



# Eurocities 2025 Braga Programme

STRONGER CITIES, FAIRER EUROPE → 4-6 JUNE



EUROCITIES 2025 BRAGA  
STRONGER CITIES  
FAIRER EUROPE

BRAGA



EURO  
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EUROCITIES 2025 BRAGA  
PROGRAMME

### 12:00 Registration

### 13:00 - 13:45 Newcomer Session

### 14:00 - 16:00 Study Visits

Visit 1 | Human Power Hub – Social Innovation Center of Braga

Visit 2 | Viva o Bairro e Pulsar

Visit 3 | INL – Iberian International Nanotechnology Laboratory

Visit 4 | Gnration e Startup Braga

Visit 5 | Municipal Market

Visit 6 | Walk with the National Capital of Culture Braga 2025

### 14:30 - 17:30 Eurocities Academy: Training Session on Building Safe Digital Cities (in Partnership with Nordic Safe Cities)

As digital spaces increasingly shape public discourse, social interaction, and democratic participation, cities are under growing pressure to address online harms such as hate speech, misinformation, and polarisation. While municipalities often find themselves on the front line, their role in the digital realm—and the tools available to them—remain unclear and frequently underutilised.

This training workshop will explore how European cities can take a more active role in fostering safer and more inclusive digital environments. Drawing on insights from the Safe Digital City programme by Nordic Safe Cities, the session will present practical strategies and lessons learned from addressing online risks and building digital resilience. Topics will include identifying the targets of online hate, understanding which issues drive polarisation, recognising the events that trigger online hostility, and exploring how city officials and municipalities can take effective preventive action to protect residents from harmful digital content.

With a strong focus on the municipal role and room for manoeuvre, we will delve into cross-sector collaboration and local prevention initiatives. The session is case-based and designed to inspire concrete action through real-world examples and peer-to-peer dialogue.



16:00 - 17:30

National Meetings

Non-EU Members Meeting

19:30

Welcome Party

Venue | Colunata dos Eventos, Parque do Bom Jesus, 4715-261 Braga, Portugal



### 07:00 - 08:00 **Walking and Running Session**

Participants can join a Walking and Running session, suitable for all fitness levels. This programme aims to provide technical guidance to all participants who wish to start running or simply engage in physical activity to combat a sedentary lifestyle. The session includes a brief warm-up, followed by coordination exercises focusing on running technique, and concludes with strength training exercises.

[You can register here](#)

### 09:00 - 10:30 **Welcome**

Ricardo Rio | Mayor of Braga

Burkhard Jung | Mayor of Leipzig, President of Eurocities

André Sobczak | Secretary General Eurocities

### **Opening Panel Discussion**

#### **'Towards a New European Partnership for Cities'**

The 2025 Eurocities Annual Conference takes place at a defining moment for urban Europe, as a new EU policy agenda emerges that could reshape the role of cities in European governance. Against the backdrop of recent crises—including the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and migration challenges—cities have proven vital in maintaining essential services and social cohesion. Yet, their political and financial empowerment remains insufficient. This panel will explore how EU institutions and city leaders can forge a new partnership, ensuring cities have direct access to funding, tools for private investment, and a stronger role in EU decision-making.

### 10:30 - 11:00 **Coffee Break**

### 11:00 - 12:30

#### **Parallel Sessions**

### **Open Cities:**

#### **Unlocking Public Spaces for All**

Investing in public spaces that are vibrant, accessible and sustainable is key to a good quality of life in cities. Local authorities have the power to transform urban spaces, making them greener, more inclusive, and ultimately more attractive. This is done through smart urban planning, urban regeneration with sustainability in mind, cooperation with various actors, and a good dose of cultural vibrancy.



From open squares to public libraries, from brownfields to new housing areas, shared spaces are multiplying, offering opportunities for more social interactions and for different uses, involving a diversity of people.

How do cities invest in quality, vibrant and inclusive public spaces? From new design and planning approaches to cultural approaches to urban planning, the session will highlight local practices while investigating enablers for vibrant public spaces, including innovative governance models, new partnerships and connections between different thematic public policies.

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## **Ambitious Cities:**

### **Shaping Public Procurement to Boost Competitiveness**

Public procurement is one of the key tools available to cities to implement their investment strategies and drive sustainable transformation. Its potential, however, remains hampered by the shortcomings and fragmentation of the EU and national legal frameworks, as well as a lack of resources and skills for the uptake of innovative approaches to public buying.

This session will discuss current city strategies to adopt new approaches to public procurement, leveraging purchasing power to promote environmental and social innovation; the most significant 'pain points' of the current EU legal framework as well as suggestions for improvement; and what kind of capacity-building activities need to take place for urban public buyers to be able to fully embrace and implement an ambitious procurement strategy.

The outcomes of the discussion will feed into Eurocities advocacy work on public procurement, including the upcoming revision of the EU Public Procurement Directives.

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## **Thriving Cities:**

### **Investing in homes, Investing in Europe**

Across Europe, more and more cities are facing a dire housing crisis, affecting urban populations, from the most vulnerable individuals to essential workers. Local governments are using all available tools at their disposal to prevent housing from becoming a luxury that only a few can afford.

Given the multi-faceted nature of this crisis, collaboration between all levels of governments is essential and the EU has a key role to play. Besides revising legislation to create a favourable framework for sustainable, affordable housing, giving cities access to EU funds and investments is one of the most urgent responses required at the EU level. The session will address the following questions:

- What opportunities do the ongoing revisions of EU funding instruments, including InvestEU, present for cities in their fight against the housing crisis?
- How to ensure the next EU budget will secure some funding to tackle the housing crisis?
- How do we ensure that the future European affordable housing plan and its pan-European investment platform will provide tools that are targeted to local needs?



**12:30 - 14:00**

## **Lunch**

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**12:30 - 14:00**

On Invitation

### **Women Leaders Working Lunch:**

#### **Digital Threats for Gender Equality and Women Leadership**

Online hatred and polarisation are on the rise across Europe, increasingly shaping public discourse and threatening democratic participation. Women in political and leadership roles are disproportionately targeted, facing gender-based abuse intended to silence, intimidate, and push them out of public life. This trend has serious implications for democratic engagement, public trust, and gender equality in city leadership.

For city leaders, this represents both a personal and institutional challenge: how to ensure safety, foster inclusive digital spaces, and uphold democratic values.

This interactive lunch session will explore the scale and impact of online abuse, drawing on recent data and key insights. Participants will be invited to reflect on their own experiences, share ideas, and learn about emerging local strategies to combat online hatred.

Organised in partnership with Nordic Safe Cities, the session will feature brief presentations followed by an open discussion to encourage peer exchange and clear takeaways.

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**14:00 - 14:30**

### **Pulse check: past insights, future directions**

**Moderator** | André Sobczak

**Speakers** | Burkhard Jung, mayor of Leipzig & outgoing Eurocities President; Mathias de Clercq, mayor of Ghent, current Eurocities Vice President

This discussion draws on insights from the Eurocities Pulse 2025 to reflect on shifting urban priorities, the evolving role of cities in the EU, and the future of city leadership. The mayors will share perspectives on managing complex challenges, the growing role of cities in EU policy, and strategies to manage complex urban agendas. They will also explore ways to deepen cooperation between EU institutions and city networks, while expressing their hopes and vision for Eurocities.

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**14:30 - 15:30**

### **Eurocities Awards**

The annual Eurocities Awards celebrate exceptional achievements by cities and individuals who are working to improve the quality of life for their residents and address Europe's most pressing challenges.

- The City Heroes award recognises politicians and city officials for their exceptional leadership or initiatives, whether at the local or European level.
  - The Inspiring City Initiative award highlights cities that are setting the standard in creating equitable opportunities, fostering inclusivity, and investing in long-term prosperity for their residents.
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**15:30 - 16:00**

## **Coffee Break**

**16:00 - 17:00**

## **Political Track**

This session will provide the opportunity for politicians to exchange with representatives from the Young City Shapers programme on the broader political dimensions of urban decision-making.

**16:00 - 17:30**

## **Learning Loop:**

### **Resilience in Action - Navigating Failures with Success**

Cities must often navigate complex and challenging decisions. They face difficulties and unforeseen events that can disrupt plans, leading to policies or projects failing or deviating from their original intent.

The bottom line is that challenges and failures offer valuable learning opportunities, especially when shared with others. This session is designed to foster this exchange - encouraging participants to learn from each other's experiences and mistakes, inspired by the conference theme "Stronger Cities, Fairer Europe".

**17:00 - 17:45**

**Restricted**

## **Shadow Commissioners Meeting**

One year after the launch of the Eurocities Shadow Commission during the 2024 European Elections campaign, it is high time for the Shadow Commissioners to meet in person. The Shadow Commission has been a key body in leveraging the network's advocacy and influence on the EU political agenda. This session will provide an opportunity for Eurocities Shadow Commissioners to exchange experiences, recognise their achievements, and look ahead to the next milestones. This will also be an opportunity to look at the lessons learned by the Shadow Commissioners during their mandate and discuss ways for Mayors to be better involved in EU affairs. A family picture with all members of the shadow Commission will be taken on this occasion.

**19:30**

## **Conference Dinner**

**Venue** | Torre da Naia, R. da Torre, Gondizalves, 4705-303 Braga, Portugal





07:00 - 08:00

### Sporting Activities

Participants are invited to join a Yoga session. This practice focuses on the connection between body, mind, and spirit through movement, breathing, and mindfulness. If weather and ground conditions permit, the yoga session may be moved to the nearby Parque da Ponte for an even more serene experience.

[You can register here](#)

08:00 - 09:00

### ExCom Meeting (ExCom Members Only)

09:00 - 10:30

### Speednetworking

An interactive networking session for cities to share their knowledge and experience.

### Political Track:

#### Becoming a Eurocities Ambassador for the Next EU Budget

As the EU prepares its next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the direction of future funding is at a crossroads. Current proposals suggest a shift toward greater centralisation, with national governments set to control the majority of the EU budget—potentially sidelining cities from direct access to key funds. This session will explore the risks of this trend, including the potential merging of vital EU programmes into a single competitiveness fund. With cities on the frontline of delivering EU priorities, mayors must step up as advocates for urban interests. Join this session to understand what's at stake and how city leaders can influence the negotiations to secure a fair, inclusive, and future-ready EU budget.

10:30 - 11:00

### Coffee break

11:00 - 12:15

### Eurocities General Assembly





**12:15 - 12:45**

## **Closing Plenary**

Young city shapers - highlights & lessons

## **Closing Words**

Newly elected president of Eurocities

Ricardo Rio | Mayor of Braga

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**12:45 - 14:00**

## **Lunch**

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**14:00 - 19:00**

## **Study Visits** (Porto & Guimarães)

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