
EUROCITIES

THE CITY LEADERS AGENDA FOR EUROPE

1. Cities at the heart of Europe

The future of Europe will be decided in our cities. Our capacity to tackle climate change is critical for turning the goals and commitments of the Paris agreement into reality. Our efforts to promote equal and fair societies, with access to quality jobs for all, is the fundamental basis for a Europe in which no one is left behind. Our attractiveness to businesses, talents and investments are essential to Europe's prosperity, competitiveness and standing as a global leader of innovation. Our public spending power and ability to make investments that match future needs are drivers for transformation. Our ability to manage the digital transformation and optimise the use of new technologies is vital for a more inclusive, efficient and dynamic Europe. Our skill in managing urban mobility supports the sustainable and efficient free movement of people and goods. And, most importantly, our continued engagement of citizens is the opportunity to bridge the ongoing gap between EU decision makers and people.

2. An urban commitment to Europe

As city leaders, we are committed to European collaboration and EU's fundamental values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Collaboration between our cities on our shared challenges delivers Europe-wide solutions, building capacity in cities and bringing results for citizens. The scale of most of today's challenges requires co-design, cooperation and co-production with citizens and between all levels of government for better legislation, more efficient use of resources, effective upscaling of sustainable solutions.

3. Shared principles for European cities

Urban areas are home to 75% of the EU population and are unique in their rich cultural heritage, diversity and liveability. We recognise and celebrate our differences, but we also emphasise our common principles:

- Every citizen matters, our cities are for all. We defend the right to the city and access to affordable housing. Our policies are citizen-focused, promoting long-term inclusive growth and equal opportunities irrespective of race, sexual orientation, religion or nationality, between men and women, as well as current and future generations.
- Collaboration is key. We actively involve our citizens in the development of our policies, seek to engage other levels of government and our surrounding areas, foster stronger urban-rural links and promote meaningful strategic partnerships with academia, social partners, civil society and the private sector.

- We have a global responsibility. What we do in our cities has repercussions far beyond our borders - socially, economically and environmentally. As legislators, public buyers and market changers, we take this responsibility seriously. We support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and strive to put our cities, Europe and our planet on the path to sustainability.

4. A pledge to engage citizens

At a time of increasing political fragmentation across Europe, our cities are uniquely placed to bridge the gap between European and national leaders and their citizens. We know from our experiences that democracy requires participation, innovation and imagination. We believe that to respond to pressing public concerns such as, climate change, social cohesion, affordable housing, security and employment, representative democracy must be enhanced with participative governance. Many of our cities are engaging citizens in ways that go beyond the traditional election cycle through citizen panels, participatory budgeting and participatory online tools, for example. As city leaders, we commit to further strengthening citizen engagement by:

- involving our citizens in a dialogue about our common future;
- inspiring all levels of government to build societies where people come first;
- making a positive impact on the way decisions are taken in Europe.

In this context, we also underline the need to tackle barriers to voting rights for EU residents and the fundamental importance of a free press.

5. An ambitious agenda for Europe, cities and people

We recognise the increased efforts to engage cities directly in the development of EU policies and initiatives with an urban dimension. Only through a continued stronger collaboration between all levels of government can we tackle Europe's challenges and deliver solutions that matter to citizens. We ask European and national leaders, as well as decision makers in the European Commission and Parliament, to further maximise the potential of urban Europe and work with us to:

- adopt and implement the vision of a carbon neutral Europe by 2050, including through progressive policies for cleaner and fewer vehicles in cities, investment in public transport networks, scale up support for energy transition in urban areas and a decisive move towards a circular economy.
- boost the digital transformation across the EU by supporting cities' efforts to develop, test and scale up digital solutions contributing to high quality and resource efficient public services, while also empowering people to participate in and benefit from citizen-focused transformation.

- recognise the vital contribution of cities to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, fully supporting our efforts to build equal and inclusive societies that leave no one behind, ensuring our citizens have access to education, quality jobs and affordable housing.

We acknowledge that the Pact of Amsterdam, establishing an urban agenda for the EU, is a milestone for Europe and cities. It recognises the role and growing importance of cities in the EU and gives city authorities a seat at the table as partners alongside member states and EU policy makers. Supported by a European Urban Initiative as part of the EU's cohesion policy, the urban agenda must continue to develop into a coherent strategic framework, supporting the role of cities in the EU. We ask for:

- strengthened leadership on urban matters at EU level through the nomination of a vice president in charge of urban affairs in the European Commission, with the secretariat general coordinating the Commission's engagement in the urban agenda for a stronger cross sectorial approach.
- a high level group on the urban agenda composed of a core group of representatives from cities, member states, members of the European Parliament and relevant Commissioners to drive progress on urban matters at EU level, inspire and push for a strategic cross sectorial agenda for cities in Europe.
- annual EU urban leadership summits gathering European, national and city leaders to define a common agenda, shared responsibilities and actions. This must be backed by the systematic involvement of cities in policy making on urban matters, in line with the partnership approach of the urban agenda.
- a renewed Urban Intergroup in the European Parliament with a clear strategic mission to support the further development and implementation of an urban agenda. The Urban Intergroup should become a driver for joining up urban matters across the Parliament's Committees, ensuring stronger links between the urban agenda and EU policy developments as well as an ongoing direct dialogue with city leaders on urban matters.
- a renewed focus on citizen engagement at EU level, based on the experiences of participative democracy in cities, to encourage the co-creation of solutions to common European challenges in a citizen-oriented future for Europe.

About EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES is the leading network of major European cities, working together to ensure a good quality of life for all our citizens. We strive for a Europe where cities are genuine partners of the EU to create a better future.

EUROCITIES provides opportunities for our members to share knowledge and ideas, exchange experiences, explore common challenges and find innovative solutions. This expertise enables us to advocate for cities and citizens interests towards the European Institutions.

EUROCITIES members include over 140 of Europe's largest cities and more than 40 partner cities that between them govern over 130 million citizens across 39 countries.

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