

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

## 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 at the tipping point of a human-made climate change crisis which, if not addressed in the next decade, will have catastrophic consequences.

Brexit threatens to raise barriers between us when the challenges facing our cities require a coordinated 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 crisis, 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 EU Urban Agenda**

We value the EU Urban Agenda and welcome Germany's intention to adopt a Ministerial declaration on urban policy during its Presidency of the EU, but 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, as well as a new high-level group on the urban agenda.

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 EU institutions to agree the next EU budget provides for increased support for sustainable urban development.

### **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 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 extremism views. We will support our communities to report concerns to the 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 in isolation.

### **Climate Change**

The role of cities will be critical in implementing the Paris agreement on climate change. Many cities are leading the way, not least in 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. Greater ambition is required at EU level to ensure that the global temperature rise is kept below 1.5C above pre-industrial levels and the process of energy transition needs to be accelerated so that we achieve net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. Cities need to be fully involved in negotiating and developing global, EU and national climate mitigation and adaptation policies.

## **Conclusion**

Our cities are engines of progress, its actions having impact well beyond its borders. We are acutely aware that only by being open and working together do we stand a chance of meeting our citizens' expectations and rising to today's global challenges.