

## Press release

### **The Cities Coalition for Digital Rights General Assembly met at the Digital Society Digital Cities international conference in Bordeaux to promote an ambitious agenda to further guarantee the protection of and promote digital rights.**

**Bordeaux, France (20 October, 2023)** - For its 5th anniversary, the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights decided to pave new ways and ambitions for promoting digital human rights in cities. During the Digital Society Digital Cities international conference organised by Bordeaux, the annual political meeting and the general assembly of the Coalition were held and saw the presentation of a Global Package for Digital Human Rights in cities, with concrete missions and goals to work towards the implementation of principles to make cities' digital transformation more equitable, open, inclusive, and sustainable.

For 5 years, the members of the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights have been working together to achieve its 5 principles (Universal and equal access to the internet, and digital literacy; Privacy, data protection and security; Transparency, accountability, and non-discrimination of data, content and algorithms; Participatory Democracy, diversity and inclusion; Open and ethical digital service standards) inscribed in the Declaration of the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights.

The latest years of work on the topic of Digital Rights, at local and international levels, have shown that the subject is here to last. The ever-changing digital transformation is creating new opportunities, and new challenges. The recent disruption provoked by the release of ChatGPT and other AI-powered tools is raising paramount questions on the future of labor, rights, and inequalities, with some of these tools even questioning the relevance of individual thinking and the value of human beings. In the face of these challenges, the coalition stressed that Digital Rights cannot be static and that they have to remain a formal declaration across the globe and must be implemented through concrete actions. Digital human rights is one of the foundations for the international guidelines on people-centered smart cities, which will be developed by UN-Habitat with a multi level stakeholder approach, upon request from 193 Member States of the United Nations. The meeting stressed that cities are one of the most relevant actors to perceive the results of these changes as the closest level of government to communities. Changes happen fast in cities. They are at the frontline when social crises, cultural changes, and economical shifts happen. They are involved and active when it comes to tackling the consequences of digital transformation, both with regards to its negative and positive impacts.

Within this context, 32 cities and representatives of the partner organisations Eurocities, United Cities and Local Governments, and UN-Habitat met on the occasion of the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights General Assembly at the Digital Society Digital Cities international conference in Bordeaux to promote an ambitious agenda to further guarantee the protection of and promote digital rights. To act concretely in their districts, their streets, their neighbourhoods and with communities. The Cities Coalition for Digital Rights will champion the cause of digital rights in cities through the following missions:

1. Boost transparency & participation in data and digital technologies
2. Provide proactive digital services that meet resident needs
3. Promote the ethical use of digital technologies and data
4. Promote digital inclusion in cities
5. Empower residents and cities to support digital rights.



## 6. Make digital rights part of the global agenda

To collaborate on these missions, the Coalition launched the following three services:

- A Digital Rights Think Tank, defining emerging challenges and producing policies advancing digital rights in our cities.
- A Digital Rights Lab, providing tailored support on local digital rights challenges and plans.
- A Digital Rights academy, improving learning and local capacities in the field of digital rights.

*If you wish to unite forces on concrete projects and to advocate for a citizen-oriented agenda promoting digital rights on the local and global political scene, then we warmly invite you to work with us, as members for cities and organisations of local and regional governments, or as collaboration partners for civil-society organisations and citizens.*

### **About the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights**

The Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, launched by the Cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York in November 2018 and now with a membership of over 50 cities worldwide, is a network of cities helping each other in the greenfield of digital rights based policy-making. The Coalition is committed to promoting and defending digital rights in urban context through city action, to resolve common digital challenges and work towards legal, ethical and operational frameworks to advance human rights in digital environments. It is supported by Eurocities, United Cities and Local Governments and UN-Habitat.

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