Mayor of Ghent elected new Eurocities President

PUBLISHED JUN 6, 2025
BY EUROCITIES

Mathias De Clercq, Mayor of Ghent, has been elected President of Eurocities and will represent major European cities for the next two years. He succeeds Burkhard Jung, Mayor of Leipzig, and will be joined by Jaume Collboni, Mayor of Barcelona, who is the new Vice President of Eurocities for the same period.

De Clercq, elected by delegates from over 200 large European cities, takes on the role at a pivotal moment for Europe, marked by geopolitical instability, the climate emergency and growing inequalities. His priority will be to strengthen the role of cities in shaping EU policies and ensure they have a seat at the table in key European debates.

> With 75% of Europeans living in urban areas, our cities are at the forefront of every major challenge Europe faces, from democratic resilience to climate action to social inclusion," says De Clercq. "As the EU sets its course for the coming years, I will work to ensure that local voices are heard, supported and empowered at every level of policymaking.

A strong focus of De Clercq's presidency will be on defending democratic values. He has raised concern over growing polarisation, declining trust in institutions, and the spread of disinformation.

> We must also remain steadfast in defending European democratic principles. This includes standing with the people of Ukraine and continuing to call for the release of Ekrem İmamoğlu, Mayor of Istanbul, who remains unjustly imprisoned in Turkey. As a network we must stand up for human rights and dignity. Eurocities will continue advocating for democratic values, diversity, and peace both within and beyond the EU.

De Clercq is committed to leading cities through a fair green and industrial transition. With the EU's Clean Industrial Deal reshaping the policy landscape, he sees a chance to align climate goals with

economic resilience. He is calling for cities to be recognised not just as implementers, but as essential partners in Europe's sustainable transformation.

> We need strong EU policies and investments that reflect the real needs of people in our cities," explains De Clercq. "From affordable housing to clean energy and innovation, the transition must be inclusive, place-based and socially just.

Within the Eurocities network, De Clercq will promote stronger collaboration between city governments and more integrated work across policy areas.

> I sincerely thank my fellow mayors for the trust they have placed in me," he said. "With Ghent's deep commitment to European cooperation, we will invest fully in making this presidency a success, for our cities, for our residents and for Europe.

Jaume Collboni, Mayor of Barcelona, will serve as Vice President of Eurocities in tandem with Laia Bonet, First Deputy Mayor of Barcelona.

Mayor Collboni said:

> As cities, we are the level of government closest to people's lives. In these challenging times, we must take the lead on delivering tangible, citizen-centred solutions. Barcelona will work with Ghent to ensure that the voice of cities is heard and that local priorities, like affordable housing, climate justice and democratic participation, are reflected in European policy.

Delegates at the 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.

Tallinn, Ghent and Barcelona were re-elected, while Frankfurt was elected to the Eurocities Executive Committee. Each now takes on the position for a period of three years. The other member cities of Eurocities Executive Committee are Athens, Braga, Florence, Helsinki, Nantes, Oslo, Sofia and Vienna.

In addition, the newly elected chairs and vice chairs of Eurocities

political forums are: Culture Forum (Glasgow and Strasbourg); Digital Forum (Bordeaux Metropole and Helsinki); Economic Development Forum (Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropole and Amsterdam); Environment Forum (Bologna and Vienna); Mobility Forum (Stockholm and Rome); Social Affairs Forum (Lyon Metropole and Zagreb).

1. 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 BlueSky and YouTube

2. The election of the Eurocities President, Vice President and Executive Committee took place at the Eurocities Conference 2025. This theme of this year's conference, held in Braga from 4-6 June, was ' Stronger Cities, Fairer Europe'.

3. View the updated members of the Eurocities Executive Committee.

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Press release distributed by Wire Association on behalf of Eurocities, on Jun 6, 2025. For more information subscribe and follow us.

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