

Press Release

Festival of the New European Bauhaus: Rethinking neighbourhoods and accelerating the clean transition can address lack of affordable housing

Participants at the Festival of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) in Brussels 9-13 June heard how the NEB is providing a tangible response to many pressing concerns in Europe and beyond - from improving access to affordable housing and strengthening democratic engagement, to building resilient communities and scaling up innovation to deliver the clean, circular transition.

Citizens, designers, architects, decision-makers, engineers and other experts came together over five days to discuss how the NEB movement is working to address the issues that matter most to people in Europe today:

Affordable housing

Discussions stressed that the lack of [affordable housing](#) in Europe is a crucial issue for citizens. It is, as European Council President António Costa told audiences, at the core of what is [driving disillusionment and damaging trust in democratic institutions](#).

NEB projects are working to address this concern by developing sustainable and inclusive solutions for homes and communities.

Crucially, these solutions are being found by [working with and for people](#), a fundamental feature of the growing NEB movement, as European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen highlighted at the Festival opening ceremony.



Resilience and democratic participation

Participants heard about the importance of citizen participation in rebuilding trust in public institutions and strengthening communities. These more resilient communities in turn help bolster our democracies, President von der Leyen told the Festival. This was illustrated by speakers from Ukraine who showcased how NEB's community-led approach is helping to reinforce resilience in the war-torn country - by bringing change, innovation and, above all, a greater sense of belonging.

Driving the clean transition for the built environment

Panellists discussed how [renovating heritage spaces](#), reusing vacant buildings and repurposing offices, involving architects, designers, citizens and the cultural sector early in such projects, can lead to neighbourhoods people are proud to live in, while at the same time creating redevelopments with less embodied carbon than new buildings.



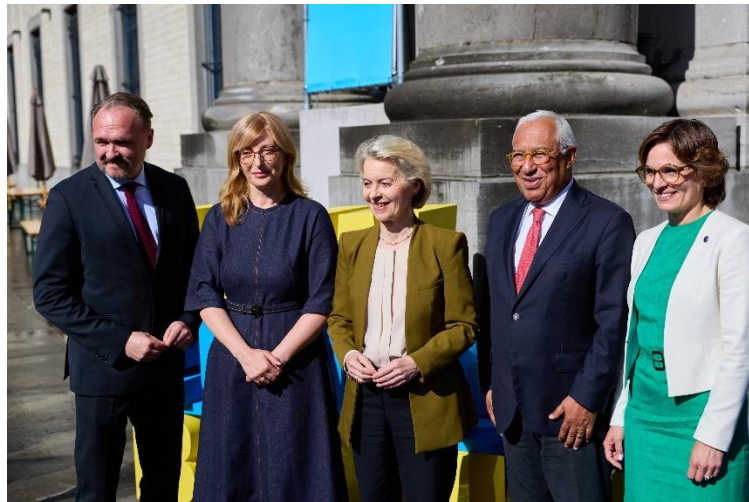
Innovation, investment and global reach

Speakers at the Festival explored how [private funding](#), entrepreneurship, and innovation can scale up sustainable, community-driven solutions and create new markets. This is also being supported by the NEB Academy, a decentralised initiative launched in 2024 dedicated to scaling up knowledge on inclusive regeneration developed through NEB projects. The Academy extends the NEB beyond the EU through a hub in Ukraine and stakeholders exploring hubs in Japan and Brazil. The European Commission [announced](#) an additional €50 million to the NEB Academy over the next two years at the Festival.

Harnessing the power of circularity

[Jessika Roswall](#), European Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy closed the Festival discussions by describing the huge potential of circularity – just 1% of demolition materials are reused – and how the NEB shows that inclusivity, beauty and sustainability are not competing ideas but reinforce

one another. She said that low carbon homes not only reduce costs for the families that live in them and the burden on public services but also improve wellbeing.



NEB Trophy Competition

The winner of the NEB Trophy 2026 - Design Competition was announced by Commissioner Roswall at the Festival on 12 June.

Luca Ambrosi, from the Academy of Fine Arts in Carrara, Italy, won the Festival vote for his design [Aurora](#) which is made up of rising, intertwined acrylic sheets in the NEB colours - green for sustainability, blue for beauty and yellow for inclusion and democratic participation. Inspired by the Northern Lights, the design's upwards form symbolises hope, renewal and movement towards a better future.

The competition gave design students the challenge of creating the first ever physical NEB trophy for the next edition of the [NEB Prizes](#), which recognise creativity, talent and innovative ideas for the benefit of local communities and society. The next award ceremony will take place in October. Executive Vice-President Raffaele Fitto launched the countdown to the event by announcing that the [public voting for projects is now open](#).



About the New European Bauhaus

The New European Bauhaus was [launched](#) by the European Commission in 2020 as a way of making sustainable, inclusive and beautiful living a reality.

Today, it is a growing movement of communities and creators with more than 2 000 members across Europe and beyond working through community-led projects to develop and test new ideas and solutions.

Almost €1.4 billion has been allocated to NEB projects from 2021-2027, with the majority of funding coming from cohesion policy and the Horizon Europe programme.