# Major survey of European mayors: mayors seek support on climate and social actions

PUBLISHED JUN 12, 2023
BY EUROCITIES

One year ahead of the European elections, the first annual Eurocities Pulse survey, which collected results from 92 mayors in 28 European countries, uncovers the major trends, challenges and priorities that shape urban affairs in 2023. Top of the bill for mayors' priorities in 2023 is climate action – with more than half of mayors confirming this – twice that of any other category.

> The Mayors' strong commitment to climate action comes in contrast to a worrying trend we currently see among national and European politicians, many of whom are turning away from their commitment to a climate neutral Europe,

says André Sobczak, Secretary General of Eurocities.

The second biggest priority for European Mayors, according to the poll, is investing in sustainable mobility, which has clear links with climate action.

When it comes to their expectations of being able to fund different priorities, mayors highlight that current resources are not enough. While EU funding is helping mayors to somewhat cover the huge financial gaps in areas such as climate and energy, mayors do not feel they receive comparable support for their other priorities.

> Alongside climate change and the energy transition, the biggest financial gaps for cities over the next five years are in areas linked to equality and social inclusion," says Sobczak. "Even though city and EU priorities seem often to be very much aligned, these are areas where European funding is falling short, and are held back by national governments. If we do not change this, we risk seeing a huge backlash in cities.

As momentum builds towards next year's European elections, the

survey sought to ‘take the pulse’ of European mayors at a crucial moment and kickstart the discussion on what is needed to localise Europe.

> In most cases, mayors are very aligned with European priorities. In recent years, European cities have also demonstrated their central role when tackling global challenges such as the Russian war in Ukraine and the Covid pandemic, while taking measures to sure up Europe’s energy and food security,
>
> However, the fact that more than half of mayors based in the EU see EU rules as a burden to implementing their local priorities, and feel that the EU institutions do not listen to them, should sound as a wakeup call. The upcoming EU campaign should take this into account, focusing on local priorities that can reduce inequalities, strengthen public services and make a difference to peoples’ lives.

Special sections of the 44-page survey report also delve into mayors’ responses to the Russian war in Ukraine and their actions on the energy crisis, including on energy poverty. Guest essays from Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament and Kadri Simson, European Commissioner for Energy, recognise the role of cities and help to set the scene for each section respectively.

According to the survey, the top priorities for mayors in 2023 are:

- 55% climate action: mayors mentioned the development of low emission zones, the creation of more green spaces in cities, and support for the European Green Deal.

- 23% sustainable mobility: mayors plans include expanding metro lines and renewing green bus fleets.

- 20% managing economic recovery: mayors stressed the need for more funding to implement plans to respond to the pandemic.

Other significant findings from the survey are:

- The top investment priorities for mayors to fight the energy crisis are sustainable mobility (24%), buildings renovation and energy efficiency (23%) and the development of renewable/green energy (20%).

- 92% of EU mayors feel they are contributing to EU priorities via the actions in their cities. However, more than 50% of mayors based in the EU say that the EU institutions and policies tend not to take into consideration their specific needs and their potential.

- Over 86% of mayors said the current high level of inflation had affected their ability to make strategic long-term investments.

- Most mayors said they will have difficulty having sufficient or partial resources to match their needs when it comes to dealing with issues such as housing (38%), climate change and the energy transition (37%), and urban poverty social exclusion (32%).

The top challenges faced by mayors in 2022 were:

- 28% the energy crisis: for mayors, this relates to issues like climate change and energy poverty. Challenges to speed up cities' energy transition include accessing finance and making buildings energy efficient.

- 26% climate change: mayors are working on ways to mitigate extreme weather while keeping up with ambitious climate neutrality objectives.

- 23% ongoing economic recovery: issues for mayors include stimulating post Covid growth and absorbing high inflation in the public budget.

- 22% migration: mayors are dealing with the high number of Ukrainian refugees resulting from Russia's war in Ukraine.

The first edition of the Eurocities Pulse survey is based on research conducted among mayors from the 210 member cities of the Eurocities network. Between January and March 2023, the mayors were invited to reply to an online survey. The survey consisted of 24 open-ended and closed questions, available in the annex. For the closed questions, the results are presented at an aggregated level with no further manipulation. For some of the questions, such as top challenges and top priorities for 2023, Eurocities used open-ended questions to allow mayors to respond freely without predetermining their response.

To make sense of these responses, Eurocities further analysed them,

categorised, and ranked them accordingly. The survey was complemented by a focus group of city leaders from the Eurocities Executive Committee that helped with discussion and validation ofsome of the assumptions and the results. Eurocities received 92 responses from mayors of large cities across 28 European countries. The responses thus offer a good representative sample of the political voice of mayors from major European cities on key issues.

You can download a pdf of the Eurocities Pulse Survey here: https://monitor.eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Euroc... The Eurocities Pulse Survey is a major element of the Eurocities Monitor, which presents all the most interesting data and insights gathered throughout the year by Eurocities' Brussels-based staff, and via input from our network of more than 6,000 city officials from all over Europe. The Eurocities Monitor therefore presents all the results of the Eurocities Pulse, as well as other information presented via essays on each of the Eurocities working areas. It is available online here: https://monitor.eurocities.eu/ Building on this overwhelming evidence, Eurocities has put out concrete recommendations on how the EU can better work with cities and support them in implementing their priorities and speeding up societal transformation. Eurocities policy proposals for how the EU can work better with cities are available here.

This is further summarised in an infographic here. 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

For media enquiries contact Andrew Kennedy, Eurocities communications advisor andrew.kennedy@eurocities.eu// 0470 65 01 73.

*Press release distributed by Wire Association on behalf of Eurocities, on Jun 12, 2023. For more information subscribe and follow us.*

# Media Assets

## Embedded Media

Visit the online press release to interact with the embedded media.

https://wireassociation.eu/newsroom/eurocities/releases/en/major-survey-of-european-mayors-mayors-seek-support-on-climate-and-social-actions-1191

---

# Eurocities

**Newsroom:** https://wireassociation.eu/newsroom/eurocities
**Website:** https://eurocities.eu/
**Primary Email:** info@eurocities.eu

## Social Media

Twitter - https://twitter.com/eurocities
Linkedin - https://www.linkedin.com/company/eurocities
Youtube - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-IuYE9G9_kknXOWB2VTwEQ
Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/EUROCITIES/
Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/eurocities.eu

---