



# Roadmap 2023-2024

More than ever cities and urban networks are at the core of a new world order. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed humanity, society and the planet. Global warming is a fact, and flood, fire and drought are part of the new climate and there are only 10000 days until 2050 when many cities aim to be net zero. War beyond international law is moving geopolitics towards a divided, hostile new world order. There is no rewind button. Back to the old normal is not an option. The GPM, mayors, cities and urban residents more generally, all have to draw lessons and invest in a different future. To do so, we must seriously address how we shift our political and economic order, which is materially expansive, socially divisive and environmentally hostile. We must also empower cities to defend democracy and build a sustainable future.

## TOWARDS NEW CITIES IN A NEW GLOBAL ORDER

### Recovery, transition, renewal

#### 1. Deepening democracy.

This new era, combining pandemics, global warming, war and multilateral geopolitical re-modelling, needs to reinforce its bonds with its populations and strengthen democratic rights and practices. Without an open democracy, based on human and inclusive rights and respect for the state of law it will be impossible to get the necessary support for recovery and transition plans. Opening democracy to participation, co-creation and co-production, at the right scale, from the neighborhood to the metropolis, will be a precondition for a swift transition. Cities will need to move from top-down, administrative government to a more horizontal, co-productive governance system including many forms of transversal collaboration. Mayors are pivotal engineers to open up political representation to co-productive city making. From top-down authoritarian government we have to move to a facilitating state and synergy with civil society. In that process mayors are increasingly repressed by corrupt or authoritarian regimes. Continental organizations like the EU or global leaders like the G7 should pay much more attention to the decline of democratic practices and the increase of repressive oppression of municipal democracy.

#### 2. Recognizing interdependence and increasing empowerment.

Cities are increasingly recognized as integral actors in existing, and especially new, multilateral settings. Cities are not separate territories, they are nodes in networks, in a space of interactions and flows. Cities are not independent, but interdependent. The burden of recovery, transition and renewal will be on cities who need to be empowered to act. This needs to be acknowledged at both the nation-state level, as well as within international organizations and global institutions. A new global multilateral power structure, as promised by the UN75 general assembly, needs to be envisioned. Cities absolutely need to get recognized as equal partners in designing global policies. Mayors need to speak up to their national governments, their diplomats and to international networks and platforms to push for structural steps to be taken. Urban diplomacy and inter-urban solidarity will play an increasing role in development policies.

#### 3. Renewing our health policies.

The pandemic showed that health and care are a top priority. The whole burden of the health crisis was put on doctors, nurses, hospitals and intensive care units. We will have to highlight a strong first line, where prevention and care meet,

focused on interdisciplinary neighborhood health provision, with special attention to elderly and weak people, as part of integrated welfare policies and social inclusion. Mayors will have to design health policies combining prevention and cure, medicine and coaching, local cohesion and social access. A new, post-pandemic urban paradigm can be realized in the caring city model, whereby cities are seen as places that look after us, that take care of our surroundings, that let us look after ourselves and other people.

#### **4. Promoting a more effective green deal.**

The pandemic is part of our fractured relationship with nature. We have to increase our efforts against global warming and need to adapt to new conditions we did not avert. Yet, reducing emissions is not a single-issue policy. To build resilience we will have to focus more on an all-inclusive eco-systemic transition by reducing our ecological footprint, defending biodiversity and at the same time offering clean air, drinkable water, good food and more green and blue public spaces in our living areas. Mayors will have to translate global policies and objectives into transversal local transition plans based on a local eco-systemic diagnosis.

#### **5. Envisioning a new economic regime.**

By focusing on health and a sustainable transition the economic recovery is not just a “return to normal”. The crisis will be deep and lasting, not the least because of geopolitical instability and inflation. Rebuilding the economy must include more bottom-up policies, focusing on existing local resources so as to spread the benefits and based on an economy whose foundation is recycling and circular thinking, where everyone can play a part in overall urban development plans. To be successful the recovery plan should build on a constructive coalition between the forces of the market, public initiative and services and the commons and voluntary sector. The new urban economies will be more sustainable and more socially inclusive. Mayors will have to determine their local ecosystem in which the new economy is included in the urban vision.

#### **6. Implementing an inclusive social policy.**

The health and energy crisis has put a great burden on the weakest amongst us. Social exclusion, poverty and unemployment is likely to increase. An urban exodus of middle classes and increasing distance or hybrid working will alter labor markets and commercial opportunities. Traditional programs of social relief will need more resources and attention and new approaches will need to be invented driven by new forms of solidarity and redistribution in civil society and extended social networks. Mayors will have to build on local resources to complement redistribution policies with voluntary local solidarity. It will need a focus on rebuilding social bonds and intercultural bridging.

## 7. Imagining the future.

To renew health, green, economic and social policies, peace and international solidarity will need all of us to strengthen our moral fiber, energy and motivation. Resetting urban life should recreate social proximity to overcome the distancing and atomization that were part of recent tendencies. Within this, arts, education, culture and media have a strong role. They are not just a (marginal) “sector”, they are a vital catalyst to remobilize the population in this collective reinvention project. The necessary transformation is in itself a cultural project as it is about values, choices, mindset, attitudes, behavior and hearts, minds and skills. An all-inclusive powerful cultural mobilization is needed that recognizes diversity, equal rights, fighting racism, sexism and colonialism. Mayors will have to design urban cultural and artistic policies as central levers in mobilizing citizens to optimistically address recovery. These require a vision and a project for the future.

## 8. Data sovereignty and the smart.

The world is going through an information and digital revolution. We have little control over our personal data and so lose our sovereignty as citizens nor do we have a say as to how algorithms and AI are defined and constructed. The data driven smart city needs to refocus on enabling us to become smarter citizens and new regulatory structures are vital to ensure our independence and that of cities is guaranteed. Mayors are locally responsible to safeguard human rights, privacy, transparency and control mechanisms. Including our citizens in the digital revolution will need information and educational programs.

## 9. Rewriting processes and procedures.

Changing the relationship between the state, the market and civil society and mobilizing our citizens means revising urban policy and planning procedures. New times require new mechanisms to foster the public interest, such as using municipalities’ power of procurement to bend the market to common good objectives. The post-Covid city also needs new measures of success as GDP is an inadequate measure and one of these is the ‘social progress index’. Mayors are best positioned to judge the quality of integrated programs beyond bureaucratic ruling and often corrupted practices.

## 10. Mayors for the future.

A new world needs new forms of leadership. The new normal has to be creatively invented and put in place with the support of civil society and the consent of the population. Mayors are pivotal in aggregating all their cities positive energies so as to lead them through recovery, transition and renewal. Urban social cohesion involves producing a common destiny by mobilizing a future project with appropriate good governance and leadership. It is not based on single identities or history. If cities are central in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, then mayors should get the means and the competences to fulfil that task. That project is a mission for the Global Parliament of Mayors. Its members will be at the forefront implementing the abovementioned principles.

*Urgency is needed. The pandemic has shaken systems, traditions, institutions, and norms. procedures and common sense. The climate crisis is rapidly unfolding and will increasingly fuel migration, both within borders and across them. War in Europe threatens to produce new, and increasingly disputatious, geopolitical alignments. Recovery is not merely going "back to normal". Cities are not merely "the local" setting for national policymakers. Many planetary challenges have to be dealt with as the future is created now. The burden of recovery, transition and renewal will be on cities who need to be empowered to act. This needs to be recognized at both the nation-state level, as well as within international organizations and global institutions. This was a message at the last World Urban Forum! A new global multilateral power structure is being designed on the go and the GPM needs to help shape it. Let us take up the mission!*

*The Road Map 2023-2024 has been discussed and established by the General Meeting of the Global Parliament of Mayors on 6 October 2022.*