Cities unite for sustainable, attractive public transport

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Representatives from major European cities and public transport organisations – including UITP and Eurocities – have reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing sustainable, accessible, and resilient public transport systems that facilitate seamless daily mobility across Europe's urban areas.

Recognising the sector's critical role in addressing social, economic and environmental challenges, the cities and organisations have signed a new declaration in Barcelona in which they commit to strengthening collaboration, supporting multimodal integration, ensuring affordability, and enhancing climate resilience.

> Strong public transport systems are key to addressing the urban challenges of the rising cost of living, social cohesion and climate change. As cities take action to make public transport sustainable and attractive, we urge the European institutions to step up investments toward this goal, says André Sobczak, Secretary General of Eurocities. "Furthermore, coordination at the European, national and regional levels will be crucial to maximise these efforts and create public transport systems that truly serve citizens.

The signatories of the declaration say that their focus remains on advancing public transport by prioritising sustainability, resilience, accessibility, and security within their respective regions. To ensure that public transport becomes a reliable and high-quality option for the majority, the signatories aim to collaborate across government levels, learning from the global pandemic to mitigate future risks.

They envision seamless integration of public transport with cycling, walking, and shared mobility, while making transport affordable and accessible for vulnerable communities, thereby providing equal access to jobs, education, and essential services.

The signatories pledge to strengthen the sector's resilience against

climate change disruptions, improve its attractiveness to address staff shortages, and invest in skills development, with a strong emphasis on achieving gender balance.

The declaration proposes several actions, including:

- Calling on European policymakers to adopt a public transport declaration that sets shared objectives, highlights positive impacts, and endorses best practices.

- Requesting support from European policymakers for zero-emission mobility, digitalisation, network projects, and innovation through the EU multi-annual financial framework.

- Advocating for new funding mechanisms based on beneficiary-payer and polluter-payer schemes, similar to the Emission Trading System, for transport investments.

- Requesting national policymakers to ensure stable, long-term funding for sustainable public transport development.

- Encouraging Social Climate Plans that prioritise public transport to improve accessibility for vulnerable communities.

> As we gather here in Barcelona, we reaffirm our collective commitment to promote local public transport at the heart of sustainable, inclusive, and resilient mobility in our cities," says Thomas Avanzata, Spokesperson of the UITP EU Committee. "Together, through innovation and collaboration, we can ensure that public transport not only meets the mobility needs of all citizens but also plays a vital role in combating climate change and promoting social equity. This initiative also aims at making local public transport a true European priority and a symbol.

1. The European Declaration for Sustainable and Attractive Public Transport in Cities is available for download here.

2. The declaration was signed by city and association representatives in Barcelona on 5 November 2024. At this high-level political meeting, the signatories shared their vision for sustainable, attractive public transport.

3. UITP is the international association representing public transport

stakeholders. In the European Union, UITP brings together more than 450 urban, suburban, and regional public transport operators, and authorities from all Member States. We represent the perspective of short distance passenger transport services by all sustainable modes: bus, regional and suburban rail, metro, light rail, tram and waterborne.

4. Eurocities wants to make cities places where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life, is able to move around safely, access quality and inclusive public services and benefit from a healthy environment. We do this by networking more than 200 larger European cities, which together represent some 150 million people across 38 countries, and by gathering evidence of how policy making impacts on people to inspire other cities and EU decision makers. Connect with us at https://eurocities.eu/ or by following our

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