



The European Commission's Digital Cities Challenge

DECLARATION OF COOPERATION on Digital Transformation and Smart Growth

Cities lead Europe's growth by producing more than two-thirds of its GDP. Cities promote sustainable growth, more and better jobs, inclusiveness, social equality and resilience. It is in European cities where a large part of EU policies and legislation take effect and where a significant share of EU funds is invested.

We take note that the European Commission is working towards bringing "Europe closer to citizens" and increasing the financial envelope for sustainable urban development strategies, while it supports the participation of representatives of local and regional governments in European policy making through the Urban Agenda for the EU, which reinforces the urban dimension in all EU relevant policies.

We recognise that advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence, sensor technologies, cloud computing, open data, Internet of Things, and blockchain reinvent the way we can manage our cities' growth and respond to the big societal challenges, such as efficient health systems, cleaner energy and environment, green mobility, social equity and offering high-value jobs. European cities can lead the digital transformation of the economy, sustain growth in the digital era and leverage high-tech to serve people.

We welcome the Commission's Digital Cities Challenge initiative, which helps 41 cities develop ecosystems for smart growth, modernise businesses, create better jobs and become better places to live. The initiative offers leading and bespoke policy advice, mentoring and coaching and opportunities to promote exchanges among the cities. The participating cities form a network of collaboration which shares insight and practical experience for digital transformation. Together we are stronger.

We commit to:

Foster dynamic innovation ecosystems

- o Explore an efficient governance framework and structure able to press ahead with the implementation of the strategy and monitor the outcome. Sharing experience in this field (e.g. an external agency, an NGO, an association of stakeholders, a department within the municipality, etc.) is a valuable first step.
- o Reinforce the city as an ecosystem where businesses and citizens can collaborate, prosper and enjoy better quality of life. To achieve this, we engage with all relevant players (local and regional governments, businesses, finance organisations, entrepreneurs, education and research communities, clusters, start-ups, social partners and the civil society) to co-create an ambitious vision and strategy for smart, sustainable, clean and inclusive growth and a more liveable city, enabled by advanced technologies.
- o Create a city culture of growth in the digital era, shape and implement joint public-private partnership and action plans.
- o Develop and test novel policy initiatives in a collaborative approach with other cities to reap the benefits of digital transformation.

Upskill the city

- o Cooperate on new business models and partnerships to develop local excellence, knowhow and talents, support entrepreneurship and the upskilling of the workforce.
- o Work towards the digitalisation of industry and development of digital competencies among SMEs while focusing on activities that are of common interest and strategic importance to the local economies.

Scale up infrastructures and investments for the 21st century

- o Exchange best practices on the implementation of cyber-physical infrastructures as a prerequisite for growth.
- o Unleash bold investment opportunities for digital transformation of the local economy, using a mix of financial instruments.
- o Explore opportunities for joint cross-city investments and undertakings (e.g. through the smart specialisation platform for industrial modernisation and the available funding mechanisms at regional, national and EU level), and public-private partnerships for the implementation and management of strategic large-scale infrastructures and applications.

Drive change through a network

- o Engage in the creation of a permanent network of European cities that promote the agenda of digital transformation, collaborative intelligence, and smart growth.
- o Engage in networking activities among European peers and partners offering mutual support and advice to realise the full potential of the digital transformation.
- o Act as models of smart growth and industrial modernisation, engage to spread our experience and knowledge to create a spillover effect towards other European cities.

The signatories of this declaration commit to a regular assessment of the achievements and progress made on the matters agreed above and on the adoption of appropriate actions supporting digital transformation and the opportunities and challenges related thereto.

Alcoy Antonio FRANCÉS PÉREZ Mayor of Alcoy	Algeciras José Ignacio LANDALUCE CALLEJA Mayor of Algeciras	Alicante César SÁNCHEZ PÉREZ Mayor of Alicante	Amsterdam Metropolitan Area Franc WEERWIND Mayor of Almere Member responsible for Digital Connectivity at the Amsterdam Economic Board	Antwerp Bart DE WEVER Mayor of Antwerp	Arad Gheorghe FALCA Mayor of Arad	Athens Giorgos KAMINIS Mayor of Athens	Barcelona Ada COLAU Mayor of Barcelona	Cork Mick FLINN Mayor of Cork
Derry/Londonderry John BOYLE Mayor of Derry/Londonderry	Espoo Jukka MÄKELÄ Mayor of Espoo	Gelsenkirchen Frank BARANOWSKI Mayor of Gelsenkirchen	Gijón Carmen MORIYON Mayor of Gijón	Granada Francisco CUENCA RODRIGUEZ Mayor of Granada	Grand-Orly-Seine Bièvre Michel LEPETRE Mayor of Grand-Orly-Seine Bièvre	Graz Siegfried NAGL Mayor of Graz	Guimaraes Domingos BRAGANÇA SALGADO Mayor of Guimaraes	Hamburg Peter TSCHENTSCHER Mayor of Hamburg
Heidelberg Eckart WÜRZNER Mayor of Heidelberg	Heraklion Vasileios LAMPRINOS Mayor of Heraklion	Iasi Mihai CHIRICA Mayor of Iasi	Idrija Bojan SEVER Mayor of Idrija	Karlskrona Sandra Bizzozero Mayor of Karlskrona	Kavala Dimitra TSANAKA Mayor of Kavala	L'Aquila Pierluigi BIONDI Mayor of L'Aquila	Lisbon Fernando MEDINA Mayor of Lisbon	Mantova Mattia PALAZZI Mayor of Mantova
Nice Christian ESTROSI Mayor of Nice	Nuremberg Michael FRAAS Mayor of Nuremberg	Oulu Päivi LAAJALA Mayor of Oulu	Padua Sergio GIORDANI Mayor of Padua	Patras Kostas PELETIDIS Mayor of Patras	Pori Aino-Maija LUUKKONEN Mayor of Pori	Reggio Emilia Luca VECCHI Mayor of Reggio Emilia	Rijeka Vojko OBERSNEL Mayor of Rijeka	Seville Juan ESPADAS CEJAS Mayor of Seville
Sofia Yordanka FANDAKOVA Mayor of Sofia	Sunderland Graeme MILLER Mayor of Sunderland	Thessaloniki Ioannis BOUTARIS Mayor of Thessaloniki	Trikala Dimitris PAPASTERGIOU Mayor of Trikala	Ventspils Aivars LEMBERGS Mayor of Ventspils				