



PRESS RELEASE - 30 May 2016 - BRUSSELS

## Pact of Amsterdam: a new role for cities in EU policy making as EUROCITIES turns 30

As EUROCITIES celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the urban agenda for the EU is an opportunity to build a stronger Europe closer to its citizens, at a time when the European project is increasingly coming under scrutiny. The Dutch EU presidency today launches the Pact of Amsterdam establishing an urban agenda for the EU. This shows important political recognition of the role of cities in the EU, providing a new framework for their involvement in developing and implementing European policy.

Speaking ahead of the launch of the Pact of Amsterdam at an informal ministerial meeting today in Amsterdam, Johanna Rolland, mayor of Nantes and EUROCITIES president said:

“Our cities have shown that the values behind the European project are still very much alive. Cities have rallied to deal with the refugee crisis where national responses have been slow. We are committed every day to greater solidarity, cohesion and citizen participation. We are working to build a stronger Europe, one that is closer to its people.”

Thematic partnerships are one of the main tools intended to deliver the goals of the urban agenda. These partnerships bring cities, member states and the European Commission together to generate better understanding of how EU policies impact on cities, and the challenges related to their implementation. EUROCITIES has been involved in the partnerships throughout their pilot phase.

Johanna Rolland said:

“Our aim is to develop and implement integrated and coherent European public policies and funding to address our shared challenges. This is not just about using new tools but, most of all, about the results. This is our opportunity to test a new way of working in partnership with cities, member states and the EU, and make the most of the tools proposed to deliver better regulation, better funding and better knowledge sharing.”

The success of the urban agenda depends on strong political leadership within the European Commission. An ‘urban envoy’ within the Commission would help drive and oversee the implementation of the agenda. The Netherlands has been proactive in pushing ahead with the urban agenda throughout its presidency. Strong engagement from all partners is now essential to make it work.

In the longer term, we would like the urban agenda to lead to a more effective approach to policy and funding with an impact on cities, where three quarters of the European population lives, in particular with a view to the financial framework post-2020.

Johanna Rolland continued:

“Adopting the Pact of Amsterdam is just a start. What matters now is how we all put our urban agenda into practice. Our citizens deserve real commitment from all European stakeholders, member states and the European Commission for a renewed and transparent governance of urban issues in Europe, beyond simple cooperation.

EUROCITIES was established in 1986 by the cities of Barcelona, Birmingham, Frankfurt, Lyon, Milan and Rotterdam, and now represents 139 cities in 39 countries representing 130 million European citizens.

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### Notes to editors

- EUROCITIES statement: <http://bit.ly/27YHLxS>; infographic - ‘Towards an EU urban agenda’: <http://bit.ly/1K6ALDN>
- EUROCITIES: [www.eurocities.eu](http://www.eurocities.eu); Twitter: @EUROCITIEStweet via #EUUrbanAgenda

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