

URP2020 Keynote Speaker: Short Biography

Maria Vassilakou



URP2020 Keynote Topic:

"Climate neutrality: Bridging the gap between political vision and practical reality"

Maria Vassilakou was born in Greece and migrated to Austria as a student in the mid-80s. She studied Linguistics and Psychology at the University of Vienna (Magister degree, 1994) and acquired 2019 an M.Sc. degree from the London School of Economics (LSE Cities Programme).

From November 2010 until July 2019 Maria Vassilakou served as Deputy Mayor of Vienna and Executive City Councillor for Urban Planning, Traffic & Transport, Climate Protection, Energy and Public Participation. Maria Vassilakou has been Austria's first Executive City Councilor with a migration background. She envisages Vienna as an open, modern, affordable, family friendly and diverse city. In her nine years serving as Deputy Mayor, she was responsible for a vast transformation agenda comprising numerous innovative projects.

Maria Vassilakou is currently providing her experience and know-how from leading Vienna, the world's most livable city (e.g. Mercer Ranking 2010–2019), working as an independent adviser with cities, NGO's and multilateral organizations worldwide to develop smart solutions for livable cities and a sustainable global urban future. In July 2019, Maria Vassilakou was appointed as member of the EU Mission Board for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities supporting the Horizon Europe, the next EU research and innovation programme (2021–2027).

All recordings of the URP2020 keynote speakers can be found at: www.urp2020.eu