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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: EU agenda for cities
- Council conclusions (26 February 2026)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the EU agenda for cities, as approved by the Council (General Affairs/Cohesion) at its 4157th meeting held on 26 February 2026.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

**on Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council,
the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions
“An EU Agenda for Cities: Driving Growth and Prosperity”**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. WELCOMES the 2025 Communication “An EU Agenda for Cities: Driving Growth and Prosperity,” which provides a strategic framework for strengthening the territorial and urban dimension of EU policies, recognising cities as key actors for delivering EU priorities, competitiveness and cohesion objectives. STRESSES the importance of continuity of the Urban Agenda for the EU, through place-based and integrated urban development, within an EU multi-level governance set-up and ACKNOWLEDGES the importance of addressing cities’ views in the design and implementation of relevant EU, national and subnational policies, while taking into account the diversity of urban governance systems and respecting the competence of the Member States;
2. ACKNOWLEDGES that around 75% of the EU population live in cities and urban areas, which face significant challenges including housing shortages, social exclusion and risk of poverty, high energy costs, security concerns, demographic and mobility challenges and the impact and mitigation of climate change, pollution and environmental degradation;
3. RECOGNISES that local and regional authorities implement around 70% of EU legislation, making them essential actors for achieving EU objectives and ensuring effective implementation;

Cities and EU Policies

4. APPRECIATES the role of cities of all sizes as important contributors to EU competitiveness, innovation and sustainable development, notably through their capacity to attract talent, foster entrepreneurship and support strategic value chains and investments, and provide public services of general interest;
5. STRESSES that cities along with their functional urban areas play a crucial role in advancing social inclusion, innovation, economic, social and territorial cohesion, by enabling integrated local responses in areas such as housing, cultural heritage and tourism, entrepreneurship and employment, combating poverty, securing education and access to services, thereby contributing to reducing inequalities and promoting inclusive growth;
6. RECOGNISES the role of cities in ensuring, within their competence, safe public spaces, civil protection and service continuity, strengthening societal resilience and contributing to the prevention of disinformation and hybrid threats. STRESSES the need to integrate resilience to environmental, social and security-related risks and crisis preparedness into urban planning through smart and inclusive design including climate adaptation strategies and EMPHASISES the need to invest in cities' preparedness to prevent and mitigate the impact of recent and future environmental shocks and security threats;
7. WELCOMES the recently adopted European Affordable Housing Plan, which among others recognises the particular pressure of the housing crisis on cities and outlines areas of action and EU initiatives that will reinforce their involvement and role. ENCOURAGES continued efforts to improve access to affordable, sustainable and inclusive housing, while respecting the competence of Member States and promoting close cooperation between them;
8. RECOGNISES cities and urban areas as key contributors to decarbonisation, climate adaptation, protection of the environment and biodiversity, and clean energy transition, including through the introduction of emission mitigation measures. ACKNOWLEDGES that cities of all sizes play a central role in improving urban mobility by fostering sustainable, accessible, clean and efficient multi-modal transport systems;

9. RECOGNISES the potential of the New European Bauhaus initiative supporting sustainable bottom-up practices in the built environment, as well as upscaling of innovative solutions with a positive impact on the quality of life of European citizens;
10. RECOGNISES the growing role of cities in international cooperation and urban diplomacy, as well as their contribution to the active implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals from the UN 2030 Agenda and the UN New Urban Agenda;
11. EMPHASISES the importance of consulting cities, where relevant, during the EU legislative process at an early stage, respecting the governance and the competences of Member States, with the aim of promoting better regulation and reducing implementation pressure by making EU rules and regulations better aligned with urban conditions, without increasing the administrative burden for cities or Member States;

Cities and EU Support

12. HIGHLIGHTS that cohesion policy contributed to strengthening the urban dimension of the EU, with over EUR 24 billion from ERDF dedicated to sustainable urban development in 2021-2027 and EMPHASISES the importance of support for cities in light of their growing challenges. STRESSES the added value of the European Urban Initiative (EUI) and URBACT as important and complementary instruments providing direct support to urban development;
13. HIGHLIGHTS the opportunities offered to cities by the mid-term review of cohesion policy, including flexibilities to address social, affordable and sustainable housing, energy transition, water resilience, competitiveness, defence and skills development, including through ERDF transfers to EUI and the EUI Seal of Excellence;
14. NOTES that the RRF also supports cities' recovery and resilience, particularly in the green and digital transition but also for the provision of public services and social and affordable housing;

15. RECOGNISES the European Investment Bank's role in providing financing and advisory services for sustainable urban transport, social, affordable and sustainable housing, decarbonisation, energy efficiency, the circular economy and development of green infrastructure, including through blending EU, national and private funding;

Way Forward

16. HIGHLIGHTS the need for improved EU and national coordination, simplification, digitalisation and capacity building to strengthen urban governance and investment capabilities, ACKNOWLEDGES that many cities, particularly medium-sized and smaller ones, face disproportionate administrative and financial constraints that limit access to EU funding;
17. EMPHASISES the value of partnerships with civil society and the private sector and REAFFIRMS the importance of embedding urban priorities across relevant EU instruments to promote integrated, inclusive and sustainable development;
18. CALLS on the Commission to continue strengthening the territorial and urban dimension of relevant EU policies, building on the Urban Agenda for the EU and the Territorial Agenda 2030. INVITES the Commission to clearly establish and support the complementarity and coexistence of the EU Agenda for cities and the Urban Agenda for the EU in a continuous dialogue with the Member States including the regional and local city-level, while ensuring coherence and avoiding duplication, overlaps and parallel structures;
19. WELCOMES the launch of the EU Cities web portal, as well as its proposed integration into the forthcoming EU Cities platform, aiming at facilitating access to EU initiatives and collaboration between cities including urban development stakeholders and the EU level;
20. RECALLS the importance of ensuring long-term support for integrated urban development, building on the achievements of the current period, as described in the EU Agenda for cities.
21. REAFFIRMS that cities are indispensable partners in EU policymaking and should be involved as appropriate in dialogue, consultation, and implementation processes with the European Institutions.