

KAUNAS DECLARATION ON BUILDING PERMITS

WHY THE DECLARATION

This declaration is aiming to significantly enhance the efficiency of EU municipalities, creating an initial consensus towards standards, in terms of processes, access to TechStack, technical interoperability and safety, social inclusion, fairness and training. This consensus is crucial for streamlining digital permitting and meeting the demand for faster approvals. Accelerated permitting processes are crucial to meet the growing demand for sustainable and affordable housing in Europe. Implementing GovStack can streamline digital permitting, reducing delays and improving efficiency for municipalities. We do want to foster common digital permitting principles to align municipal practices across the EU. Front-runners demonstrate that digitized, transparent building permitting reduces administrative burden and increases trust.

TO WHOM

It's our purpose to send a clear message to policy makers, small and big city managers, permit authorities, authorized technical and environmental approval and certification bodies, developers, national digital transformation offices, public procurement bodies, and EU institutions supporting the Digital Europe Programme.

IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS IN EU

There is an increasing demand on sustainable and affordable housing in Europe. It affects the dynamics of new houses for young people, the EC Renovation Wave, and new smart cities transformation. Efficient building permitting allows more renovations of old buildings, reducing or facilitating bureaucracy problems. In some parts of EU,

increasing demand of housing stock requires to speed up permit processes. They may require improved transparency and efficiency in local and regional administrations, and there is a financial implication from Banks as they have more clear legal support.

URBAN PLANNING, GIS AND BIM, A SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY?

New technologies are opening new opportunities: GIS for urban and rural planning, BIM for all lifecycle phases of buildings, advanced and augmented visualisation technologies (AR, MR, i.e.), improved communication for participatory processes.

NETWORKS AND 3D, NEW CHALLENGES

We are facing new challenges of mobility, district heating and new electrical networks, with more requirements of sustainability and management of public spaces. There are many infrastructure affections and there's a need for for public information. At the same time, we must comply with a private and ethical management of that information. Building permits must improve the liability tracking in BIM-based permit processes, which will result in a strengthening of local authorities, with reduced costs and timescales for public participation processes.

STRUCTURED INFORMATION AND MODELS, PUBLIC PORTALS

City geoportals can manage public



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information in a very efficient way, but regulations must be harmonized. Clear information requirements enhance system efficiency and transparency. Uniform information requirements at EU-level are crucial. Machine readable regulations facilitate integration of complex data sets, automate compliance checks and streamline administrative processes. We must be able to solve the challenge of accuracy in the Z (vertical) coordinate, and harmonization with the cadastre and other geographic information systems is essential. We must provide clear ways to solve the challenge with the size of the data models, disciplines, and future city digital twins. And the integration of infrastructure data into 3D environments will improve scenario planning.

DEVELOPERS MUST WORK TOGETHER WITH ADMINISTRATIONS

Articulating individual specifications and bidding processes for a city can be problematic. Standards may help to make available market tools

to solve city problems. Developers can support customers, reducing the work load of city processes. And developers can provide future software solutions if open standards are available. Developers should support Permit GovStack and open-source solutions for public good, facilitating access and rapid adoption of permit processes. This will help prevent public authorities from being excluded, locked into specific vendors, or facing unfair competition biases. There are already some best practices: Estonia's Building Register includes IFC-based submission and is harmonized with cadastral-GIS layers, ensuring consistency.

HELP WITH FIRST AND SIMPLE STEPS

We consider that today it is crucial to have simple first steps, to get more cities involved with a clear digital support for urban planning or a basic building design proposal specification for urban viability. This can be reused as digital information for public participation processes. Any city can start with

open standards (IFC, CityGML), local zoning digitization, and public model viewers, but consultancy and technical support in implementing, customizing, and adapting Permit GovStack will be needed.

RURAL DEVELOPMENTS VS BIG CITIES

There is a lack of technical resources in small cities. And we may be losing the opportunity of

managing massive information for new constructions outside big cities. Cloud-based permitting tools and national digital twins can bridge resource gaps (as it has been proven in Estonia's smaller municipalities).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

There is an opportunity for sharing the same basic design BIM model (Building Application Model 1, BAM1) for Public Participation Processes. This will bring citizens closer to the city's problems and new developments, engaging citizens at an early stage, reducing planning disputes, and helping citizens to make more informed decisions.

TRANSPARENCY

There is an opportunity to increase transparency in new developments, to improve competition and to reduce social and legal conflicts. We could achieve greater social inclusion, greater citizen awareness, and greater acceptance through

greater transparency in permitting and approval processes. The use of open APIs and audit trails in digital permitting ensures procedural fairness and acceptance through improved transparency of permit and approval processes.

WHAT TO DO NEXT? DBP CONGRESS IN VIENNA

We will propose a first standardization effort towards BAM1 definition, BIM-GIS integration and public participation processes. These efforts will be continued at the DBP Congress in Vienna in DECEMBER 2025 (<https://dbp25.conf.tuwien.ac.at/>), and they are aligned with the EUBIM task group.

GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

We will propose EU-supported training programs for municipal staff, especially in small CITIES and communities, and new EU-supported capacity programs for the development, implementation, and consultancy of Permit GovStack.

At Kaunas (Lithuania),
13th of May 2025

