



BRAGA
SOUNDS LIKE FUTURE.

DEMOCRACY AT THE CROSSROADS: CITIES TAKE ACTION

GPM ANNUAL SUMMIT 2025

BRAGA, PORTUGAL
6TH - 8TH JUNE 2025

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BRAGA

WHERE TRADITION MEETS INNOVATION

Located in northern Portugal and being one of the most ancient European cities with over 2000 years of history, Braga warmly welcomes you to explore its rich tapestry of history, culture, and innovation. Known as one of Europe's oldest cities, Braga is a living museum of architectural marvels, vibrant traditions, and a spirit that blends the past with the future.

As you wander through Braga's charming streets, you'll discover an unparalleled historical heritage. From the iconic Bom Jesus do Monte Sanctuary – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – to the ancient Roman ruins and the magnificent Cathedral built in the XI century, among many other landmarks. Yet, Braga is not just a city of the past, as it is a city that looks ahead. Recently awarded the title of European Rising Innovative City, Braga is leading the way in technology, sustainability, and creative industries, cementing its reputation as a forward-thinking urban hub.

The city's vibrant culture is celebrated through a rich calendar of events and festivals, from the solemnity of Holy Week processions to the lively 'Braga Romana', where history comes to life in the streets. Braga has also been awarded Portuguese Capital of Culture for 2025, promising an unforgettable lineup of artistic and cultural experiences throughout the entire year.

Braga is also a paradise for food lovers. Our gastronomy offers hearty and flavorful dishes with some centuries-old monastic recipes. Complementing this is the region's renowned 'green wine', a light and refreshing wine that pairs perfectly with local specialties.

The people of Braga are known for their hospitality. Whether you're mingling with locals at one of the many festivals or simply strolling through our lively squares, you'll feel the genuine warmth and friendliness that make Braga truly special.

We've invited you to immerse yourself in everything Braga has to offer—a city where history and tradition meet innovation and creativity. We are proud to share our city with you and hope your time here leaves you inspired and longing to return. Here, you can find rich history and tradition. But you can also find innovation, creativity and a vision for tomorrow. While being an ancient city, Braga sounds like the future.



DEMOCRACY AT THE CROSSROADS: CITIES TAKE ACTION

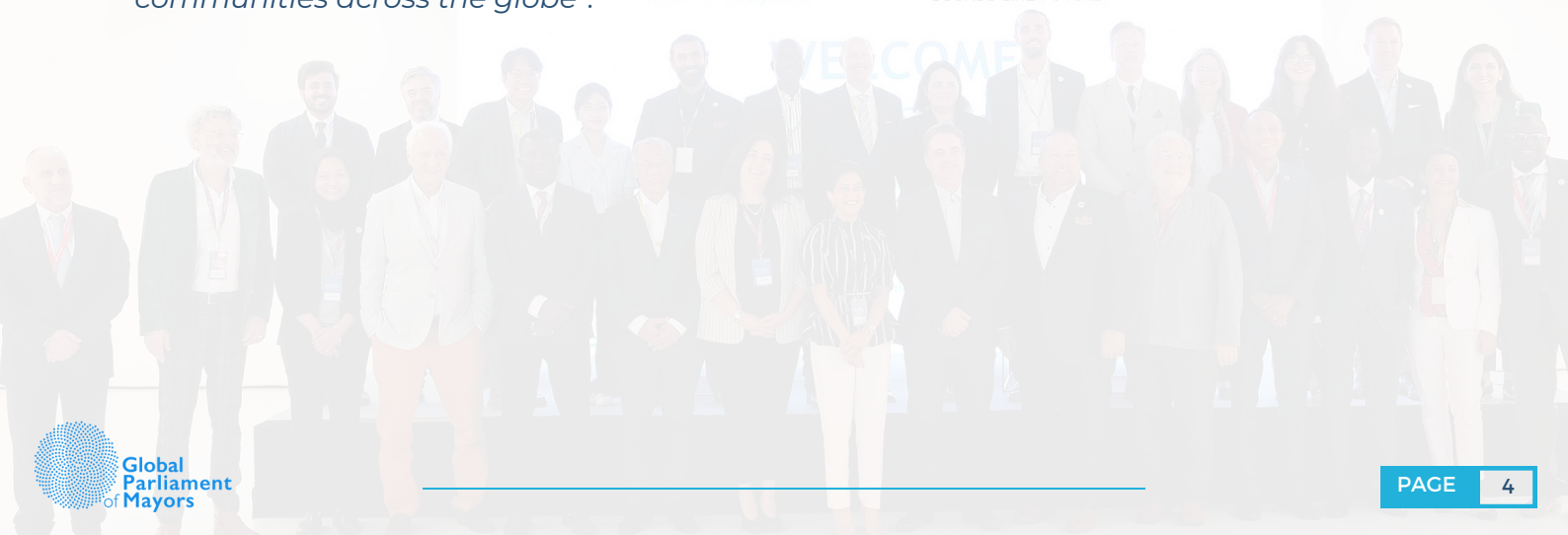
Around 100 participants, including mayors & deputy mayors, as well as leaders of city networks, and representatives of international organisations came together at the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) Annual Summit. The event was hosted by Mayor Ricardo Rio of Braga, Portugal, with the title: “Democracy at the Crossroads – Cities Take Action”

Mayors gathered in Braga and participated in dynamic panels on issues such as Delivering Democracy, Empowering Cities, Caring Cities, & The Power of Culture, 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.

The Summit was opened with keynote addresses by the Vice-President of the European Parliament Younous Omarjee, EUROCITIES Secretary General André Sobczak, GPM Chair Mayor Ricardo Rio, and GPM Executive Director Rainer Kern.

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

“The GPM Annual Summit 2025 represents a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogues about the complex challenges that urban areas are currently facing—from climate resilience to social inclusion, from sustainable development to the retaining of talent. By promoting open exchange and collaboration among several cities from all around the world and many international organizations, we can inspire truly transformative change and empower local governments worldwide. We strongly believe this summit did not only strengthen international partnerships but also generate innovative ideas and practical solutions that will improve the quality of life for communities across the globe”.



MAYOR RICARDO RIO AWARDED GPM'S PRESTIGIOUS DR. BENJAMIN BARBER GLOBAL CITIES AWARD 2025

June 2025 – This year, the Global Parliament of Mayors awarded the prestigious Dr. Benjamin Barber Global Cities Award to Mayor Ricardo Rio of Braga, Portugal. The award ceremony was part of the opening of the GPM Annual Summit 2025 hosted by Mayor Rio. The Benjamin Barber Award recognizes mayors for their outstanding contribution to further global urban governance and inspiring city leadership.

Mayor Rio's dynamic and innovative leadership as the Mayor of Braga, has not only transformed the lives of his constituents but has also served as an inspiring example to mayors and city leaders worldwide. His dedication to urban development, social progress, and sustainable initiatives is truly commendable. His tireless efforts to improve the quality of life in Braga and his relentless pursuit of positive change have not gone unnoticed.

In a world facing numerous challenges, Mayor Rio's leadership stands out as a beacon of hope and progress. His 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. His endeavors are setting a remarkable precedent for cities around the globe to follow.

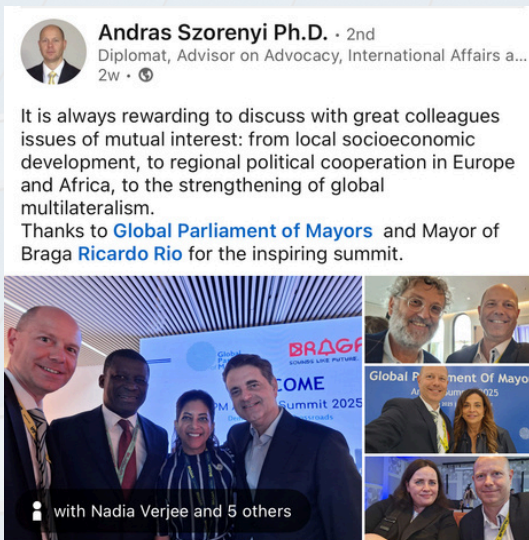
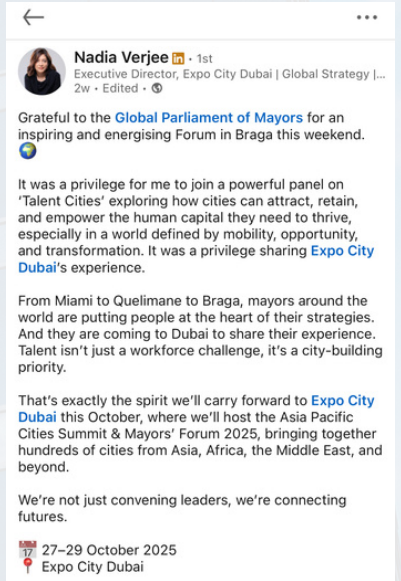


Mayor Rio commented: "Receiving this distinction from the Global Parliament of Mayors is, above all, a recognition of the path Braga has been forging through its internationalisation strategy. It reflects our firm commitment to positioning Braga as an open and collaborative city—one that actively engages with global networks and actively promotes principles of democracy, inclusion, and sustainable development. I am honored to have received this acknowledgment, as it reinforces our dedication to building a future that is not only more connected, but also more just, resilient, and responsive to the needs of citizens and communities from all around the world."

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 GPM, Dr. Benjamin Barber, author of the book 'If Mayors Ruled the World' (2014), who continues to inspire Mayors from around the world.

The GPM Annual Summit gathers mayors from all over the world, strengthening the voice of cities and elevating city leadership. Mayors, city network leaders, and representatives of international organizations gathered in Braga to convene on the topics of Democracy, Empowering Cities, Caring Cities, & The Power of Culture, reflecting on the pressing issues of the world.

THE SUMMIT IN SOCIALS



ma.ploskonka 🗣️ The quality of democracy is not just about elections! 🗳️ It's also about the daily work of our institutions and real citizen participation! 🙌

A city is definitely not a State. 🏠🗣️ It's a space where relationships, human rights, and freedom for everyone matter! 🤝👥

True democracy means accessibility, openness, and real civil rights – at the level of the city, neighborhood, and community! 🏡👥

It's not enough to talk – we need to show results! 📊

Let's build better, more open, and fairer cities together! ❤️🤝

#Democracy #CityForPeople #CivilRights #Freedom #Participation #TogetherForTheCity 🗳️🌐 #GPMayors #GPMSummit2025 #CitiesTakeAction #HRCN #DeCiDE

7 June

PLENARY SESSIONS

This session was opened with keynote addresses by the Vice-President of the European Parliament, **Younous Omarjee**, EUROCITIES Secretary General **André Sobczak**, GPM Chair and Mayor of Braga **Ricardo Rio**, and GPM Executive Director, **Rainer Kern**.



Delivering Democracy: DeCiDE

The summit began with a debate on democracy. This session delved into the global challenge of democracy and human rights in urban governance, particularly in relation to the DeCiDE project. It highlighted the worldwide variation in democracy and underscores the need for urban democracy in addressing pressing urban challenges. The speakers also outlined the objectives and the progress of cities in the DeCiDE project, and outlined the importance of co-creating a monitoring tool for human rights in cities.

On the Panel:

Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga, Portugal, GPM Chair of the Executive Committee
Mathias de Clercq, Mayor of Ghent, Belgium
Łukasz Sęk, Mayor of Krakow, Poland
Frederique Hanotier, Board Member of HRCN

Moderated by:

Prof. Dr. Eric Corijn, GPM Director of Policy & Research

This project is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Funded by
the European Union



DeCiDE
Recharge Democracy and
Human Rights in Cities



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.

On the Panel:

Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Eckart Würzner (online), Mayor of Heidelberg, Germany
Peter Nyong'o, Governor of Kisumu, Kenya
Eider Inunciaga, Councillor of Bilbao, Spain
Jordi Pascual, Coordinator, UCLG Culture
Simone d'Antonio, Lead Expert, URBACT
Doris Sommer (online), Professor, Harvard University

Moderated by:

Charles Landry, Advisory Committee, GPM



Caring Cities

The concept of “Caring Cities” was discussed, 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.

On the Panel:

Alix Desulme, Mayor of North Miami, USA
Jose Manuel Ribeiro, Mayor of Valongo, Portugal
Andras Szörényi, Senior Policy Advisor, Global Cities Hub

Moderated by:

Alison Curtis, Deputy Executive Director, Strong Cities Network

Smart Talent Cities™

The discussion highlighted the expanding role of cities as the change agents of trade, innovation, creative culture, and peace globally. Speakers pointed out the essentiality of urban diplomacy in a world where the majority of people live in cities and cities are the point of enactment for national and global policies. A key message was the need for city-to-city dialogues and the projected growth of the practice of urban diplomacy. A second panel discussed the trend of smart cities becoming more human-centric cities. Global Parliament of Mayors Smart Talent Cities™ program, was highlighted as an innovative approach for unleashing human capacity and practicing urban diplomacy by forming smart talent bridges and smart talent hubs globally.

Panel 1:

Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga, Portugal, GPM Chair of the Executive Committee

Bryan Barnett, Mayor of Rochester Hills, USA, GPM Executive Vice-Chair

Manuel de Araujo, Mayor of Quelimane, Mozambique, GPM Executive Committee

Rainer Kern, GPM Executive Director

Panel 2:

Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga, Portugal, GPM Chair of the Executive Committee

Datuk Dr. Mahadi, former Mayor of Kuala Lumpur, International Advisor to CityNet

Dr. Claudia Simoes, Director of iBMS Research Center at the University of Minho, Non-Executive Director at InvestBraga

Nadia Verjee, Executive Director, Expo City Dubai

Moderated by:

Gerri Burton, Smart Talent Cities

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.

On the Panel:

Luisa Salgueiro, Mayor of Matosinhos, Portugal

Bryan Barnett, Mayor of Rochester Hills, USA

Allison Curtis, Strong Cities Network

Moderated by:

Rainer Kern, GPM Executive Director

Building Global Governance for an Inclusive and Sustainable World

GPM, A UNIQUE GOVERNANCE BODY

Strength in Unity

Established in 2016, the GPM is a unique governance body of, by, and for mayors from all corners of the world. The core goal is to empower cities to play an important role on the international stage, engaging in global strategy debates with nation states and international organisations, such as the UN, and bringing local knowledge to the table. The mayors are focused on developing, sharing, and adopting action-oriented solutions.

Vision

A world in which mayors, cities, and networks are equal partners in building a global governance structure for an inclusive and sustainable world.

Global City Rights Movement

The GPM is envisioned as a global city rights movement that brings a different voice to the political arena: the voice of mayors, cities and their citizens. It is designed to harness the power of the proximity of mayors to urban residents and leverage cities' approaches to problem solving. Mayors can drive solutions in their cities that are more progressive, faster, and more targeted than those put forward at the national level.

The GPM is promoting collective action, connectivity, and solidarity among mayors at a time where the common global voice of mayors is especially needed as a driver of change.

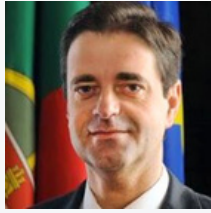
Online Community

GPM Mayors have direct access to the GPM Virtual Parliament and existing urban networks that offer research, best practices and city-to-city cooperation. The GPM's goal is to enable the physical and online debate between mayors without regard to political affiliation, and within their competences, and to give a common voice to the many distinct and important voices of mayors around the world.

GPM Membership

The more mayors join the GPM, the stronger the GPM voice in global debates will be. The membership includes mayors from cities large and small, north and south, developed and emerging. Members are brought together physically at an Annual Summit for city leaders and networks to deliberate as a Parliament and online, through the Virtual Parliament, allowing mayors to communicate, vote and act during the year.

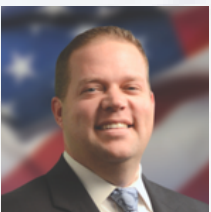
Executive Committee



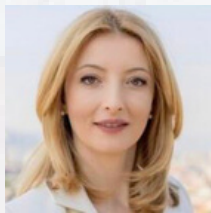
Mayor Ricardo Rio
Chair
Braga, Portugal



Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe
Vice Chair
Banjul, The Gambia



Mayor Bryan Barnett
Vice Chair
Rochester Hills, USA



Mayor Danela Arsovska
Treasurer
Skopje, North Macedonia



Mayor Manuel de Araujo
Quelimane, Mozambique



Mayor Eckart Würzner
Heidelberg, Germany



Rainer Kern
Executive Director, GPM,
Secretariat

GLOBAL AMBASSADORS

Sigmar Gabriel, former Vice Chancellor and former minister of Foreign Affairs, Germany - **Jozias van Aartsen**, former minister of Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, former mayor of The Hague and former acting mayor of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

HONORARY MEMBERS

Patricia de Lille, former mayor of Cape Town, South Africa - **Ed Johnson**, former mayor of Asbury Park, USA - **Grace Mary Mugasa**, former mayor of Hoima, Uganda - **Daniel Termont**, former mayor of Ghent, Belgium

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ian Klaus, Chair, Senior Fellow Chicago Council on Global Affairs and professor, USA - **Eric Corijn**, Urban Studies, Vrije University Brussels, Director of Policy & Research, Belgium - **Michael Nutter**, former mayor of Philadelphia, USA - **Ulli Sierau**, former mayor of Dortmund, Germany - **Mauricio Rodas**, former mayor of Quito, Ecuador - **Amanda Eichel**, former ED Global Covenant of Mayors, USA - **Seth Schultz**, CEO Resilience Rising, USA - **Debra Greenspan**, Managing Director Energy & Sustainability, Finsbury and Glover, USA - **Hazem Galal**, Global Leader for Cities & Local Government, PwC, Middle East - **Charles Landry**, Urban Specialist Creative City, UK - **Tom Cochran**, ED US Conference of Mayors, USA - **Elizabeth Johnston**, ED EFUS, France - **Henk Ovink**, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs, The Netherlands - **Lord Wei of Shoreditch**, House of Lords, UK - **Eileen Haring Woods**, Haring Woods Studio, UK - **Leah Baber**, Patron GPM Advisory Committee.

Summit Participants

Vice President Younous Omarjee (European Parliament, Belgium)
Mayor Ricardo Rio (Braga, Portugal)
Vincent Wallaert (Aix Marseille Provence, France)
Mayor António Loureiro e Santos (Albergaria-a-Velha, Portugal)
Mayor Emil Boc (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
Mayor Mathias De Clercq (Ghent, Belgium)
Governor. Peter Anyang Nyongo (Kisumu, Kenya)
Mayor Luisa Salgueiro (Matosinhos, Portugal)
Mayor Yves Lamine Cisse (Mont-Rolland, Senegal)
Mayor Alix Desulme (North Miami, FL, USA)
Mayor Vincent Languille (Le Thonolet, France)
Mayor Zubair Ali (Peshawar, Pakistan)
Mayor Manuel De Araujo (Quelimane, Mozambique)
Mayor Bryan Barnett (Rochester Hills, MI, USA)
Mayor José Manuel Ribeiro (Valongo, Portugal)
Rainer Kern (Executive Director Global Parliament of Mayors)

Olivier Plumandon (Assistant to the Vice President, European Parliament, Belgium)
Mehmet Cemil Arslan (Marmara Municipalities Union, Turkey)
Councillor Eider Innunciaga (Bilbao, Spain)
Deputy Mayor Olga Ursu (Chisinau, Republic of Moldova)
Deputy Mayor Lukasz Sek (Krakow, Poland)
Datuk Seri Haji Mahadi Che Ngah (Former Mayor of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
AbdulRahman Al-Mana (Ministry of Municipality, Qatar)
Khaled Alkoutob (Ministry of Municipality, Qatar)
Dr. Sultana Al-Nabet (Ministry of Municipality, Qatar)
Deputy Mayor Nikola Barbutov (Sofia, Bulgaria)
Nasra Al Rahma (Vice President's Office for Political Affairs, UAE)

André Sobczak (EUROCITIES Secretary General)
Nadia Verjee (Executive Director, Expo City Dubai, UAE)
Andrew White (Expo City Dubai, UAE)
Misha Mittal (Expo City Dubai, UAE)
Andras Szorenyi (Global Cities Hub, Switzerland)
Dr. Eric Corijn (GPM Director of Policy & Research, Belgium)
Ed Johnson (GPM Honorary Member, USA)
Charles Landry (GPM Advisory Committee, UK)
Frederique Hanotier (HRCN, Belgium)
Gerri Burton (Smart Talent Cities, USA)
Allison Curtis (Strong Cities Network, UK)
Jordi Pascual (UCLG, Spain)
Simone d'Antonio (URBACT, Italy)
Tabaré a. Curras (WWF Cities, Portugal)

Vanessa Granja (Master of Ceremonies, Portugal)

Telma Vidal Pereira (Albergaria-a-Velha, Portugal)

Sandra de Almeida Vereadora (Albergaria-a-Velha, Portugal)

Alazne Zugazuga (Bilbao, Spain)

Filipe Fernandes (Braga, Portugal)

Nuno Gouveia (Braga, Portugal)

Hélder Costa (Braga, Portugal)

Ana Ferreira (Braga, Portugal)

Carla Pereira (Braga, Portugal)

Nuno Almeida (Braga, Portugal)

Marta Encarnação (Braga, Portugal)

Eva Sousa (Braga, Portugal)

Sérgio Freitas (Braga, Portugal)

Rita Miranda (Braga, Portugal)

António Freitas (Braga, Portugal)

António Barroso (Braga, Portugal)

János Kenderney (Budapest, Hungary)

Rafael Amorim (Cavado Intermunicipal Community, Portugal)

Mihai Cebotar (Chisinau, Republic of Moldova)

Mora Jaime Paulo (CityNet, Seoul, Republic of Korea)

Eui Rin Um (CityNet, Seoul, Republic of Korea)

Ambassador Nancy Quartey-Sam (Ghana Delegation)

Morgane Lambrechts (Ghent, Belgium)

Pietro d'Arcano (Global Parliament of Mayors)

Ariana Mazli (Global Parliament of Mayors)

Aloice S.O Ager (Kisumu, Kenya)

Martin Born-Wiezer (The Hague, The Netherlands)

Lea Blanchez (HRCN, Belgium)

Mateusz Płoskonka (Krakow, Poland)

Diana Gonçalves (Matosinhos, Portugal)

Annemarie Houtman (Rotterdam, The Netherlands)

Chris Rieckmann (The Netherlands)

Djamila le Pair (Journalist, The Netherlands)

Rudolph Petithomme (North Miami, FL, USA)

Muhammad Rahim (Peshawar, Pakistan)

Taj Malook (Peshawar, Pakistan)

Kaleem Ullah (Peshawar, Pakistan)

Muhammad Haroon (Peshawar, Pakistan)

Adnan Nawaz (Peshawar, Pakistan)

Sadia Ali (Peshawar, Pakistan)

Pedro Carvalho da Silva (Journalist, Portugal)

Jessica Zielke (Rochester Hills, MI, USA)

Georgi Stamov (Sofia, Bulgaria)

Judit Kozenkow (Switzerland)



globalparliamentofmayors.org



info@globalparliamentofmayors.org



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