



Press kit

A European urban policy fit for the future

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QUOTES

Rudi Vervoort – Minister President of the Brussels-Capital Region

"The Brussels Region is playing an active role in the 13th Belgian presidency of the Council of the EU, in particular through this high-level meeting devoted to the future of the Union's urban policy. This presidency is an opportunity for us to recall the importance of cities and metropolises in the construction of Europe. With this declaration, Brussels will act as the spokesperson for European towns and cities to the European institutions over the coming months. I'm convinced that a strengthened dialogue and partnership between the Union and its cities will help us to meet our common challenges and objectives in terms of economic, social and territorial cohesion, the climate, innovation and housing. During this presidency, the people of Brussels and the many visitors to our capital will also be able to take advantage of a very rich selection of public and cultural events putting Europe in the spotlight, right at the heart of its capital."

Rudi Vervoort – Minister President of the Brussels-Capital Region

Ans Persoons - Secretary of State Brussels-Capital

"Cities are at the heart of the European project. With nearly 3 out of 4 Europeans living in urban areas, cities are on the front line when it comes to tackling the challenges of the future, such as climate change, resilient public spaces, quality affordable housing, education and infrastructure, prosperity, social and health protection and access to culture. Thanks to the Brussels part of the Belgian Presidency of the EU, the voices of cities are now being heard. Together, with the 40 mayors who have signed this Declaration, we are putting the future of cities back at the heart of the debate. Over the next 6 months, Brussels will be the voice of these cities, defending their interests and priorities before the European institutions."

Ans Persoons – Secretary of state of the Brussels-Capital Region

Elisa Ferreira - European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms

"European cities matter! They play a major role in the implementation of European policies on the ground, from the digital transition to the green economy. This is why the European Cohesion Policy devotes a historically high amount of 24 billion euros to sustainable urban development strategies, throughout the European Union, during the 2021-2027 financial programming period. Local leaders have an essential role to play in defining policies and we must ensure that the voice of cities and mayors is heard to enable cities of all sizes to fully develop their potential."

Elisa Ferreira - European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms



European cities networks

European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA)

"The metropolitan dimension is the most suitable scale to tackle some of the most significant challenges facing Europe and its citizens: mobility, waste management, water supply, housing or energy efficiency, among others, are better addressed at the metropolitan level.

To create a Europe that genuinely serves its citizens, European Institutions must include metropolitan areas in the policy-making. This is the only feasible approach for the EU to accomplish the ambitions outlined in the Agenda 2030, as well as the goal of climate neutrality by 2050.

The European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA) is a forum for leading politicians from Europe's main cities and metropolitan areas, which currently includes 57 metropolises from 22 countries, representing 122 million inhabitants. We strongly support the *Brussels Declaration of European Mayors: A European urban policy fit for the future*, and call for the European institutions to adopt our recommendations."

Marianne Schuurmans-Wijdeven, Representative of EMA, Vice-Chair of the Metropolitan Region Amsterdam, Mayor of the City of Haarlemmermeer

EUROCITIES

"It is clear that a better Europe starts in cities. With the European elections just months away, this declaration signed by mayors and the Belgian Presidency underscores cities' commitment to create an alliance with our partners at EU level to develop strong urban policies that will ensure a green, just and prosperous future for millions of people."

Burkhard Jung, President of Eurocities and Mayor of Leipzig

METREX

"Metropolitan regions and areas are a key but under-valued ingredient in creating a more resilient and competitive Europe. METREX is thrilled to be representing over 50 such Metropolitan Partnerships at this important high level event for the Belgian Presidency of the EU. We look forward to debating with mayors on how Metropolitan Partnerships can enhance urban policy in a way that simultaneously strengthens other areas, and the tools and resources they urgently need to help unlock Europe's future success."

Jakub Mazur, President of METREX and First Deputy Mayor of Wrocław

CEMR

"It's imperative to work on the interdependence between urban and rural systems to reinforce the principles of territorial cohesion. The relationship between urban and rural areas is a win-win. Hence, we need to lift any artificial opposition between the two"

Fabrizio Rossi, CEMR Secretary-General

ICLEI

"We are honoured to prepare the ground for a more ambitious and coherent future European urban policy agenda together with Perspective Brussels, under the Belgian Presidency.

A strong EU urban policy agenda and framework, coupled with multilevel governance and necessary funding schemes and programmes for our towns and cities are a prerequisite to achieve the European Green Deal objective of a more just, productive, inclusive and green future for all. With our partners, we will promote the recommendations formulated today to the next mandate of EU decision makers for a more sustainable and safer future for Europe and its people."

Lasse Frimand Jensen, Mayor of Aalborg (DK).

BELGIUM'S URBAN POLICY PRIORITIES AND EVENTS

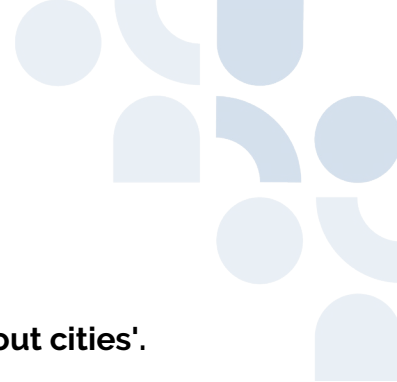
The presidency in the different policy areas has been divided between the federal level and the federated entities. The Informal 'Urban Policy' Council is chaired by the Brussels-Capital Region.

During this presidency, Belgium will convey three main messages for urban policy:

- Defending the **urban and metropolitan dimensions** in European policies and post-2027 programming.
- Reaffirming the importance of cities as **European partners and driving forces** for the development of wider territories and improved urban and rural cooperation.
- Recognising **spatial planning, the territorial approach and urban governance** as essential tools for achieving European (urban) objectives.

In this context, the Brussels-Capital Region is organising two events related to its **two thematic priorities**:

- The future of post-2024 urban policy: High-level political event with European mayors on 24 January 2024.
- Combating urban sprawl and promoting qualitative density: European seminar with urban planning agencies on 29 and 30 May 2024.



The Belgian presidency is aiming to be **'a presidency that cares about cities'**.

To achieve this objective, the three Belgian regions have developed a full programme of events dedicated to **European mayors** with the aim of:

- Giving mayors the possibility to express their messages and priorities towards the European institutions;
- Putting cities and their challenges at the heart of the European political agenda for the next five years;
- Increasing the involvement of cities and mayors in the EU decision-making process and EU policies and programmes.

Six events dedicated to mayors:

Official Belgian EU Presidency event on urban policy:

23 & 24/01/2024 High level event with mayors:
A European urban policy fit for the future

Official thematic events

23/01/2024 Direct Dialogue between EU Capitals Mayors and the European Commission on the Rule of Law

15/03/2024 Conference "Translating the EU Green Deal into Local action"

18 & 19/03/2024 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities

20 to 22/03/2024 8th International Conference "Security, Democracy & Cities"

19/04/2024 Conference "Local Government Approaches to Diversity"

EVENT PRESENTATION

General presentation

This high-level political event was organised by the Brussels-Capital Region on the initiative of Rudi Vervoort, Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region, and Ans Persoons, Secretary of State for Urban Planning and European Relations. This event is part of the 'Urban Policy' section of the Belgian presidency of the European Union.

The event brought together 41 mayors of European cities and metropolitan areas, representatives of European institutions such as the European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, associations of European cities and metropolises, as well as other important stakeholders in Europe's urban policy.

Objectives

Organised under the auspices of the Belgian presidency of the EU, this high-level event examines the role of cities in building the Europe of tomorrow: resilient and inclusive cities will make Europe stronger and more able to meet the challenges of the future.

The objectives of this meeting were as follows:

- To ensure that the urban dimension remains a priority on the European political agenda.
- To ensure ongoing dialogue between cities and European institutions.
- To raise awareness not only of the future challenges facing European cities, but also of their experience and expertise in meeting these challenges.
- To discuss and share lessons from the past and reflect on the future of EU urban policy.

Declaration of European Mayors

A Brussels Declaration of Mayors to the European Institutions was presented and signed during the event. This overarching declaration by the presidency aims to provide bold political messages and recommendations for a strong European urban policy during the next mandate of the European Parliament and the European Commission (2024-2029).

BRUSSELS DECLARATION OF EUROPEAN MAYORS

The Brussels Declaration of European Mayors, signed on 24 January, is a key element of the urban policy component of the Belgian presidency of the EU.

To date, the declaration has been signed by 41 mayors from 19 European countries. A large number of other mayors and associations have already expressed their willingness to join the list of signatories.

With this declaration, Europe's mayors and urban networks are calling for an ambitious European urban policy and present six recommendations to the European institutions for the EU's 2024-2029 mandate.

1. Systematic dialogue and involvement of local governments at European level
2. Better integration and coordination of urban matters at European level
3. More urban-friendly EU regulations
4. More accessible and urban-friendly EU funding
5. Promotion of metropolitan governance
6. A paradigm shift towards a new sustainable model for cities

In order to convey a message that reflects a vision shared by most European cities during its mandate and through this declaration, the Brussels-Capital Region has set up a co-creation process, both for defining the presidency's urban programme and for drafting this declaration.

Various European stakeholders were consulted throughout 2023, and two preparatory participatory workshops were organised with European cities and networks.

The declaration is attached to this dossier.

PARTICIPANTS

Delegation	Name	Position
Brussels Capital Region	Rudi Vervoort	Minister President
Brussels Capital Region	Ans Persoons	Secretary of State for urbanism & European and international relations
European Parliament	Younous Omarjee	MEP, Chairman of the Committee on Regional Development
European Parliament	Jan Olbrycht	MEP, Chairman of the URBAN intergroup
European Parliament	Marcos Ros Sempere	MEP
European Parliament	Fabienne Keller	MEP
European Commission	Elisa Ferreira	Commissioner For Cohesion and Reforms
European Committee of the Regions	Vasco Alves Cordeiro	President
European Committee of the Regions	Kieran McCarthy	Member
European Committee of the Regions	Joško Klisović	Member
Club of Rome	Sandrine Dixson Declève	Co-President of The Club of Rome
Aalborg	Lasse Frimand Jensen	Mayor
Amsterdam Metropolitan Area	Marianne Schuurmans-Wijdeven	Mayor of Haarlemmermeer
Antwerp	Tom Meeuws	Alderman responsible for social affairs, poverty alleviation, community development, social economy, environment and services of worship
Barcelona	Laia Bonet	First Deputy Mayor
Barcelona Metropole	Elisenda Alamany	Vice President of International Relations and digital metropolis

Berlin	Jürgen Neumüller	Head of Unit European Spatial Development
Bologna	Anna Lisa Boni	Deputy Mayor for EU/Recovery funds, ecological transition and international relations
Bordeaux Metropole	Céline Papin	Deputy Mayor of Bordeaux with for territorial, European and international cooperation; Vice-President of Bordeaux Metropole for territorial balance, international relations and civic dialogue.
Braga	Ricardo Rio	Mayor
Budapest	Gergely Karácsony	Mayor
Espoo	Mervi Heinaro	Deputy Mayor - Economic Development, Sports and Culture
Frankfurt am Main	Eileen O'Sullivan	City Councillor Citizens, Digital and International Affairs
Ghent	Mathias De Clerq	Mayor
Gothenburg	Aslan Akbas	Mayor
Hamburg	Claus Müller	Director General Hanse Office
Helsinki	Juhana Vartiainen	Mayor
Lille Metropole	Hélène Moeneclaey	Vice-President of Lille Metropole
Łódź	Hanna Zdanowska	Mayor
Lyon Metropole	Renaud Payre	Vice-President of Lyon Metropole
Milan	Pierfrancesco Maran	Councillor for Housing and Neighbourhood Planning
Munich	Felix Sproll	City Councillor
Nantes Metropole	Yves Pascouau	Vice-President of Nantes Metropole
Nicosia	Constantinos Giorkadjis	Mayor
Prague	Bohuslav Svoboda	Mayor
Rome	Andrea Tobia Zevi	Councillor for Heritage and Housing
Rotterdam	Ahmed Aboutaleb	Mayor

Stockholm	Olle Burell	President of the Stockholm City Council
Strasbourg	Jeanne Barseghian	Mayor
Stuttgart	Peter Pätzold	Deputy Mayor for Urban development, housing and environment
Tallinn	Mihhail Kõlvart	Mayor
The Hague	Robert van Asten	Deputy Mayor for Urban Development, Libraries, Europe and Segbroek district
Toulouse Metropole	Jean-Claude Dardelet	Deputy Mayor of Toulouse, Vice-President of Toulouse Metropole for Attractiveness, Tourism, Europe and International
Trier	Wolfram Leibe	Mayor
Vienna	Stephan Auer-Stüger	Vice-Chair of City Council Committee on Climate, Environment, Democracy and Personnel
Wrocław	Jakub Mazur	First Deputy Mayor
Zaragoza	Natalia Chueca	Mayor
European Commission – DG REGIO	Marek Teplansky	Head of Unit for Inclusive growth, urban and territorial development
European Commission - Directorate-General EUROSTAT	Márta Nagy-Rothengass	Deputy Director Sectoral statistics
European Investment Bank	Werner Schmidt	Director of Projects
OECD	Soo-Jin Kim	Deputy Head of the Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division
Council of European Municipalities and Regions	Fabrizio Rossi	Secretary General
EMA	Carlota Rosés Montesinos	EMA representative
EUKN	Martin Grisel	Director

Eurocities	André Sobczak	Secretary General
ICLEI	Wolfgang Teubner	Europe Regional Director
Metrex	Henk Bouwman	Secretary General
European Urban Initiative	Tim Caulfield	Director
URBACT	Theofil Gherca	Director
ESPON	Wiktor Szydarowski	Director
	Federico Savini	Professor Amsterdam University
	Claire Dupont	Professor Ghent University
The Netherlands	Karen Dantzig	Urban Envoy
Service Public Wallonie	Annick Fourmeaux	Director General SPW Territory, Housing, Heritage, Energy
Vlaams Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur	Carolina Stevens	Chief of Unit « Beleid Steden, Brussel en Vlaamse Rand »
Brulocalis	Corinne François	Director
Brussels Capital Region - perspective	Antoine de Borman	CEO
Brussels Capital Region - urban	Bety Waknine	Director General
Brussels Capital Region - Brussels international	Anne Claes	Director General
Brussels Capital Region - CityDev	Benjamin Cadranel	Managing Director
Brussels Capital Region - SAU	Gilles Delforge	Director General

COMMUNICATION

Website	https://belgian-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/events/a-european-urban-policy-fit-for-the-future/
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Emoji	

PRESS CONTACTS

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