

Cities, partners of local crime prevention policies in Europe

European Union cities' mayors, members of the European Forum for Urban Safety and committed in active policies to fight against discrimination and fear of crime that affect citizens' daily life are particularly worried by the growing economic crisis, unemployment rate, as well as the constant arrival of migrants facing tough economic conditions and by the increase in the number of social situations endangering people's safety.

Mayors fear the development of a social breakdown that would accentuate inequalities regarding access to citizen rights and rejection feelings towards socially underprivileged populations. They especially dread an increase in crime and in opportunities favouring delinquency, public disorders, and attacks to property and people's integrity.

Mayors condemn all kinds of declaration, behaviour or action aiming to stigmatize some inhabitants or groups of inhabitants of their cities, or blame them for the situation. They denounce the demagogical use of unsafe situations and public disorders for electoral ends.

More than ever, they aim to preserve a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect, which is essential to enable a positive exit from the crisis. In this alarming context, mayors want to contribute to the respect of the Law and the preservation of equal rights for all in their cities.

Regulated immigration should always be considered as an asset for the economic growth. The brakes upon social, cultural and economic inclusion and upon human development cannot contribute to an efficient safety policy.

The EFUS' Mayors recall that European elections represent an opportunity for European voters to make a real choice on how to efficiently fight for employment, youth inclusion in society, violence and crime prevention and respect of the Law. They reaffirm the 2006 Saragossa Manifesto's principles of actions, having our cities play a major part in crime prevention issues, and defining prevention as a priority of the Europe of Justice, of Safety and of Liberty.

The Parliament representatives who are to be elected will have to recognize crime prevention as a common objective, with significant and permanent means.

In respect of the principle of subsidiarity, Europe should support local authorities directly confronted with the current issues, and should make an assessment of all actions and measures undertaken by cities to face the crisis, in order to enable their dissemination and expansion. To that end, they suggest, to the Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, organising a Forum of local authorities willing to reinforce links of solidarity and supporting creativity in order to create new job opportunities and new solutions to improve citizens' welfare.

The present crisis should not lead to the breakdown of Europe, but to a renewed development characterized by the inclusion of cities in European policies. Cities are the partners of Europe which is united in confronting social and economic crisis and insecurity.

Adopted on May 8th 2009, in Sao João da Madeira (Portugal) by the Executive Committee of the European Forum for Urban Safety.

About the European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS):

The European Forum is a Non Governmental Organisation established in 1988, in Barcelona under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Its network gathers more than 300 European local authorities and serves as a think-tank and a place for dialogue and discussion. It provides opportunities for the exchange of positive experiences, on the basis of inter-city cooperation. This helps to stimulate and orient policies at a local, national and community level, in the areas of prevention of urban insecurity and crime management. The European Forum works with most of the 27 Member states; National Forums have been created in France, Italy, Belgium, Luxemburg, Spain and Portugal over recent years.

The member cities of the EFUS Executive Committee:

Paris, Roubaix, Le Havre (France), **Alcobendas, Saragossa, Lleida** (Spain), **Budapest** (Hungary), **The Crime Prevention Council of the Land of Lower Saxony, Stuttgart** (Germany), **Brussels, Liege, Mons** (Belgium), **Campania Region, Modena, Roma, Reggio Emilia** (Italy), **Loures, Matosinhos, São João da Madeira** (Portugal), **Liverpool** (United Kingdom).

The entire list of the EFUS members is available in the website of the Forum

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