

## NEWS

THE PATTIS  
FAMILY FOUNDATION  
GLOBAL CITIES  
BOOK AWARD

Hosted by  
**metropolis ●**



**Jordi Vaquer**  
Secretary General of Metropolis,  
the World Association of Major  
Metropolises.

“ Books offer an unmatched ability to unpack such complexity. They provide the space and time needed to explore the layered realities of urban life, helping readers navigate the overwhelming flow of data, impressions, and rapid developments that define modern cities. ”

## Jordi Vaquer: On Metropolitan Narratives, Global Cooperation, and the Transformative Power of Books

Friday 13/06/2025

We asked **Jordi Vaquer**, Secretary General of Metropolis and member of the Judging Committee of the 2025 edition of The Pattis Family Foundation Global Cities Book Award, how the Award aligns with Metropolis' mission, the role of storytelling in global urban collaboration, and how an initiative such as this literary prize can reveal unusual narratives and approaches to urban innovation:

## HOW BOOKS ARE CRITICAL IN SPARKING REFLECTION AND CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT AROUND METROPOLITAN COMPLEXITIES

*"The current shape of cities is more complex than ever before. Some urban areas now exceed 10 or even 20 million inhabitants—scales never before experienced in human history. These contemporary metropolises are not only vast in size but also intricately structured, with blurred boundaries and a patchwork of interconnected spaces—suburban, rural, industrial, natural, and more. Added to this is the astonishing diversity of people who inhabit or pass through them: permanent residents, commuters, temporary migrants, and visitors.*

*In this context, books offer an unmatched ability to unpack such complexity. They provide the space and time needed to explore the layered realities of urban life, helping readers navigate the overwhelming flow of data, impressions, and rapid developments that define modern cities. **While digital media excels at speed and accessibility, books remain indispensable for offering depth, historical context, and narrative cohesion.***

*Well-crafted non-fiction books do more than just explain—they invite reflection and critical engagement. They complement fast-paced formats by adding the perspective and structure necessary **to truly understand global urban dynamics.** And just as books have weathered the rise of newspapers, radio, television, and social media, they continue to adapt and remain vital in shaping informed public discourse.*

*By illuminating the everyday realities of over half the world's population, **books contribute meaningfully to the broader public understanding of cities as key arenas where global challenges**—climate change, inequality, migration, governance—are being confronted. This is precisely the kind of contribution that the Pattis Family Foundation Global Cities Book Award seeks to recognize and celebrate".*

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## THE AWARD AS A SEAMLESS FIT IN METROPOLIS' WIDER MISSION

*"Metropolis operates on the core belief that local governments are uniquely positioned to accelerate each other's progress through the generous exchange of knowledge, experiences, and solutions.*

*In a world where cities often find themselves in intense competition for investment, talent, and influence, Metropolis promotes a countervailing force—collaboration. We see every opportunity for city-to-city learning as a chance to advance urban sustainability, equity, and resilience on a global scale.*

*In this context, **organizing the Pattis Family Foundation Global Cities Book Award is a natural extension of our mission.** Books are powerful vehicles for shaping urban thought, distilling lessons, and influencing policy beyond a single context. By recognizing outstanding non-fiction works on cities, **the Award helps surface critical insights, innovative approaches, and compelling narratives that can inspire decision-makers, researchers, and citizens alike.***

*The Award complements and strengthens our broader ecosystem of knowledge exchange—connecting with our work on metropolitan data, peer learning programs, best practice platforms, and advocacy for metropolitan governance. **It enriches the global circulation of ideas and contributes to building a shared urban imagination**—one where informed dialogue, not competition, is the driving force for improving life in the world’s largest cities”.*

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## **AN EDITION THAT WILL SPARK EMERGING PERSPECTIVES AND DIVERSE VOICES**

*"One of the greatest strengths of a book competition like The Pattis Family Foundation Global Cities Book Award, and one of the joys of being part of it, is its ability to surprise us. Rather than seeking confirmation of established narratives, **we welcome the emergence of fresh perspectives and ideas that we may not have anticipated but that challenge us** to see urban resilience, inclusion, and the future of cities in new ways.*

*My hope is that this year's edition of the Award will remain open to the diversity of voices and insights that come through the submissions. **At the end of the process, our goal is to help elevate the books that offer meaningful contributions to understanding metropolitan life and governance**, and to share them widely so they can inspire new thinking, spark global conversations, and inform the work of those shaping our urban futures."*

\* With a background in international relations and urban policy, Jordi brings extensive experience in global governance, democracy, and urban futures. Prior to joining Metropolis, he served as the Regional Director for Europe at the Open Society Foundations and co-directed the UN Habitat’s World Urban Campaign. He is a passionate advocate for multilevel governance, democratic innovation, and metropolitan collaboration to confront global challenges.