

Conclusions from the Cities' Social Summit

6 May 2021

We are facing an unprecedented crisis that is deepening social inequalities. Nowhere is this more visible than in our cities where homelessness is on the rise, unemployment rates are shooting upwards and new groups of people are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Addressing this crisis requires bold actions and a new pact for all levels of government to work together to build a just, sustainable and inclusive recovery, leaving no one behind.

Cities are committed to work together with EU and national leaders to put people first in Europe's recovery and transition process. Being home to over 75% of Europe's population, our cities are the engines of Europe's economies, the beating hearts of Europe's societies and the closest level of government to Europe's people. As city leaders, we are responsible for implementing more than half of the EU's social acquis and for ensuring two thirds of the total public social investment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have stepped up our role in managing the crisis on the frontlines by putting in place immediate measures to save jobs, help local businesses and protect the most vulnerable people.

We are ready to join forces in strengthening social Europe, reinforcing the European Green Deal through a stronger social dimension and efficiently delivering the European Pillar of Social Rights in line with local needs.

We want to ensure the social and green agendas go together in Europe's recovery. And to this purpose we are creating a Mayors Alliance for the European Green Deal that brings together ambitious local action where climate, environment and social goals go hand in hand.

The road to a stronger social Europe by 2030 needs cities in the driving seat to bring Europe closer to citizens and bring all people on board for just transitions. We are ready to fulfil our role and we expect European leaders to engage us as key partners in the EU agenda for recovery.

Cities contributions to delivering the European Pillar of Social Rights

Cities have already proven their commitment to the European Pillar of Social Rights with real actions on the ground. We have taken tangible measures to promote social rights for all people through the **66 city pledges** collected as part of the Eurocities campaign '[Inclusive Cities 4 All](#)' and we have so far mobilised a total municipal investment of **€15 billion** towards the Pillar principles.

Cities can contribute to the EU's social targets for 2030 with concrete actions:

- **Inclusive employment: decent working conditions, local pact and social economy.** Cities can support fair pay and decent working conditions, including for platform workers, with social clauses in public

procurement and awareness raising campaigns. We can set up Local Pacts for Employment with local companies to help people enter local jobs. We want to foster the social economy and coordinate measures for inclusive labour markets especially for young people, women, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, migrants and minorities.

- **Skills: addressing the mismatch, Local Pact for Skills, addressing the digital divide.** We want to step up our efforts to address the skills mismatch at local level through up-skilling and re-skilling helping people to access jobs in the new green and digital sectors. Cities are able to coordinate Local Pacts for Skills, with local businesses, education and training providers setting training pathways to match the demand and offer for new skills. We are able to tackle the digital divide by investing in digital skills, including the elderly, early school leavers and the long-term unemployed.
- **Poverty reduction: ensuring urban social cohesion.** We are committed to strengthen our social inclusion measures to combat urban poverty, grant active support to the most vulnerable and equal opportunities for all people. Cities can focus on fighting child poverty by improving access and take-up of key services by children in need and increasing the capacity, quality and affordability of childcare services in our cities. We can continue to support local plans for integration of migrants and local strategies for Roma inclusion. We want to support the inclusion of people with disabilities and age-friendly strategies to tailor our services to the needs of the most vulnerable in our society.
- **Fighting and preventing homelessness.** Housing is a human right and cities can set up local strategies for preventing and fighting homelessness, combining housing support with social, health and active inclusion into employment.
- **Investing in affordable housing.** Lack of affordable housing is a worrying trend in cities: gentrification, touristification and financialisation of housing resulted in a higher number of people from the lower middle class facing housing deprivation. We aim to boost long-term investments in affordable and social housing, and use it as a tool for social mix, urban regeneration and social cohesion.

Our recommendations

The EU social targets for 2030 should be matched by ambitious social policy reforms and social investments. We call for:

- **A pact between city and EU leaders to join forces in delivering the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan with strong synergies with the European Green Deal, recovery fund and investment in social infrastructure.** We call for an annual social summit on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan with a meaningful representation of cities in the debates. Moreover, cities should be involved in the national recovery plans to ensure that the recovery priorities match the needs at local level for urgent investments into projects to support fair, green and digital transformations.
- **Reinforcing the social dimension of the European Green Deal.** Cities fully support the goals of the Green Deal and believe climate neutrality by 2050 can be achieved, while ensuring a fair and inclusive transition. We must ensure the cost of housing remains affordable after investment in energy efficiency. The social and green agendas need to go **together in Europe's recovery by matching green and digital investments with social investments.**

- **Strengthening social investment and investment in social infrastructure as key means to deliver a just recovery.** Taking into account the deep social impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, the recovery will require an unprecedented level of social investment in local services and social infrastructure that cannot be done by cities alone. Even prior to the pandemic, the gap in social infrastructure investment was estimated to be €192 billion per year and now this risks increasing further. Investing in social and affordable housing as well as childcare, education and training infrastructure will help Europe to exit the crisis.