

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**WASTED SQUARE METERS IN CITIES:**  
**Increasing the use of buildings in time & space**

**When:** Thursday 22 June 2023

**Where:** STAM Europa, rue d'Arlon 104, Brussels, Belgium

**What:** In a context of scarce urban land and the fight against climate change and the artificialization of land, **many urban spaces remain paradoxically underused**. In addition, for many years, cities have been built with **monofunctional buildings**. If the way of conceiving the city has evolved, we are still consuming far too many resources including **land and building materials**. According to the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON), land take exceeded the population growth during the 2000 – 2018 period<sup>1</sup>. "Even areas experiencing depopulation usually still show increases in artificial surfaces." Our cities need to go through a **resource diet**. And the **use of space in cities** is one of the sectors that must radically change. On average, the use rate for a school is around 20%, when an office building is used around 30% of its time across a year<sup>2</sup>.



This topic poses the question of **how we use and share our resources** (in this case, the space in cities) to meet the basic needs of all. The problem is not so much about the availability of space and buildings, but how these resources are shared among a territory.

Come to Brussels to learn, get inspired and exchange with municipalities and organizations active in exploring alternatives to urban sprawl.

This one-day workshop will focus particularly on:

- Pooling of public equipment (schools, libraries, etc.) and private offices
- Reactivating vacant spaces and buildings through transitional urbanism for example
- Strategies to assess the use intensity and map vacant spaces

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<sup>1</sup> ESPON, 2020, policy brief, reuse of spaces and buildings

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2023/01/11/urbanisme-en-ville-les-benefices-d-un-usage-intense-des-batiments-sont-nombreux\\_6157385\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2023/01/11/urbanisme-en-ville-les-benefices-d-un-usage-intense-des-batiments-sont-nombreux_6157385_3232.html)

## **DRAFT AGENDA**

- **8:30 – 9:00: Welcome & Icebreaker**
- **9:00 – 9:30: Setting the scene** – presentation of the policy brief “reuse of spaces and buildings” by **Marjan van Herwijne** from the **European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion**
- **9:30 – 10:30: Inspirational speech: circular urbanism, what are we talking about?** by **Sylvain Grisot**, Urban Planner, Founder of dixit.net, author of the “Manifesto for **Circular Urbanism**” + Q&A

### **10:30 – 10:45: BREAK**

- **10:45 – 12:30 Deep dive on various examples** from Brussels & around (world café) – 1<sup>st</sup> round (participants will have the possibility to choose and explore two examples during 45min each)
  - o Tools to optimize the use of existing buildings in cities: the case of **one-stop-shop for vacant spaces in Brussels** (CityDev)
  - o Zzz zwischenzeitzentrale temporary use agency, **Bremen**
  - o The experience of the **city of Ghent** with **temporary use** with the REFILL Urbact project

### **LUNCH BREAK (12:15 – 13:30)**

- **13:30 – 15:00: Deep dive on various examples** from Brussels & around (world café) – 2<sup>nd</sup> round (participants will have the possibility to choose and explore two examples during 45min each)
  - o Action coeur de ville” to fight the **urban retail vacancy** in the city of **Arras**
  - o Soft densification through the **BIMBY** (Build in My Back Yard) strategy, **SCOT Vosges Centrales**
  - o “**Soft requisition and housing sensors**”: the **Charleroi** strategy to reactive privately-owned housing units and make them accessible to low-income households
- **15:00 – 15:30-45: Closing & final remarks** by Federico Savini – **degrowth of cities**: why is it necessary and where to start? - tbc