



Global
Parliament
of Mayors

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

18 OCTOBER 2024

The Global Parliament of Mayors presents this summary of its key activities from November 2023 until August 2024. The GPM had a successful year advocating for the interests of mayors, organizing meaningful debates both online and in-presence, and making the voice of mayors heard globally. These efforts included last year's summit in Skopje, North Macedonia, the ongoing and continuing intensive leadership in the Urban7 process, the launch of a major project on human rights in cities, and a declaration spearheaded by a partnership with Global Cities Hub on pandemic preparedness. In this summary, you will find details about these activities and other highlights from the past year.

Thank you for your support of the GPM.
We look forward to another productive year ahead!

Executive Committee



Mayor Ricardo Rio
Chair

Braga, Portugal



Mayor Mathias de Clercq

Ghent, Belgium



Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe
Vice Chair

Banjul, The Gambia



Mayor Manuel de Araujo

Quelimane, Mozambique



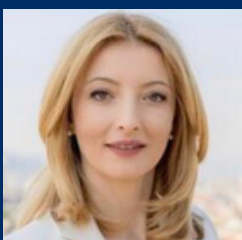
Mayor Bryan Barnett
Vice Chair

Rochester Hills, USA



Mayor Eckart Würzner

Heidelberg, Germany



Mayor Danela Arsovska
Treasurer

Skopje, North Macedonia

New Members

Between November 2023 and August 2024,
the GPM welcomed the following new members:



Mayor Ion Ceban

Chisinau, Moldova



Mayor Alix Desulme

North Miami, Florida, USA



Mayor Blerim Bexheti

Saraj, North Macedonia



Mayor Stevčo Jakimovski

Karpoš, North Macedonia



Mayor Eckart Würzner

Heidelberg, Germany

GPM Annual Summit 2023

Skopje, North Macedonia

Empowering, Engaging, and Caring Cities: Delivering Democracy and Development with the Next Generations



Skopje, November 2023 – Around 100 participants, including mayors & deputy mayors, as well as leaders of city networks, and representatives of international organisations came together at the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) Annual Summit. The event was hosted by Mayor Danela Arsovska of Skopje, North Macedonia, with the title: “Empowering, Engaging, and Caring Cities: Delivering Democracy and Development with the Next Generations”

Mayors gathered in Skopje and participated in dynamic panels on issues such as Delivering Democracy, Empowering Cities, Caring Cities, and The Power of Culture & Art, reflecting on the pressing issues of the world. They discussed how they could work together to address some of these global challenges at the local level and push for change in existing governance structures.

Mayor Ricardo Rio of Braga, Portugal and Chair of the GPM observed,

“In the vibrant exchange of ideas and perspectives at this Annual Summit in the beautiful city of Skopje, we witnessed the power of collaboration among mayors, deputy mayors and networks from diverse cities worldwide. Our discussions on democracy, empowering cities, caring cities, and the transformative power of culture underscored the pivotal role cities play in shaping a sustainable and inclusive global future. As leaders, we are not just representatives of our communities; we are architects of positive change. Together, we stand united in our commitment to address the complex challenges of our urban landscapes and forge a path towards a better tomorrow. As Chair of Global Parliament of Mayors, I am looking forward to develop more discussions among mayors and city activists”.

The Summit was opened with keynote addresses by the President of North Macedonia Stevo Pendarovski, as well as Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe Mathieu Mori. Mayor Arsovska also provided opening remarks.

The Power of Culture & Art

The mayoral summit session delved into the crucial role of culture and art in city development, emphasizing their significance as the fourth pillar of the GPM's focus. The discussion highlighted the impact of urban culture on planning, economy, and social life, emphasizing the need for cultural literacy in urban strategy. The arts were recognized as central to fostering an open-minded and resilient culture, with creativity essential for problem-solving, sustainability, and citizen well-being. The session stressed the importance of integrating arts and culture into urban projects for vibrant, innovative, and inclusive city development.

Caring Cities

The concept of "Caring Cities" was introduced, advocating for localized social policies, economic analysis, and spatial planning to address citizens' needs and promote sustainability, inclusivity, and human rights. The session underscored the importance of state support for city initiatives and GPM's role in elevating cities' voices globally.

Empowering Cities

The summit session on "Empowering Cities" addressed the urgent need for strengthening municipal and metropolitan levels in global governance. It emphasized the vital role of mayors in driving transformative change at the local level, tackling complex issues cross-sectorally. The discussion focused on three dimensions: building true multi-level governance, expanding competencies and resources, and preserving urbanity against divisive nationalism. The session called for international recognition and inclusion of cities in addressing global challenges, emphasizing democratic, caring, and culturally innovative urban development.

Delivering Democracy

The summit began with a debate on democracy. This session delved into the global challenge of democracy in urban governance. It highlights the worldwide variation in democracy and underscores the need for urban democracy in addressing pressing urban challenges. The speakers explored the democratization of institutions, society, and the urban spirit, emphasizing the importance of effective governance, citizen engagement, and education. The session called for a global agenda, with mayors and cities at the forefront, to address complex urban issues.

Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe Awarded GPM's Prestigious Dr. Benjamin Barber Global Cities Award 2023



November 2023 - The Global Parliament of Mayors awarded the prestigious Dr. Benjamin Barber Global Cities Award to Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe of Banjul, The Gambia. The award ceremony was part of the opening of the GPM Annual Summit 2023 hosted by Danela Arsovska, Mayor of Skopje, North Macedonia. The Dr. Benjamin Barber Award recognizes mayors for their outstanding contribution to further global urban governance and inspiring city leadership.

Mayor Lowe's dynamic and innovative leadership as the Mayor of Banjul, has not only transformed the lives of her constituents but has also served as an inspiring example to mayors and city leaders

worldwide. Her dedication to urban development, social progress, and sustainable initiatives is truly commendable. Her tireless efforts to improve the quality of life in Banjul and her relentless pursuit of positive change have not gone unnoticed.

In a world facing numerous challenges, Mayor Lowe's leadership stands out as a beacon of hope and progress. Her commitment to addressing issues such as climate change, public health, education, and social inclusivity resonates deeply with the core values of the Global Parliament of Mayors. Her endeavors are setting a remarkable precedent for cities around the globe to follow.

Mayor Lowe stated *“I wish to thank our host, my sister, Mayor Danela Arsovska, her team and the GPM secretariat for a well-organized summit. I am going to dedicate this award to the residents of Banjul who trusted my leadership in the first place and agreed to work with me and voted me into office for a second term. I wish to thank you for watching me do my thing – day and night. I love what I do and I will continue to do my utmost best and even do better henceforth since I am aware now that someone is watching”*.

The Global Parliament of Mayors created the award to honor outstanding actions or research on urban governance and contributions to advancing the roles and principles set out by the GPM. The award is named in memory of the founder of the GPM, Dr. Benjamin Barber, author of the book ‘If Mayors Ruled the World’ (2014), who continues to inspire Mayors from around the world.



The Global Parliament of Mayors and Bilbao Metropoli 30 Forge Strategic Partnership

March 2024 – In a landmark move towards catalyzing urban innovation and addressing pressing challenges, the Global Parliament of Mayors and Bilbao Metropoli 30 have come together in a pioneering Memorandum of Understanding. Signed on March 14 at the Urban Revolution Aurrera in Bilbao, this MOU marks a significant milestone in fostering a shared vision and principles for strategic urban thinking worldwide.



At the heart of this collaboration lies a profound recognition of the evolving landscape of cities and metropolises. Both entities recognize the urgent need for disruptive and innovative approaches to tackle the myriad challenges confronting urban centers today. From climate change to social equity, from economic resilience to technological advancement, cities stand at the forefront of these complex issues.

The MOU serves as a rallying cry for cities and metropolises across the globe to unite in a dynamic community committed to addressing urban challenges head-on. It builds upon the foundational work laid out by various organizations, networks, and experts worldwide, including the GPM, which has been a leading voice in advocating for urban governance and cooperation.

Through this strategic partnership, the GPM and Bilbao Metropoli 30 seek to galvanize momentum for transformative urban action. By leveraging the collective expertise, resources, and networks of both entities, they aim to foster an international movement dedicated to innovative urban solutions.

Global Parliament of Mayors and Strong Cities Network Sign Partnership to Strengthen City Resilience



April - The Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) and the Strong Cities Network have joined forces in a collaboration aimed at bolstering resilience in cities worldwide. Through a recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed at the Transatlantic Dialogue Initiative in Bratislava, these two influential organizations have formalized their commitment to supporting mayors and local governments in addressing pressing issues such as hate, extremism, polarisation, and crime while promoting social cohesion and human rights.

Strong Cities, established in September 2015, boasts a network of over 230 cities and local governments dedicated to sharing knowledge and strategies for combating extremism and fostering inclusive communities. Acknowledging their shared objectives, both organizations have expressed a keen interest in collaborating to leverage their respective expertise and resources for the collective benefit of their networks. This collaboration has already seen fruitful interactions, including participation in key events such as GPM's Annual Summit in Skopje and the Strong Cities Transatlantic Dialogue Workshop in Bratislava.

The MoU outlines several areas of collaboration, including the regular exchange of information on efforts to address various challenges faced by cities, inviting representatives to relevant meetings and conferences, and sharing resources and best practices. Additionally, both parties have committed to meeting quarterly to evaluate progress and explore further opportunities for cooperation.

By forging this partnership, GPM and Strong Cities aim to enhance the resilience and effectiveness of cities worldwide in tackling complex societal issues. The collaboration will not only benefit their shared members but also contribute to a broader audience, reinforcing the importance of inclusive governance and sustainable urban development.

As cities continue to grapple with evolving threats and vulnerabilities, the partnership between GPM and Strong Cities stand as a beacon of hope, fostering cooperation and solidarity among urban leaders worldwide. Together, they are paving the way for a more secure, inclusive, and sustainable future for all.

Webinar: Ensuring Human Rights in Cities: the Right to Vote in the 2024 European Parliament Elections

How can local authorities guarantee the right to vote and enhance a democratic participation in the 2024 European Parliament elections?



This online event was co-organised by the *Human Rights Cities Network (HRCN)* and the *Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM)*, and was embedded in Barcelona's programme for the *1st European Capital of Democracy (ECoD)*. The webinar was held on the 6th of May at 15:00 CET to explore the topic. The speakers at the event addressed the challenges and the opportunities for the voters to exercise their human rights at the local level, based on local practices from cities with a particular focus on transparency, equality, accountability, and integrity of the electoral process.

Quelimane and Gent Awarded by European Cyclists Federation

The European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) has announced the recipients of its prestigious awards for exceptional contributions to cycling at the Velo-city 2024 conference.

In its third year, the ECF awards ceremony took place at the Kuipke Velodrome in Ghent, attracting 1,500 delegates. ECF President Henk Swarttouw, alongside CEO Jill Warren, emphasized the importance of recognizing the often-overlooked efforts of individuals and cities in promoting cycling. Swarttouw praised the leadership of Bologna, Ghent, Lyon, and Quelimane, highlighting their contributions to safer and more accessible cycling environments.

Quelimane, Mozambique, received the ECF Award for Best Active Mobility for establishing the country's first cycle path. Mayor Manuel Araujo was acknowledged for his role in advancing the city's sustainable mobility, with Quelimane achieving a modal split of 40% walking and 35% cycling.

Ghent, Belgium, the host city of Velo-city 2024, was awarded the ECF Cycling Infrastructure Award. Ghent boasts 500 kilometers of cycling infrastructure and over 60 bridges and subways, enhancing connectivity for cyclists. The conference also marked the inauguration of Ghent's latest infrastructure project, the Annie Vande Wielebrug bridge, set to accommodate over 3,000 cyclists and pedestrians daily.



Urban7: Making Voices of Cities Heard in the G7 Process

In 2023, the Global Parliament of Mayors continued its leadership in the Urban7, working to make the voices of cities heard in the G7 process. Since January 2022, the GPM and ICLEI formally serve as the U7 Secretariat.



This year U7 partners joined a meeting of G7 senior urban development officials in Rome between Senior Urban Development Officials from all G7 countries in order to prepare the Urban Development Ministers' Meeting. The meeting focused in particular on urban development and the opportunities and challenges faced by cities, as well as cooperation and concerted action frameworks for cities in G7 countries and the world to aid in the sustainable urban transformation. [Link](#)

The U7 also published a discussion paper that looks into meeting outcomes and proposes avenues for future multilevel cooperation in the G7 in anticipation of the G7 Ministerial meetings on Culture (Napoli, 19-21 September) and Urban Development (Genova, 3-5 November 2024). [Link](#)

DeCiDE: “Boost Democratic Participation in Cities to Recharge Democracy in Europe”

The **Human Rights Cities Network** and the **Global Parliament of Mayors** proudly present the innovative DeCiDE project. Our two-year initiative involves municipalities and civil society organizations from selected cities co-creating human rights indicators and monitoring tools. Our aim is to enhance urban democracy and human rights practices in Europe, through community participation in human rights monitoring and knowledge sharing between cities' networks.

DeCiDE

Recharge Democracy and Human Rights in Cities

The DeCiDE project envisages the development of a monitoring mechanism for human rights in cities, in respect of each city's political priorities and challenges. The aim is to co-create, with 10 pilot municipalities, a unique set of indicators and monitoring tools integrating people and their rights at the center of the public policies and practices. Cities using this system will be able to regularly evaluate their achievements and analyse the influence of their work in making human rights a reality for the people. This system will respond to the specific needs of both, the cities and the people, and its standardisation should allow the utilisation of this monitoring by the largest number of cities as possible in Europe.

The selection of 10 pilot cities from European countries is based on criteria related to the size of the city, the diversity, and the level of commitment to human rights, thus ensuring a geographical balance. Participating cities will take part in regular exchanges of good practices and sharing of experience among a network of cities during the **two years** implementation. The project will begin in **October 2024**.



Funded by
the European Union

Mayors' Declaration for Better Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response

The Mayors' Declaration for Better Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response has been prepared in 2023 by the Global Parliament of Mayors and the Global Cities Hub (GCH) in consultation with leading global health experts. It has been signed by over 100 mayors around the world and was shared by the GCH with WHO, Member States as well as with Facilitators (Morocco, Israel) of the UN General Assembly High Level meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response on September 20, 2023, in NYC.

The GCH, accredited stakeholder of the process, has also shared the mayoral declaration as input in the intergovernmental negotiations on the Pandemic Treaty and the revision of the International Health regulations to be adopted at the 77th Assembly of the World Health Organization (WHA77) in May 2024, as well as in other relevant processes, ensuring that the voices of city leaders are heard in shaping global pandemic response strategies.

By mobilizing mayors from around the world, this declaration amplifies the voices of local leaders and ensures that their experiences, challenges, and innovative solutions are taken into account in international discussions and agreements. With cities at the forefront of pandemic response, collaboration between local, national, and international stakeholders is essential to build resilient and prepared communities that can effectively address global health crises.



Members

António Loureiro (Albergaria A Velha, Portugal)
Marie Angele Meyanga (Afanloum, Cameroon)
Yousef Shawarbeh (Amman, Jordan)
Femke Halsema (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
Honoré Gabriel Rasamimanana (Antsirabe, Madagascar)
Rohey Malik Lowe (Banjul, The Gambia)
Albano Carige (Beira, Mozambique)
Alec Von Graffenried (Bern, Switzerland)
Ricardo Rio (Braga, Portugal)
Marvin Rees (Bristol, United Kingdom)
Philippe Close (Brussels, Belgium)
Bilubi Ulengo Méschac (Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo)
Maria Helena Rosa de Teodósio e Cruz Gomez de Oliveira (Cantanhede, Portugal)
Giuseppe Monteleone (Carini, Italy)
Carlos Carreiras (Cascais, Portugal)
Ion Ceban (Chisinau, Moldova)
Barthelemy Dias (Dakar, Senegal)
Mxolisi Kaunda (Durban, South Africa)
Kwasi Bonzoh (Ellembelle, Ghana)
Jeni Arndt (Fort Collins, USA)
Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr (Freetown, Sierra Leone)
Mathias De Clercq (Ghent, Belgium)
Alban Hyseni (Gjilan, Kosovo)
Eckart Würzner (Heidelberg, Germany)
Tayseer Abu Sneineh (Hebron, Palestine)
Brian Kaboyo (Hoima, Uganda)
Olga Ditsie (Jwaneng, Botswana)
Talib Bensouda (Kanifing, The Gambia)
Marcin Krupa (Katowice, Poland)
Andre Kampa Kamwanya (Kasumbalesa, Democratic Republic of Congo)
Governor Peter Anyang' Nyong'o (Kisumu, Kenya)

Oliveir Hoarau (Le Port, Reunion Island)
Peter Soulsby (Leicester, United Kingdom)
Martin Kazembe Shula (Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo)
Helder Sousa Silva (Mafra, Portugal)
Peter Kurz (Mannheim, Germany)
Luisa Salgueiro (Matosinhos, Portugal)
Marek Nazarko (Michałow, Poland)
Michaël Delafosse (Montpellier, France)
Jefferson Koijee (Monrovia, Liberia)
Geoffrey Ngiriker (Nebbi, Uganda)
Hubert Bruls (Nijmegen, the Netherlands)
Alix Desulme (North Miami, USA)
Óscar Escobar (Palmira, Colombia)
Shqiprim Arifi (Presevo, Serbia)
Manuel de Araujo (Quelimane, Mozambique)
Asmaa Rhlalou (Rabat, Morocco)
Alexandre Branco Gaudêncio (Ribeira Grande, Portugal)
Bryan Barnett (Rochester Hills, USA)
Ahmed Aboutaleb (Rotterdam, the Netherlands)
Blerim Bexheti (Saraj, North Macedonia)
Danela Arsovska (Skopje, North Macedonia)
Cateno De Luca (Taormina, Italy)
Erion Veliaj (Tirana, Albania)
Jan Van Zanen (The Hague, The Netherlands)
Sharon Dijksma (Utrecht, the Netherlands)
Jose Manuel Ribeiro (Valongo, Portugal)
Baikuntha Nath Neupane (Vyas, Nepal)
Jacek Zbigniew Sutryk (Wroclaw, Poland)

Honorary Members

Former Mayors van Aartsen (The Hague, The Netherlands), Wolusmal (Kandahar, Afghanistan), Termont (Ghent, Belgium), Orlando (Palermo, Italy), de Lille (Cape Town, South Africa), Mugasa (Hoima, Uganda), Johnson (Asbury Park, USA) Kurz (Mannheim, Germany)

Engaged Mayors

1. Accra, Ghana
2. Arua City, Uganda
3. Barcarena, Brazil
4. Basse Area Council, Gambia
5. Clermont-Ferrand, France
6. Dannieh, Lebanon
7. Entebbe, Uganda
8. Fortaleza, Brazil
9. Greater Manchester, United Kingdom
10. Kampala, Uganda
11. Kampala Central Division, Uganda
12. Kuntaur, Gambia
13. Lejweleputswa District Municipality, South Africa
14. Mamou, Guinea
15. Niteroi, Brazil
16. Palmira, Colombia
17. Podgorica, Montenegro
18. Province of Barcelona, Spain
19. Rijeka, Croatia
20. Rio De Janeiro, Brazil
21. Santa Maria Nebaj, Guatemala
22. Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
23. Sindelfingen, Germany
24. Sousse, Tunisia
25. Timișoara, Romania
26. Turbat, Pakistan
27. Vienna, Austria



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