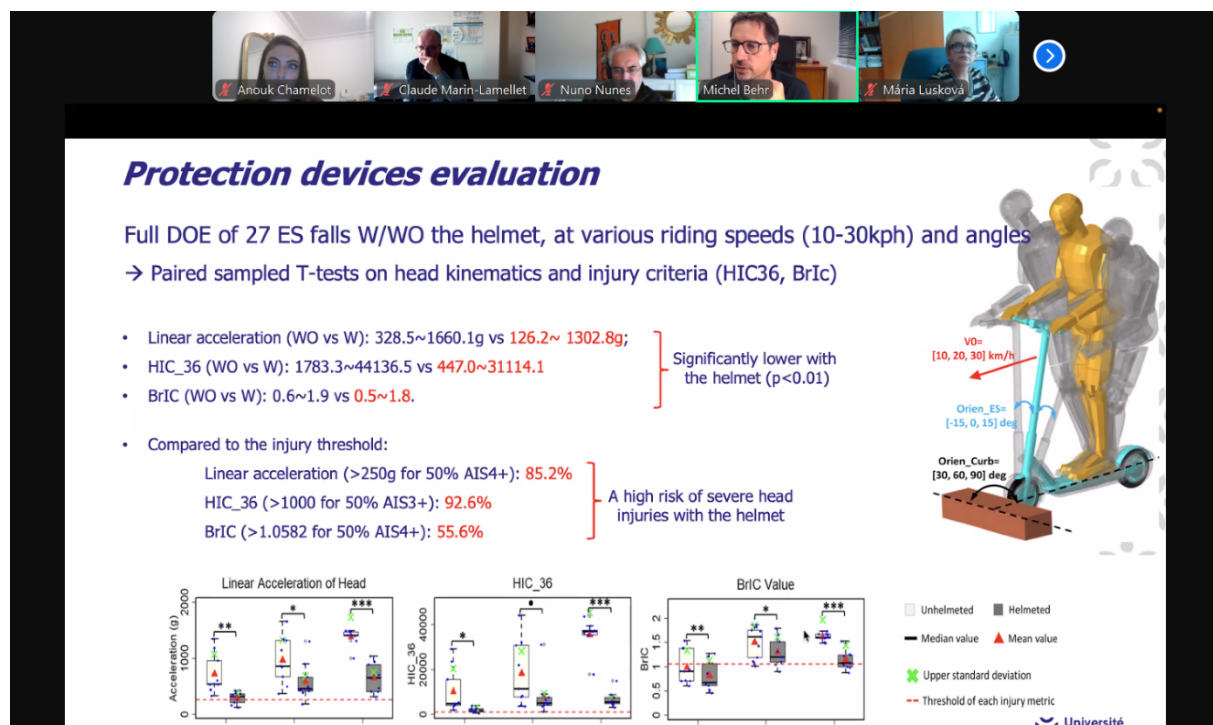


Figure 3: Scientific Café no.7

Scientific Café no.8: WP2 Energy Café (Nov 28, 2024)



Figure 4: Scientific Café no.8

This session focused on energy innovation and sustainability:

- **Nuno Bento (ISCTE)** addressed energy security through demand-side policies.
- **Elyes Nefzaoui (UNI EIFFEL)** covered sensor networks for urban energy management.
- **Johanna May (TH Köln)** highlighted design strategies for fully reusable and recyclable building energy systems.

Scientific Café no.9: Final Café: Cross-Topic Exchange (June 27, 2025)

The ninth and final session celebrated cross-disciplinary collaboration:

- Topics ranged from travel behavior research and digital city simulation to energy performance design and electrical grid resilience.
- Presenters included scholars from ISCTE, UNIZA, TH Köln, and Université Gustave Eiffel.



Figure 5: Scientific Café no.9

European Universities driving local and global innovation

On December 4, 2024, Université Gustave Eiffel hosted a high-level InCITIES event in Brussels, bringing together European policymakers, university alliances, and local stakeholders to discuss how universities can strengthen local collaborations and co-develop impactful research agendas.



Figure 6: Université Gustave Eiffel's high-level InCITIES event

Organised under the leadership of ISCTE as part of the InCITIES project, the event focused on integrating research and education with local needs to address urban challenges. Sessions explored university-local ecosystem synergies and presented research roadmaps, including that of InCITIES. With contributions from the European Commission, PIONEER Alliance, and Ulysseus University, the gathering highlighted universities' pivotal role in fostering sustainable and inclusive cities across Europe.

UNIZA Winter School completed with a 2-day onsite event



Figure 7: UNIZA winter school

On December 10–11, the InCITIES UNIZA Digital Transition HUB held a two-day training event at the University of Žilina (UNIZA) focused on Digital Transformation for Inclusive, Sustainable, and Resilient Cities. The event opened with remarks from Prof. Tatiana Kováčiková, who introduced the InCITIES project and the PIONEER Alliance.

Three student teams showcased their innovative projects, including:

- Data analysis and forecasting for public transport,
- A sensor network for traffic monitoring in Žilina,
- An intelligent network architecture for academic and management systems.

Their presentations received valuable feedback from industry experts, stakeholders, and UNIZA faculty.

In the second part of the event, students participated in co-creation activities aimed at applying their digital solutions to real-world urban challenges, including a simulated resilience scenario in Žilina.

Special thanks go to all students, faculty, and partners from iTransys, IS – Industry Solutions, and IoMobility Solutions for their contributions to this successful and forward-looking initiative.

InCITIES BIP Cities Futures – Interdisciplinary Challenges at ISCTE



Figure 8: International team at ISCTE (BIP) Cities Futures – Interdisciplinary Challenges

As part of the European InCITIES project, ISCTE launched a pilot Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) titled *Cities Futures – Interdisciplinary Challenges*, led by Associate Professor Catarina Ferreira da Silva. Running from October 30, 2024, to January 24, 2025, the programme brought together students and academics from the University Gustave Eiffel, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, the University of Žilina (UNIZA), and the Slovak University of Technology. The in-person phase began on January 20, 2025, with a welcome ceremony hosted by Professor Maria das Dores Guerreiro, ISCTE's Vice-Rector for Internationalisation, at the university's Knowledge and Innovation Centre. The Lisbon-based week featured a dynamic programme of workshops, site visits, roundtables, and a tour of the Audax_ISCTE entrepreneurship centre.

Key highlights included two roundtables addressing Inclusive Social Design and Future Cities Thinking. Speakers such as Professor Luís Coelho (E³UDRES² Ent-r-e-novators), researcher André Samora-Arvela (ISCTE), and representatives from Inovar Autismo and the Lisbon Town Council offered insights on open science, active aging, and urban innovation. The programme culminated in the *Hackathon Future Cities from*

Vivid Reality: Inclusive and Sustainable Challenges in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, where students presented solutions to real-world urban challenges to a jury of professors and InCITIES associated partners. Opened by Professor Helena Carreiras, ISCTE's Vice-Rector for the PIONEER Alliance, the event concluded with awards sponsored by CP Comboios de Portugal, underlining the vital role of cross-sector collaboration in shaping inclusive and sustainable urban futures.



Figure 9: ISCTE's Vice-rector for the PIONEER Alliance, Professor Helena Carreiras, and Catarina Ferreira da Silva, Associate Professor with Habilitation

ISCTE Human Resources Excellence in Research Award

ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon has become the first Portuguese university to receive the prestigious HR Excellence in Research Award, granted by the European Commission. This recognition highlights ISCTE's commitment to implementing high standards in the recruitment and management of researchers in line with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Among over 50 Portuguese institutions that have endorsed these principles, only twelve currently hold the certification, with ISCTE being the sole university.

The award reflects ISCTE's strategic efforts within the InCITIES project and its alignment with the PIONEER Alliance, a European consortium of ten universities. It affirms ISCTE's leadership in fostering ethical recruitment, researcher development, and institutional innovation. According to Vice-Rector Jorge Costa, this recognition

underscores ISCTE's view of higher education as a key component of national scientific advancement. The award not only elevates ISCTE's international profile but also promotes integration into global research networks and supports a dynamic and supportive environment for its researchers.



Figure 10: ISCTE is honored with the distinguished HR Excellence in Research award

The University of Žilina's prestigious HR Excellence in Research Award

The University of Žilina (UNIZA) has been awarded the HR Excellence in Research distinction by the European Commission, recognizing its commitment to high-quality, ethical, and transparent research practices under the HRS4R framework.

This milestone, led by Prof. Tatiana Kováčiková, Ing. Veronika Kunová, and colleagues across UNIZA, supports Work Package *Talent Scout and Career Opportunities Strategy* of the InCITIES project, which focuses on strengthening research careers and promoting Open Science.

The award affirms UNIZA's dedication to research integrity, talent development, and international collaboration, reinforcing its role in building inclusive and sustainable academic ecosystems across Europe.



Figure 11: University of Žilina receives prestigious HR Excellence in Research award

InCITIES Observatory shows indicators of Inclusion, Sustainability and Resilience of cities

The InCITIES Observatory, developed under the InCITIES project, automatically collects and aggregates indicators to assess Inclusion, Sustainability, and Resilience of cities of InCITIES.

The process began with a literature review to identify key indicators for evaluating city progress in these three domains. Based on these findings, and within the scope of a Master's dissertation of the ISCTE's Data Science programme, a web application was designed and implemented to visualise and analyse aggregated indicators for Inclusion, Sustainability, and Resilience of cities.

Eurostat data relevant to these domains were selected, aggregated, and integrated into the application through automated retrieval. Priority is given to local data at the NUTS3 level to ensure sufficient granularity for accurate city-level comparisons and performance assessments. Indicators were chosen with historical data available since

2014, enabling the Observatory to provide insights into the evolution of urban inclusion, sustainability, and resilience.

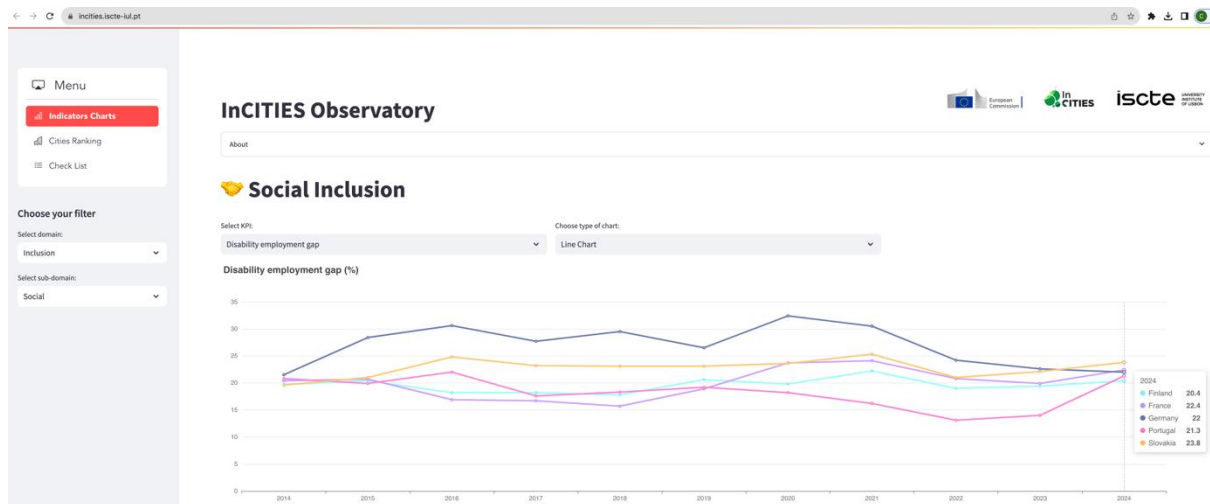


Figure 12: The InCITIES Observatory website enables to compare InCITIES cities on various indicators of Inclusion, Sustainability, and Resilience

Future data releases from Eurostat will continue to feed the platform, ensuring ongoing updates. The InCITIES Observatory web application offers two core features: indicator charts and city rankings. These tools provide urban planners, policymakers, and researchers with a robust resource for benchmarking and promoting best practices in urban development. This work was developed by Beatriz Santos and supervised by Associate Professors Catarina Ferreira da Silva and Assist. Professor Carmo Botelho (ISCTE). More info at <https://incities.iscte-iul.pt/>

Roundtable on Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Cities

The 4th of June 2025, ISCTE has organised the roundtable on Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Cities at the Portugal International Smart Cities Summit 2025. The session united renowned professionals to share insights on advancing urban development through sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity.

The roundtable, chaired by Catarina Ferreira da Silva, Associate Professor with Habilitation at ISCTE, had the participation of Leão Mendes, Head of Quality, Environment, and Safety at CP – Comboios de Portugal (InCITIES Associated Partner); António Sérgio Pinheiro, Director of Studies and Planning at Transportes Metropolitanos de Lisboa (TML, member of the AML – Lisbon Metropolitan Area,

InCITIES Associated Partner); Rita Januário, Innovation Director at the company TUU; and João Guerreiro, Associate Professor with Habilitation at ISCTE.



Figure 13: Roundtable panellists on Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Cities at the Portugal International Smart Cities Summit 2025

The roundtable emphasised the importance of integrated transport systems, technological innovation, and collaborative planning in shaping smart cities capable of addressing today's and future social and environmental challenges.

InCITIES at the 2024 PORTUGAL SMART CITIES SUMMIT

ISTAR-Iscte once again took part in Portugal's largest international event dedicated to smart cities, held at FIL – Feira Internacional de Lisboa from 8 to 10 October 2024. Representing Iscte – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, the team contributed to important discussions on urban innovation and policy development for smarter, more sustainable cities.

During the event, Catarina Ferreira da Silva presented key outcomes of the InCITIES project, funded by the EU's Horizon Europe programme and coordinated in partnership with Vice-Rector Maria das Dores Guerreiro. Additionally, Duarte Almeida showcased his ongoing PhD research on Tourism Carrying Capacity, a project

supervised by Fernando Brito e Abreu and linked to the Resetting project, supported by the EU COSME programme.



Figure 14: InCITIES presence in the 2024 Portugal Smart Cities Summit

The event provided a valuable platform for sharing research, fostering dialogue, and highlighting ISCTE's active role in shaping future-ready urban environments.

**Thank you for being part of our community over the past
three years!**

**We look forward to staying connected and hope our paths
will cross again soon.**