

DECLARATION OF COOPERATION
on Digital Transformation and Smart Growth

Cities lead Europe's growth by producing more than two-thirds of its GDP. Cities promote sustainable growth, more and better jobs, inclusiveness, social equality and resilience.

It is in European cities where a large part of EU policies and legislation take effect and where a significant share of EU funds is invested.

We take note that the European Commission is working towards bringing "Europe closer to citizens" and increasing the financial envelope for sustainable urban development strategies, while it supports the participation of representatives of local and regional governments in European policy making through the Urban Agenda for the EU, which reinforces the urban dimension in all EU relevant policies.

We recognise that advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence, sensor technologies, cloud computing, open data, Internet of Things, and blockchain re-invent the way we can manage our cities' growth and respond to the big societal challenges, such as efficient health systems, cleaner energy and environment, green mobility, social equity and offering high-value jobs. European cities can lead the digital transformation of the economy, sustain growth in the digital era and leverage high-tech to serve people.

We welcome the Commission's Digital Cities Challenge initiative, which helps 41 cities develop ecosystems for smart growth, modernise businesses, create better jobs and become better places to live. The initiative offers leading and bespoke policy advice, mentoring and coaching and opportunities to promote exchanges among the cities. The participating cities form a network of collaboration for sharing insight and practical experience for digital transformation. Together we are stronger.

We commit to:

- **Foster dynamic innovation ecosystems**

- Explore an efficient governance framework and structure able to press ahead with the implementation of the strategy and monitor the outcome. Sharing experience in this field (e.g. an external agency, an NGO, an association of stakeholders, a department within the municipality, etc.) is a valuable first step.
- Reinforce the city as an ecosystem where businesses and citizens can collaborate, prosper and enjoy better quality of life. To achieve this, we engage with all relevant players (local and regional governments, businesses, finance organisations, entrepreneurs, education and research communities, clusters, start-ups, social partners and the civil society) to co-create an ambitious vision and strategy for smart, sustainable, clean and inclusive growth and a more liveable city, enabled by advanced technologies.
- Create a city culture of growth in the digital era, shape and implement joint public-private partnership and action plans.

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- Develop and test novel policy initiatives in a collaborative approach with other cities to reap the benefits of digital transformation.
- **Experiment and utilise cutting-edge technologies and unlock the potential of big data**
 - Consider acting as city-labs for testing and piloting new technologies and city-relevant solutions; work on common online platforms for sharing information, resources, tools, piloting applications and creating joint public sector databases.
 - Reinforce collaboration among technology and innovation centres, clusters, digital innovation hubs, fablabs, incubators, accelerators and venture capital to provide first-class services to businesses and citizens by promoting demand-based development models.
 - Make more public-sector data available and encourage their use by digital and non-digital companies to develop innovative services and support their business operations
 - Use data to identify and close social gaps and divides in local communities.
- **Upskill the city**
 - Cooperate on new business models and partnerships to develop local excellence, knowhow and talents, support entrepreneurship and the upskilling of the workforce.
 - Work towards the digitalisation of industry and development of digital competencies among SMEs while focusing on activities that are of common interest and strategic importance to the local economies.
- **Scale up infrastructures and investments for the 21st century**
 - Exchange best practices on the implementation of cyber-physical infrastructures as a prerequisite for growth.
 - Unleash bold investment opportunities for digital transformation of the local economy, using a mix of financial instruments.
 - Explore opportunities for joint cross-city investments and undertakings (e.g. through the smart specialisation platform for industrial modernisation and the available funding mechanisms at regional, national and EU level), and public-private partnerships for the implementation and management of strategic large-scale infrastructures and applications.
- **Drive change through networking**
 - Engage in the creation of a permanent network of European cities that promote the agenda of digital transformation, collaborative intelligence, and smart growth.
 - Engage in networking activities among European peers and partners offering mutual support and advice to realise the full potential of the digital transformation.
 - Act as models of smart growth and industrial modernisation, engage to spread our experience and knowledge to create a spill over effect towards other European cities.

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The signatories of this declaration commit to a regular assessment of the achievements and progress made on the matters agreed above and on the adoption of appropriate actions supporting digital transformation and the opportunities and challenges related thereto.

Done in Brussels on 4 December 2018 in one original in the English language.

***The Declaration has been signed by the following cities:**

Alcoy
Algeciras
Alicante
Amsterdam
Arad
Derry/Londonderry
Grand-Orly Seine Bièvre
Heraklion
Iasi
Kavala
L'Aquila
Padua
Pori
Rijeka
Seville
Sofia
Thessaloniki
Trikala
Heidelberg

***The remaining cities are expected to sign in the near future and an updated version will be published on the website.**

