

POLITICAL DECLARATION

June, 05 2019 – LYON

The Mayors, Presidents and political Representatives of the European metropolitan areas gathered in Lyon for the 5th forum EMA and advocate for

“European inclusive metropolitan areas facing together social challenges”

Metropolitan areas have a particular responsibility due to the increasing concentration of activities, wealth and populations in cities and territories, with all the social and spatial tensions it generates.

On a daily basis and in a spirit of solidarity, urban territories are forging links with all the stakeholders to work on economic development and also the social and territorial cohesion of their living areas. Our territories are demonstrating their ability to act and assume their responsibilities for solidarity between urban centres, towns, low-income neighbourhoods, but also suburban and rural areas.

The work carried out within the EMA serves to remind us that the majority of competencies and tools of social policy are shared widely by the various public decision-making levels, from local to national, but also engaging the stakeholders of civil society. The European metropolitan areas are making considerable efforts and are mobilising major resources in social policy despite that fact that the importance given them in the national or sectoral programmes of European funds is by no means proportionate¹.

Social cohesion in the metropolitan areas is also a long-standing and constant challenge to local elected officials, to which they respond by major investment in the urban, rural, economic and social development of their territories.

However, the necessary focus on employment, economic inclusion and amenities does not provide for adequate management of all societal issues such as homelessness, social, racial

¹ Cf. Preliminary study by the CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs) – April 2019

and sex discrimination, gender inequality, children at risk, dependent people, urban poverty, and integration of refugees.

We are convinced that the challenge today is to allow everyone, in particular those with the least prospect of employment and housing, thus the most vulnerable, to be recognised, protected and respected.

European metropolitan cities and authorities reaffirm their will to implement integrated holistic, and innovative approaches to meet the needs of their citizens. They research, experiment and share the best solutions by being closer to local challenges, in the field.

Social inequality needs to be handled by a transversal approach via other policies at metropolitan or regional level, such as territorial planning, mobility and transport, the management of environmental services, economic development and the management of public space, and via policies of redistribution in favour of municipalities in the metropolitan area.

This is why the political network of the EMA intends, in the context of its 5th meeting in Lyon, to continue:

- The dynamic of the first four editions of the EMA, which every year sees the metropolitan areas exchange their thoughts and their experiences to help improve the services offered to their citizens;
- The *“inclusive cities for all: social rights in my city”* initiative launched by the Eurocities network in February 2019.

Today, many European metropolises and cities have committed to implementing various principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights;

- The meeting of the International Social Housing Festival which is to launch Lyon Commitment *“For a society of affordable Housing”* on 4 June 2019

Thus, today, We, as local authorities elected officials, call for:

1. The new European Parliament following the elections on 26 May, the European Commission, the European Council, the European Committee of the Regions, to work with courage for a more social Europe, one that takes into account and recognises the role played by the metropolitan areas in these policies. The European project is first and foremost a humanist project, which is judged upon its ability to enable everyone to participate fully in society.
2. The European institutions to give greater importance to the metropolitan authorities in the European governance process. Our territories are real living spaces with a concentration of challenges which can only be addressed by a metropolitan approach: environmental quality, affordable housing, territorial cohesion and a reduction in inequality of all kinds. Thus, local authorities are the most able to respond precisely and fairly to local and European challenges alike.

As such, the Urban Agenda has since its creation constituted a welcome recognition of the key role of local authorities in the major challenges for the Europe of tomorrow, including housing, climate change, the ageing population, urban poverty, jobs and skills. This role must be upheld in the new partnerships to come.

3. A stronger link between the achievement the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, the respect for the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the recommendations of the European Semester, which cannot only address the economic dimension at the expense of the social needs of populations and environmental protection.
4. The European Financial Framework for 2021-2027 to support a more social Europe. The definition of next policies, in particular the Cohesion Policy, must more actively integrate the metropolitan areas, insofar as they are key actors to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In this context, we welcome the recent position of the European Parliament in early 2019 on the European Social Fund (ESF+) regulation and the proposal to increase its funding to € 120.5 billion and its rollout “at national, regional and local level”. This position converges with the priorities which the future Cohesion Policy needs to set itself.

5. The urban part of the Cohesion Policy to be strengthened: while it has allowed our territories to benefit, in the period of 2014-2020, from more than one billion euros, it must be clarified and strengthened, and its implementation must be facilitated for the next programming period of 2021-2027.

Over and above European and national strategies - we, the European metropolitan authorities, in all our geographical, economic, social and cultural diversity - commit to continuing our collaboration within the European Metropolitan Authorities network supporting a solidary United Europe, taking into account the concerns of its citizen.

*“Diversity is Being Invited to the Party, Inclusion is Being Asked to Dance” ®
Vernā Myers, inclusion strategist*

Lyon, June, 05 2019

Signatures
