



KATOWICE-GZM POLITICAL DECLARATION

On the 27th of June 2022, mayors, leaders and political representatives of the European metropolitan areas gathered in Katowice, the capital city of Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia for the 7th European Metropolitan Authorities Forum, to join the efforts of global political leaders and citizens, gathered in Katowice, on the occasion of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum, to follow the transformation of cities for a better urban future.

Bearing in mind that the meeting of global leaders is held in times of previously unimaginable crisis of peace in the East, i.e. the war in Ukraine, Europe is now struggling with the need to maintain peace and safety. However, European countries, although undergoing numerous crises, experience solidarity, support and joint efforts of international environments greater than ever before. Having respect to the so far joint efforts of all EMA members to consolidate the growing role of metropolitan areas in counteracting crises and with the above WUF 11 objective as a frame, the mayors, leaders and political representatives have focused on the ambition of the “Metropolitan Vision of a Better Future. Make metropolises inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

Recalling on recent challenges faced by metropolitan areas and regions, cities and other local governments, caused previously by the pandemic and currently by the war in Ukraine, we the political leaders gathered today in Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia underline and stress that the level of a metropolis, is the most efficient one to achieve ambitious urban-oriented objectives.

Today, having debated on the EU Agenda and the role of metropolitan areas, metropolitan solutions to contemporary challenges, resilience, safety, sustainability and ability to react to crises, improvement of democratic quality in metropolises and bottom-up initiatives to address metropolitan challenges, citizen engagement and participation of economic and social stakeholders in metropolitan agendas, we the political leaders have drawn main challenges and responses:

1. Reconstruction of Ukraine and strengthening relations with the European Union

Soon there will be an immense need to support our colleague Mayors in Ukraine in their struggle to rebuild their cities. Therefore we the political leaders, show our readiness to cooperate and flexibly react to war-refugees crises and collaborate in terms of support and relocation of people throughout Europe and beyond. EMA network shows its commitment to be involved and to participate in the reconstruction of Ukrainian cities through political, economic and technical support. We also call the EU to support our efforts by joint-

development, cocreation and implementation of tools and instruments to support this aim of cooperation. EMA commits to support the broadening and deepening of relations between Ukraine and the European Union.

2 Resources and Infrastructures

The times of the pandemic with its effects upon supply chains resulting from the dependence of our economies on the production in e.g. China, have had some negative effects upon the performance of SMEs, proximity of commerce, security of employment and consumer habits. Apart from the above mentioned economic disruptions, the times of the latest crises have revealed the limits in capacity of e.g. public transport infrastructures, availability of human and financial resources and capacity of public spaces. The vulnerability of infrastructures have never been greater. Therefore better application of technologies, sustainable development of transportation network, effective and direct use of EU funds by metropolitan areas as the owners of these public tasks, can help metropolitan areas overcome the challenges visible in that scope of metropolitan governance. According to Robert Pyka from the Silesian University, *“Metropolises whose population density and social, cultural, and economic diversity can be treated as sources of creativity will therefore be competing with one another not only in terms of economic growth, but also, of new ideas and innovation in regard to which ones can first develop new models of urban life in response to the potentially catastrophic challenges – sanitary, ecological, social (and, in light of recent events in Ukraine, perhaps even military) – that are now reaching global dimensions”*. Therefore, we the political leaders of European Metropolises, undertake to counter-react the crises with new models of urban policies and solutions. We undertake to assist our municipalities and support the co-generation, co-governance and creativity in sharing economies related to food, mobility, housing, etc. Today, we notice the potential of metropolitan areas as a hub of ideas co-developed participatively with different stakeholders.

3. Climate change and immediate need to remodel energy sources

Bearing in mind that our colleagues from Ukrainian cities and metropolitan areas, both citizens and also the mayors and political representatives, struggle to survive and overcome the war crises related to access to food, water, energy, we the mayors and political representatives also notice immediate need to remodel our energy sources. It is said that due to all the latest disruption caused either by the pandemic or by the growing prices and restricted energy resources caused by the war in Ukraine, Europe will need to struggle to survive these crises without any delay and immediately *“(…) with energy and other prices rising (...) we, inside the EU, have to accept to pay also a price to stop this outrageous and unprovoked war: the future of our security and our democracies depends on it. The price to pay is the price of freedom”*¹. Therefore, we the EMA political leaders show our support for the REPowerEU objectives² with a simultaneous call to EU institutions about our readiness to participate as stakeholders, beneficiaries and demo areas of modern solutions. As reaffirmed in the meeting in Porto in 2021, EMA network has assumed the main agreements of the COP26 and all metropolitan areas are working to develop programmes and projects aligned with these agreements in the framework of their competencies.

¹ Source: Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/war-ukraine-and-its-implications-eu_en

² REPowerEU https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1511

4. Networking and the Power of International Exchange

Recent challenges related to latest crises have shown the enormous power of both local and multi-stakeholder cooperation but also the potential of international exchange and support among diverse communities and societies. With new challenges related to the refugee crises around the globe and especially in Europe, we the political leaders underline the power of both local and international exchange and support. With the Ukrainian war going on just at the borders of the country we met in today, we are happy to underline that no friends are left behind.

5. Metropolitan Governance

Rapid urbanisation is inevitable. As the UN estimates, 55% of the global population lives in urban areas and that figure is to rise to 68% by 2050. With just a few exceptions, cities and metropolitan areas are expected to become larger and more populated. At the same time, cities already now offer and will further offer, massive possibilities to its citizens, to improve their quality of life. At the same time, with the increase in sizes and populations, metropolitan areas and cities will need to struggle with all effects of strains of infrastructures, diversity and different needs of populations, as well as inevitable climate change. As mentioned by Maimunah Mohd Sharif, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat – “(...) the Covid-19 pandemic has shown us that cities are in the front line of twenty-first century challenges and that overcoming those challenges requires new governance approaches based on cooperation, collective action and solidarity”.³ Therefore we, the local political leaders notice and underline the imperative of good governance but never through recentralization practices, we have faced during the COVID-19 pandemics. Governing future cities and metropolitan areas will with time be more complex and will require strong institutions with financial resources and participative approach. Gathered today in Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia, we underline that the goals of metropolitan governance should address the issues of sustainability, equity, liveability of future metropolitan areas. The new models of governance should encompass diverse stakeholders and rely on a helix model, which involves citizens, engages academia and business and inspires public administration. We strongly support informed policy-making and we call EU institutions to support us in our efforts, by enabling metropolitan areas directly participate and directly benefit from EU Policies in particular the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the cohesion instruments.

With respect to the above, having discussed all necessary aspects, the network of European Metropolitan Authorities agrees to take all measures to fulfil the accepted key points of further cooperation and bring metropolitan vision of a better future into action.

Katowice, Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia
27th of June 2022

³ Source: Governance Assessment Framework for metropolitan, territorial and regional management, <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/10/gaf-mtr.pdf>

Signatures: