



European Committee  
of the Regions



## Principles that make cities and local communities Liberal

A liberal city is a space of:

- **Freedom and responsibilities**, where citizens:
  - are aware of their freedoms, and are able to exercise them;
  - understand their responsibilities towards other citizens and the wider community, and fulfil them with conviction.

A liberal mayor will ensure citizens respect the rule of law and that the city administration has these objectives as priorities.

A liberal city is not a place of fear or lawlessness, but rather a space of trust and justice.

- **Free enterprise**, where citizens:
  - are able to develop their entrepreneurship;
  - can contribute to a thriving local economy and grow their small businesses;

A liberal mayor will promote small government, ensuring the city administration limits regulation to what is strictly necessary.

A liberal city is not a place of bureaucracy or big government, but rather a space of efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Democracy**, where citizens:
  - are directly involved in the decision-making processes, or feel that they are actively consulted and that their opinions are listened to and respected;
  - are able to shape the future direction of their own lives and of their local community;
  - individually or through civil society organisations, freely interact with their elected representatives and are able to hold them accountable.

A liberal mayor will be accessible to the citizens and will ensure the city council and administration actively reach out and encourage their participation in the decisions that affect them, and will develop administrative capacity to focus on delivery of results.

A liberal city is not a place of submission, but rather a space for citizen government.

- **Independence**, where citizens:
  - are free from deprivation and able to contribute to society in meaningful ways;
  - in cases where public help is required, are encouraged and helped to regain their independence as quickly as their personal circumstances permit them to.

A liberal mayor will target city policies towards preventing and reducing deprivation, and enabling citizens receiving public assistance to regain their autonomy over time.

A liberal city is not a place that promotes dependence, but a space of empowerment.

- **Inclusiveness and trust**, where citizens:
  - embrace diversity, because freedom and diversity are two sides of the same coin: there cannot be freedom without diversity and there cannot be diversity without freedom;
  - welcome other citizens regardless of their geographical origin, ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, etc.;
  - contribute to building trust across communities, engaging in dialogue, sharing experiences, and working on joint initiatives.

A liberal mayor will set the example by reaching out to all citizens, building bridges not walls, and bringing all citizens together for dialogue and joint projects, and will ensure the city policies prevent the formation of ghettos of any kind. Ghettos destroy trust.

A liberal city is not a place of discrimination or rejection, but rather a space of association and respect.

- **Empowerment and emancipation**, where citizens:
  - are and feel free to choose their own lifestyle;
  - are able to build their own unique identity without being judged by others.

A liberal mayor will set the example by promoting and defending diversity of lifestyles as a strength of the city.

A liberal city is not a place of conformity, but rather a space of choices.

- **Opportunity and social mobility**, where citizens:
  - are able to develop their ideas, talent, and expertise in new ways, quickly and easily;
  - are encouraged and able to fulfil their potential, by acquiring new knowledge and skills.

A liberal mayor will promote the talent factory by actively seeking to remove barriers that inhibit opportunity, while protecting social cohesion, and will ensure city policies promote education, training, and accessibility.

A liberal city is not a place of fatalism, but rather a space of encouragement.

- **Liveability**, where citizens:
  - are and feel safe in their homes and on the street;
  - feel free to access any part of the city;
  - are able to move through the city freely and quickly;
  - are able to lead healthy lives, enjoy clean air and have good access to outdoor spaces and sports facilities;
  - actively contribute to the environment and a sustainable local economy.

A liberal mayor will ensure the city services are focused on enhancing the quality of life of the citizens and on delivering tangible results for them.

A liberal city is not a place of neglect, but rather a space of evolution and improvement.

- **Knowledge, education and culture**, where citizens:
  - have spaces to learn, reflect, be inventive, express their ideas, and share them with other citizens;
  - are able to develop the local culture and share it across borders.

A liberal mayor will encourage diverse cultural expression and the pursuit of knowledge.

A liberal city is not a place of ignorance, but a space of enlightenment.

- **Smart innovation**, where citizens:
  - are able to create new and more efficient working methods;
  - embrace new technologies and incorporate them effectively into society.

A liberal mayor will promote innovation and good civic use of new technologies.

A liberal city is not a place that rejects new ideas and methods but rather a space that is open to smart change and progress.

- **Positive action**, where citizens:
  - interact with other citizens, businesses, and public bodies, creating networks, connections, and partnerships.

A liberal mayor will promote, facilitate and create spaces for this interaction.

A liberal city is not a place of stagnation, but rather a space of dynamic activity.

- **Optimism**, where citizens:
  - believe that it is in their power to build a better future, individually or as a community;
  - see concrete progress and results that confirm their belief.

A liberal mayor will set the example by promoting optimism and delivering positive results.

A liberal city is not a place of pessimism, but rather a space of inspiration.

- **Openness to the world**, where citizens:
  - are able to connect with citizens from other places around the world;
  - have the opportunity to meet and interact with people from other cultures;
  - are able to inspire and be inspired through these interactions.

A liberal mayor will promote curiosity for the rest of the world.

A liberal city is not a place closed off from the world, but rather a space of global connections.

Approved at the 2nd Liberal Mayors Summit, Warsaw, 2 December 2016

Participating mayors:

Belgium – **Bart SOMERS**, Mayor of Mechelen

Belgium – **Patrick De KLERCK**, Mayor of Blankenberge

Czech Republic – **Adriana KRNÁČOVÁ**, Mayor of Prague

Croatia – **Andro VLAHUŠIĆ**, Mayor of Dubrovnik

Estonia – **Mart VÕRKLAEV**, Mayor of Rae municipality

France – **François DECOSTER**, Mayor of Saint Omer

France – **Jean-Christophe LAGARDE**, Mayor of Drancy

Germany – **Dirk HILBERT**, Mayor of Dresden

Ireland – **Kieran O'HANLON**, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick

Ireland – **Fintan PHELAN**, Mayor of Carlow

Lithuania – **Vytautas GRUBLIAUSKAS**, Mayor of Klaipėda

Moldova – **Dorin CHIRTOACA**, Mayor of Chişinău

Slovenia – **Jasna GABRIČ**, Mayor of Trbovlje

Spain – **Guillermo GROSS**, Mayor of Valdemoro

Sweden – **Carola GUNNARSSON**, Mayor of Sala

United Kingdom – **Keith HOUSE**, Leader of the Eastleigh Borough Council