Urban Democracy Lab 2027

Guidelines for the host city

24 November 2026

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Context

About Nets4Dem

Nets4Dem is a meta-network creating a hub for collaboration and advanced research in the field of democratic innovation, civic deliberation, participation and citizenship education.

Initially funded for a period of three years (2023-2026), the European Commission has decided to continue its support of Nets4Dem for a further three years (2026-2029), enabling the network to deepen, improve and expand its work.

Nets4Dem fosters collaboration among practitioners, policymakers, and researchers across Europe to enhance civic deliberation, participation, and democratic innovation. Recognising the pressing need for democratic renewal in the face of challenges such as citizen dissatisfaction, polarization, and technological disruptions to civic discourse, Nets4Dem seeks to address these issues by facilitating better connections, collaboration, and knowledge dissemination.

The initiative acknowledges that traditional approaches to democratic renewal have not been sufficiently impactful and that there's a lack of consistent and meaningful democratic practice. This is exacerbated by fragmented knowledge and siloed work among practitioners, researchers, and organisations. Nets4Dem aims to bridge these gaps by establishing a European community focused on fostering inclusive societies and resilient democracies through collective action.

Key objectives of Nets4Dem include promoting greater connectedness among diverse stakeholders to facilitate holistic conversations and mutual learning, providing better access to research and knowledge resources, and fostering collaboration and innovative partnerships across sectors and levels of governance. Additionally, Nets4Dem is committed to empowering countries, populations, and communities that stand to benefit the most from civic engagement efforts.

Eurocities is one of the 15 partners of Nets4Dem. Next to Eurocities, the project consortium consists of Democracy Reporting International (DRI) – project coordinator, the City of Leipzig, the City of Lodz, Coglobal, Democratic Society (Demsoc), Demos Helsinki, Egmont Institute, European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), International IDEA, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade, Missions Publiques, Open Government Partnership, People Powered and Trans-European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA).

The initiative creates a range of possibilities for local government officials and policymakers to train their democratic skills and processes and enable mainstream democracy innovations across urban policymaking through peer-learning and capacity-building programmes. Urban Democracy Labs, coordinated by Eurocities, are dedicated to urban actors to foster peer exchange and capitalise on the broad Nets4Dem network of democracy experts and practitioners.

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About these guidelines

These guidelines aim to help cities/regions understand the process of hosting an Urban Democracy Lab, a format of activity organised within the EU-funded project Nets4Dem. The guidelines outline the event format, objectives, timeframe, and requirements to support interested cities and regions with their application.

The current call aims to select one city/region in the EU to host the Urban Democracy Lab in 2027. The preferred timeframe for organising this event is April to June 2027. The call for the host city is open **until 8 January 2027 at 23:59 CET**.

About Urban Democracy Labs

Background

> ***Democratic innovations*** *are processes or institutions that are new to a policy issue, policy role, or level of governance and developed to reimagine and deepen the role of citizens in governance processes by increasing opportunities for participation, deliberation and influence. (…) We identify four families of democratic innovations: mini-publics, participatory budgeting, collaborative governance and referenda and citizens' initiatives, while highlighting the proliferation of hybrids often aided by digital participation.* (Elstub & Escobar, 2019)

Cities face complex societal challenges, from housing crises to rising inequalities to the threats of climate change and environmental degradation. These issues often stem from interconnected systems involving and impacting multiple stakeholders with diverse perspectives and needs. Addressing these challenges in a democratic fashion creates opportunities for people from all walks of life to be heard and seen. Democratic innovation encompasses various participatory approaches, empowering city dwellers to actively engage in decision-making beyond traditional electoral cycles. It allows for the engagement of community members in shaping policies and solutions that directly affect their lives, thus improving the quality and impact of policy. By embracing democratic innovation, cities can tap into the collective wisdom of their residents, leading to more sustainable, fair, and effective outcomes that reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire community.

Urban Democracy Labs (UDLs) in the context of Nets4Dem are designed as living laboratories where municipalities, practitioners and researchers from the Nets4Dem network can experiment with new participatory approaches in response to complex local challenges

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Overview

UDLs serve as a platform for local government officials and democracy practitioners to promote collaborative problem-solving and democratic innovation at the local level.

UDLs bring together diverse stakeholders to delve into democratic innovations by jointly working on the real-life challenges presented by cities. Selected cities join a UDL with a challenge they face. They work in a small team of peers, assisted by a facilitator, to design actionable democratic interventions ready-to-implement back home. In this creative effort, the team is assisted by representatives from the Nets4Dem network, host city staff, and local stakeholders. To ensure learning exchange and breadth of perspectives, participants take part in study visits and meet local community members. The working language of UDLs is English.

Participating cities also receive assistance to prototype and test solutions in real-life settings by being eligible to tailored mentorship through the Rising Stars programme[1].

Two UDLs will be organised over 2027-2029 – each edition hosted by a different city and dedicated to a different democratic challenge. Cities participating in a UDL will also be entitled to compete for the Democratic Innovation Awards, granted towards the end of the Nets4Dem project (mid-2029).

Participation in the event is open to Nets4Dem members and their affiliates in the EU or in Horizon Europe countries[2].

Three Democracy Labs were already organised in 2024-2026:

1. Democracy Lab 2024 – Barcelona, 17-19 September 2024
2. Democracy Lab 2025 - Grenoble Alpes Metropole, 25-27 March 2025
3. Democracy Lab 2026 – Bilbao, 10-12 February 2026

Objectives

UDLs aspire to empower cities to address complex societal challenges in a democratic spirit by facilitating peer collaboration, enhanced by the involvement of experts and communities affected by the issue. This way, we aim to encourage policymakers to view issues from diverse perspectives and engage directly with citizens. This process enables a holistic understanding of the challenges and ensures solutions are rooted in real-world experiences.

Expected outputs:

- actionable implementation plans / frameworks / roadmaps addressing challenges presented by challenge owners
- a set of novel approaches to addressing pressing urban challenges in a democratic way

[1] Cohorts 2 (July - December 2027) and 4 (July - December 2028)

[2] Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Morocco, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

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- a set of learnings to feed into the development of policy recommendations on mainstreaming democratic innovation at different levels of government.

Participants

A UDL brings together about 60 participants – governments, experts and stakeholders – from the Nets4Dem network members and their affiliates (e.g. Eurocities members).

Participants are divided into teams (5 to 8 depending on the number of challenge owners and participants). Each team comprises 4 to 7 participants (including 1 or 2 challenge owners, 1 facilitator and 2 to 4 city peers and/or experts). Teams are assisted by representatives of the Nets4Dem network, local facilitators, host city staff members and local partners.

Participants categories and roles:

Category of participants	**Role and activities**
Challenge owners	The challenge owner is a representative from a local government entity, such as a city or region, or organisation affiliated with the local government, tasked with presenting a specific urban challenge at the UDL (1-2 persons per city). They are selected among Nets4Dem network members and their affiliates through an open call. The challenge owner's role is central to the collaborative problem-solving process. Challenge owners provide real-life context and insights into their city's issues, ensuring that the discussions and solutions developed are grounded in urban experiences.
Peers	Peers are representatives from local and regional governments, and organisations or enterprises linked to them that are involved in delivering public services (maximum two representatives per local/regional government). They are selected among Nets4Dem network members and their affiliates through an open call. They work on similar topics as the challenge owners and want to learn new ways to approach the topic and/or bring their specific expertise as practitioners. They work in teams with challenge owners to co-design solutions.
Local stakeholders	The host and its local partners: Practitioners and experts from academia, civil society organisations, activists, community and business representatives active in the host city/region. To ensure learning exchange and breadth of perspectives, participants will take part in study visits presenting innovative practices in the host city, meeting local stakeholders. They can also take part in the team discussions to bring their knowledge and experience.

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Facilitators	Facilitators are local democracy experts and/or professionals of participatory processes, selected through an open call based on the following criteria: • Relevant experience in designing and facilitating participatory processes with local councils (preferably in the democratic innovation field, civic participation or similar) • English proficiency • Motivation / interest in taking part in the UDL • Availability to perform the task before, during and after the UDL. In collaboration with Eurocities and the Host, facilitators are responsible for communicating with the challenge owners ahead of the event to help them prepare for their participation in the UDL. During the UDL, facilitators lead the work of small groups during the working sessions (processes and time keeping and provide additional input and expertise when needed). They communicate and feedback to organisers. After the event, facilitators provide short summary reports of their groups' work and outputs, prepared accordingly with the template provided by organisers.

Lab thematic challenges

A leading thematic challenge guides each edition of Urban Democracy Lab. The list below (non-exhaustive) presents possible themes that were identified by the Nets4Dem consortium through baseline assessment, including multiple engagements with Eurocities members and which have not yet been tackled by previous editions of the Democracy Labs. The topic of youth engagement and empowerment will be tackled through Youth Participation Labs organised with the cities of Leipzig and Lodz in 2027-2028. It is therefore not expected in the UDL.

Host city applicants are asked to clearly indicate which theme they choose and demonstrate relevant experience and a diverse network of local actors in the selected area(s). Applicants should choose **one leading theme** in order to build a strong and detailed application; incorporating relevant issues and topics from other themes is also welcome if justified, and the applicant city has a track record in the given area.

- Democratic involvement of minorities and vulnerable groups (e.g. LGBTQ+ communities, migrants and residents of migrant background, Roma, Sinti and Traveller communities, homeless people)
- Democratic participation of women and girls
- Art and culture to enhance democratic innovations
- Democratic innovation in sustainable urban planning and mobility policies
- Democratic participation in housing management and regeneration
- Citizen's engagement in preparedness and safety
- Democratic innovation in government – mainstreaming participatory culture and democracy innovation across the local administration(s)

The applicant may propose its own theme in the application form.

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The decision on the leading thematic challenge of the next UDL will be made together with the host city and Eurocities, in consultation with the Nets4Dem consortium.

Format guidelines

The UDL concept draws from the social hackathon methodology that brings together multidisciplinary teams who collaborate intensively over a short period to develop prototypes of solutions. Leveraging expertise from the Nets4Dem network, the UDL provides a unique opportunity for cities' staff members to co-create solutions and action plans alongside diverse partners, including peers, democracy innovation experts from civil society organisations, academia, and community representatives. Integrating tried and tested methods from Eurocities, the UDL incorporates site visits, guest interventions, and mutual learning to inspire and develop solutions collaboratively with those directly affected by the issues at hand. Teams will be guided by experienced facilitators who understand the group process and are grounded in the principles of design thinking to navigate the iterative process of solutions development.

The event will span 2.5 to 3 days.

The visual model of the UDL format is presented in Annex 1.

Indicative agenda

	Day 0	**Day 1**	**Day 2**	**Day 3**
Morning		Welcome and introduction Keynote address Host city presentation Setting the scene: Lab theme overview	Recap and energizer Site visit(s)	Testing strategies and iteration Final presentation and reflection Event conclusion
Lunch		Networking lunch	Networking lunch	Lunch and participants' departure
Afternoon	Organisational team: Venue preparation Team briefing Facilitators' briefing	City challenges presentations Teams formation and problem-framing	Ideation session Prototyping workshops	Organisational team and facilitators final wrap-up

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Evening		Organisational team and facilitators wrap-up Optional – informal dinner in newly formed teams	Organisational team and facilitators wrap-up Joint dinner for all participants	

The host city and project team will co-design the event programme and agenda based on the guidelines above. Host city applicants are asked to indicate their experience in designing and delivering events of similar type; the experience may include, but is not limited to, the organisation of community events, design thinking workshops, participatory planning workshops, social hackathons, climathons, mutual learning meetings, Eurocities forum(s), Social Innovation Labs, etc.

Urban Democracy Lab host city

Each UDL is co-organised by Eurocities and the host city, with the support of other Nets4Dem consortium members. The host is a city/region known for its creative, advanced, or pioneering approach to democratic innovation, and committed to allocating adequate human, financial and technical resources for the successful organisation of the UDL. The collaboration starts at the moment when the selection process concludes; Eurocities and the host are equal partners in designing the event, with a clear division of responsibilities. Event organisation expenses are shared between the host city and Eurocities[3]. The benefits, requirements, responsibilities, and selection criteria are described below.

What's in it for the host city?

- **Showcasing good practices and expertise:** by co-organising the event, the host city can exhibit its innovative democratic practices, expertise, and successful measures implemented, positioning itself as a leader in democratic governance.

[3] Eurocities human and financial contribution is covered by the Nets4Dem project budget.

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- **Enhanced reputation as a democratic leader:** hosting a UDL allows the city to further solidify its reputation as a democratic leader, both regionally and internationally, garnering recognition for its commitment to inclusive governance.
- **Opportunity for learning and improvement:** the event provides a platform for the host city to learn from the experiences and feedback of other participating cities and experts, enabling them to improve their current approaches and expertise in democratic innovation.
- **Increased visibility on the EU level:** Through engagement in follow-up dissemination and advocacy activities conducted by Nets4Dem, the host city gains enhanced visibility on the EU level, contributing to its influence and recognition within broader European networks.
- **Networking opportunities:** co-organising the event facilitates networking with like-minded cities across Europe and democracy innovation actors, fostering valuable connections and potential collaborations for future initiatives and projects.
- **Roles of influence and leadership:** the host city has the unique opportunity to serve as a mentor, sharing its expertise and insights with other participants, as well as eligibility to serve as a jury member for the democratic innovation award, further solidifying its role as a leader in democratic innovation.
- **Contribution to programme development:** co-developing the programme allows the host city to actively shape the event's agenda and activities, ensuring alignment with its priorities and objectives in promoting democratic engagement.
- **Innovative engagement formats:** Collaborating on the event presents an opportunity to co-design a new engagement format in the Eurocities portfolio, contributing to the development of innovative approaches to democratic governance within the Eurocities network and beyond.

Host city responsibilities

Local logistics

- Venue:
    - The capacity of the main plenary room is sufficient for the estimated number of participants 60; the ideal set-up would be with (round)tables in the plenary room for up to 8 teams (5-7 team members) so that teams can come together for plenaries and disperse for group work.
    - The venue should be equipped with appropriate audiovisual facilities, including a projection screen, microphones, and a professional sound system.
    - Breakout rooms – if the plenary room is not big enough to accommodate up to 8 teams sitting comfortably at the working tables
    - Small registration area: registration desk(s) and meeting materials to be displayed;
    - Coffee break/lunch area;
    - The venue should be located close to a large number of hotel(s) or easily accessible by walking or public transport.
    - The venue should ideally have a connection to the theme of the UDL.

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- The venue must fulfil the accessibility requirements (as described in the *Annex 2 to the Guidelines for the host city: Accessibility guidelines)*

- Infrastructure:
  - on-site management of technical support;
  - Internet/Wi-Fi, microphones, PC, beamer, screen, flip charts and markers, photocopying etc.

- Catering:
  - vegetarian lunches (3) as per Eurocities sustainability strategy;
  - 1 or 2 informal and/or official dinner (seated or cocktail reception, based on host city discretion);
  - if available, regional/organic/ethical food is appreciated.

- Other:
  - Organise transport for participants to/from the site visits, prioritizing public transportation;
  - Provide a list of accommodation options for the participants and written guidance for getting around the city.
  - Provide comprehensive practical information for participants, including travel directions to the venue and guidance on navigating the city's public transport system.

Event programme

- Actively participate in the UDL format and programme design: assign staff member(s) who will coordinate the programme creation and logistics. Bi-weekly working meetings for the city and Eurocities teams for 3-4 months before the event date are envisaged.
- Identify and invite possible guest speakers (a shared responsibility with Eurocities).
- Disseminate the call for facilitators to local experts.
- Prepare a short background paper with information on the local context and policies in the host city.
- Identify and arrange for local stakeholders to attend the event as speakers relevant to the UDL leading theme.
- Organise and guide site visit(s) relevant to the theme of the UDL.
- Prepare short background information on local stakeholders and site visits.
- Provide a printed version of the working documents, if needed.
- Provide name badges with attendee name and city/organisation affiliation (in collaboration with Eurocities) using the city's, Eurocities', and Nets4Dem logos.

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- Respect and enforce the UDL Code of Conduct (*Annex 3 to the Guidelines for the host city: Code of Conduct*)

Eurocities responsibilities

Eurocities, as the Nest4Dem consortium partner, coordinates the programmatic and logistics organisation of the Lab: liaises with the project consortium, the project donor (European Commission), and the host city, develops the event concept and establishes its objectives aligned with the project goals, and provides the host city with the relevant programme, financial and technical guidance and support. The primary roles of Eurocities are:

- Lead the development of the UDL concept, format and programme.
- Identify and invite possible guest speakers and experts (a shared responsibility with the Host).
- Identify, hire and brief facilitators.
- Handle event registration, participant recruitment and communication with cities and other prospective participants.
- Respect and enforce the UDL Code of Conduct (*Annex 3 to the Guidelines for the host city: Code of Conduct*)
- Communicate and disseminate the information on the event content, objectives and outcomes to relevant stakeholders at the national and EU levels through diverse media channels.
- Disseminate the materials to the event participants.
- Draft event reports and disseminate them to the participants, relevant stakeholders, and policymakers, within the Nest4Dem framework.
- Handle post-event engagement activities for participants, including the organisation of the Democracy Innovation Award competition and ceremony in 2029.
- Provide financial support/contribute to the budget by covering:
  - travel expenses for keynote speaker(s), international experts, and selected event participants (cities presenting their challenges).
  - catering expenses for coffee breaks. Eurocities does not cover lunches and dinner(s).
  - fees of facilitators

Selection criteria

Eligibility criteria

- The host city is **based in the EU or one of the Horizon Europe countries**[4] and a **Nets4Dem network member and/or one of its affiliates** (e.g. Eurocities members, OGP local members[5]).

[4] See the list here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

[5] See the full list of Nets4Dem members here: https://nets4dem.eu/our-network/

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- The host city has adequate **human resources** to plan and organise the event for 60 participants based on the tasks specified below (host city responsibilities);
- The host city has sufficient **financial resources** to organise an event for 60 participants. Eurocities contribute to the event costs as specified below (Eurocities responsibilities);
- The host city has the capacity to organise a UDL between is between **April and June 2027** (exact dates to be agreed between the host city and Eurocities);
- The host city is willing to organise the **event in close cooperation with Eurocities** based on the main elements of structure, format, and approach presented in these Guidelines.

Award criteria

- Relevance of the application to the proposed theme of UDL.
- Expertise and track record of democracy innovation in the area specified as the UDL leading theme to showcase at the event and share learnings.
- Experience organising similar events with actors from different sectors and/or of international background, including Eurocities forums, conferences, mutual learning events, and others.
- New ways in which different relevant actors (CSOs, academia, businesses, social enterprises and local community representatives) can be engaged in the programme, and the network the city/region can leverage on.
- Innovative tools, methods or techniques for collaborative learning and co-creation.
- Geographical balance: to ensure a diverse representation across regions, we particularly encourage cities from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as South-East Europe, to apply. This will complement previous editions of the Democracy Labs, which have been hosted in Western European cities.

Application procedure

Please fill in the **online application form** by 8 January 2027 at 23:59 CET.

Please send a **support letter** signed by a political representative to Clémentine Daubeuf, Project Coordinator at Eurocities clementine.daubeuf@eurocities.eu by 8 January at 23:59 CET.

Indicative timeline (for a UDL taking place in April 2027)

8 January 2027	**Application deadline**
30 January 2027	Applications review and host city selection
February 2027	Kick-off meeting for the organisational team (Eurocities and the host city)

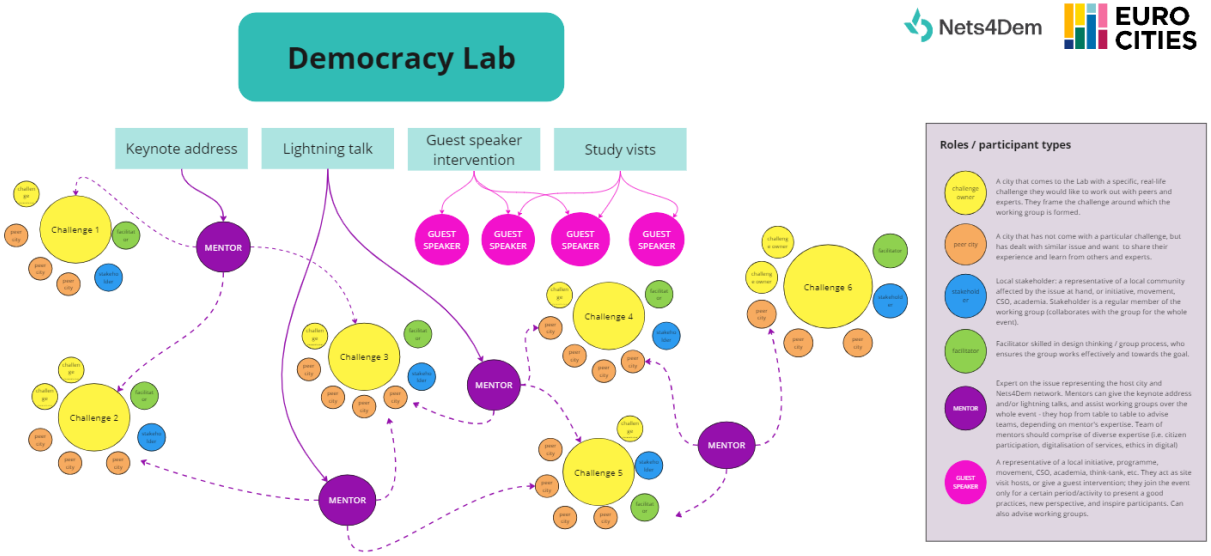
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February-April 2027	Programme development and Lab organisation - Call for city challenges - Call for participants
April/June 2027	Urban Democracy Lab
July - December 2027 and July - December 2028	Cohort 2 and Cohort 4 of the Rising Stars mentorship programme available to host city and challenge owners
February/March 2029	Application for the Nets4Dem Democracy Innovation Awards
May/June 2029	Nest4Dem Democracy Innovation Awards ceremony

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Annex 1: Urban Democracy Lab model

Access the high-resolution model at the Eurocities Collaboration platform: Democracy Lab model 2024.pdf



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Annex 2: Accessibility guidelines

Making meetings and events accessible

This document aims to identify potential access barriers to overcome for planning events. It is addressed to everyone who organises in-person events and meetings. These guidelines include the main elements of accessibility that should be taken into account when organising events, whether they are large or small. Following these guidelines will improve the accessibility of Eurocities events, making them more inclusive.

Definitions

Accessibility: As a principle, accessibility is about giving access to everyone. It is relevant to the physical environment, transportation, information, and services.

Persons with disabilities: Those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others[2]. Around 87 million people in the EU have some form of disability[3].

Note: For the purpose of these guidelines, we do not only include long-term impairments, but also short-term and temporary ones.

Contents

These guidelines represent a first step towards mainstreaming accessibility and inclusion in our events. They focus on easy actions to prevent excluding attendees or experiencing last-minute stress due to not knowing how to act in certain situations. The prevention actions suggested will guide you at all phases of organising events.

Is the venue accessible?

Whether the person organising the event can visit the venue or is in touch with the contact person of the venue, they should take into account the following:

Stairs and ramps:

The entrance should not have stairs, and if it does, there should be a **lift** or **ramp** as an alternative.

Make sure the ramp is not too steep (tolerated slope is 5%, min. acceptable ramp width 90cm).

All ramps and stairs/steps need to have **handrails**.

Facilities:

- Accessible **toilets**

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- Large doors
- If there is a need to access different floors: the presence of a lift.
- If there is a **podium**, a ramp or a wheelchair lift needs to be installed if one of the speakers is a wheelchair user.
- **Avoid thick carpets** if possible, since it makes it more difficult to circulate in wheelchairs.
- **Reserved parking places** for participants with impairments near the meeting venue. Make sure there is an accessible route for taxis to get close to the venue.

Seating:

- Keep in mind that some participants may need for example easy **access** to the exit door, **space** for a guide dog, **proximity** to speakers, etc. If needed, add "reserved seat" signs and inform these participants that the place is for them.
- Make sure there are **spaces for wheelchair** users. They must be flat and near the escape routes. There must be space in between rows and in the aisles to circulate with a wheelchair.

Catering

- For coffee breaks and lunches, make sure that there are **low tables** for wheelchair users (not only high tables).
- Available seats/chairs to rest for people that cannot stand for a long time.

Before the event

Speakers & Programme:

- **Local Speakers' briefing**

Please send them as early as possible a written briefing and offer them support and advice for preparing their presentations. If it is possible, it is always more efficient to have a preparation meeting with the speakers as well. Speakers need to be reminded to **speak slowly**, prepare **slides with a big font**, **describe images,** and explain slide's content.

- Plan **proper breaks** during the programme

Signage:

- **Black writing** with font **Arial** is best for readability. The signs should ideally have **pictograms** too.

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Practical information:

- Send meeting documents, timetables, and practical details **in advance**.

Blind person:

- If there is a blind person coming with a service dog, check that there is no dog allergy among the participants.
- Inform the venue, restaurants for evenings or any place where you'll go that there will be guide dogs.
- Foresee a water bowl for dogs.

During the event

Brief staff:

- Designating a **specific point of contact** within your team can be incredibly helpful for guests with access needs. Having people who can provide up-to-date knowledge on the event, the venue, the facilities, and the agenda is key.
- If some participants have specific needs, inform the security, catering staff etc.

A quiet area:

- The noise, light, and social interactions in meetings can be very tiring and stressful, especially for neurodiverse persons or people with mental illness or chronical affections. Make sure the venue has an extra room, if possible, with deemed light, where people take a time-out away from the group to relax and rest.
- The room could also be used for people with hearing impairments if they wish to have meetings in a calm area / not too noisy. Remember to suggest it to everyone who can make use of it.

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Annex 3: Code of Conduct

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Eurocities code of conduct for Member Cities and Partners

1. Introduction

Eurocities adopted its organisational values at the General Assembly in Cluj Napoca, Romania, on 30 May 2024, as outlined in the Eurocities Strategy 2030. The current five values - one of which was added later - are:

- **We are inclusive.** We embrace diversity and create an environment where every individual is valued, respected, and has equal opportunities to thrive.
- **We are professional.** We are good at what we do, demonstrating the highest degree of proficiency, transparency, compliance and integrity, learning continually, and adapting quickly.
- **We empower.** We work closely together to share knowledge, support, and inspire each other through mentorship, encouragement, openness, and trust.
- **We are impactful.** We are committed to bold objectives and driven by the difference we make when we take initiative and use change as an opportunity.
- **We are responsible**. We care about our member cities, our staff, our partners, society, and the planet and we act accordingly.

In line with these values, Eurocities has adopted two complementary Codes of Conduct that reflect the same organisational values and follow the same structure:

- the Eurocities Code of Conduct for Staff, Interns and Freelancers, and
- the Eurocities Code of Conduct for Member Cities and Partners.

Together, these codes help ensure that everyone who works for, contributes to, or participates in Eurocities activities is treated with dignity and respect and is able to engage in a safe, inclusive, professional and constructive environment.

2. Scope of application

This Code of Conduct for member and partner cities, and participants in Eurocities activities, forms part of the wider Eurocities framework for ethical and professional behaviour. It complements the Eurocities Code of Conduct for Staff, Interns and Freelancers, and translates the same organisational values into standards applicable to representatives of member and partner cities, and other participants in Eurocities activities.

This Code applies to all representatives of Eurocities member cities and organisations participating in Eurocities activities, including meetings, working groups, forums, events, projects, governance meetings, and online platforms.

By participating in Eurocities activities, members and partners commit to upholding the principles and standards set out in this Code of Conduct and to contributing to a respectful, inclusive, professional, and constructive environment for all.

3. Values

1. ***We are inclusive.*** *We embrace diversity and create an environment where every individual is valued, respected, and has equal opportunities to thrive.*

Eurocities members and partner cities, and participants in Eurocities activities commit to respecting at all times the dignity, worth and equality of the persons they work with, ensuring a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation based on gender, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, and social and economic background.

Eurocities members and partner cities, and participants in Eurocities activities should show awareness that statements or actions not necessarily intended to be offensive to another person may be perceived as such, by exercising restraint and refraining from unpleasant or disparaging remarks or actions. Diverse perspectives strengthen the Eurocities network. All are encouraged to listen actively, engage constructively, and ensure that all voices have an opportunity to contribute.

2. ***We are professional.*** *We are good at what we do, demonstrating the highest degree of proficiency, transparency, compliance and integrity, learning continually, and adapting quickly.*

2.1. As professionals, we uphold the integrity and credibility of our organisation by respecting and aligning with its collective decisions. We contribute to informed decision-making processes and, once a course of action is set, we demonstrate unity and responsibility in representing our organisation's position. Members are expected to engage constructively in Eurocities decision-making processes and to respect decisions taken through the organisation's agreed governance procedures, even where differing views were expressed during discussions.

2.2. Integrity and conflict of interest

Members and partner cities should act in the best interests of Eurocities and the integrity of its activities. A conflict of interest may arise where personal, professional, political, organisational, or financial interests could influence, or reasonably be perceived to influence, participation in decision-making, project selection, procurement procedures, appointments, advocacy positions, or other Eurocities activities.

Members and partner cities should disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity and, where appropriate, refrain from participating in related decisions or discussions.

2.3. Anti-bribery and anti-corruption

Eurocities is committed to the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct. Eurocities maintains a zero-tolerance approach to bribery, corruption, fraud, extortion, embezzlement, and any other improper conduct that could compromise the integrity, independence, reputation, or good functioning of the organisation.

Representatives of member cities, partners, and participants in Eurocities activities must not directly or indirectly offer, promise, give, request, or accept any financial, material, political, or other advantage that could improperly influence, or reasonably be perceived as influencing, decisions, positions, activities, or outcomes within Eurocities.

Particular care must be exercised in relation to governance processes, advocacy activities, project implementation, procurement procedures, funding decisions, the selection of experts or partners, and any other activity where impartiality, transparency, and trust are essential. Contributions to Eurocities discussions and decision-making processes must be based on the collective interests of the network and conducted in an open, transparent, and professional manner.

Gifts, hospitality, or other benefits may only be offered or accepted where they are occasional, of modest value, consistent with normal professional courtesy, and cannot reasonably be perceived as creating an obligation or influencing a decision, position, or outcome within Eurocities activities.

Any member, partner, or participant who becomes aware of, suspects, or is approached in relation to possible bribery, corruption, fraud, or other improper conduct connected to Eurocities activities should promptly report the matter in accordance with the reporting procedures set out in this Code of Conduct. Eurocities will not tolerate retaliation against any person who raises concerns in good faith.

3. ***We empower.*** *We work closely together to share knowledge, support, and inspire each other through mentorship, encouragement, openness, and trust.*

3.1. We encourage and support the professional development of fellow members, city representatives, partners, and Eurocities staff and promote individual achievement and continuous learning. We expect and deliver feedback regularly, considerately and constructively, and positively recognise success.

We communicate with each other in a calm, professional, and respectful manner, even in challenging situations, fostering an environment of trust and collaboration.

3.2. We empower each other by acknowledging and valuing the work, ideas, and achievements of our colleagues. We foster a culture of mutual respect and fairness, ensuring that credit is given where it is due. We actively support and recognise each other's contributions, promoting a collaborative and appreciative work environment where everyone's efforts are recognised and valued.

3.3. We promote an open and inclusive work environment where diverse perspectives are valued. We commit to consult with each other and value the perspectives of those who are different from us, as well as those who challenge our own point of view. We are committed to communicating openly and honestly.

4. ***We are responsible.*** *We care about our member cities, our staff, our partners, society, and the planet and we act accordingly" & "****We are impactful****. We are committed to bold objectives and driven by the difference we make when we take initiative and use change as an opportunity."*

Commitment to Responsibility. As responsible professionals, we take ownership of our actions and decisions. We ensure that our work reflects the values of our organisation and contributes positively to our member cities, and partners. We actively support our colleagues and partners to ensure we work collaboratively toward shared goals. As part of our commitment to caring about the planet and acting sustainably outlined in the Eurocities Sustainability Strategy, we follow travel and event policies that promote environmentally responsible choices.

Commitment to Impact. We are driven by the desire to make a meaningful difference through our work. We take initiative, set bold objectives, and embrace change as an opportunity for growth and improvement. We actively seek ways to contribute to positive outcomes, whether through innovative ideas or collaborative actions, and are accountable for the impact of our decisions. We recognise that boldness and innovation sometimes come with failure — and we see this as part of the learning process. We support Eurocities members, staff and participants in Eurocities activities in taking thoughtful risks, provide constructive feedback, and encourage continuous learning to turn setbacks into opportunities for growth. By staying focused on our goals and being proactive, we ensure that our efforts lead to tangible, lasting benefits for our organisation and our members.

4. Implementation

At Eurocities, we are committed to making this Code of Conduct a living document that supports positive, respectful, and productive collaboration across our network.

To support the implementation of this Code:

- The Code of Conduct is made available to all member cities, partners, and participants in Eurocities activities and is communicated through relevant channels, including governance, forums, working groups, projects, events, and online platforms.
- Representatives participating in Eurocities activities are expected to familiarise themselves with the principles and standards set out in this Code and to apply them in their interactions with others.
- Chairs, moderators, elected representatives, project leaders, and members of the Eurocities Office are expected to promote and exemplify the behaviours and values reflected in this Code.
- Opportunities to raise awareness, exchange good practices, and reflect on topics such as inclusion, integrity, ethical conduct, respectful participation, and collaboration may be incorporated into Eurocities meetings, events, projects, and capacity-building activities.
- Where relevant, Eurocities may provide guidance on matters such as conflicts of interest, integrity, anti-corruption, responsible advocacy, and the respectful management of discussions and decision-making processes.
- Eurocities' governance rules, membership commitments, project agreements, organisational policies, and event procedures support the practical application of this Code.
- Upholding this Code is a shared responsibility. All participants in Eurocities activities contribute to maintaining a safe, respectful, inclusive, professional, and constructive environment that enables effective collaboration and mutual trust across the network.

5. Reporting breaches

Any concerns regarding breaches of this Code of Conduct should be raised as soon as possible with the relevant Eurocities contact person, event organiser, forum chair, working group chair, moderator, or member of the Eurocities Office, depending on the context.

Reports will be handled confidentially, fairly, and in a timely manner, taking into account the nature and seriousness of the concern. Eurocities may designate members of the Eurocities office to receive, assess, and follow up on reports of potential breaches of this Code of Conduct.

Retaliation against individuals who raise concerns in good faith or who participate in the resolution of a concern will not be tolerated.

Where a breach of this Code of Conduct is identified, Eurocities may take appropriate measures, including:

- issuing a reminder of the expected standards of behaviour;
- requesting that inappropriate behaviour cease immediately;
- facilitating dialogue or mediation between the parties concerned where appropriate;
- issuing a formal warning;
- removing an individual from a meeting, event, online platform, or activity;
- restricting or suspending participation in specific Eurocities activities; or
- referring serious or repeated breaches to the relevant Eurocities governance bodies for further consideration.

Eurocities reserves the right to take any action necessary to ensure a safe, respectful, inclusive, and professional environment for all participants.