

## Five ways to a more social Europe

City politicians and experts from over 50 major European cities have called on the EU to strengthen commitments for a more social Europe. They agreed [10 key recommendations](#) to deliver social rights for all by proposing two actions across each of the following five areas:

- Fighting poverty: immediate actions and long term visions
- Inclusive and equitable early childhood education for all
- Decent work for all: focus on young people
- Addressing gentrification and ensuring access to affordable housing for all
- Healthy cities promoting well-being for all at all ages

The city authorities also adopted a joint position on the ESF+ calling for financial support for cities to deliver on commitments to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The current European Social Fund is a major source of funding for cities, which have used the programme to achieve better access to jobs, schools, training, housing and social care for those in need. The next funding programme, ESF+, needs to help cities deliver on their commitments to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Laia Ortiz, chair of EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum and deputy mayor of Barcelona, said:

“A stronger Europe is only possible if people are at the centre of it, which should be reflected in the EU’s budget. We believe that as the EU’s main tool to invest in people, the ESF+ must be shaped closer to people to better respond to the social challenges they face. Only by involving cities as reliable partners in the governance and programming, can the new fund lead to bigger impact for people. Let’s boost the EU’s social cohesion, by linking ESF+ to the European Pillar of Social Rights and leading the way to a more social Europe.”

The success of frameworks such as the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the EU’s Pillar of Social Rights depend on cities as active agents of social change. Cities play a critical role in delivering social sustainability and social rights for all, including to the most vulnerable. Without the involvement of cities, 65% of the SDGs and two thirds of the principles of the EU Pillar of Social Rights will not be fully achieved.

Werner Wölfle, deputy mayor of Stuttgart for social affairs and integration, said:

“Cities have a responsibility to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Pillar of Social Rights at local level. Cities know the needs and capacities of local communities and are best placed to turn these global goals and EU principles into real actions that work for people, especially those who are at risk of falling behind. Stuttgart is acting via a local level strategy, and we see that many cities throughout Europe are doing the same.”

Stuttgart also became the latest city to commit to implementing the social pillar, by pledging to principle 17, ‘inclusion of people with disabilities’, with many other cities ready to follow in the coming months. The city will invest over €2.5 million each year on new measures for the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Participants, who met for the EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum, elected a new forum chair, Andreas Schönström, deputy mayor of Malmo, and a vice chair, Maarten van Ooijen, deputy mayor of Utrecht.

[ENDS]

## Notes to Editors

1. EUROCITIES is the political platform for major European cities. We network the local governments of over 140 of Europe's largest cities and more than 40 partner cities that between them govern some 130 million citizens across 39 countries. [www.eurocities.eu](http://www.eurocities.eu)
2. The full list of 10 recommendations agreed by politicians and experts from over 50 cities is available here: <https://bit.ly/2D2LcN8>
3. The joint position on ESF+ can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2pLw91M>
4. EUROCITIES statement on 'Social Rights for All' can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2heAxT5>
5. Stuttgart's full pledge to the European Pillar of Social Rights is here: <https://bit.ly/2O491W1>
6. The meeting took place in the context of EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum in Stuttgart from 23-24 October

## Media contact:

Alex Godson: +32 495 298 594 // [alex.godson@eurocities.eu](mailto:alex.godson@eurocities.eu)