Ihor Terekhov, Mayor of Kharkiv, and city of Turin win top prizes at Eurocities Awards 2025

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Ihor Terekhov, Mayor of Kharkiv, and the city of Turin have been announced as the winners of the Eurocities Awards 2025. Both winners have shown exceptional dedication to addressing society's most urgent crises, while working to build a just and resilient future for everyone.

This year, the Eurocities Awards were re-invented. Eurocities member cities showcased not only outstanding urban projects but also the incredible people driving transformative change in our cities.

The first-ever City Heroes Award recognised politicians and city officials for their exceptional leadership or initiatives, at the local or European level. The inspiring local leaders nominated were Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj–Napoca, Ihor Terekhov, Mayor of Kharkiv, and Markku Markkula, President of Helsinki-Uusimaa Region and Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions.

The Inspiring City Initiative Award highlighted cities that are creating opportunities and investing in long-term prosperity for their residents. Second place in this category was awarded to Gothenburg's school community hubs supporting children and their families, and third place went to Nice's community restaurants tackling senior isolation. The other finalists were Gaziantep's rehabilitation centre for Turkish earthquake survivors, and C6 Finland's The Finnish Alliance model, supporting cooperation between Finland's government and its six largest cities.

- Mayor Ihor Terekhov was chosen for the extraordinary dedication and exceptional leadership he has shown in guiding the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv throughout the Russian war. Despite constant shelling and the city's proximity to the Russian border, he has ensured the continuity of essential services for Kharkiv's 1.3 million residents. His

initiatives, including Ukraine's only underground schools and free public transport, have made Kharkiv a symbol of resilience and innovation in the face of war.

Accepting his award, Ihor Terekhov, Mayor of Kharkiv, said:

> It is a great honour for me to receive this Eurocities Award, but I want to emphasise that it does not belong to me personally, it belongs to the whole of Kharkiv city and every citizen. It is a recognition of our joint efforts, our resilience and unity. This is the result of the support we have received from the cities of Europe throughout the war.

Inspiring City Initiative Award winner:

- Turin was selected for its ToNite project which has transformed nighttime safety in the city's once neglected Dora River area. By combining urban regeneration with social innovation, the project has made public spaces safer and more welcoming for the local community. It created an 'outdoor campus' for students, turned an abandoned site into a family-friendly playground, and improved the riverbanks with new lighting and street furniture. ToNite has also supported community-led projects involving over 30,000 people, strengthening social inclusion and building a stronger sense of community.

Daniela Silvi, Head of International Relations at the City of Turin, said:

> We would like to express our gratitude and thanks for this acknowledgement that celebrates the dedication of our community to co-create solutions that prioritise equity, social inclusion, innovation and sustainability. From our industrial roots to our current role as living lab for urban experimentation, Turin has transformed challenges into opportunities, becoming European Capital of Innovation 2024-2025.

Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga, and Chair of the Awards jury which shortlisted nominees, said: "Congratulations to this year's winners of the Eurocities Awards. They are outstanding examples of how cities, and the inspiring people who lead them, are delivering practical solutions to transform people's lives and strengthen our communities.

> Throughout the Russian bombardment of Kharkiv, Ihor

> Terekhov has shown remarkable courage and leadership to support his people in the most difficult circumstances, and Turin's ToNite project shows how urban regeneration can transform neighbourhoods, making them safer and more inclusive for residents. These awards celebrate the power of cities to lead in times of crisis and transformation.

The awards ceremony took place on 5 June 2025, during the Eurocities Conference, held in the Portuguese city of Braga.

1. The Eurocities Awards showcase outstanding achievements by Eurocities member cities and individuals working for those cities in the delivery of local activities or practices which improve the quality of life for citizens. Take a closer look at the shortlisted finalists: https://eurocities.eu/awards

2. Check out the finalists' video presentations on YouTube: Eurocities Awards 2025 – YouTube

3. 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 you mention the photos are 'copyright of Eurocities.'

4. The shortlist for this year's Eurocities Awards was chosen by an expert panel made up of: Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga and chair of the jury; Elisa Ferreira, former European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms and current Professor in the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto; Ricardo Martinez, Senior Research Fellow in Global Cities at the think tank CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs); David Rodrigues, former Executive Deputy Director at the Red Cross in Portugal and currently Executive Board Member of Fundação Primavera (a foundation in Braga helping organisations that support elderly people and children). For the first time, the winners of the Eurocities Awards were voted on by city contact officers in the Eurocities network.

5. The Eurocities Annual Conference focuses on a different theme each year. During this year's three-day conference in Braga, more than 400 delegates from over 100 cities around Europe focused on how city leaders and the EU can work together to build a more just and resilient future for the people of Europe. More information on

Eurocities 2025 is available here: Eurocities Annual Conference 2025 Braga – Eurocities

6. Eurocities wants to make cities places where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life, can move around safely, access quality and inclusive public services and benefit from a healthy environment. We do this by networking over 200 larger European cities, which together represent some 150 million people across 39 countries, and by gathering evidence of how policy making impacts people to inspire other cities and EU decision makers. Connect with us at eurocities.eu or by following our Bluesky, Youtube.

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