

# 8<sup>th</sup> EU Capital City Mayors Meeting

## Joint declaration by the Mayors of the 28 EU Capital Cities

*LONDON*

*25 June 2019*

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The challenges facing Europe and our cities are increasing in number and intensity.

Inequality continues to widen across society. It threatens the social fabric of our communities and fuels the populist and extremist movements that are on the rise across Europe, spreading division and hate.

We are in the midst of a climate emergency which, if we do not begin to address immediately, will have irreversible and catastrophic consequences.

Brexit threatens to raise barriers between us when the challenges facing our cities require an increasingly collaborative response.

As Mayors of 28 capital cities - home to 40 million people - we commit to doing all we can to tackle inequality, address the climate emergency, and continue working in close cooperation to improve the lives of our citizens.

Cities are already leading innovative action to address these challenges, working together across Europe and globally for greater impact, and it is in cities where we find the energy created by more - and new forms of - citizen activism and local innovation.

But we cannot do this alone. We therefore welcome the EU Urban Agenda and call for it to be strengthened so that we can work with the European Commission and national governments to provide solutions to Europe's most pressing problems.

We believe that, if we harness all the forces at our disposal, we can build a better Europe with vibrant, fair and equitable cities at its core.

We owe it to our citizens and future generations of Europeans.

### **A unique role for cities and Mayors**

European cities are uniquely positioned to achieve change.

We are leading a transport and energy revolution and setting the most ambitious climate targets. We are trialling new ways of supporting our citizens to be active partners in community development. It is cities and their leaders who can best connect to citizens, understand their concerns and support local initiatives and solutions. Without citizens' involvement, the action we so urgently need will be too late and incomplete.

We are also aware that our impact is greater when we cooperate across borders, sharing knowledge and resources.

## **Strengthening the Urban Agenda for the EU**

We value the Urban Agenda and welcome the support expressed for it in the Bucharest Declaration. We also welcome Germany's intention to adopt a Ministerial declaration on urban policy during its Presidency. However, there is still a considerable discrepancy between the impact of Mayors on our citizens' lives and the level of involvement by Mayors in European and national policy making.

We therefore seek to further strengthen the Urban Agenda process by calling on the European Commission to nominate a new Vice-President with responsibility for urban affairs with the secretariat general coordinating the Commission's engagement in the Urban Agenda. We also call for a new high-level group on the urban agenda, comprising representatives of the Commission, member states and cities. The Urban Agenda should be included in the Commission's annual work programme.

While the work done through the thematic partnerships is overall positive, we call for resources to support cities' participation in meetings and delivery of the Action Plans.

We also call on the European Parliament to maintain the Urban Intergroup - which has helped to ensure urban affairs are considered across the Parliament's areas of work - whilst emphasising the need for the next EU budget to provide increased support for sustainable urban development.

We look forward to seeing ambitious European programmes after 2020 with a strong urban dimension, including a European Urban Initiative with as wide participation as possible, and designed in partnership with cities.

## **Making cities more secure through openness and inclusion**

Our cities are among the most diverse and inclusive places in the world. This is a source of strength and something of which we are extremely proud.

Yet some individuals and organised groups remain determined to divide us by sowing the seeds of hatred and spreading extremist ideologies. This is damaging our society and the cohesion of our communities - and in its most extreme form, it has led to the loss of innocent lives through acts of violence.

The causes of violent extremism are complex. There is no single pathway and there is no check list as to who might be vulnerable to radicalisation.

We are determined to tackle hatred and intolerance by strengthening our cities' diverse communities, safeguarding the vulnerable, and stopping the spread of hateful ideologies. We will consult with our communities on how we together tackle the spread of hatred and intolerance. We recognise the importance of equipping our diverse communities with the skills and knowledge to stand up to extremism, and through this we will build resilience against those who seek to divide us. We will empower communities to speak out and challenge hate crime and extremist views.

We will support our communities in engaging with public authorities, and we will look to share best practice so that we find lasting solutions that will ultimately stop the spread of violent extremism completely.

The fight against all forms of extremism is a shared endeavour, and one that cannot be achieved without a holistic approach focused on comprehensive preventive measures.

### **Tackling Climate Change and improving air quality**

The role of cities is critical in implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change and addressing the climate emergency. Many cities in Europe also face a health crisis due to unacceptable levels of air pollution. That is why many of our cities are leading the way, not least in developing Paris Agreement-compatible action plans; decarbonising energy and transport sectors by promoting low and zero-emission vehicles; facilitating district heat and power systems; retrofitting buildings; and encouraging renewables.

But we need to act with greater speed and determination. We call on our governments and institutions to commit to long-term climate targets aligned with the 1.5C aspiration of the Paris Agreement and develop associated budgets and sectoral policies to achieve this. These should include the objective of peaking emissions by 2020, more than halving emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero by 2050. This will necessitate enhancement of the 2030 EU climate and energy targets, commitment of all member states to binding net-zero emissions reduction targets and alignment of the next EU long-term budget with this strategy, mainstreaming climate action as a priority across all EU funding programmes.

European cities also need to work together to ensure the EU legal framework on air quality is sufficiently ambitious to deliver vitally needed health improvements. Legal standards should move towards achieving World Health Organisation guidelines.

Cities need to be fully involved in negotiating and developing global, EU and national climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, and be adequately resourced and empowered by governments to implement action.

### **Conclusion**

As Mayors of the EU's capital cities our actions have impacts well beyond the borders of our cities. We therefore commit to playing our full part in rising to today's global challenges.

We will work together to make the most of our experience and resources, actively seek out talent and best practice from around the world to help us improve the lives of our citizens, and share our expertise and knowledge with others.

We call on the rest of civil society, and in particular our national governments and the European Union institutions, to work with us in partnership.