

Gdansk, Madrid and Pau win top prizes at Eurocities Awards



PUBLISHED MAY 31, 2024
BY [EUROCITIES](#)

Gdansk, Madrid and Pau have scooped the top prizes at the Eurocities Awards 2024. Each city demonstrated extraordinary commitment to this year's theme of 'tackling global challenges,' which focused on cities' innovative solutions to overcoming the many crises threatening society and to building a green, resilient and just future for everyone.

The 2024 winners impressed the panel of expert judges with their projects to attract skilled workers for the green transition, support sustainable food systems, and mobilise residents to vote in elections.

- Madrid won in the 'Innovation ecosystems: attracting and retaining talent' award category with its Centre for Innovation in the Circular Economy, a unique hub fostering innovation and supporting business entrepreneurship to help the city reduce waste and embrace sustainability.
- Pau won in the 'Sustainable food systems: empowering people' category, with its Green Belt project, which is shortening food supply chains and increasing the food and drink produced locally. The project aims to settle 100 small farmers, providing them with technical assistance and access to city markets.
- Gdansk won in the 'Creative election campaigns: mobilising citizens' category for its viral campaign 'Don't sleep, or you will be outvoted.' Created to inform the public about the 2023 national elections, the campaign sparked a record turnout, motivating first-time voters, young people and women to have their say.

The winners of this year's Eurocities Awards have shown their exceptional drive to create healthier, more prosperous futures for their residents and to stand up for the core European values of democracy and equality,

said Burkhard Jung, President of Eurocities and Mayor of Leipzig.

Amid increasing political division in Europe, widening inequalities and the impacts of climate change, our cities are responding with innovative, inspirational projects that are transforming people's lives and setting a compelling example for others to follow.

As the European elections draw closer, cities are proving that they have the vision needed to tackle society's most significant challenges. The EU must recognise this transformative power, working with city governments to develop strong policies that will ensure a green, prosperous future for all, built on the values of democracy and equality.

The awards ceremony took place on 31 May 2024, during the Eurocities Conference, held in the Romanian city of Cluj-Napoca.

At the annual conference, the mayors of more than 200 cities that are part of the Eurocities network adopted a major new declaration – The values that unites us – committing to uphold human rights, freedom and democracy in Europe and beyond. Ahead of the European Parliament elections, with populist and far right politicians expected to gain support, the declaration underlines mayors' commitment to an open, pluralistic and inclusive society.

Delegates at the Eurocities conference also took part in elections for Eurocities Executive Committee – always represented by politicians from 12 cities, who form the main decision-making body of the organisation.

The new committee member, which receives a three-year mandate, is the city of Sofia, while Braga, Florence and Oslo were re-elected. The other member cities of Eurocities Executive Committee are Athens, Barcelona, Ghent, Helsinki, Leipzig, Nantes, Tallinn and Vienna. Meanwhile, the mayor of Rotterdam has decided to step down from his role within the group.

1. The Eurocities Awards showcase outstanding achievements by Eurocities member cities in the delivery of local activities or practices which improve the quality of life for citizens. Nine cities were shortlisted for the prizes across the three categories: Madrid, Aix-Marseille and Porto competed in the 'Innovation ecosystems: attracting and retaining talent' category; Bordeaux, Dortmund and Pau in the 'Sustainable food systems: empowering people' category; and

Gdansk, Rotterdam and Zurich in the 'Creative election campaigns: mobilising citizens' category.

Take a closer look at the work of the nine shortlisted finalists:
<https://eurocities.eu/awards>

Check out the nine finalists' video presentations on YouTube:
Eurocities Awards 2024 – all city project videos.

2. All photos can be found on the Eurocities Flickr page.

If you would like any specific photos from the awards ceremony, you can download them from the Flickr page, making sure that you mention the photos are 'copyright of Simion Sebastian Tataru.'

3. The Eurocities Awards are judged by an expert panel each year. For 2024 this was: Bianca Faragau, Institutional Policy Officer at the Permanent Representation of the European Investment Bank; Catarina Heeckt, Programme Lead for the European Cities Programme, London School of Economics; Giovanna Coi, Data Journalist for Politico Europe; Emilia Botezan, Head of the Foreign Affairs and Investments Cluj-Napoca; Miguel González, Communications Manager at the Federation for Innovation in Democracy – Europe (FIDE). Find out more: Eurocities 2024 Cluj-Napoca – Eurocities 2024 Cluj-Napoca (c-edu.ro)

4. The Eurocities Annual Conference focuses on a different theme each year. During this year's three-day conference in Cluj-Napoca, more than 500 delegates from over 100 cities around Europe focused on cities' central role in tackling the significant challenges currently facing our society. More information on Eurocities 2024 is available here: Eurocities 2024 Cluj-Napoca – Eurocities 2024 Cluj-Napoca (c-edu.ro)

Watch the recordings of the Eurocities conference opening session, and the final session, focusing on the findings of the Eurocities Pulse Mayors Survey 2024.

5. Read the declaration, 'The values that unite us,' signed by the mayors of cities in the Eurocities network: <https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Eurocities-th...>

6. 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 almost 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 www.eurocities.eu or by following our

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Press release distributed by Wire Association on behalf of Eurocities, on May 31, 2024. For more information subscribe and [follow](#) us.

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