

UK-Swiss Decarbonising Cities Conference a success

World news story

Cities play a central role on decarbonisation and the energy transition. In the lead-up to COP26, we brought together thought leaders in decarbonisation.



It is with great pleasure that we look back on the Decarbonising Cities Conference, which we organised in collaboration with Swisspower. More than 300 people from science, innovation and business joined us in person and online to discuss how we can decarbonise our cities and make them more climate friendly.

Our speakers gave insight into topics in the run up to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), which the UK will host in October-November. Scientists and leaders discussed the impacts of climate change and cooperation between the public and private sectors. In addition, 14 clean tech start-ups from Switzerland and the UK presented their ideas and sustainable solutions for our cities.

David Moran, the COP26 Regional Ambassador for Europe, highlighted that to make COP26 in Glasgow a success, we need commitment to reduce emissions by a significant amount and a long-term strategy, and how states are going to get to a net-zero balance of carbon emissions by 2050. Furthermore, we need the ambition to keep the global temperature under control. Finally, we need to deliver and act now in terms of energy transition, moving to electric vehicles, moving out of coal and much more.

Thomas Stocker, President of the Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research and Professor of Climate and Environmental Physics at the University of Bern spoke about responsibility for the global heating that we are experiencing now, and the importance of cities leading the way in adopting net zero policies. Weather extremes as we have experienced this summer, Stocker highlights, will increase in intensity and frequency in the future. One way in which we can achieve our climate goals in cities was presented by Kristen Panerali from the WEF. She points out that clean electrification

should be the top priority for any city decarbonisation strategy, which requires a dramatic system change. Massive clean electrification and efficiency could help reduce global energy demand at the same time it serves a larger economy and population of the future.

Numerous personal climate goals, which the participants posted on a wall at the conference, rounded off the event and gave each individual cause to continue to think about climate goals and to shape the path towards a sustainable future for our cities.

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