

Group Study Visit in Krakow, Poland

Citizen-Led Climate Action, Urban Renovation and Clean Energy Solutions

With around 800,000 residents, Kraków is one of Poland's EU Mission Cities and a partner in the NEEST pilot project developing practical tools to reduce emissions from buildings. In 2021, the city convened its first Climate Assembly, which strengthened public awareness and community involvement in the transition, and produced 32 recommendations on energy efficiency and renewable energy that were formally adopted as binding commitments for the Mayor and integrated into city policy.

Key Climate Actions to discover

Thermal waste treatment and energy recovery: In Kraków, residual municipal waste is thermally treated to produce heat and electricity, with integrated systems for waste handling, flue gas cleaning, energy recovery, and safe management of post-incineration materials.

Citizen engagement and climate education: The Krakow Climate Education Centre, created following the city's Climate Assembly, serves as a shared space for organisations and institutions to promote climate knowledge. Its activities focus especially on young people, strengthening environmental awareness, critical thinking, and community involvement.

Urban renovation and nature-based solutions: Kraków is combining green infrastructure, building retrofitting, and people-centred urban design. Examples include the revitalised Zakrzówek Reservoir, Wisława Szymborska Park and the redesigned Krupnicza Street, the renatured Polish Aviators Park, and transition projects in the Nowa Huta district linked to the NEEST project.

Learn from these enabling factors

- **Governance and policy coordination** – Strategic steering of climate-related investments through the Projects Portfolio Council “Zero-emission Krakow,” aligning municipal projects with long-term transition goals.
- **Technological innovation and urban infrastructure** – Deploying solutions such as the Thermal Waste Treatment Plant and area-based renovation approaches under the NEEST initiative, combining technical upgrades with social regeneration.
- **Democracy and participation** – Engaging residents and stakeholders through structured dialogue processes and initiatives like the Krakow Climate Pact to build broad support for urban transition measures.

Learn about the collaboration with local stakeholders

- **Kraków City authorities** – Municipal departments responsible for strategic planning and implementation of city-wide transition projects.
- **Municipal companies** – Public service providers involved in energy, waste, housing, and infrastructure actions supporting low-emission urban development.
- **Civil society and dialogue bodies** – Krakow Public Benefit Activity Council, civil dialogue committees, and NGOs contributing to civic participation and community outreach.
- **National Centre for Research and Development** – National innovation agency and NEEST consortium partner supporting research-driven urban solutions.
- **Academic and expert community** – Researchers and specialists providing technical expertise in building renovation, energy systems, and sustainable urban design.
- **Climate Transition Team** – Cross-departmental team coordinating local climate transition actions and stakeholder cooperation.