



THE NETWORK  
OF MAJOR  
EUROPEAN  
CITIES

## **EUROCITIES Lyon Declaration**

**Local governments:  
key partners in  
international cooperation**

**Adopted by the members of EUROCITIES in Lyon on 22 November 2005**

**On the occasion of EUROCITIES Conference & Annual General Meeting 2005**

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### **EUROCITIES**

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EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Founded in 1986, the network brings together the local governments of 129 large cities in some 33 European countries. EUROCITIES represents the interests of its members and engages in dialogue with the European institutions across a wide range of policy areas affecting cities. These include: economic development, the environment, transport and mobility, social affairs, culture, the information and knowledge society, and services of general interest.

EUROCITIES website: [www.eurocities.org](http://www.eurocities.org)

## INTRODUCTION

The end of the twentieth century was marked by a profound transformation in the field of international relations. New actors have since been called on to play a major role in the management and resolution of social problems, environmental questions, intercultural dynamics, spatial planning and economic development.

Local and regional authorities now find themselves fully involved in international cooperation. The major European cities have a specific role to play within this context. As the level of governance closest to the citizens, local authorities are at the heart of the democratic process. Moreover, they have technical skills and a real capacity for political involvement that has been strengthened by the decentralisation process.

For many years, European cities have been participating in the internal policies of the European Union, including for example policies concerning regional development, social and economic cohesion, the fight against social exclusion and poverty, and the environment. Local governments have made positive contributions to the development and implementation of European policies across a range of fields.

In the implementation of the Territorial Dialogue the European Union has explicitly recognised the role of local authorities in European governance, and established systematic consultation with cities in the definition and implementation of its policies.

After 10 years of the Barcelona Process, the Conclusions of the Conference of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers on 30-31 May 2005 refer to the need for closer involvement of local and regional authorities in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The enlargement process of the European Union is progressing positively through the support provided to acceding and candidate countries in order to help them achieve the "Copenhagen criteria", while the EU has also developed a progressive partnership with the western Balkans through the Stabilisation and Association process.

Following the 2004 enlargement, the European Union has defined a European Neighbourhood Policy with an aim of strengthening stability, security and well-being for all. The establishment of this policy underlines the importance of external relations for the European Union.

Despite these advances, the place of local authorities is often insufficiently recognised within the European Union, in its policies towards candidate countries and neighbouring countries, and also in the agreements that it concludes with countries and sub-regions outside the European continent, including developing, emerging and developed countries.

In the context of globalisation, big cities have become the main drivers of economic and social development - both within and outside the European Union. This reality requires that the European Union must recognise the value and importance of decentralised city-to-city cooperation. Moreover, it is necessary to make changes to current practices and institutions in order to recognise the legitimacy of major cities, to take advantage of their experience, their knowledge and their political capacity, and to adapt and/or create financial instruments that can be used to support and encourage decentralised cooperation.

## CITIES' CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

EUROCITIES and its members are committed to promoting sustainable urban development, both in Europe and in other parts of the world, balancing social, economic and environmental objectives.

EUROCITIES and its members have practical experience of cooperating with cities in neighbouring countries, including through the former East-West Committee, and currently through the Working Groups on European Neighbourhood Policy and on Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation.

EUROCITIES members have been involved in a range of projects and initiatives to share knowledge and practices among local governments, including the Med-Act pilot project.

The contribution of EUROCITIES and its member cities to international cooperation includes working with cities across four main categories of countries:

### 1. EU accession, candidate, and potential candidate countries

EUROCITIES and its member cities are engaged in:

- assisting cities in EU accession and candidate countries to implement the *acquis communautaire* at the local level through exchange programmes and twinning relationships;
- encouraging a sense of European identity by developing close relations between local governments and by facilitating exchanges among citizens;
- helping to stimulate the economic development of cities in all of the European Union Member States, accession and candidate countries.

### 2. The European Neighbourhood: Eastern Europe (including Russia), Southern Caucasus and the Mediterranean

European cities wish to contribute to the new common policy which aims to invite our neighbours to share in the peace, stability and prosperity of the European Union.

EUROCITIES and its members contribute to the success of this policy, particularly:

- by sharing know-how in the fields of governance, social and economic development, environment, knowledge society, culture and international cooperation - through exchanges of experience, training and internships;
- by encouraging local authorities, for example through training, to make full use of the competences attributed to them by national law with a view to supporting the democratisation process and strengthening civil society;

- by contributing to the development of local policies that aim to improve the quality of life of people in these countries;
- by participating in international political dialogue and thereby contributing to a common space where peace and security thrive;
- by encouraging contact between peoples and supporting exchanges to promote intercultural dialogue and to reinforce the consciousness of shared heritage.

### **3. Developing countries**

Development involves boosting the capacities of local authorities by strengthening their administrative, technical, ecological, social, economic and cultural potential.

The members of EUROCITIES can contribute positively to the implementation of EU policies for Aid and Development:

- by supporting local development through partnership arrangements;
- by sharing technical and administrative skills and expertise for the management of community services (water, waste, transport, etc);
- by supporting the implementation of decentralisation policies in these countries (for example by training local officials and administrators) and the development of local democracy and civil society.

### **4. Developed countries**

EUROCITIES and its member cities are committed to sharing knowledge and exchanging experiences with cities in other parts of the world, with a view to identifying and learning from examples of good practice in various policy areas.

Strengthening contacts with cities in other parts of the world brings benefits for European cities, notably in terms of business, cultural and educational opportunities.

These benefits can be achieved by various means, including:

- direct exchanges and twinning arrangements between cities;
- participation in international conferences, networks and organisations.

**In this context EUROCITIES and its member cities**

- **believe that local government has a legitimate role to play in the definition and implementation of those EU policies and programmes for international cooperation to which cities can make a contribution,**
- **wish to increase its contribution to the dialogue between the European Union and other countries, including accession, candidate and pre-accession countries, neighbouring countries, developing and developed countries.**

**They therefore believe that an active contribution from EUROCITIES members at the policy development stage of international cooperation will:**

- **facilitate the strengthening of relations between the European Union and third countries by means of direct dialogue among city governments, recognising that local authorities are the level of governance that is closest to the citizens,**
- **strengthen the commitment of European cities to carry European Union international action through inter-city relations,**
- **promote a better understanding of the expectations of the local authorities in neighbouring and candidate countries and within the context of partnership agreements with developing countries, in order to ensure better visibility of the international action of the European Union at the local level,**
- **reinforce the policies of the European Union in favour of the UN's Millennium Development Goals,**
- **promote the actions and influence of the European Union on the international scene,**
- **draw together European citizens and those of other countries through cultural exchanges and the sharing of knowledge and experiences.**

**They also believe that an active contribution from EUROCITIES members at the policy implementation stage of international cooperation will:**

- **support the recognition of local authorities of other countries as partners of their national governments and as public bodies representing their citizens, which will improve the effectiveness of public policies and actions at the local level,**
- **promote the strengthening of democracy and citizens' participation at local level,**
- **ensure greater operational effectiveness for programmes in favour of public-private partnerships for delivering collective services.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

EUROCITIES calls on the EU institutions and Member States to recognise that local and regional authorities are **legitimate spheres of governance** with their own roles and responsibilities that are distinct from those of national governments, as well as from those of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other actors in the "civil society".

EUROCITIES calls on the European institutions to recognise the important and valuable contribution that local and regional authorities can make to the **strengthening of relations** with EU accession, candidate and pre-accession countries, with other countries in the European Neighbourhood, and with developing as well as developed countries.

EUROCITIES calls on the European institutions to recognise the important and valuable contribution that local and regional authorities can make to the **development and implementation of the external policies of the European Union**, including: accession and pre-accession strategies, the Stabilisation and Association Process, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), aid to developing countries, commercial and economic relations, cooperation on environmental policies, cultural and educational exchanges.

EUROCITIES calls on the European Commission to **widen the remit of the Territorial Dialogue** to include discussions on how increasing the involvement of local and regional authorities can contribute to achieving the goals of the Union's external policies.

With regard to relations with EU accession, candidate and pre-accession countries, EUROCITIES calls on the European institutions to positively encourage the **involvement of local and regional authorities** in the process of preparing for EU membership, and adapting to the administrative requirements of the *acquis communautaire*.

EUROCITIES calls for the objectives of the **European Neighbourhood Policy** to include "strengthening local government and democratic institution-building at the local level", to be incorporated into the bilateral Action Plans with partner countries.

EUROCITIES calls on the European Commission to ensure that the various **Community programmes and financial instruments** that are used to support pre-accession strategies and external policies (including ENP and EMP) are mutually-reinforcing, and that they include opportunities for the participation of local and regional authorities and direct city-to-city cooperation.

EUROCITIES calls on the EU institutions to include an **urban strand** in the various programmes being developed to support the Union's external actions 2007-2013. This would ensure added value in terms of enhancing the impact and effectiveness of these policies, including the ENP and EMP, as well as pre-accession processes.

EUROCITIES calls on the European Commission and the Member States to actively support the implementation of the proposal, which was part of the original Barcelona Declaration in 1995, that there should be an **annual meeting of city and regional representatives** from all of the countries involved in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

EUROCITIES calls on the EU institutions to encourage and facilitate the involvement of European cities in the definition and implementation of European policies and initiatives which are designed to support processes of **democratisation and decentralisation** and to help **reinforce the capacities of local authorities in developing countries**.

EUROCITIES calls on the EU institutions to put in place appropriate instruments which can be used to provide technical and financial support for **decentralised cooperation and partnerships** between European cities and local authorities in developing countries, including support for the actions of international city networks.

EUROCITIES calls on the EU institutions to recognise the important role that major cities play as drivers of social and economic development in the context of increasing globalisation, and to ensure that the contribution of cities is taken into account during the development and implementation of policies aiming to stimulate **economic growth and employment** - notably in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy.

## ANNEXE TO LYON DECLARATION

### General context

#### **Cities: experienced political and administrative entities in matters of cooperation.**

European cities have substantial and varied experience in international cooperation. This experience includes the building of civic society, support for the organisation of urban transport, urban development, support for the economic stimulation of an area and enhancing the value of cultural and architectural heritage.

The relationships that European cities have forged with non-European cities form a network that touches every continent. These relations are often managed by local authorities and encourage dynamic cooperative action which delivers specific outcomes. They respond to the expectations of citizens and pay attention to the quality of the results obtained. They are constructed around long-term partnerships and supported by citizens, and consolidate cooperative actions between States themselves.

#### **Cities: actors in cooperation for urban development.**

All cities face the challenge of implementing a complex group of policies in order to meet the requirements of their citizens. They must develop and articulate innovative strategies and solutions in matters of transport, environment, sustainable development, management of migratory flows, the fight against social exclusion, employment, culture, research, and innovative communication tools and all these are components of long term urban development. European cities have extensive experience in carrying out these types of actions that interact within a concentrated territorial area. This experience is sought by local authorities in their partner cities in order to assist them in carrying out urban development and to have access to effective, long-term solutions to the problems that they encounter.

#### **Cities: platforms for dialogue and for mobilising local actors.**

Apart from their own services, local authorities mobilise different actors in their area to carry out cooperative actions, including school and health service providers, youth organisations and cultural and economic actors. These mean that individual issues can be dealt with in a complete and thorough manner. The relationships established by the cities with these actors and with NGO's who are more specialised in questions of development are a precious tool for supporting cooperative actions. The support which cities provide for dialogue between the actors in their area can encourage their partner authorities to strengthen their links with society.

#### **Extension of the Territorial Dialogue to include policies on neighbouring and developing countries.**

With the Territorial Dialogue, the Commission has undertaken to consult associations of local and regional authorities in order to improve the implementation of policies and encourage involvement in EU policy-making. Given the experience and skills developed by cities in matters of international cooperation, a similar consultation process should be applied in order to draw up policies relating to neighbouring countries, countries around the Mediterranean basin, candidate countries and developing countries.

## EUROPEAN CITIES AND NEW MEMBER STATES AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES.

#### **Cities have long had the expertise for the development of the EU.**

In the past, local authorities have made their contribution to the construction of the EU by their contribution to easing the relations between countries, via twinning between towns after the Second World War, and building relations between authorities in Western and Eastern Europe during the Cold War. This history has enabled links to be formed between local authorities, experts, and members of organisations in civil society amongst others, thus facilitating a mutual understanding of the potential risks and benefits of an enlarged Europe.

In view of these relations and their adjustment to the situation in present-day Europe, local authorities have, more than ever, a major role to play in the construction of a European identity from the local level upwards. Local authorities are public institutions that are close to the citizens and they have a legitimate role to play in direct relations with citizens.

#### **Cities: contributing to putting the benefits of the community to use in new Member States.**

Cities have a responsibility in the construction of a dynamic balance between economic change, improved social conditions and environmental considerations. They are the level at which organisation takes place for the cooperation



between public and private actors, between institutional levels and between services performing within complementary fields of competence. They intervene on questions of security, issues of solidarity and cultural and educational actions, amongst others. They are the fundamental rung of democracy.

Exchanges between cities of established EU Member States and cities of new Member States and Candidate Countries add strength to the diffusion of community benefits in all fields.

**Cities: contributing to reducing economic disparities within the European Union.**

The experience of cities in established EU Member States is often called on by cities in new Member States and Candidate Countries in order to help speed up their own development. This experience is acquired while accompanying the economic development in their city and region during the development of business areas and housing and transport policies and providing support for training schemes.

## **EUROPEAN CITIES, EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP.**

**Cities: looking towards neighbouring countries.**

Several European cities already cooperate with cities in non-EU countries. Of the 121 EUROCITIES members, 15 are European cities in non-member countries of the EU.

The EUROCITIES European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Working Group illustrates the attention paid by the European cities to implementing and carrying out the "neighbourhood policy aimed at inviting our neighbours to the East and South to share the peace, stability and prosperity of the European Union in order to create a ring of friends all around the borders of the new, enlarged European Union".

Cities in the European Union and cities in neighbouring countries are working on issues that they have in common, for example the organisation and management of public services such as urban transport, relations with associations, their policy for articulating competitiveness and prosperity.

The conclusions of the EUROCITIES ENP Working Group show the extent to which cooperation between cities can contribute to the European Union Neighbourhood Policy and regional integration.

Notably, this cooperation:

- contributes to the visibility of the European Union's international action,
- complements negotiations carried out at national government level,
- encourages exchanges of experience in the search for long-term solutions for the challenges posed by urban development,
- participates in the democratisation process in neighbouring countries through the strengthening of the local powers.

To consolidate these processes, the Working Group is exploring proposals for organising financial systems similar to those established within the framework of the Barcelona Process and capable of being integrated into the European Union Neighbourhood Policy.

**Neighbouring countries, the Mediterranean basin, and the Baltic Sea: priority zones for Europe.**

These countries are important for Europe due to their geographic proximity, and the demographic and urban dynamics, as well as the intensity of the cultural relations, the migratory movements, and the entry of new countries into the EU.

As part of the EU's external and cross-border policy, the Northern Dimension (ND) initiative was launched in 1999 to raise the profile of the EU in Northern Europe. Through reinforcing coordination and complementarity between existing EU programmes and financial instruments, and by promoting cooperation between relevant sectors in the region, the initiative should allow a more coherent approach to the specific issues facing Northern Europe. Following the accession of Poland and the Baltic States in 2004, the relations between EU and Russia have become central to the initiative.

Developing relations with the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova is a very important priority. The development of these countries towards a democratic order, based on the respect of law and a free market economy, as the basis for further economic and social development, is of utmost importance to the stability, peace and prosperity on the continent. Based on the Treaties of Rome, they have the right, along with other European Countries, to apply for membership in the European Union. EUROCITIES particularly supports the European Neighbourhood Policy towards these three countries.

EUROCITIES member cities on both sides of the EU border already cooperate in the framework of the ENP objectives. In order to facilitate the intensification of city-to-city cooperation, the EUROCITIES ENP Working Group has made several practical proposals.

In terms of the Mediterranean area, all the European institutions and Member States have signed the statement saying that "The region formed by the South and East banks of the Mediterranean and the Middle East assumes a vital strategic importance for the European Union. *It is considered an essential priority of European Union external relations.*"

#### **Cities: a foundation for the Barcelona Process.**

EUROCITIES and its member cities lend their skills and their responsibility as public actors to the success of each of the three major objectives of the Barcelona Process:

1. "To make the Euro-Mediterranean zone into a space of peace and stability founded on the respect of essential principles including human rights and democracy".

Local authorities on the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean are accepting responsibility and this is a new dynamic. It constitutes a democratic advance in countries where civil societies are weak and fragmented. They are strongly supported in this by their European partner cities.

2. "To construct a shared zone of prosperity through an economic and financial partner"

Cooperative actions between cities on the banks of the Mediterranean integrate policies and actions in support of investment, urban transport and fuel, urban development, employment, industrial partnerships.

3. "To encourage understanding between cultures and draw people closer together"

The cities in Northern Mediterranean countries are directly concerned where reception of new populations and floating populations and management of cultural diversity is involved. They are at the front line for contributing to the construction of unified societies on their territory.

In spite of the multiplicity of relations between the cities around the Mediterranean, the main financial instrument of the EU serving the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, the MEDA programme, does not play a significant role in the cities except through a few target and pilot projects such as Med'Act.

## **EUROPEAN CITIES, DEVELOPMENT AID AND COOPERATION BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES.**

EUROCITIES and its member cities cooperate with local authorities in developing countries. This cooperation has two main characteristics:

- It is highly focused depending on the countries and their history and language - for example Iberian countries and Latin America; France and Sub-Saharan Africa; Germany and the Balkans.
- The objectives are very different: from humanitarian aid to the institutional reinforcement of the partner authority; from support for the development of the regions of origin of migrants to a policy of international influence; from cultural exchanges to support for industrial partnerships.

#### **Cities: supporting decentralisation policies.**

The cooperative actions of European cities are diverse but they also have hidden similarities. They all mobilise their own skills and those of the institutions in their regions to implement urban support and development programmes in their different political, technical, social and logistic dimensions of institutional reinforcement and support for democratisation, including transport management, treatment of waste, urbanisation and spatial development, creation of new quarters and social inclusion, employment, culture, information, health equipment, strengthening administrative capacities. These cooperative actions complement the European Union programmes supporting development and accompanying policies of decentralisation and strengthening urban systems.

A precondition for sustainable actions is peace and stability between the different communities (for example those in the Middle-East, Kosovo and Darfur). The responsibility of the UN and Member States themselves is evident, but initiatives by local authorities provide additional value, because they have a practical focus and are not (directly) linked to the international policy of their national government.

Through mutual dialogue and cooperation, local authorities can organise a framework by which trust is built, while tackling real problems on the ground. Long-term aims include increasing mutual understanding and cooperation and improving the daily lives of citizens. It is therefore important that EU policies acknowledge the role that local authorities can play and also include such actions in the financial instruments of the EU.

### **Cities: working towards the UN's Millennium Development Goals.**

The Millennium Development Goals<sup>1</sup> were reiterated at the New York Millennium +5 Summit in 2005 by the 191 Member States of the UN and repeated in the development policy of the European Union. However, these goals cannot be achieved without the active involvement of local authorities around the world. These goals were laid down at the State level and their implementation depends for a large part on the expertise of local authorities and their actions - for example in social promotion, improving living conditions, the fight against poverty and reducing unsanitary housing conditions.

### **Associating cities with the creation of policies supporting the development of the European Union.**

The place occupied by European cities in defining policies supporting the development of the Union remains very modest when compared with the role which they play - such as training technical agents, financing infrastructures, supporting relations between local authorities and civil societies. The Cotonou agreement which defines cooperation between the EU and ACP countries is an example of this. Local authorities were not involved in the creation of the programmes financed by the FED<sup>2</sup>, although non-state actors were (economic actors, associations and unions etc) - even though cooperation between local authorities is undergoing dynamic growth in this area.

## **CITIES AS MOTIVATING FACTORS IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

Globalisation, technological changes and the transition to the knowledge-based economy all have major repercussions on city economies, particularly due to the growing mobility of business and capital. The end of the twentieth century was marked by a lack of impetus and the questioning of the mode of economic regulation, dominated by the State, its institutions and its territory. Now, however, the quest for flexibility and competitiveness between businesses happens largely at the city level, with cities providing the opportunities for consolidating new public-private partnerships.

Today cities are the first level of defence and regional drivers. Cities want to make the most of their potential with a view to attracting new skills and new businesses to complement the human, technical and financial resources already present on their territory.

The current situation leads to competitiveness and sometimes even a competition between cities. One of the characteristics of European cities, if we compare them with North-American or Asian cities for example, is that partnerships have been developed which aim - through the sharing of competence and expertise in particular economic sectors - to enable them to face international competition.

Moreover, as European cities are the guardians of European cultural heritage, they generally adopt development reference systems that try to combine competitiveness between companies, social solidarity and sustainable development.

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<sup>1</sup> Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; develop a global partnership for development.

<sup>2</sup> FED : *Fonds Européen de Développement*, European Development Funds