Local Diplomacy
Policies, practices and tools

Edited by
M. Cemil Arslan
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

We can mention various approaches of humanity in solving its problems. War and diplomacy are the two most prominent ones. The more destructive one is, more constructive the other is; the more power-based one is, more negotiation-based the other is; and the more closed to dialogue one is, the more open the other is. It is not an as easy job as one might think to reconciliate competing interests and find solutions built on a mutual acceptance.

That is why, following the two world wars, international institutions were established to resolve problems without resorting to destructive means, such as war. There are many international institutions, although their effectiveness and ability to find solutions are disputed, active in different fields ranging from energy policies to migration policies, from security policies to food policies. Besides global institutions, there are organizations that operate at the regional level in numerous fields such as trade, economy and security. There are also networks, focusing on inter-city relations, that prove the importance of local diplomacy by creating a basis for cooperation in different areas such as culture, climate change, cross-border relations, advocacy of local democracy, migration and food issues.

Local diplomacy is an important instrument for both negotiating global and national unresolved issues and utilizing the world's resources and opportunities through responsibility and cooperation. It must be admitted that the very concept of "local diplomacy" is off-putting for those who think that diplomacy is only applicable on the national and supranational level. In fact, the increasing importance of local diplomacy both in overcoming crises at the national level and in building a more

just and equitable world is becoming more and more evident every day.

In a sense, we live in an urban world. As Benjamin R. Barber puts it, "Cities are our destiny." It is widely agreed that the trend of urbanization will continue, and the number of metropolitan cities and their populations will increase. On the one hand, cities are the centers of production and trade; on the other hand, they have become the areas of overconsumption, environmental pollution and inequalities. Cities are the breeding ground for national and global opportunities and problems. Although there are different definitions of "local" depending on the context, cities are one of the main actors when we talk about the "local level". Therefore, by disregarding cities, which issues can be resolved for the common good of humanity, and which problems can be eliminated permanently, efficiently and without causing new crises?

If diplomacy, in its simplest form, is the ability to find solutions to problems without using weapons, then local diplomacy has a potential that cannot be ignored. Certainly, we cannot say that all organizations that are the instruments of local diplomacy, can produce effective policies. When institutional structures forget their purposes of existence, they turn into mere devices that produce symbolic seats for individuals. In this respect, it is possible to state that some of the institutions that local actors are members of, and some international organizations that states are members of, have been actionwashing*. However, it is not impossible to adapt them to the renewed needs and expectations and transform them into a structure that produces effective results, as long as the tendency to actually "do" something rather than "pretending" prevails. This is only possible through transparent structures founded on honesty and equal rights, information and not ignoring ethical rules. In short, it can

* Organizing events and producing solutions for the sake of appearances instead of taking effective and concrete steps.

happen if we want to, but only if we really want to...

This led us to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the international relations and local diplomacy activities of cities. In this book, we have covered subjects such as the place of local diplomacy in the discipline of international relations, diplomacy practices of cities, local diplomacy tools, the role of cities in global agenda and peace building effort, the relationship between national foreign policy and diplomacy practices of local governments, international city networks, town twinning and sister city relations, and the importance of international projects and cooperations. While analyzing local diplomacy activities in Türkiye, we examined the international organizations that are important for the foreign relations activities of local governments and the international documents and legislations that Türkiye is a party to. While shedding light on Türkiye's local diplomacy history, we examined Türkiye's sustainable development journey, especially after Local Agenda 21. We have compiled the relationship between the diplomacy activities of cities and local governments with global documents and agendas, and the activities carried out by cities within the scope of internationally recognized important days, weeks and awards.

We introduced the book with the article of Prof. Mesut Özcan, Director of Diplomacy Academy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. Defining subnational actors as the supporters of national foreign policy, Özcan underlines that central governments need cities and local governments to achieve their foreign policy goals. In the current century, local governments have a major role to play in solving the issues facing all humanity and strengthening democracy. In Türkiye, paradiplomatic activities are largely carried out by local governments and local government associations. As long as these activities are aligned with national foreign policy objectives, they contribute to our country's public diplomacy activities and visibility in the international arena.

Cities, playing a role in solving both local and global problems, pave the way for local diplomacy through the sister city relations they establish among each other, the project collaborations they develop and the international networks they join in. In this context, it would not be wrong to say that cities have been active actors in diplomatic activities throughout history, from Ancient Greece to the present day. Local diplomacy activities, which have gained momentum over the years, have become a part of the discipline of international relations and have taken their place in the literature. In her article, Prof. Birgül Demirtaş discusses the role of subnational actors in the field of diplomacy and explores different extents of local diplomacy from security to development, economy to culture, networking to representation.

One of the important tools of local diplomacy is sister city relations, also known as town twinning. It is becoming increasingly important to develop urban policies and provide urban services that make cities more resilient, livable and sustainable in the face of current developments and threats. When cities' current resources, capacities and methods are insufficient, learning from each other and developing joint projects becomes valuable. Town twinning, allowing cities to exchange experiences and know-how with their counterparts, offers effective solutions, especially in terms of financial resources, human resources and time wise. In his article, Bülent Özcan mentions recently implemented town twinning projects between Türkiye and the European Union by the Directorate for EU Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye and provides enlightening information on international organizations and projects that employ the town twinning method.

One of the most important institutions that local governments in Türkiye have developed relations within the international arena is the European Union and the Council of Europe, both of which serve the integration of Europe. There are

many cooperation and legal ties between local governments and these organizations that also share the common goal of strengthening local and regional governments. The Council of Europe documents such as the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation and Authorities and the European Urban Charter, all ratified by Türkiye, provide guidelines for many of the practices of local governments. In his article, Prof. Yusuf Erbay sheds light on these conventions and documents, also clarifying the legal regulations regarding the international activities of local governments in Türkiye.

Along with the documents such as the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Council of Europe offers various policies and strategies to strengthen good governance at the local level. One of these is the European Label of Governance Excellence, which can be obtained if local governments implement the 12 principles of good governance set by the Council of Europe. For the first time this year, Türkiye joined the 22 countries that have been awarded the label so far. Dr. İnan İzci and Merve Ağca discuss the road to the European Label of Governance Excellence that was awarded to Sultanbeyli and Şişli Municipalities. They explain the Integrated Municipal Governance Model that aims to make the culture of good governance more functional and effective throughout the institutional structure and management processes of municipalities, thus contributing to sustainable development and improving the standard of living.

Local governments that pioneer efforts to localize sustainable development in line with the principles of good governance in Türkiye are carrying out many successful projects in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other local stakeholders. In his article, Sadun Emrealp discusses the path to "Local Agenda 21" action planning, which aims to localize sustainable development, and the importance of the Habitat II particularly for Türkiye. He then mentions Local Agenda 21

practices and the city councils established in this process. He analyzes the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda as a complement to all these processes in terms of local governments.

We cannot deny the opportunities offered to cities by local diplomacy to build a sustainable future with the roadmap provided by the Sustainable Development Goals against the global development challenges. Some of the opportunities offered by local diplomacy include sharing knowledge and experience among cities, developing joint projects, setting the global agenda and contributing to global peace and trust. It is possible to say that these opportunities, each of which is individually important, are intertwined in practice and nurturing each other. Yasemin Okay reveals the role of local diplomacy in building a sustainable future and the critical role of international cooperation between cities.

It is important to mention examples of cities with well-developed international activities. Barcelona Metropolitan Area, with more than 40 years of experience, is a very successful local government in terms of internationalization. Barcelona, which hosts many international city networks and organizations, approved its first 5-year internationalization plan in 2021. Xavier Tiana, Head of International Relations of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, summarizes the strategies behind Barcelona's international action. He explains Barcelona's internationalization strategy in terms of its influence on the European and international political agenda, its role in attracting European and international funds, innovation and information management, international financial assistance and international cooperation. He also examines the European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA), that was established under the leadership of Barcelona and is open to the participation of metropolitan cities in Europe, as an example of an international city network.

It is possible to say that international city networks have become the main actors of multilateral diplomacy at the local level. The most important contributions of these networks to their member cities can be summarized as creating a platform for international cooperation, defending the interests of cities in the international arena, providing a platform for information generation and international information sharing, contributing to the realization of international goals, supporting capacity building efforts and facilitating access to financial resources. Özge Sivrikaya explains the opportunities that the increasing number of international city networks have provided to cities from past to present. In her article, in which she also compiles the networks with a high impact in recent years, Sivrikaya shares with the readers the highlights of the International City Networks Dataset published by Marmara Municipalities Union.

Today's global challenges, from climate change to social injustice, from poverty to terrorism, require quick, practical and effective action. Nation states that are still the main actors in global politics and diplomacy, are insufficient to solve global problems on their own. Benjamin R. Barber, professor of political science and author of *If Mayors Ruled the World*, emphasizes the role of cities in addressing these major crises that traditional diplomacy cannot respond to. Defining mayors as trusted actors who govern cities, Barber argues that the problem-solving capacity of cities makes them functional on a global scale. In his article, M. Cemil Arslan outlines Benjamin R. Barber's book *If Mayors Ruled the World*.

International days, weeks, awards and events has great importance for cities to become functional and practical actors in diplomacy and they increase the international visibility of cities and provide a platform for them to express themselves. Such days and events are organized in order to raise awareness on various issues related to cities, improve cities' cooperation with different stakeholders and encourage their international representation; and they not only make cities more sustainable, resilient and

livable, but also support the capacity building of cities. In her article, Merve Ağca compiles important days and weeks aiming to raise awareness about cities on an international scale. She also summarizes the international awards that contribute to shared learning among cities, disseminating good practices, developing cooperation with each other and increasing their international visibility. She touches upon the contributions of these programs organized under the leadership of international organizations that set the global agenda, such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, UN-Habitat and Metropolis.

Overall, we can say that it is vital to make our cities resilient, livable, sustainable and inclusive in the face of the issues ranging from climate change to mass migration flows, from social inequalities to security challenges, affecting every corner of the world. On the one hand, cities are the origin of the major global problems of our age, and on the other hand, they are the main actors for the solution. Likewise, the role of local governments in resolving conflicts within states and building global peace cannot be denied. Therefore, in this book, we wanted to shed light on the international relations of local elements, whose role is growing on the global agenda as well as the local one. We hope that this book focusing on local diplomacy, a subject that has not yet found its rightful place in the international literature and which is quite open to development in practice, will open a new horizon for you, our esteemed readers...

Enjoy your read,

M. Cemil Arslan & Burcuhan Şener

Editors

LOCAL DIPLOMACY AND ITS REFLECTIONS IN TÜRKİYE

Mesut Özcan *

Since their establishments, cities have been known as places where civilizations were born, developed and expanded; they are the places where the society could live together, social and economic cycles would occur, cultural and artistic activities could take place. Historically speaking, although cities had not undergone serious changes until the Industrial Revolution, a great movement and transformation began right after that occurence. According to the data of the World Bank, the rate of the world population living in the cities is 57% in 2022 and the urbanization rate has increased by 1,85% on the average in the last 5 years (World Bank, 2022). The Industrial Revolution and the subsequent globalization, technological advancements and democratization efforts have constructed the phenomenon we know as urbanization today. In addition to maintaining their historical missions in which cities became the main actors that direct the economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions of the globalization process, they also have become places where decisions are being made with effects that go beyond the territorial boundaries of nation states (Pustu, 2006). Thus, cities have become centers where complex problems that have never been encountered before are solved (Martinez, 2017).

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International relations science can be considered as a new discipline. The first century in which it is regarded as a science branch has been barely left behind. During this period, some methodological and doctrinal barriers had to be overcome in order to define international relations as a field of study (Alvarez, 2020). In this process, states, international organizations and other major institutions were included in the analysis (Alvarez, 2020). Discussions related to the role of decentralized units within the scope of international relations have been held at the works that have commenced to be produced since 1990s (Michelmann and Soldantos, 1990; Aldecoa and Keating, 1999; Maira, 2010). The emergence of cities as independent global actors introduced us new concepts such as "local diplomacy,", "paradiplomacy" and "local foreign policy". Duchacek and Soldatos (1990) define paradiplomacy as the practice of international relations by subnational actors, that is, local governments. This concept refers to the connections with the international actors, formed by cities and regions. Local units, which can be defined as subnational actors such as states, regions, provinces, cantons, oblasts, shape the modern relations at the global context while contributing to the pluralization of diplomacy through the same way.

Literature regarding the concept of paradiplomacy mostly revolves around developed countries' examples, such as the USA, Germany, Australia and Canada (Fry, 2017; Chaloux et al., 2015; Michelmann, 1988; Aldecoa and Keating, 1999). Lecours (2008) notes that paradiplomacy is often observable in Western industrialized countries. Crucial examples for understanding and examining the issues of paradiplomacy are Quebec (Canada), Catalonia (Spain), Basque Provinces (Spain), Flanders (Belgium) and Wallonia (Belgium) (Lecours, 2008). Ciesielska and Kaminski's article, titled "Paradiplomacy and Its Impact on EU Foreign Policy", is an excellent study for identifying the paradiplomatic activities at the EU level. On the other hand, - although paradiplomacy is mainly discussed through developed

countries' relations to their local governments- in the context of developing countries, the question of whether there is paradiplomacy in developing countries is also argued in the studies (Martínez, 2017; Corral, 2016). Pietrasiak et al. (2018) comparatively examines paradiplomacy in the context of China, Russia and India. Liu and Song (2020) discusses the theoretical context of paradiplomacy in China.

Studies regarding local government diplomacy in the context of Türkiye are limited. Gültekin Punsmann (2013) discusses paradiplomacy from the point of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Kuşku-Sönmez (2014) examines the examples of paradiplomacy between the cities of the Black Sea Region. Daoudov (2013) explores paradiplomacy in the context of the Marmara Region municipalities. Demirtaş (2016) examines the paradiplomacy of the cities that are strong in the terms of socioeconomic indicators and reception of the greatest number of immigrants in Türkiye. Güleç (2021) discusses the issue in the context of public diplomacy specific to Konya Metropolitan Municipality.

Research about paradiplomacy focus more on the operations of the states in the federal states, federated states or regions in regionalized unitary states and their relations to the federal/national governments (Daoudov, 2013). While discussions centering the unitary or federal state structuring continue, some local units desiring to leave central governments can be provided with some privileges. In unitary state structures, this progress happens in a more controllable manner because of giving sovereignty to the different components other than the national government is deemed unfavorable; for this reason, local governments' intervention to the central government policies is not possible. As for the federal state structures, political decentralization appears to be more flexible (Yaylı, Gönültaş, 2018). However, the boundaries of the concept of paradiplomacy have expanded over time. Paradiplomatic activity that has become a global experience observed in all over the world started

to be encountered within the state that has all sorts of structures and systems (Tavares, 2016; cited in Erdoğan, 2020).

Paradiplomatic activities are conducted with the inclusion of the federal or unitary state units in the international relations; sometimes for their own self-interests and sometimes according to the central government's policies. These activities realized by the subnational actors do not damage the local foreign policy; on the contrary, they raise the visibility of national policy at the international arena. In this context, governments need their cities and local governments to achieve certain domestic and foreign policy objectives related to the national security, competitive capacity and international development. Besides, local governments, while strengthening democracy, play an important role in handling all the challenges that we face in the 21st century -such as climate change, mass migration, environmental issues, ethnic and religious hatred, discrimination, extremism, xenophobia, islamophobia and all other exclusionary approaches. Common issues such as counter terrorism, climate change, migration and so forth have especially started to shape the main topics of the local foreign policy agendas of the countries with the new connections cities have established. In this context, local governments' foreign relations are not merely about attracting investment, making financial gain and establishing commercial relations; but beyond that, they are seen as a way of supporting central government's local foreign policy, bringing prestige and know-how to the country and helping central government with national and religious sentiments that derived from common cultural geography (Güleç, 2021).

Local governments have gained a much wider ground for foreign relations with the reforms happened at the level of central and local governments in Türkiye. Owing to that fact, many local governments have had the opportunity to represent their cities and countries in the international arena. However, this representation process is carried out within the legal boundaries of the country (Güleç, 2021). A series of attempts to

pass legislation that restructures public administrations and local governments have come up for this purpose. Legislative changes, particularly those regarding the new status of the local governments and the authority of the central government, brought up many transformations (Sözen, 2005; cited in Güleç, 2021).

Türkiye retains its paradiplomatic activities with the initiatives of local governments and local government associations. Municipalities undertake an important role in this framework. Local governments support the international policy with sister city relations, memberships to international organizations, tourism activities and humanitarian aids. The sister city practices we have encountered in Türkiye since the 1960s is one of these activities. Sister city practices not only actualize commercial relations based on investment, but also realize collaborations and experience sharing in various fields such as tourism, culture, art, sports and technology. According to the data of the Deputy General Directorate of Cultural Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, a total of 2050 sister city agreements were signed between the cities of our country and others between 1992 and 17 November 2022. An international relationship can help establishing connections with expat Turks, engaging public diplomacy, increasing the tourism capacities of the cities; also, it can contribute to the preservation and restoration of the historical sites in the cities and encourage municipalities to make collaborations about matters of their purview and host international events both to gather information and advertise the city with the incentive of awards (Güleç, 2021). These agreements diversify and empower Türkiye's cultural and public diplomacy tools. They also play a prominent role in increasing the recognition of our country and its potency in the field of public diplomacy. From local to global level, the increase in the paradiplomatic activities of the municipalities not only enriches the valuable cities of Türkiye but also enables them to open up to

the world. For this reason, sister city agreements must be transformed into win-win collaborations and designed to serve local foreign policy.

During the design and implementation of these activities, there can be some challenges. At some point, some subnational actors may cease their efforts to influence the foreign policy of the central government and decide to reach their own goals with their own means (Erdoğan, 2020). Conflicting with the foreign policy of the central government or the voices that see him as rivals to the same country, it will become harder to sustain a consistent foreign policy in the international arena. In this context, the paradiplomatic activities conducted by the local governments become a very sensitive subject for the central governments. It is undeniable that these activities have repercussions in the bilateral relationships of the countries in the international arena. These and similar situations bring forth the question of who the real actor in international politics is (Erdoğan, 2020). Although paradiplomatic activities continue to expand both in scope and depth, the central governments will carry on being the main actor in international relations (Alvarez, 2020). At this point, the central government should know how to transform itself into a module that would include the pressure between subnational and supranational levels while involving local governments in the process for the effective implementation of local foreign policy (Alvarez, 2020).

Another challenge on this issue is the planning and actively implementing the activities carried out by local governments. It has been seen that these connections that had been initiated and established on a whim decreased, even froze over time, for several reasons. It is expected that these activities that were initiated with great effort and expense to be sustainable and effectively applicable in the long stretch. The program of these activities that are sometimes limited to visits between delegations should be prepared in parallel to the foreign policy programs of the national government and should be supported by sustainable,

effective and active studies in line with the foreign policy objectives of the country during the implementation phase.

Policymaking and implementation by subnational actors who have easier access and communication with people can take place bidirectionally. Firstly, subnational actors are effective in implementing policies decided at higher levels and ascertaining responses at lower levels (Erdoğan, 2020). Secondly, since subnational actors are closer to the public, they can be an effective tool in closely identifying the problems to which the public needs a solution and in producing the applicable policies to solve these problems. If these actors produced policies that are tested with less risk and give positive results, these could become a set of methods that can be put to use in the national or international arena. At the same time, they can be used as a guide for taking measures which may be related to administrative policies that can often be implemented or replicated in the international arena (Setzer, Anderton, 2019). In this sense, paradiplomacy could play an active role in ensuring the foreign policy agenda and in practices to be more democratic and serve human welfare (Erdoğan, 2020).

The world we live in today is in a great transformation, owing to globalization and technological innovations; there are many actors who come forward in the international relations. It is discernible that local governments as well as national governments have increased their domain and started to affect decision making processes, set their own agendas in foreign policy initiatives and even implement aforementioned initiatives. Therefore, as long as the paradiplomatic activities of the local governments correspond with the foreign policy objectives of the central government, local governments' contributions to the country's public diplomacy activities and their visibility in the international arena will increase.

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ANALYSIS OF THE GLOBALIZATION OF CITY DIPLOMACY[1]

Birgül Demirtaş *

INTRODUCTION

From Ancient Greece to Anatolian principalities, from Italian city-states to German principalities, cities and regions have played important roles in the development of civilizations and global politics throughout human history. One cannot grasp the beginning of theoretical perspectives without Thucydides' analysis of the Peloponnesian War. Until the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, cities had been one of the main actors of international relations. Therefore, cities were the first actors of the discipline of international relations. Indeed, cities have not emerged as new actors since the 1990s, on the contrary, they have begun to experience a rebirth.[1]

As we approach the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, humanity is faced with both traditional and non-traditional security threats. The fact that the war waged in Ukraine by the Putin regime since February 2022 violating the most fundamental principles of international law shows to us all that

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1 This study is based on the research I conducted at Eberhard Karls Tübingen University between 15 June 2021 and 10 September 2021 with the scholarship of German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and in Cologne between 17-30 October 2022 with the support of the University of Cologne.

traditional security threats are still very close. On the other hand, the pandemic we have been experiencing since 2020 reveals how a microscopic virus can radically alter our lives. At the same time, we increasingly experience the outcome of climate change which is the natural outcome of savage industrialization and deforestation. In addition, the refugee movement caused by the Syrian civil war that had started in 2011 has radically affected and continues to influence many countries, particularly Türkiye, both in terms of politics, economics and foreign policy. The repercussions of all these phenomena will continue in the foreseeable future.

Whether we aspire to stop the war right beside us forthwith and establish peace or to come up with creative solutions for refugees, whether we try to fight the pandemic effectively or find permanent solutions to environmental problems, in brief whatever the problem is; to solve all these problems we need endeavors, contributions and creativity of cities more and more and that fact will remain the same in the future.

On the other hand, cities, while contributing to the effort to find solutions to both local and global issues, collaborate with each other by establishing international organizations and carrying out international projects. In this context, the rise of the cities also causes acceleration of city diplomacy.

Therefore, in the discipline of International Relations, while we are listing the actors whose influence on the global system has increased since the 1990s, we must include cities as well as non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations and international organizations. Studies on city diplomacy are increasing in number and enriching the field with various case studies. In this study, the concepts related to city diplomacy will be analyzed; also, the change and evolution of local foreign policy will be examined.

CITY DIPLOMACY: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Rosenau, in his study about the situation of international relations in the 21st century, underlines that the states have lost their dominant position and global governance gets more and more fragmented.[2] Rosenau states that two trends particularly manifest themselves in this context: The first of two is the transnational governance; for example, non-governmental organizations that transcend state lines can be considered within this framework. The second trend is the subnational governance; this includes cities and microregions increasing involvement in international relations. According to Rosenau, it was obvious that "cities and microregions are likely to be major control mechanisms in the world politics of the twenty-first century."[3] Therefore, the scholars of the international relations discipline began to analyze cities that we can describe as revived actors of the world politics by the 1990s.

In literature, various concepts have been used to explain local governments' global relations. The most used concepts are paradiplomacy, subnational foreign diplomacy, local foreign policy, municipal foreign policy, city diplomacy and microregionalism.[4]

Paradiplomacy is the abbreviation of "parallel diplomacy". This concept starts from the assumption that the local actors follow a parallel course with the nation-states foreign relations, from there it moves to the assumption that the local follows the

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2 James N. Rosenau, "Governance in the Twenty-First Century", Global Governance, Vol. 1, No 1, 1995, p. 13-43.

3 Ibid., p. 27.

4 For a more comprehensive study about this topic see Birgül Demirtaş, "Türkiye'de Yerel Yönetimlerin Dış İlişkilerinin Analizi: Merkez-Çevre Etkileşimini Yeniden Düşünmek", Uluslararası İlişkiler, Vol. 13, No. 52, 2016, pp. 151-173.

central's foreign policy by employing its own tools.[5] If we can use an analogy, we can state that international relations of the central and local authorities are like two vehicles running in parallel roads and the destination is the same.

The concepts of subnational foreign policy and local foreign policy include the global relations of all units under the central government.[6] The municipal foreign policy, on the other hand, contains the relations of local governments with global actors, especially at the municipal level.[7]

Furthermore, the concept of city diplomacy is the name given to the policy implemented by cities to represent themselves in global politics and to actualize their interests.[8] As a matter of fact, city diplomacy is quite old in the world history as mentioned above.

Another concept that needs to be addressed in this section is the concept of the "world city". "The world city hypothesis" improved by Friedmann is a study that utilizes Immanuel Wallerstein's World-System Theory adapted to cities.[9] The

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5 Iñaki Aguirre, "Making Sense of Paradiplomacy? An Intertextual Enquiry About a Concept in Search of a Definition", Francisco Aldecoa and Michael Keating (Comps.), Paradiplomacy in Action, The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments, London, Frank Cass, 1999, p. 185-209.

6 Samuel Lucas Mcmillan, "Subnational Foreign Policy Actors: How and Why Governors Participate in US Foreign Policy", Foreign Policy Analysis, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2008, p. 232-237.

7 Murat Daoudov, Yerel Dış Politikanın Temelleri, İstanbul, Marmara Belediyeler Birliği, 2013, p. 27-28.

8 Rogier van der Pluijm with Jan Melissen, City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics, Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2007, p. 6.

9 John Friedmann, "The World City Hypothesis", Development and Change, Vol. 17, 1986, p. 69-83; John Friedmann, "Where We Stand: A Decade of World City Research", Paul L. Knox and Peter J. Taylor

system of relations created by the capitalist structure chooses some cities as its center. These cities, which are both the headquarters of multinational corporations and the center of production and finance, are also prominent in their demographic size and central role in transportation. Similar to Wallerstein's periphery/center distinction, Friedmann divides cities into primary and secondary cities according to the roles they play in the global capitalist system.[10] According to this distinction, London, Frankfurt, New York, Tokyo and Sao Paulo are examples of primary cities; while Brussels, Milan, Houston, Sydney, Buenos Aires and Manila can be examples of secondary cities.[11]

The possible contribution of city diplomacy -that could also be called paradiplomacy, subnational foreign policy, local foreign policy or municipal foreign policy- to the solutions of global problems will be discussed in the next section.

GLOBAL PROBLEMS AND CITIES

According to the statistics of the United Nations (UN), 55% of the global population currently dwells in the cities. This figure is predicted to increase to 68% by 2050.[12] This means that by the time we reach the middle of the current century one third of the world population will be living in the cities. Additionally, cities produce 80% of the global GDP as of now.[13]

(Comps.), World Cities in a World System, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 20-47.

10 Friedmann, "The World City Hypothesis", p. 72.

11 Ibid., s. 72

12 "68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, says UN", https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html

13 "Urban Development", https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview

Also, cities are still vital to the global economy. Global transformations that have been happening in the world economy since the 1970s increase the importance of the cities. According to Sassen, there are three important features of the global cities today: first, cities are the command centers of the global economy and are becoming the centers for the activities of banking and service industry over time. The second feature is that they maintain their quality as markets for the primary industries. Finally, cities still host a significant amount of industrial and technological production.[14]

On the other hand, it is also known that cities are the source of many global problems and security issues, such as climate change, refugee problem and health and food security. At the same time, cities are also among the most important actors in solving these problems. Much of the global production, technological innovation and intellectual activity take place within the boundaries of the cities. Since most of the economic production takes place in the cities, a significant part of the environmental pollution originates from cities. Additionally, refugees coming from all over the world mostly settle in big cities, leading to new challenges, chiefly in urban areas.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed that densely populated urban areas pose the greatest threat to health security: during the pandemic, people living in rural areas had a bigger advantage because it was much easier for them to maintain a physical distance whereas densely populated cities have had serious difficulties in maintaining that distance between people. Furthermore, food security is a greater issue for the big cities because in the rural areas self-sufficiency through agriculture is more likely. As Camagni rightly points out, cities are both the problem areas and at the same time they are the

[14] Saskia Sassen, Cities in a World Economy, Thousand Oaks, Pine Forge Press, 1994, p. 4-7.

"islands of new opportunities".[15] The chart displayed in Table 1 is the proof that Turkish municipalities are very active in local diplomacy. Only three cities had a foreign relations unit in 2000 whereas today this number has increased to 28, representing about one-third of the cities in Türkiye that have started to weigh in city diplomacy.

Facing the complex challenges, the nation states have lost their ability to solve global problems on their own long ago. Climate change, refugee influx, the pandemic, energy insecurity or food crisis, whatever the problem may be, nation-states are obliged to collaborate with other actors, including cities. Nation-states cannot cope with these challenges on their own, without taking the cities into account. The next section will inspect the objectives of city diplomacy.

THE CAUSES OF CITY DIPLOMACY

Why do cities develop relationships with each other in a globalized world? Why do they forge ties with global actors? Why do they cooperate with other cities and form their own international organizations? Why do they endeavor to be influential in global organizations established by the governments? What are the benefits of the foreign relations and global engagement for the local administrations?

There is a wide range of literature about the analysis of city diplomacy in different parts of the world. Pluijm and Melissen argue that there are six main extents of city diplomacy: security, development, economy, culture, networks and representation. Next to them we can also add the global challenges, proto-diplomacy and domestic political dynamics that are increasingly

[15] Roberto Camagni, Roberto Capello and Peter Nijkamp, "Managing Sustainable Urban Environments", in Ronan Paddison (Ed.), Handbook of Urban Studies, London, Sage Publications, 2001, p. 129.

becoming the subjects of local diplomacy. According to Pluijm and Melissen, appertaining to the security, conflict prevention, establishing dialogue with conflicting parties and post-conflict reconstruction are among the crucial activities of the cities. The US-based "Cities for Peace initiative" that included 70 cities and was launched to prevent the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 is a good example on that matter.[16] Cities can launch initiatives to prevent or stop violent conflicts, or they can aim to contribute to post-war peace-building activities. Another example is the German cities' contribution to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN); so far, 137 German cities and municipalities have signed the call for the abolition of nuclear weapons and requested the German federal government to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.[17]

The second dimension of the local diplomacy is the development. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized the role of the local governments in global development by stating that development starts from city streets.[18] Also, cities can provide developmental assistance or send emergency aid in times of natural disasters to the other cooperating cities.

A third extent of the local foreign relations is related to the economy. In the current neoliberal world order, city diplomacy is seen as a means to gain economic benefits through international

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[16] Rogier van der Pluijm with Jan Melissen, City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics, Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2007, p. 21.

[17] "Deutsche Städte fordern das Verbot von Atomwaffen", Frei Raum, Vol 14, No 4, 2019, p. 1; "ICAN-Städteappell und Bundesländer-beschlüsse", https://www.icanw.de/ican-projekte/ican-staedteappell/

[18] "Kofi Annan recognizes role of local governments in international development", http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/uclg/index.asp?, UCLG, 2005 quoted in van der Pluijm with Melissen, City Diplomacy, p. 23.

partnerships. Local governments may try to convince foreign companies to invest in their cities and attract more tourists. In both cases, the main objective is to make profits and enrich the city. Another way of the economic dimension can be the exportation of the city's know-how and services to global partners.[19]

The fourth extent, cultural diplomacy, is another dimension of local diplomacy. Through sports, arts, folklore activities, local governments can engage in cultural exchange with their partners.

The fifth component is international networking: the establishment of international local government organizations such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Eurocities and Mercocities have become an important part of local diplomacy. Through networking, cities declare their common goals and visions to solve global/local problems.

Representation, the sixth dimension, implies that cities want to partake in the decision-making process at the international level. Local governments aiming their voices to be heard try to take part in international organizations. The EU's Committee of the Regions is a good example of city representation in international organizations.[20]

The seventh extent, the global issues, ranging from the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to health security during pandemics and migration flows, constitute another area for the local diplomacy: As stated above humanity faces significant challenges such as climate change, growing global inequalities, pandemics and epidemics and refugee crises. Nation-states need the cooperation of the local actors to tackle these complex challenges. Meanwhile, cities are to collaborate with each other to develop solutions to said challenges.

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[19] van der Pluijm with Melissen, City Diplomacy, p. 25-27.

[20] van der Pluijm with Melissen, City Diplomacy, p. 27-31.

In addition, proto-diplomacy is particularly emphasized for cities inhabited by minority groups. Some of these cities endeavor to promote their own culture and sometimes encourage the creation of a national identity. Barcelona can be regarded as a good example of proto-diplomacy.

In other respects, it should also be mentioned that cities try to build peace from the bottom up by bringing nations together. This is the forefront of the sister city relations developed by the German cities. Germany's troublesome and painful history has led Germany to make the rapprochement of nations through peaceful relations one of the pillars of its foreign policy. In this context, the goal of mutual understanding among nations is always emphasized at the interviews conducted in the foreign relations departments of local governments in different cities in Germany. In order to strengthen this aim, it is very important to establish and maintain sister city associations (*Verein*) with the support of municipalities whence sister city relations surpass being a bureaucratic process between the city officials and make local people involve in the process of fraternization.[21]

[21] Online interview with Dr. Birte Klemm, Head of the European and Foreign Relations Unit of the Municipality of Cologne, 2 November 2022; interview with Ute Dreiocker, employee of the European and Foreign Relations Unit of the Municipality of Cologne, 24 October 2022; interview with Walter Kluth, President of the Association for the Development of Cologne-Istanbul Sister City Relations, 21 October 2022; interview with Hasan Ateş, Member of the Association for the Development of Cologne-Istanbul Sister City Relations, 27 October 2022; Interview with Christopher Blum and Stephan Klingebiel from the Art, Culture and International Relations Unit of the Municipality of Tübingen, 30 June 2021; Interview with Manuela Kaupp and Gülay Temel from the Rottenburg-Yalova Sister City Association, 9 July 2021; Interview with Dr. Frederic Stephan, Deputy Head of the Foreign Relations Unit of the Municipality of Stuttgart, 5 August 2021.

Figure 1. Poster prepared by the Cologne-İstanbul Sister City Association for the 25th anniversary of the İstanbul-Cologne sister city agreement (left) and members of the Cologne-İstanbul Sister City Association at the anniversary gala (right) (Source: https://www.koeln-istanbul.de/category/projekte/).

The last component of city diplomacy is related to the relationship between city diplomacy and domestic political dynamics. We are witnessing a backsliding of democracy in the world aswe observe a shift from democracy to authoritarianism in a great number of countries ranging from Hungary to Poland and India. This trend of de-democratization has reflections at domestic diplomacy in some countries: in the countries where national politics shows authoritarian tendencies and where major cities are governed by the opposition parties, this situation gives a chance to the opposition to lay the groundwork for re-democratization through city diplomacy. City mayors are joining forces with the mayors of partner cities facing similar conditions in their respective homelands. Solidarity between opposition-led municipalities in authoritarian countries could be another extent of the subnational foreign relations. In this context, the Pact of Free Cities established in 2019 by four European cities (Warsaw, Budapest, Bratislava and Prague) is a milestone initiative.[22]

[22] "Pact of Free Cities", https://www.pactoffreecities.com/

Therefore, on the basis of the examples above, one can assert that city diplomacy has many dimensions such as ensuring security, improving economic development, emphasizing re-democratization and rebuilding a different understanding of foreign policy. As the world politics has changed and new challenges emerged -such as pandemics, food crises, energy security issues or democratic backsliding- city diplomacy has proven capable of creating new areas of cooperation between partnering local governments.

In the next section, it will be argued that local diplomacy is no longer a phenomenon exclusive to the Western cities, but is increasingly used in various countries around the world, from Russia to China.

CHANGING WORLD ORDER, CHANGING LOCAL DIPLOMACY

As the world order has changed and as the developing countries started to get more shares from the world economy, city diplomacy has been influenced by those shifts. After the end of the World War II, city diplomacy has become a common phenomenon used by the Western world to establish friendly relations between the people of different cities with the aim of building a sustainable peace. For decades, local diplomacy remained predominantly as a Western practice. However, in recent years, non-Western states have also discovered the importance of local diplomacy. Non-Western states, some of which are authoritarian states, have started to use city diplomacy for various purposes. Today, from Iran to China, Brazil to Russia, there is a growing number of research on the foreign relations of the cities.

CITY DIPLOMACY IN THE NON-WESTERN WORLD

For a considerable period of time, the global academic literature on city diplomacy has predominantly focused on the

foreign relations of the cities of developed countries of Western democracies. However and especially since 2010, scholars have realized that the global engagement of subnational actors is not limited to Western countries, but that local diplomacy is spreading across the globe, from Latin America to Asia. From Brazil to China, Iran to Russia, it is evident that cities are increasingly engaged in global activities; to put it differently, city diplomacy is globalizing beyond the Western borders. This could be considered as a local reflection of the global shift into a multipolar system. It should also be noted that regardless of the type of political regime and the degree of the democratization in the countries, local diplomacy is on the rise all over the world, yet the dynamics and justifications behind that increase vary across countries.

What is the point of developing local diplomacy practices for Russian, Chinese and Iranian autocratic leaders who desire to consolidate power in their own hands? It appears that non-democratic countries are trying to redesign this Western practice to serve their own interests. In these countries the economic interests play an essential role in promoting city diplomacy, too. For instance, in China, the central government has been encouraging some cities to develop economic relations with their partners. China's former President Hu Jintao has described the cities of Yunnan and Xinjiang as bridgeheads in China's international relations. Furthermore, China is also attempting to use city diplomacy to boost the country's public image. However, city diplomacy in China is under the control of the central government as one might expect and in this context city diplomacy is supposed to protect national red lines, e.g., Beijing criticized Paris when Paris wanted to grant honorary citizenship to the Dalai Lama.[23]

[23] Tianyang Liu and Yao Song, "Chinese Paradiplomacy: A Theoretical Review", Sage Open, Vol. 10, No 1, 2020, p. 1-14; Dominik Mierzejewski, "Channeling Foreign Policy through Local

However, even in the authoritarian countries like China there have been some cases where provinces have had influence over official foreign policy, e.g., Yunnan province has had the chance to partially effect the Chinese government's pipeline policy: the local leadership of Yunnan has been persuasive in convincing the Chinese government to allow the planned pipeline to pass through Myanmar. This is an example of how in some exceptional circumstances local leadership can partially influence the official foreign policy of the authoritarian state.[24]

Moreover, India under the Mondi administration is another example of promoting the global activities of the cities despite the government's populism. The main motivation of the Indian government in promoting city diplomacy is to increase the number of foreign investors in the country.[25] After covering the activities of local diplomacy in the non-Western world, the next section will evaluate local diplomacy from the perspective of international relations theories.

THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CITY DIPLOMACY

After overviewing what is new in the city diplomacy literature, it is possible to utilize the theories of international

Activities in China: City of Guangzhou Case Study", in Malgorzata Pietrasiak et al. (eds.), Paradiplomacy in Asia. Case Studies of China, India and Russia, Lodz, Lodz University Press, 2018, p. 95; Justyna Szczudlik, "China's lukewarm soft power in Poland", in Ties Dams, Xiaoxue Martin and Vera Kranenburg (eds.), China's Soft Power in Europe. Falling on Hard Times, Report by the European Think-tank on China, April 2021, p. 71.

[24] Audrye Wong, "More than Peripheral: How Provinces Influence China's Foreign Policy", China Quarterly, 2018, p. 735-757.

[25] Grzegorz Bywalec, "Paradiplomacy in India as Exemplified by the State of Gujarat", in Malgorzata Pietrasiak et al. (Eds.), Paradiplomacy in Asia. Case Studies of China, India and Russia, Lodz, Lodz University Press, 2018, p. 62.

relations to develop a theoretical understanding of municipal diplomacy. If we were to apply the realist theory to analyze municipal diplomacy, we can suggest that nation-states are still the main actors in global politics and can use municipal diplomacy to advance their national interests.[26] Given this perspective, cities or regions have no role as autonomous actors, but they are merely the instruments of centralized states. Henceforth, city diplomacy is expected to imitate or complement the official foreign policy of the government. According to the realist theory, local diplomacy is under the full control of the central government and it is rational that authoritarian states also have municipal diplomacy because it is a tool that they can utilize to implement their official foreign policy.[27] This has the capacity to explain why local diplomacy has thrived in authoritarian states such as Russia and China.

In contrast, liberalism has a quite different conception of the global relations of the cities. It argues that states are not the sole actors in international relations, that there are other significant actors and cities and regions are among them. According to this theory, cities can play their own independent role in global politics by developing their own foreign relations.[28] Cities have their own space to maneuver in building their external relations. Furthermore, liberal theory argues that economics is the key to

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[26] Tomasz Kaminski, "Paradiplomacy. Discourse Analysis and Research Conceptualization" in Malgorzata Pietrasiak et al. (Eds.), Paradiplomacy in Asia. Case Studies of China, India and Russia, Lodz, Lodz University Press, 2018, p. 19-20.

[27] Kaminski, "Paradiplomacy. Discourse Analysis and Research Conceptualization" in Malgorzata Pietrasiak et al. (Eds.), Paradiplomacy in Asia. Case Studies of China, India and Russia, Lodz, Lodz University Press, 2018, p. 20.

[28] Kaminski, "Paradiplomacy. Discourse Analysis and Research Conceptualization" in Malgorzata Pietrasiak et al. (Eds.), Paradiplomacy in Asia. Case Studies of China, India and Russia, Lodz, Lodz University Press, 2018, p. 17-18.

international relations. These concepts can be adapted to city diplomacy by noting that the global relations of local governments can also attempt to achieve economic goals, such as attracting foreign investment, drawing more tourists and creating financial centers.

The other theory for grasping the meaning of cities' international relations could be the social constructivism that fundamentally argues that we cannot understand the main dynamics of global politics without identities, norms and values. The constructivist perspective can be transferred to the conceptualization of municipalities' external relations according to which not only states but also cities as well as regions may attempt to construct or develop an identity for their own through their foreign relations.[29] Cities acquire the ability to establish or develop an identity for themselves through sister city relations, partnerships with fellow cities, affiliation with international organizations and become involved in international projects. They may focus on cultural characteristics of their cities while connecting with the rest of the world. Similar to the states that construct and reconstruct their identities through foreign policy, cities can seek to focus on their identities in search of their global partnerships.

[29] Kaminski, "Paradiplomacy. Discourse Analysis and Research Conceptualization" in Malgorzata Pietrasiak et al. (Eds.), Paradiplomacy in Asia. Case Studies of China, India and Russia, Lodz, Lodz University Press, 2018, p. 20. On a constructivist understanding of city diplomacy also see Ario Bimo Utomo, "Reimagining City Identities in Globalisation: A Constructivist Study on City Paradiplomacy", Global South Review, Vol. 1, No 2, 2020, p. 33-48.

CONCLUSION

In the 21st century, humanity faces significant challenges. On the one hand, traditional security threats such as the war in Ukraine are persisting; on the other hand, new threats such as pandemics, refugee crises and climate change are becoming more and more pressing. Whether they are traditional or new security challenges, the solution to each of them requires the contribution of cities. Cities are also the primary drivers of some of the new security challenges such as climate change. Considering the increasing urban population, we can say that cities are both the source of some problems and the actors that will contribute to their solution.

This study analyzes, on the one hand, the importance of the cities in facing the current challenges; furthermore, the concepts related to city diplomacy are examined. On the other hand, the main purposes of the local administrations in their interaction with the globalization process are reviewed. In the final section, it is demonstrated that city diplomacy is no longer solely a policy of developed cities in Western democratic states, but has spread to non-Western countries as well, whether democratic or non-democratic, or whether they are developed or developing economies. Given their growing demographic and economic strength, the influence of the cities in global politics is likely to grow in the foreseeable future.

Table 1. Metropolitan and Provincial Municipalities with Foreign Relations Departments

Municipality	Related Unit
Adana Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations (under the Department of Survey and Projects)
Afyonkarahisar Municipality	Project Coordination and Foreign Relations Unit (under the Directorate of Cultural and Social Affairs)
Ankara Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Foreign Affairs
Antalya Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Foreign Affairs
Aydın Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of EU and Foreign Relations (under the Department of Press and Public Relations)
Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations (under the Department of Strategy Development)
Bursa Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Foreign Affairs
Çanakkale Municipality	Domestic and International Relations Unit (under the Directorate of Cultural Affairs)
Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations

Municipality	Related Unit
Edirne Municipality	EU and International Relations Office (under the Directorate of Cultural and Social Affairs)
Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of EU and Foreign Relations (under the Department of Resource Development and Affiliates)
Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations (under the Department of Press and Public Relations)
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Foreign Affairs
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Foreign Affairs
Izmir Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Foreign Relations and Tourism
Kahramanmaraş Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Foreign Affairs
Kars Municipality	Office of the Private Secretary
Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of EU and Foreign Relations (under the Department of Survey and Projects)
Kırklareli Municipality	EU Communication and Coordination Bureau (under the Directorate of Survey and Projects)

Municipality	Related Unit
Kırşehir Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations
Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Foreign Affairs
Konya Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations (under the Department of Cultural and Social Affairs)
Malatya Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations and Grants (under the Department of Agricultural Services)
Manisa Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations and EU (under the Department of Cultural and Social Affairs)
Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality	Department of Strategy Development and Foreign Affairs
Tekirdağ Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Balkan Turks and Foreign Relations (under the Department of Press and Public Relations)
Trabzon Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations and Projects (under the Department of Strategy Development)
Van Metropolitan Municipality	Directorate of Foreign Relations

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INTERVIEWS

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Interview with Ute Dreiocker, employee of the European and Foreign Affairs Department of the City of Cologne, 24 October 2022.

Interview with Walter Kluth, President of the Association for the Development of Cologne-Istanbul Sister City Relations, 21 October 2022.

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Interview with Christopher Blum and Stephan Klingebiel from the Arts, Culture and International Relations Department of the City of Tübingen, 30 June 2021.

A CONVENTIONAL TOOL FOR THE NEW GENERATION LOCAL DIPLOMACY: TOWN TWINNING

Bülent Özcan [*]

Town twinning, or as a term local authorities are more familiar with "sister city/sister town" mechanism, has long been used in Europe but is also increasingly desired and enthusiastically practiced around the world. There are many different motivations underlying the enthusiasm and excitement of local authorities for establishing town twinning agreements. Among the motivations of local authorities for town twinning activities, there are:

- Enabling cities develop the skills to contribute to the international policy-making processes by taking an active role in regional and global efforts that go far beyond their executive authority,
- Enabling them become a center of attraction by increasing regional and international recognition,
- Pioneering dialogue mechanisms that can contribute to peace between countries and regional stability,
- Enabling the establishment of new collaborations thus creating a possibility of dialogue to potentially be extended to other sectors and areas.

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In this regard, one may deduce that town twinning offers local authorities much more than just "a simple intercity dialogue mechanism". Town twinning is essentially not only a broad and flexible concept that covers any relationship that can be initiated between two or more cities, but it can also be performed *at the most basic* level in the extent of communication and information sharing. Additionally, it might include the physical dimensions of cooperation and partnership that can be established at higher levels as well.[1]

A CONVENTIONAL BUT EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The town twinning, which was a primary endeavor of the municipalities' foreign relations units in Türkiye before the millennium; has been able to find a place among the issues that have been reemphasized through financial assistance provided by the European Union (EU) in recent years and various projects funded through the EU Programmes even if it seems to regress to a secondary importance today. However, the developments and diversification of communication and collaboration tools with the impact of technology at an unprecedented pace can sometimes be considered a disadvantage for town twinning.

Keeping the findings and assessments above in consideration, the fact that the Directorate for EU Affairs' support to local authorities through "Town Twinning Between Türkiye and the EU Project" revealed that town twinning still maintains its place and importance in the local authorities' agenda.[2] Thanks to the

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[1] Directorate for EU Affairs, *The Handbook of Town Twinning: The Turkish Perspective* (July 2019) 5, accessed October 27, 2022, https://www.yereldeab.org.tr/Portals/4/publications/the_handbook_of_town_twinning.pdf

[2] For further information on the Town Twinning Between Türkiye and the EU project: https://www.yereldeab.org.tr/towntwinning/Home.aspx

projects implemented by the Directorate for EU Affairs with EU funds, town twinning has once again attracted the attention of local authorities. In this respect, in order to have a more holistic approach to the issue it is useful to take a brief look at the projects implemented in Türkiye in the last decade: The idea of supporting town twinning activities with EU funds started to sprout with the "*Technical Assistance for Building Capacity for the EU Affairs in the Governorates (VABpro) Project*" that was designed with an inclusive approach in terms of its purpose and implementation methodology.

The project that was developed to increase the capacity of governorates on EU-related issues in order to fully implement and monitor the reforms carried out in the EU accession process and to ensure that this process is understood by the public. The project was implemented with governorates in twenty pilot provinces with a budget of approximately 2 million euros. Launched on December 12, 2012, the project was completed at the end of 2014 after a period of 24 months.

The most innovative activity in the project was to develop international collaborations was the "*Town Twinning Programme*". Pilot governorates were brought together with their EU

counterparts through this programme and they were provided with technical and financial support to establish partnerships with the local authorities in the EU. In this framework, a Town Twinning Conference was organized in Ankara to establish thematic cooperation. The representatives from pilot governorates and their counterparts from EU member states were paired to develop concrete cooperation prioritized by their own needs.

The list of thematic cooperation established as a result of the conference is noted below:

- Istanbul - Lisbon (Portugal), Tourism and City Branding
- Hatay - Braga (Portugal), Culture and Tourism
- Düzce - Dubrovnik (Croatia), Tourism and City Branding
- Kahramanmaraş - Citta di Portici (Italy), Food and Tourism
- Bartın - Riga (Latvia), Environment and Waste Management
- Karaman - Lodzkie Region (Poland), Education, Energy and Tourism
- Aksaray - Kujawsko Pomorskie Region (Poland), Agriculture
- Muğla - Castilla (Castilla La Mancha) Province (Spain), Environment and Tourism
- Elazığ - Tallinn (Estonia), Agriculture, Solid Waste Management and Transportation
- Tekirdağ - Klaipeda (Lithuania), Logistics and Environmental Waste Management
- Erzincan - Eszak Alföld Region (Hungary), Agriculture and Eco-Tourism
- Isparta - Andujar (Spain), Renewable Energy, Agriculture, Eco-Tourism

- Adıyaman - A Coruna (Spain), Culture and Tourism
- Manisa - Budapest (Hungary), Environment and Urban Planning
- Yalova - Rottenburg (Germany), Culture
- Trabzon - Lucca (Italy), Tourism and Agriculture
- Antalya - Picardie Region (France), Logistics, Renewable Energy, Tourism
- Denizli - Thessaloniki Region (Greece), Environment, Tourism and Education
- Mardin - Varazdin (Croatia), Tourism
- Amasya - Puglia (Italy), Culture Industry, Energy, Natural Stone

The Town Twinning Programme was actively supported by the Ministry of Interior, Union of Municipalities of Türkiye and Union of Provinces in Türkiye. Within the scope of the programme, pilot governorates and EU local authorities organized mutual study visits in 2014 and held various consultations to share knowledge and experience.

VABpro: First Successful Step for the Town Twinning

The successful implementation of the Town Twinning Programme within the framework of VABpro project led the stakeholders working in close cooperation with the Directorate for EU Affairs during the implementation period of the project to prepare a new and unique project focusing only on town twinning in 2014. The project proposal was well-received by the EU and was included in the 2014 programming of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

Türkiye-EU Town Twinning Conference

The second International Town Twinning Conference was organized in Istanbul on 22-23 November 2017 in order to promote the opportunities offered by the "Town Twinning Between Türkiye and the EU" project in Türkiye and in the EU more effectively. The conference was attended by 80 representatives of local authorities', of which 52 were from Türkiye and 28 from the EU. Within the scope of the conference, 140 meetings were held on the issues directly related to the EU Acquis that are among the priorities of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

It is "Time to Town Twinning"

Shortly after the International Town Twinning Conference held in Istanbul, a call for proposal was announced to support small-scale projects to be implemented in partnership with the

local authorities from Türkiye and the EU within the scope of the project "Town Twinning Between Türkiye and the EU". Following the evaluation, the projects aiming to strengthen twinning relations between the Turkish and EU local authorities and to increase the role of the local authorities in the EU integration process were prioritized. 23 projects were granted with 60,000 to 130,000 euros.[3]

The objective of the "Town Twinning Between Türkiye and the EU Project" implemented by the Directorate for EU Affairs is to increase administrative capacity at local level in Turkey's EU Accession process, whereas the purpose of the project is to create sustainable structures for exchange between local authorities in Turkey and EU Member States in areas relevant for EU Accession.[4] The project was implemented in cooperation with the Directorate General of Local Authorities of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye and the Union of Provinces in Türkiye.[5]

The project had a total budget of €4.5 million and two components, namely "technical assistance" and "grant". Of the total budget, €2.6 million was used to support 23 grant projects under the Town Twinning Grant Scheme, while €1.9 million was allocated for the technical assistance. Started in 2018, the implementation period of the project ended in December 2020.

[3] For further information on the grant scheme: https://www.yereldeab.org.tr/Portals/4/publications/towntwinning_brochure_eng.pdf & https://www.yereldeab.org.tr/Portals/4/publications/grant_scheme_brochure.pdf

[4] Directorate for EU Affairs, *EU Acquis and Harmonization of Local Authorities in Turkey: An Analysis* (2020), accessed October 27, 2022, https://www.yereldeab.org.tr/Portals/4/publications/Activity%20B.4.3%20-%20EU%20Acquis%20Analysis%20(EN).pdf

[5] For a brief overview of the project please see the project brochure: https://www.yereldeab.org.tr/Portals/4/publications/project_brochure.pdf

Within the scope of the Grant Scheme, 23 grant projects which brought local authorities from Türkiye and 12 EU Member States together to work on the priority themes were funded. The success of the grant projects can be attributed to the impressive ownage demonstrated by the grant beneficiaries and their willingness and determination to achieve the objectives.[6]

All grant beneficiaries have signed a goodwill document or protocol with their partners in the EU countries to ensure future cooperation on priority issues. A significant number of them involved chambers of commerce and industry, development agencies, universities and civil society organizations as local stakeholders, and managed to sign cooperation protocols on different contents by establishing close relations with their counterparts in the EU countries.

The Project is a forerunner in terms of providing grants in the field of town twinning to support projects based on thematic collaboration between local authorities in Turkey and in the EU while maintaining an explicit focus on promoting the role of local authorities in Turkey's accession to the EU and ensuring the proper implementation of EU *acquis* at local level.

Furthermore, globally recognized good governance practices were followed in the project through engaging other local stakeholders such as development agencies, civil society organizations, universities and chambers into the town twinning process. The Town Twinning Project stood out as an exemplary project in Türkiye where EU funding was allocated exclusively to the town twinning activities.

Within the scope of the technical assistance component, many activities were carried out with the participation of local

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[6] Directorate for EU Affairs, *Road Map for an Effective Town Twinning Methodology in Turkey*, Directorate for EU Affairs website (2020), accessed October 27, 2022https://www.yereldeab.org.tr/Portals/4/publications/road_map_en.pdf

authorities. The workshops were highly fruitful in terms of monitoring how local authorities' representatives approached the twinning. The first thematic workshop on town twinning was held in Ankara on 27-28 August 2019 and the second workshop was held in Çanakkale on 18-19 September 2019. The workshops showed that town twinning can still be an effective tool.[7] As a result of the workshops, some of the prominent expectations of the local authorities' representatives regarding town twinning are summarized below:

- Participation in the international networks which are operational in the EU should be more actively encouraged in order to support and accelerate the exchange of good practices among local authorities.
- Joint steps should be taken to incentivize the collaboration between municipalities and special provincial administrations.
- Union of local authorities should create unique and certified training programmes for their members, that focus on city diplomacy and addresses the needs of local authorities at different scales.
- More contemporary, inclusive and innovative approaches - such as "smart city"- should be prioritized.
- Town twinning should not be confined to "twinning of the municipalities" but it should rather be seen as "twinning of the cities". In this context, necessary steps should be taken to match local authorities with local actors such as non-governmental organizations, professional associations, universities, private sector organizations, etc.

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[7] Türkiye ve AB Arasında Şehir Eşleştirme Projesi [Town Twinning Between Türkiye and the EU Project], *Şehir Eşleştirme Konulu Tematik Çalıştaylar Sonuç Raporu* [Final Report of the Thematic Workshops on Town Twinning] (October 2019), accessed October 27, 2022, www.yereldeab.org.tr/Portals/8/yayinlar/sehir_eslestirme_calistaylari_ozet_raporu.pdf

- As is the case in EU, networking should be incentivized to strengthen cooperation between local authorities and exchange of information among them should be facilitated in Türkiye.

TOWN TWINNING AND GLOBAL AGENDA

The Town Twinning Project has significantly raised awareness on the issue, especially among the local authorities in Türkiye, during its implementation process of nearly three years. Its success has been closely monitored by the relevant EU missions. The concrete achievements of the project accelerated the efforts for the second phase of the project.[8] Thus, the second phase of the Town Twinning Project was included in the IPA-II 2020 programme with the theme of "A Green Future".

"*Town Twinning Between Türkiye and the European Union-II: Twinning for a Green Future*" stands out as a project having grant support that has the potential to contribute to the relevant policies at national, regional and global levels. The programme aims to bring innovative solutions to environmental and climate change-related issues faced by local authorities in Türkiye and the EU and to establish permanent and sustainable institutional structures through grant projects to be carried out in cooperation with local authorities. The programme plans to provide a total of €2.5 million in grants to the projects to be developed by local authorities. The Union of Municipalities of Türkiye is the main beneficiary of the project, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate for EU Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change Directorate General of Local authorities and the Union of Provinces as partners.

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[8] Delegation of the European Union to Türkiye, "Town Twinning Projects Supported by European Union are Achieving Great Results," November 15, 2019, accessed October 27, 2022, https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/eu-and-member-states/town-twinning-projects-supported-european-union-are-achieving-great-results

Within the framework of the grant scheme, municipalities, special provincial administrations and Departments of Investment Monitoring and Coordination (DIMCs) from Türkiye will receive grants ranging from €60,000 to €100,000 to develop grant projects together with the local authorities from EU member states. The proposed projects are expected to be developed in line with the governance principle, involving local actors such as associations, foundations, cooperatives, universities, development agencies and chambers.

Within the scope of this grant scheme there will be:

- Development of local strategies, plans and roadmaps on climate change and sustainable development,
- Enablement of local initiatives to support green economic development,
- Development of Local Climate Action Plans,
- Preparatory work to support policy formulation,
- Preparation of Volunteer Local Evaluation Reports,
- Localization of global agendas on environment and climate change,
- Establishment of networks and platforms for sharing good practices on climate and environment,
- Increase of representation in European networks through joint actions,
- Identification and monitoring of the impacts of climate change at local level,
- Implementation of actions targeting public awareness on climate change and environment, focusing on different groups of the society,
- Effort to raise awareness on the urgency and importance of adapting to climate change,
- Activities such as developing community-based adaptation measures to combat climate change.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PLATFORMS USING THE TOWN TWINNING METHODOLOGY

There are various EU-funded organizations and platforms that continue to use town twinning as a method.

100 Climate-Natural and Smart Cities

The "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities" Programme or as simply called "Mission Cities" is structured under the Horizon Europe Programme. “Mission Cities” is the EU’s most important initiative targeting the cities aiming to support the smart and green efforts to technically and financially combat climate change by 2030. The Mission has 100 cities from the EU Member States and 12 cities coming from countries associated or with the potential of being associated to Horizon Europe including Türkiye.

The long-term objective of the mission that includes the cities of Istanbul and Izmir from Türkiye is stated as "to ensure that all cities in Europe become climate neutral and smart cities by 2050 through 112 cities that will act as laboratories by 2030". Therefore, it is vital for the EU that the Commission’s supporting 112 cities through a consortium called "NetZeroCities".

The NetZeroCities consortium consists of 33 members, including universities, think tanks, technology companies, research organizations, city networks and non-governmental

organizations. The consortium will pool its knowledge, know-how, expertise and experience to these 112 cities with the support of the European Commission. The amount of the financial support allocated by the Commission for 2021-2023 is €360 million.

In order to achieve its goals, NetZeroCities will be utilizing different tools and methods. Among these tools, town twinning still plays an important role. With the open call for twins that is expected to be announced in June 2023, European cities with cities advancing pilots will be matched.[9] 'Twins' will benefit from experience of pilot to replicate solutions that work. They will have access to peer-exchange, and replication support.

The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy

"The Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy", or "Covenant of Mayors", is a platform of mayors who voluntarily work together to contribute at local level to achieving the EU's climate and energy goals. This platform is directly supported by the European Commission. The platform in which 42 municipalities from Türkiye are members at different levels aims to prepare "Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Action Plans - SECAP" to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 and to take solid steps in this direction.[10]

[9] Further information about the call: https://netzerocities.eu/nzc-calls/

[10] Further information about the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy: https://www.eumayors.eu

Covenant of Mayors offers different types of supports to municipalities such as funding opportunities via call for proposals, informative events, practical support for practitioners, sharing of best practices and guidance, etc. Among these supports formerly known as Town Twinning,[11] renamed as Peer Learning is also included.[12]

[11] Life Adaptate, "Apply now for the Covenant twinning programme!," August 27, 2018, accessed February 24, 2023, https://lifeadaptate.eu/en/apply-now-for-the-covenant-twinning-programme/

[12] Energy Cities, "Launch of the Covenant of Mayors peer learning programme 2022-2023," February 25, 2022, accessed February 24,

Peer Learning programme consists of four components:

- Town twinning
- Expert Mission
- Peer Review
- Technical Support

The objective of the Town Twinning component is explained as the exchange of knowledge and experience between two municipalities in order to increase their adaptation capacities to climate change. In this framework, it is intended to support shared learning to come up with solutions by twinned municipalities with similar problems and then conducting field visits.

European Union Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme

The CERV programme seeks to support and develop open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on the rule of law. Through this programme, the EU aims to facilitate dialogue between participating Member States and candidate/potential candidate countries, strengthen mutual understanding and tolerance and foster a common European belonging and identity through town twinning and city networks.[13] The total budget of the programme is €1.56 billion.[14]

2023, https://energy-cities.eu/launch-of-the-covenant-of-mayors-peer-learning-programme-2022-2023/

[13] European Commission, *Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme, Call for Proposals*, (2021), accessed February 7, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/cerv/wp-call/2022/call-fiche_cerv-2022-citizens-town_en.pdf

[14] For further information on the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme_en

This programme is a follow-up to the Europe for Citizens[15] programme implemented between 2014 and 2020. According to the findings of the evaluation study conducted in 2020 on the Europe for Citizens Programme, 60% of the €188 million spent between 2014-2020 was allocated to the town twinning, network of cities and NGO projects.[16] In the study, it was stated that the demand for the twinning was very high, and the highest number of applications were received for "Town Twinning" calls.[17] Within the scope of the CERV Programme, calls for proposals under the titles of town twinning and networks of towns are still being published.

Some of the priorities of the town twinning calls:

- Raising the awareness of Europe's richness in culture and language
- Strengthening the European integration process based on the solidarity principle and raising awareness on the subject
- Strengthening European belonging by facilitating discussions on the future of Europe
- Some of the priorities of the networks of towns:
- Strengthening the European and democratic extent of the EU decision-making process
- Supporting free and fair elections in Europe
- Strengthening European belonging by facilitating discussions on the future of Europe

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[15] For further information on the Europe for Citizens programme: https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders/funding-programmes/previous-programmes-2014-2020/europe-citizens-efc_en

[16] European Commission, *Europe for Citizens Programme*, accessed February 24, 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-02/infographics_final_04102019.pdf

[17] Ibid.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR TOWN TWINNING?

In solving the increasingly complex problems that are and will be caused by climate change, it is getting impossible to make progress by neglecting or ignoring the cities where a significant portion of the world's population lives. Recent developments frequently have shown that cities will become important actors setting the global agenda in both policymaking and implementation. Such a prospect and scenario require local authorities to be competent and well-equipped in terms of institutional and administrative capacity to address potential problems and challenges. It is obvious that we will soon enter a period in which it will become more challenging for local authorities to deliver services with the methods that they have been practicing to date. These will be sometimes related to the environment and climate change, sometimes to the issues of energy, mobility and transportation and sometimes to governance.

There is no doubt that "town twinning methodology" will be on local authorities' agenda in the future. Furthermore, it will remain cost and time effective tool to face the complex problems. Shared learning through the exchange of knowledge and experience in cooperation with a counterpart authority that has experience in tackling the same complex problems in different parts of the world will become even more valuable in this time restricted period that is caused by climate change.

Then the solution is self-evident: *It's time to town twinning!*

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND TURKISH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS [1]

Yusuf Erbay *

INTRODUCTION

After World War II, Turkish national policy was to take part in the new institutions of the restructured Europe. In parallel with this general trend of Türkiye, Turkish local governments also started to establish close relations with these institutions and to become members of their organizations. The accession process of the Republic of Türkiye to the European Union (EU) is certainly a subject of wider analysis and involves local governments, as well. In this regard, it is crucial to closely monitor the developments and changes in approach towards the local governments in the EU.

When the subject of local governments is examined in the process of European integration, the first thing that came up is the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe was established even before the foundation of the European Common Market, the first form of the EU, and the other treaties that paved the foundation for it. The Council of Europe has created a roof of democracy for the wider European family. Under this umbrella, local governments, the cradles of democracy, have found a plat-

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[1] Some parts of this study are excerpts from my book "Local Governments in Türkiye and Europe" published in 2017.

form where they can grow together and cooperate: "Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe".

The EU has recognized the Council of Europe's work in the field of local governments as regulations that its member states must comply with. Council of Europe-originated documents, particularly the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, and the European Urban Charter have been the guidelines for the EU and have been incorporated into EU policies.

It should be noted that institutions emerged consecutively in the same period, such as the European Union[2] and the Council of Europe that are the institutions that serve European integration, set common goals in support of each other and carried out joint work. Among these common goals and efforts the strengthening of local and regional governments came first. The notion of strengthening local and regional governments and developing cooperation between them has been a prioritized policy. The efforts started with the initiatives of the Council of Europe in this field have gained importance in the context of European integration.

Until the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union had operated as an organization prioritizing the national state level. However, "regions" that are active in the internal structuring and administration of the national states reacted to this approach and requested to be included in the European integration process (Özel, 2009: 70).

"Cross-border cooperation" is one of the types of cooperation relatively newly developed between European regions. Cross-

[2] At the time of its establishment, it was called the European Economic Community. It was later transformed into the European Community and eventually, with the Maastricht Treaty that entered into force in 1993, became the European Union.

border cooperation is a form of "horizontal cooperation" that, among other functions, contributes to European integration.[3]

1. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Council of Europe and the European Union, which are active organizations in the European geography, have prepared a joint memorandum of understanding (a treaty) in order to define their relations and fields of cooperation. Among the articles of this treaty, which consists of 55 articles in total,[4] those related to cooperation at local and regional level and their contents can be listed as below:

a) Articles 5, 6, and 8: Advancing the existing good relations between the two institutions, strengthening cooperation where common interests require it and ensuring coordination in the future endeavors.

b) Article 12: The Council of Europe and the European Union, reiterating the aspirations and objectives set out in the preceding articles to establish close cooperation based on common priorities, pledge to strengthen their relations in the following areas of common interest: Human rights and fundamental freedoms; rule of law, legal cooperation and orientation towards new opportunities; democracy and good governance; democratic stability; intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity; strengthening relations of education, youth and the individual; social cohesion.

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[3] "Vertical integration" refers to the process by which member states transfer their authorities to the EU in order to implement the EU structure whereas "horizontal integration" is a process that contributes to the advancement of the EU integration starting from the bottom towards higher structures. See Özel, 2009: 71.

[4] See Özel, 2009: 73.

c) Article 13: The signatories of the treaty, the European Union and the Council of Europe, in the field of regional and cross-border cooperation, will develop closer working methods and seek to promote local democracy, drawing on the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform.

d) Article 15: The Committee of the Regions of the European Union and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe are expected to increase their cooperation in accordance with the treaties signed in 2005.[5]

2. INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

As seen in the memorandum of understanding mentioned above, one of the most important areas of cooperation between the European Union and the Council of Europe is the local and regional administrations. Interregional cooperation developed at the European Union level is the outcome of the desire and objective to include regions to the European integration process. One of the most defining concepts developed towards that objective is the "Europe of the Regions".

In accordance with this approach, the amount of importance and official duties given to the regions increased. Thanks to the implementations that support the integration and growth of Europe, regions will open up spaces especially for the cultural, economic and political cooperation between subnational governments; strengthen common perspectives and realize joint projects (Özel, 2009,75).

[5] As these provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding suggest, the leading institutions for strengthening local and regional governments and increasing cooperation between them are the Committee of the Regions of the European Union and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

There are various approaches towards the "Europe of the Regions" concept. To start with, there are those who claim that regions, as main elements in European integration, should undertake the role of the nation states. Given the existence of non-uniform regions within the EU, this view is difficult to implement in the foreseeable future. Supporters of a more reasonable and feasible approach advocate for greater participation of the regions in the implementation of policies at the supranational level on the one hand and demand regions, as political action units at the subnational level, to be parties in the EU treaties on the other.

Supporters of yet another approach, which is feasible and relatively easy to implement, put the emphasis on developing forms of cooperation between subnational local units in Europe that exceed state boundaries. According to this approach, along with the cooperation of the border regions, the cooperation of regions that do not directly border each other should also be achieved. To this end, the European Commission launched an initiative called "Interreg" to contribute to the cross-border cooperation of the regions and prepared cooperation programs in 1988. In order to eliminate the economic, political, administrative, cultural and psychological barriers that complicate the integration process that was intended by the EU, new policies have been developed for the border regions (Özel, 2009: 78).

The EU, an important player in the development of cross-border cooperation, expanded these practices to all border regions of the EU in line with the regional policy adopted in the following years and the regional funds allocated accordingly. Apart from supporting the cooperation in the border regions of the existing members, similar policies were also pursued in the process of preparation of the candidate countries for accession with the purpose of eliminating the factors hindering joint developments. Cross-border cooperation practices that have become increasingly important in terms of strengthening

integration within the EU have become one of the main objectives of the EU's cohesion policy under the name of "European Territorial Cooperation" in the 2007-2013 period (Özel, 2009: 79-82).

3. THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE "CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE"

During the EU accession process not only for Türkiye but also for other candidate countries, the relations between local governments and the adaptation work required to be carried out in local governments were generally carried out through the mechanisms of the Council of Europe. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, which has become one of the most important institutions of the Council of Europe and where countries are represented by national delegations, plays a vital role in the development of local governments and their adaptation to the European standards in addition to its importance in the transition process.

The Council of Europe has three major organs that make up its structure: the first is the Committee of Ministers in which the governments are represented and made up of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states, the second is the Parliamentary Assembly in which the parliaments are represented and made up of members appointed from the members of the national parliaments and the third is the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in which the local and regional authorities are represented and made out of their elected members (Erbay and Yener, 1999: 16-17).

In the early years of its establishment, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (shortly “the Congress”) was referred to as the consultative body representing local and regional governments in the Council of Europe (Erbay and Yener, 1999: 24). As a result of the changes in its tasks over time, the Congress

started to be defined as a political assembly representing more than 130,000 elected local and regional authorities from 46 European countries, consisting of 612 members (306 representatives and 306 substitutes) and encompassing Europe as a whole.[6]

The Congress, in principle, has the same number of seats as the Parliamentary Assembly. Delegates, who are the elected local and regional representatives or the officials who are directly responsible to the elected representatives, serve on two-year terms. In the Congress delegation, a balanced representation of the countries by geography, political tendencies, the model of local and regional governance and the ratio of women to men is sought.[7]

Some changes have also been made to the objectives of the Congress, some of which were to involve local and regional governments in the European Union process and the work of the Council of Europe: to establish local and regional democracy and improve its operability; to ensure that local and regional governments cooperate closely both with their national democratic institutions and the European institutions representing the local and regional governments of the Member States of the Council of Europe; to strengthen cooperation, especially between regions and border regions in Europe (Erbay

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[6] Russia was expelled from the Council of Europe in 2022 as a result of the war waged against Ukraine. For more information on the composition of the Congress: https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/overview#

[7] Türkiye is represented at the Congress by a delegation of 18 members and 18 substitute members, consisting of 9 members and 9 substitute members elected from municipal council members or mayors in the local wing and 9 members and 9 substitute members elected from general provincial council members or chairs in the regional wing. For more information on the national delegations to the Congress: https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/national-delegations

and Yener, 1999: 24). As per these changes, the role of the Congress is to raise the level of local and regional democracy, improve local and regional "governance" and strengthen their autonomy. The Congress pays special attention to the implementation of the principles laid down in the European Charter of Local Self-Government.[8] It promotes localization and regionalization processes and cross-border cooperation between cities and regions.[9]

To achieve these objectives, in addition to the operation at its headquarters in Strasbourg, the Congress monitors,[10] dispatches expert delegations, deploys observers to elections, integrates programmes, establishes dialogue with governments and liaises with Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs), Euroregions and the Committee of the Regions, an EU body.[11]

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[8] Council of Europe. (n.d.). Monitoring of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/monitoring-of-the-european-charter-of-local-self-government

[9] Council of Europe. (n.d.). Cross-border Cooperation. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/transfrontier-cooperation

[10] Monitoring Groups, established and guided by the Congress, make regular monitoring visits to all member states to assess the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Based on the conclusions drawn from the monitoring reports, the Congress makes "recommendations" for countries to follow and "resolutions" with an aim to improve governance in local and regional governments. For more information on the monitoring role of the Congress: https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/work

[11] Council of Europe. (n.d.). The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from https://www.coe.int/en/web/tirana/the-congress-of-local-and-regional-authorities

3.1. Working Areas

The Congress' current working areas encompass a wide range of issues ranging from local democracy to youth issues whose most important principles are to foster solidarity and cooperation among local governments. The most important works of the Congress on local governments to date are as follows:

- The European Charter of Local Self-Government,[12] a guideline for the constitutional and legal arrangements necessary for the local autonomy that contains principles essential for the democratic functioning of the local governments such as authority, control and financial management,
- The European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (and three related protocols) that stipulates cooperation between regional and municipal governments on both sides of the national border areas, provides model arrangements for regional planning, economic development and environmental protection at the borders,
- The European Urban Charter and the European Urban Charter II - Manifesto for a New Urbanity that contain guidelines for the local governments on management issues such as pollution, environment, security, housing, preservation of historical heritage, etc. for management that is respectful of urban rights and creating livable cities within the scope of the European Declaration of Urban Rights,
- Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level that ensures foreigners to exercise their civic and political rights in the countries of residence,
- European Network of Training Organizations that

[12] In 2009, an Additional Protocol was ratified as an annex to the Charter.

promotes cooperation between local and regional authorities at the European level and provides practical methods for local government administration,

- The LODE Program (named after "local democracy"), technical and legal guideline for various areas of local and regional self-governance re-establishment, especially in the Central and Eastern European countries,
- European Landscape Convention,
- Reference Framework for Regional Democracy.

4. THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTIONS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT SIGNED BY TÜRKİYE

4.1. European Charter of Local Self-Government

The "European Charter of Local Self-Government" that was prepared by the Council of Europe and opened for signature in 1985, was ratified last by San Marino on May 16, 2013. Henceforth, the Charter, after being ratified and accepted by all 47 member states of the Council of Europe, has acquired a special status.[13]

The decisive concept in the preparation process and content of the Charter was "local autonomy". Comprehending the core of the Charter is closely related to the understanding of this concept, which has been debated from time to time.

4.1.1. What is Local Autonomy and What is Not?

Since its foundation, the Council of Europe has attached great importance to local autonomy, which is a common social value in

[13] The Charter was signed by Türkiye on 21 November 1988 and approved by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye pursuant to the Act 3723 in 1991. For more information on the Charter: https://rm.coe.int/european-charter-of-local-self-government-gbr-a6/16808d7b2d

European countries, with the belief that "autonomous local governments" are one of the most important cornerstones of the future European Union. To qualify as democratic and autonomous institutions, local governments must have elected decision-making bodies, conduct their own affairs through their own organs without any external interference and have legal person status. Autonomy is the ability of a local community to carry out local affairs on its own with its organs and to have the resources to achieve this (Erbay and Keleş, 2013: 24-25).

Local autonomy has two dimensions: the first is related to the local bodies' relations to the center. It is not possible for local governments to be completely independent from the center regarding these relations. As a concept, independence is different from autonomy.

The main idea of autonomy is the local units' capability to carry out their affairs through their resources without any interference from the center. The second dimension concerns local governments' relations to the local community, i.e., the public. It refers to the capability of the elected local bodies' proper representation of the public and also refers to the convenience of the method of representation that enables the qualified persons to be elected.

The position of the Council of Europe bodies on local autonomy has reverberated in various resolutions. For example, a resolution of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe states: "*Every community, from the municipality to the region, shall have the freedom to take decisions on its own in matters concerning itself*." (Keleş, 2012: 55)

The desire for inclusion of the principle of local autonomy in the constitutions was emphasized in numerous draft resolutions prepared in the Council of Europe until 1984. It was emphasized that autonomy means that a significant part of public services should be provided under the responsibility of local governments for the benefit of the citizens. This right was envisaged to be

exercised by the bodies elected by secret ballot on the basis of free, equal, direct, universal suffrage; also the principle that local governments should perform the duties related to local services that were not explicitly left to another organization was adopted.

The Council of Europe further developed these principles and finalized them under the name of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1985 at the European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Local Government and opened them for signature. The Charter, which was ratified by Türkiye in 1991 with some reservations, provides guidance for the constitutional and legal arrangements required for the local autonomy and includes principles such as authority, extent, monitoring and financial resources that are necessary for the democratic operability of the local governments (Keleş, 2012: 56-57).

Articles 2 and 3 of the Charter clearly define what the concept of local self-government means and what its content and components are. According to these articles, the principle of local self-government shall be recognized by statute and, where applicable, by constitutions. The meaning of "autonomous local government" is that local governments have the right and opportunity to conduct a substantial part of the public activities to meet the service requirements of the local population under their own responsibility within the framework of the laws (Erbay and Keleş, 2013: 25).

In order to clarify some of the disputes on the concept of autonomy of the local governments in Türkiye, which is a party to the Charter, it should be added that the European Charter of Local Self-Government is not a document that envisages local governments to be a "state within a state". Under the Charter, local governments are units of government that benefit from a certain degree of autonomy "within the framework of the law", but are certainly not "independent" (Delcamp, 2001: 21).

4.1.2. Content of the European Charter of Local Self-Government

Briefly, the European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985), which is a document regulating common European standards in order to protect the rights of the local governments, consists of a preamble and three sections; within these main sections there are 18 articles in total. The preamble lists the general principles on which the articles adopted by the signatory member states of the Council of Europe are based.

In this respect, the Council of Europe aims to achieve further unity to protect and realize the ideals and principles that are the common heritage of its members and to establish treaties in the field of governance for the realization of this objective. The right of the citizens to participate in the management and conduct of public affairs is one of the democratic principles shared by all member states of the Council of Europe and the most direct exercise of this right is at the local level.

Equipping local governments, one of the pillars of the democratic regime, with real powers will ensure that an administration is both effective and close to the citizens. Moreover, the protection and empowerment of the autonomous local authorities will make an indispensable contribution to the creation of Europe based on democratic principles and decentralization of power. Achieving these objectives requires the existence of local authorities with democratically constituted decision-making bodies and a broad autonomy in terms of the means, methods and resources necessary to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to local authorities.

Section 1, which constitutes the main part of the Charter, contains 10 articles (Articles 2-11). This chapter explains the concept and scope of the autonomous local governments that characterize the spirit of the Charter and sets out the provisions regarding their boundaries, resources, functions, officials, forms of monitoring, the cooperation they may engage in and their le-

gal protection. According to Article 2 of the Charter, the principle of autonomous local self-government shall be recognized by national legislation and, where applicable, by the constitution.

The concept of "autonomous local government" is explained in Article 3; it means the right and capability of the local governments to regulate and administer a significant part of the public affairs under their responsibilities and in the interest of the local population within the boundaries set by the law. This right shall be exercised by councils or assemblies composed of members freely elected by secret ballot on the basis of direct, equal, universal suffrage that may possess executive organs reporting to them. This provision shall in no way affect the recourse to assemblies of citizens, referendums or any other form of direct citizen participation where it is permitted by statute.

Article 4 of the Charter consists of six parts and defines the "scope" of local self-government. According to this provision: "The basic powers and responsibilities of local authorities shall be prescribed by the constitution or by statute. However, this provision shall not prevent the attribution to local authorities of powers and responsibilities for specific purposes in accordance with the law.

Local authorities shall, within the limits of the law, have full discretion to exercise their initiative with regard to any matter which is not excluded from their competence nor assigned to any other authority. Public responsibilities shall generally be exercised, in preference, by those authorities which are closest to the citizen. Allocation of responsibility to another authority should weigh up the extent and nature of the task and requirements of efficiency and economy.

Powers given to local authorities shall normally be full and exclusive. They may not be undermined or limited by another, central or regional, authority except as provided for by the law. Where powers are delegated to them by a central or regional authority, local authorities shall, insofar as possible, be allowed

discretion in adapting their exercise to local conditions. Local authorities shall be consulted, insofar as possible, in due time and in an appropriate way in the planning and decision-making processes for all matters which concern them directly."

Article 5 defines protection of local authority boundaries: "Changes in local authority boundaries shall not be made without prior consultation of the local communities concerned, possibly by means of a referendum where this is permitted by statute."

Article 6 regulates appropriate administrative structures and resources for the tasks of local authorities: "Without prejudice to more general statutory provisions, local authorities shall be able to determine their own internal administrative structures in order to adapt them to local needs and ensure effective management. The conditions of service of local government employees shall be such as to permit the recruitment of high-quality staff on the basis of merit and competence; to this end adequate training opportunities, remuneration and career prospects shall be provided."

According to Article 7, "The conditions of office of local elected representatives shall provide for free exercise of their functions. They shall allow for appropriate financial compensation for expenses incurred in the exercise of the office in question as well as, where appropriate, compensation for loss of earnings or remuneration for work done and corresponding social welfare protection."

Article 8 regulates the administrative supervision of local authorities' activities: "Any administrative supervision of local authorities may only be exercised according to such procedures and in such cases as are provided for by the constitution or by statute. Any administrative supervision of the activities of the local authorities shall normally aim only at ensuring compliance with the law and with constitutional principles. Additionally, administrative supervision may however be exercised with regard

to expediency by higher-level authorities in respect of tasks the execution of which is delegated to local authorities. Administrative supervision of local authorities shall be exercised in such a way as to ensure that the intervention of the controlling authority is kept in proportion to the importance of the interests which it is intended to protect."

Article 9 lists the financial resources of local authorities in eight items. According to this article, "Local authorities shall be entitled, within national economic policy, to adequate financial resources of their own, of which they may dispose freely within the framework of their Powers and local authorities' financial resources shall be commensurate with the responsibilities provided for by the constitution and the law. Part at least of the financial resources of local authorities shall derive from local taxes and charges of which, within the limits of statute, they have the power to determine the rate.

The protection of financially weaker local authorities calls for the institution of financial equalisation procedures or equivalent measures which are designed to correct the effects of the unequal distribution of potential sources of finance and of the financial burden they must support. Such procedures or measures shall not diminish the discretion local authorities may exercise within their own sphere of responsibility. Local authorities shall be consulted, in an appropriate manner, on the way in which redistributed resources are to be allocated to them.

As far as possible, grants to local authorities shall not be earmarked for the financing of specific projects. The provision of grants shall not remove the basic freedom of local authorities to exercise policy discretion within their own jurisdiction. For the purpose of borrowing for capital investment, local authorities shall have access to the national capital market within the limits of the law."

Article 10 regards local authorities' right to associate: "Local authorities shall be entitled, in exercising their powers, to co-

operate and, within the framework of the law, to form consortia with other local authorities in order to carry out tasks of common interest. The entitlement of local authorities to belong to an association for the protection and promotion of their common interests and to belong to an international association of local authorities shall be recognised in each State. Local authorities shall be entitled, under such conditions as may be provided for by the law, to co-operate with their counterparts in other States."

Article 11 regulates the legal protection of local self-government: "Local authorities shall have the right of recourse to a judicial remedy in order to secure free exercise of their powers and respect for such principles of local self-government as are enshrined in the constitution or domestic legislation."

Part II of the Charter consists of three articles under the title of miscellaneous provisions. Article 12 regards the undertakings of the signatory countries, Article 13 regards the authorities to which the Charter applies, Article 14 regards all relevant information concerning legislative provisions and other measures taken by it for the purposes of complying with the terms of this Charter.

According to the provision under the Article 12, "Each Party undertakes to consider itself bound by at least twenty paragraphs of Part I of the Charter, at least ten of which shall be selected from among the following paragraphs and shall notify to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe of the paragraphs selected: Article 2; Article 3, paragraphs 1 and 2; Article 4, paragraphs 1, 2 and 4; Article 5; Article 7, paragraph 1; Article 8, paragraph 2; Article 9, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3; Article 10, paragraph 1; Article 11."[14]

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[14] Türkiye ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government with Law No. 3723 and according to Article 12, paragraph 1 of the Charter

a) Articles 2 and 5,

b) Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Articles 3, 7 and 8,

Part III of the Charter consists of four articles about technical provisions regarding signature, ratification, entry into force, territorial clause and denunciation (Article 15-18).

4.1.3. Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government

The "Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority" (2009), was prepared to the purpose of adapting ever so important notion of "participation" to the changing conditions, adopted in Utrecht (Netherlands) on 16 November 2009 and entered into force.[15]

In the preamble of the additional protocol consisting of seven articles, it is underlined that considering the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs is one of the democratic principles that are shared by all member States of the Council of Europe, it would be appropriate to supplement the Charter with provisions guaranteeing the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority.

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c) Article 4, paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5,
d) Article 6, paragraph 2,
e) Article 9, paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8,
f) Article 10, paragraph 1 were approved and ratified. Apart from these articles, no conclusive work has yet been carried out on the remaining articles, which were subject to reservations. There should be no harm in removing some of the reservations that no longer have any meaning as a result of the new regulations on local governments.

[15] For another example of this work done by the Council of Europe, see "Ethics Guidelines for Municipal Officials: A Council of Europe Directive", Keleş, 2012: 567-575 & Council of Europe (2013). European Charter of Local Self-Government. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from https://rm.coe.int/european-charter-of-local-self-government-gbr-a6/16808d7b2d

According to the articles containing the principles for the regulation of this right:

According to Article 1, "The States Parties shall secure to everyone within their jurisdiction the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority. The right to participate in the affairs of a local authority denotes the right to seek to determine or to influence the exercise of a local authority's powers and responsibilities. The law shall provide means of facilitating the exercise of this right." Any other formalities, conditions or restrictions regarding the exercising of this right will be defined by the law (Keleş, 2012: 67).

Article 2 of the Additional Protocol includes provisions about implementing measures for the right to participate. The Parties shall take all such measures that are necessary to give effect to the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority and empower local authorities to enable, promote and facilitate the exercise of this right. To this end, procedures for involving people that may include consultative processes, local referendums, and petitions; procedures for access to official documents; encouraging the use of information and communication technologies shall be developed.

Article 3 of the Additional Protocol regards local authorities to which the Protocol applies; Article 4 regards territorial application; Article 5 regards signature and entry into force; Article 6 regards denunciation; and Article 7 regards notifications. These articles contain provisions similar to the relevant articles in the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

5. THE EUROPEAN OUTLINE CONVENTION ON TRANSFRONTIER CO-OPERATION BETWEEN TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES OR AUTHORITIES

"Transfrontier Co-operation" is one of the important areas of work carried out by the Council of Europe to improve

cooperation among members. The "European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities" (1980), prepared by the Council of Europe to form the legal basis of transfrontier co-operation that aims to establish agreement-based co-operation and find common solutions to problems in border regions with common historical, geographical, economic and environmental aspects was opened for signature on 21 May 1980 and entered it into force on 22 December 1981 after the signature of a sufficient number of member states.[16]

As of 2022, the Convention has been signed by 41 member states, ratified and entered into force by 39 member states, including Türkiye who signed the Convention on 4 February 1998, ratified on 11 July 2001 and entered it into force on 12 October 2001.[17]

5.1. What is Transfrontier Co-operation?

A "territorial community" is an area with potential commonalities in terms of geographical, historical, environmental, ethnic, economic opportunities, etc.; it is unified in certain respects, but under the sovereignty of states on both sides of the border. The basic principle of transfrontier cooperation is to find common solutions to similar problems by building consensual

[16] For more information on the Convention: https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=106

[17] Türkiye has put a reservation to the Convention, limiting cooperation to local governments of countries with which Türkiye has diplomatic relations. In addition, local governments that can cooperate across borders are defined as special provincial administrations, municipalities, villages and local government unions established in Türkiye for this purpose. For more information on the status of other Members of Council of Europe with regards to the Convention: https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=signatures-by-treaty&treatynum=106

relations in these border regions.

The areas where transfrontier co-operation is intended to develop can be analyzed in 6 fields: Environment, agriculture and spatial planning; tourism; culture, education and research; logistics, transportation, security and communications; economy and employment; border population, health and social services.

The stages of the process of establishing transfrontier co-operation between local governments are as follows:

The Stage of No Relations: Governing units and communities do not recognize each other and live in a self-sufficient manner. As a result, borders are perceived as lines of separation and security.

The Stage of Information Exchange: This stage is very important for local governments as it is the first stage of establishing relationships. Informal meetings between administrators take place and the other side is informed in written form. In order to cooperate they need to know more about their neighbors' political, economic, social and cultural structures.

The Stage of Consultation: Neighboring units inform and consult with each other on the fields in which they intend to cooperate before taking any decisions. Such consultations are usually informal and the results are non-binding.

The Stage of Cooperation: In some areas, local policies cannot be effectively implemented without transfrontier co-operation. The experience with transfrontier co-operation has shown that joint solutions can be only applicable and effective when communities on both sides of the border are facing similar problems.

The last two stages, called *the Harmonization Stage* and *the Integration Stage*, are the final stages to be reached.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has envisioned the Convention as the cornerstone of a new structure that will play a vital role in transfrontier areas in the process of European reconstruction. According to the Assembly, the principles set out in the Convention could serve as the basis for a

new doctrine of international law governing neighborly relations on both sides of the border and the sharing of responsibilities between local authorities. The Convention led to a number of subsequent developments in transfrontier cooperation and became a reference document for possible forms of transfrontier cooperation.

5.2. The Content of the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities

The objective of the Council of Europe is to achieve a more comprehensive integration among its members and to promote cooperation. The Convention consists of a "Preamble" and 12 articles. According to the Preamble, this goal would be achieved through agreements, especially in the field of administration.

The Council of Europe shall ensure the participation of territorial communities or authorities of Europe in the achievement of its aim for which the participation of territorial communities or authorities of Europe bears great importance. The participation between communities or authorities at frontiers can be established in such fields as regional, urban and rural development, environmental protection, the improvement of public facilities and services and mutual assistance in emergencies. Past experience shows that co-operation between local and regional authorities in Europe makes it easier for them to carry out their tasks effectively and contributes in particular to the improvement and development of frontier regions. The Council is resolved to promote such co-operation as far as possible and to contribute in this way to the economic and social progress of frontier regions and to the spirit of fellowship which unites the peoples of Europe.

According to Article 1 “Each Contracting Party undertakes to facilitate and foster transfrontier co-operation between territorial communities or authorities within its jurisdiction and territorial

communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of other Contracting Parties."

Article 2 explains the concept of transfrontier co-operation and some other terms: "Transfrontier co-operation in the Convention shall mean any concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighbourly relations between territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of two or more Contracting Parties and the conclusion of any agreement and arrangement necessary for this purpose. Transfrontier co-operation shall take place in the framework of territorial communities' or authorities' powers as defined in domestic law."

According to Article 3 "The Contracting Parties shall encourage any initiative by territorial communities and authorities inspired by the outline arrangements between territorial communities and authorities drawn up in the Council of Europe... Agreements and arrangements shall be concluded with due regard to the jurisdiction provided for by the internal law of each Contracting Party in respect of international relations and general policy and to any rules of control or supervision to which territorial communities or authorities may be subject."

As per Article 4 "Each Contracting Party shall endeavour to resolve any legal, administrative or technical difficulties liable to hamper the development and smooth running of transfrontier co-operation and shall consult with the other Contracting Party or Parties concerned to the extent required."

According to Article 6 "Each Contracting Party shall supply to the fullest possible extent any information requested by another Contracting Party in order to facilitate the performance by the latter of its obligations under this Convention." Per Article 7 "Each Contracting Party shall see to it that the territorial communities or authorities concerned are informed of the means of action open to them under this Convention."

Other articles in the Convention are in regards to technical provisions about the signature, ratifying, accepting, approving,

denouncing processes.

6. A CONVENTION TO WHICH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE DIRECT PARTIES: EUROPEAN URBAN CHARTER

The "European Urban Charter", adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in 1992, is a groundbreaking initiative in Europe, recognizing the cities for the first time as "co-players"[18] that can play a role in solving the problems faced by societies.[19]

Since the adoption of the European Urban Charter, European cities have become the forefront of globalization and the focus of European efforts to adapt to the consequences of new technological, ecological, economic and social conditions. In response to these changes, on 29 May 2008, the Congress adopted the "European Urban Charter II - Manifesto for a New Urbanity" to guide the policies of the local authorities. The Manifesto, which contains Europe's urban "acquis", adapts the first Urban Charter to new developments, presents a new approach to urban life and aims to mobilize European countries for sustainable cities and settlements.[20]

The document of the European Urban Charter II is a set of principles and concepts that empower cities to respond to new

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[18] Unlike the other Charters drafted by the Council of Europe, the European Urban Charter did not have the status of a treaty and in that respect, it was opened directly to the signature of the local authorities of the member states, not the states themselves. The "European Urban Charter II - Manifesto for a New Urbanity" has the same characteristics. Türkiye does not yet have a local government unit that has signed the treaty.

[19] For detailed information on the European Urban Charter, see Yener, Z. & Arapkirlioğlu, K. (1996). *Avrupa Kentsel Şartı* [European Urban Charter]. Ankara: Mahalli İdareler Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları.

[20] For more information: https://rm.coe.int/urban-charter-ii-manifesto-for-a-new-urbanity-publication-a5-58-pages-/168095e1d5

challenges in urban planning and administration. The Charter provides a comprehensive approach and a detailed model for a new culture of urban life. According to European Urban Charter II, urban planning, development and administration should lead to the realization of the following main objectives:

1. "Cities for citizens" where the interests and the needs of citizens are the top priority,
2. "Sustainable towns and cities" that respect the local and global environment,
3. "Cohesive towns and cities" committed to developing the greatest possible social cohesion within themselves and with other cities,
4. "Knowledge-based towns and cities" providing fertile ground for creative diversity, pioneering knowledge and innovation as centers of science and culture.[21]

6.1. Preparations for European Urban Charter III

Since 2008, as a result of the changes and especially the pandemic, urban living conditions in Europe have undergone major changes and significant adjustments have been made to accommodate the new conditions. This crisis has affected local governments' interaction with national authorities as well as their future plans for transportation, health, education, participation and elections.

In order to update the European Urban Charter in accordance with the new developments and the aftermath of the pandemic a new revision process has been launched. This revision that is being carried out within the framework of the "Congress Priorities 2021- 2026" aims to associate the idea of urbanity and

[21] Ibid. In addition to these objectives, the text of the European Urban Charter II contains some important findings on Europe's cities and settlements, addresses some of the problems and puts forward principles and ideas for their solution.

urban society with the Congress priorities of promoting "resilient, democratic, cohesive, sustainable and digital societies". The revised Charter is scheduled to be approved at the 45th session of Congress in October 2023.[22]

7. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

In order to provide better services to its citizens, the European Union attaches great importance to local governments as being the unit of government closest to the people. There is no uniform model of local government in the EU member states and the EU regulations do not impose any sanctions on member states on issues related to the local government system, such as the form of organization and the division of duties. However, the EU aims to develop a common understanding of "governance" to be applied to local governments within its borders, the main characteristic of which is democratic and inclusive administration.

In line with the principle of "good governance" adopted by the EU, the work of the local governments should be open to citizen audit, public services should be provided in an effective and collaborative manner and these qualities should be sustainable. There are some common features specific to the local governments of EU member states where no single model is imposed, but common understandings and principles such as decentralization, participation, transparency, and accountability have been developed. EU member states adopt the concept of developing local governments and empowering local democracy as an important common value. The "principle of subsidiarity" is

[22] Council of Europe (2022, October 26). Towards a new Urban Charter of the Congress: How to build participative, inclusive and sustainable cities and towns. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/-/towards-a-new-urban-charter-of-the-congress-how-to-build-participative-inclusive-and-sustainable-cities-and-towns

one of the most important principles to put this understanding into practice.

7.1. Principle of Subsidiarity

With the Treaty of Maastricht, which is the founding treaty of the EU that came into force in 1993, the principle of subsidiarity was adopted as one of the fundamental principles of the EU and became legally binding. However, this concept had been also widely discussed and brought to the agenda before the Maastricht Treaty.

The principle of subsidiarity was included in Article 95 of the 1951 Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, the 1972 Spinelli Report and the 1985 European Charter of Local Self-Government prepared by the Council of Europe. Conference on Local Authorities at the European Parliament in 1994, subsidiarity and local democracy were listed among the "fundamental principles of the European Union" (Özcan, 2002: 646-647).

In the 1984 draft treaty on the EU prepared by the European Parliament, the principle of subsidiarity was included on the one hand as a rule for distribution of power and as a rule for exercise of power on the other hand. In the 1986 Single European Act, the principle of subsidiarity entered into treaty law for the first time in relation to environmental policies (Yüksel and Altan, 2011:134).

The principle of subsidiarity[23] is the first of two provisions of the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 that gives importance to the function of local and regional governments in the European integration process. As a guarantee of democracy in general and local and regional democracy in particular, the principle of

[23] The second is the establishment of an advisory body, the European Committee of the Regions, that will be examined below. In this way, local units are to be better represented at the EU level.

subsidiarity, which is established in Article 3/B of the Treaty, is in a way the principle regulating the exercise of powers between the EU and the Member States. According to this principle, "In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Community." (T.C. Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2004:42-43).[24]

The international consensus on the political union in the Maastricht Treaty was achieved thanks to this principle that was considered as a safeguard against excessive concentration of political power in Brussels. However, it would not be appropriate to interpret this principle only in terms of the division of tasks between the EU and nation states. The principle would also be applied at subnational levels of governance, determining the division of tasks between the center of the nation-state and its sub-regions (UNDP&TESEV, 2005:94).

The rule in Paragraph 2 of Article A of the Maastricht Treaty stating "...decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen" is another indication of the importance given to subsidiarity.[25] The principle of "subsidiarity", to which both the EU bodies and the Council of Europe attach great importance, envisages increased autonomy of the local and regional governments by transferring more power to them.

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[24] The European Union has adopted a four-level model of governance: local, regional, national and union level. (UNDP&TESEV, 2005:94).

[25] Furthermore, Article 128 of the Maastricht Treaty states that "The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore." This imposes responsibilities on the national and subnational level in the field of culture.

In fact, the principle of subsidiarity is an organizing principle that can be applied to all areas of administration. Subsidiarity implies that all the tasks done and decisions taken in the field of administration should be carried out in the places closest to the people in order to achieve the intended effect. Local and regional governments possess this feature in many areas of administration (IULA-EMME, 2005:194-195). However, those who approach this principle and its content from a holistic perspective do not evaluate the issue only in terms of closeness to the people. The principle of subsidiarity envisages not only the provision of public services, but also their realization at the most appropriate scale. In other words, according to the principle of subsidiarity, responsibilities in society should be handled, decided and implemented at the most efficient and appropriate scale. For the principle of subsidiarity that promotes local democracy and local autonomy optimization and efficiency of services are of similar importance (Yılmaz, 2005:138).

For those who share this view, the principle of subsidiarity does not, in practical terms, aim to create a bottom-up administrative structure. That is, what is desired is not only the creation of a structure that allows the organization at a higher level (the EU) to intervene in cases where the organization at a lower level is unable to fulfill a certain task, but to create a structure that works in accordance with the principles of optimization and efficiency (Keleş, 2006:84).

The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam did not introduce a new regulation on the principle of subsidiarity and the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty were included in Article 5 of the Treaty. Yet, it is important that the EU's "obligation to respect the principle of subsidiarity" is explicitly enshrined in the document of the Treaty of Amsterdam.

The principle of subsidiarity was included in Article 3b, paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Lisbon Treaty, which was signed by the heads of state and government at the European Union Summit in

2007 and entered into force on January 1, 2009. Judicial supervision of the principle of subsidiarity has been strengthened with these amendments and both national parliaments and the Committee of the Regions became entitled to request judicial supervision on whether the principle of subsidiarity is respected or not (Yüksel and Altan, 2011:138-139).

7.2. European Committee of the Regions

Within the EU, local governments are both affected by and influence the Union policies. Therefore, the EU-local government relations are not unidirectional but bilateral. Among these influencing mechanisms, the structures organized in Europe such as the European Committee of the Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Assembly of European Regions (AER), EUROCITIES or METREX can be counted (Mengi, 2007: 102).

Within these organizations, the European Committee of the Regions is considered to be the voice of the regional and local governments in the EU.[26] A substantial proportion of the EU citizens believe that locally and regionally elected representatives

[26] Alongside the Committee of the Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is another institution that makes the influence of the local and regional governments felt on EU policies. CEMR, the largest organization of local and regional authorities in Europe, was founded in Geneva in 1951. Since then, it has been promoting the establishment of a united, peaceful, and democratic Europe, with an understanding of self-government that respects subsidiarity and citizen participation. CEMR carries out projects to increase sister city relations. Sister city relations, which are defined as an association of geographically distant settlements to develop cultural and commercial relations, provide these cities with a different perspective and partnership mechanism. For more information on CEMR: https://www.ccre.org/

are better qualified to represent them at the EU level.[27] Almost three out of four EU legislative acts have a direct impact on the local and regional level. EU citizens should therefore be involved in the drafting of these regulations and the views of the elected authorities closest to them should be sought.

The Committee of the Regions is the EU assembly of regional and local representatives. It has 329 members and 329 substitute members, consisting of regional presidents, mayors and elected representatives of the regions and cities.[28] Indeed, members, who reside and work in the regions and cities where they are elected, are not only in constant contact with their constituents, but they are also the voice of their constituents in the EU's decision-making and law-making processes and keep them abreast of developments in the EU.

Since its establishment in 1994, the Committee of the Regions has sought to bring the EU closer to its citizens. The 2009 Lisbon Treaty expanded the role of the Committee of the Regions and enhanced its recognition. Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament and the European Council are obliged to consult the Committee of the Regions in their legislative processes in the following areas: economic and social cohesion, TransEuropean Transport Network, health, education and culture, employment, social policy, environment, transport, vocational training, civil defense, climate change and energy.[29]

Subsidiarity, proximity and partnership are the three fundamental principles of the Committee of the Regions.

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[27] European Committee of the Regions. (2020). EU annual regional and local barometer. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/EURegionalBarometerDocs/4370-Barometer%20optimized.pdf

[28] For more information: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/16/the-committee-of-the-regions

[29] Ibid.

According to the principle of "subsidiarity", the EU decisions should be taken as close as possible to the people and no action should be taken at the EU level in the areas that can be dealt with more effectively at national, regional, or local level. When the principle of subsidiarity is violated, the Committee of the Regions has the right to appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

According to the principle of "proximity", all levels of governance require being close to the people. Transparency in the actions of national, regional and local governments is a key element of public participation in the democratic process. According to the "partnership" principle, the four levels of governance -European Union, national, regional, and local- should cooperate closely to ensure "good governance in Europe". All four levels of governance are indispensable and must be included in decision-making processes.

8. LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN TÜRKİYE

Local government organizations can become members of international organizations in order to solve global problems, to provide increasing and varying public services more effectively, to establish collaborations and to share experiences. Türkiye is a member of 133 international organizations. These organizations are called associations, organizations, committees, councils, programs, funds, and platforms (Tuzcuoğlu et al., 2020: 1221).

8.1. Fundamental Laws

8.1.1. Law on the Execution and Coordination of International Relations

The fundamental legal provisions on international actions that local governments in Türkiye can undertake are regulated in the Law No. 1173 on the Execution and Coordination of

International Relations.[30] Article 1 of the Law states that the contacts and negotiations of the Republic of Türkiye with foreign states and their representative offices and representatives, international organizations and their representative offices and representatives shall be conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in cooperation with the relevant ministries, and that the Republic of Türkiye is obliged to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its contacts with foreign state representative offices and their affiliates.

Article 6 of the Law lists local governments among the organizations that are obliged to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when engaging in international relations. Henceforth, local government units are obliged to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in their foreign relations.

Considering the developments in recent years, the Ministry issued a circular (2017/4) entitled "Issues to be Considered in International Activities" on foreign relations.[31] The Circular states that there has been a significant increase in the relations of public institutions and organizations with international organizations and their participation in international activities. In this context, in line with the provisions of Law No. 1173, all public institutions and organizations were reminded that they should act in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in advance of their relations to be carried out through their officials who may be sent abroad permanently or

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[30] Milletlerarası Münasebetlerin Yürütülmesi ve Koordinasyonu Hakkında Kanun [Law on the Execution and Coordination of International Relations], Pub. L. No. 1173 (1969). Retrieved from https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=1173&MevzuatTur=1&MevzuatTertip=5

[31] Yurt Dışında Yürütülen Faaliyetlerde Dikkat Edilmesi Gereken Hususlar [Circular on Issues to be Considered in International Activities] 2017/4, Retrieved from https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2017/03/20170316-37.pdf

temporarily and in relation to the people they intend to invite to our country for a variety of reasons. According to the Circular, prior to the public statements to be made by senior officials on issues concerning our foreign policy, they should act in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidency.

8.1.2. Law on the Establishment of Organizations of International Status

Regulations on international organizations that local governments may establish or join are set out in Law No. 3335 on the Establishment of Organizations of International Status.[32] According to the first article of the Law, in cases where an international cooperation is deemed beneficial, it is possible for Turkish and foreign real and legal persons or only legal persons to engage in activities for the purpose of developing cooperation in economic and technical fields and benefiting from each other's knowledge, experience and technology in related fields, provided that they do not aim to share profits and are not prohibited by law. For this purpose, it is subject to the permission of the President of the Republic for at least seven of them, in Türkiye or abroad, to establish international unions, federations or similar institutions or to open branches of such institutions; to engage in international activities; to join or cooperate with existing organizations and similar associations. Institutions to be established in Türkiye shall acquire legal personality by submitting the declaration of establishment and its annexes to the highest local authority of the district where their headquarters are located. The institutions which fail to fulfill the obligations stipulated by the laws and statutes, and those which

[32] Uluslararası Nitelikteki Teşekküllerin Kurulması Hakkında Kanun [Law on the Establishment of Organizations of International Status], Pub. L. No 3335 (1987). Retrieved from https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.3335.pdf

lose their founding, purpose and conditions, shall be deemed to have disbanded automatically.

8.2. Regulations in Local Government Legislation

8.2.1 Municipalities

The provisions on how municipalities can establish international relations are set out in Article 74 titled "international relations" of the Municipal Law No. 5393 of 2005.[33] Accordingly, municipalities may become founding members or members of international institutions and organizations operating in their field of authority, subject to the decision of the municipal council. Municipalities may carry out joint activities and service projects or establish sister city relations with these institutions, organizations and foreign local governments.

Municipalities must first obtain a decree from the municipal council in order to carry out the aforementioned international relations. Following the decree, the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change gives the necessary approval in line with the advice received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Despite various permissions and limitations, the Municipal Law gives municipalities the authority to become a party to international organizations and establish partnerships. While conducting these activities, municipalities should be mindful of the necessity to act in accordance with the national foreign policy and international agreements and to obtain permission from the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change. Furthermore, Article 18/p of the Municipal Law No. 5393 states that "to decide on establishing mutual cooperation with the municipalities and local administration unions within the country and abroad with the permission of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change; to

[33] Municipality Law, Pub. L. No. 5393. (2005). Retrieved from http://www.lawsturkey.com/law/municipality-law-5393

establish sister city relations;[34] to carry out activities and projects in the fields of culture, arts and sports in order to develop economic and social relations; to construct, build, lease or allocate land, buildings and similar facilities within this framework", all of which shows that the authority of decision on the international relations of municipalities is vested in the municipal council.

8.2.2. Metropolitan Municipalities

Law No. 5216 on Metropolitan Municipalities does not contain a regulation on the foreign relations of the metropolitan and metropolitan district municipalities. However, the provision in Article 28 of the Law stating that "The provisions of the Municipal Law and other relevant laws that are not contrary to this Law shall also apply to metropolitan and metropolitan district municipalities accordingly" shows that they are subject to

[34] A sister city is a relationship established between cities with similar characteristics in at least two countries. Through sister city relations, common objectives such as information and experience sharing, technical, cultural and economic cooperation are established. The number of sister city relations that are not only considered as inter-municipal relations but also as an important "public diplomacy" tool has increased rapidly in recent years and reached 2020 as of October 2022. For more information: https://yerelyonetimler.csb.gov.tr/en The Union of Municipalities of Türkiye has prepared the "International Cooperation and Sister City Guide for Municipalities", which explains the procedures required for the establishment of sister city relations and aims to assist municipalities in this process. This guide, prepared with a leading approach, evaluates the current situation regarding international cooperation and sister city relations and offers suggestions for improving the current situation and establishing functional cooperation or sister city relations in line with the increasing importance of municipalities. For more information: https://www. tbb.gov.tr/Tr/icerik_kardes-sehirler_97

the same regulation as municipalities.[35]

8.2.3. Special Administrations

According to Article 62 of Law No. 5302 on Special Provincial Administration, special provincial administrations may also become founding members or members of international institutions and organizations that are active in the areas of their authority. Article 10/m that lists the responsibilities and authorities of the general provincial council states that the authority to decide on the execution of these activities belongs to the council, similar to that of municipalities.[36] The first issue that special provincial administrations should pay attention to in these activities is compliance with foreign policy and international agreements and the second is the obligation to obtain prior authorization from the Ministry.

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[35] With the Circular dated 07.04.2005 and numbered 2005/36 issued by the Ministry of Interior in relation to the issues of hesitation in the implementation of the Municipal Law No. 5393, the principles to be followed by municipalities in their foreign relations were clarified.

[36] Law on Special Provincial Administration, Pub. L. No. 5302. (2005). Retrieved from http://www.lawsturkey.com/law/law-on-special-provincial-administration-5302?s=5302#

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INTEGRATED GOOD GOVERNANCE IN MUNICIPALITIES AND THE EUROPEAN LABEL OF GOVERNANCE EXCELLENCE

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We live in in the "era of cities", cities are evermore interacting with each other as global actors as competently as countries, establishing sister city relations, forming international city networks and developing thematic or project-based collaborations with many international stakeholders. Within this process, local governments strive to make cities more sustainable, developed and livable through new strategies and activities. Indeed, local governments are the main democratic public institutions in meeting local common needs and demands. In addition to their local activities, local governments also play a role as important actors in decision-making processes at the international level. Moreover, cities and local governments contribute to the establishment of a culture of global peace and coexistence, and to the sustainability of the planet. Therefore, local governments should be considered not only as local actors but also as global actors.

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Various issues that the world is currently facing affect cities in different ways and intensities, e.g., climate change, social polarization, inequalities and economic concerns. Local governments endeavor to respond to these issues by using their powers and resources depending on their specific conditions. During such a period, the importance of local governments increases in ensuring sustainable development, protecting and improving the quality of life of the different groups of the society and realizing fundamental rights. The capability of local governments to fulfill these roles more effectively heavily depends on strengthening the culture of good governance.

The governance concept acknowledges that private sector and non-governmental organizations play a role in the governing processes of cities as well as public institutions. It assumes that all actors have influence on common issues concerning the society. Therefore, it advocates for a more holistic, inclusive and effective handling of decisions and resources of different institutions in the governance of cities.

Essentially, good governance refers to a culture of increasing trust in the relationship between governing and governed actors. It focuses on how elected representatives and appointed bureaucrats use the public authority and resources at their disposal to provide solutions to meet the expectations and demands of their society through appropriate processes, methods and steps. Rather than the activities and services provided per se, it focuses on how they are decided, implemented and evaluated. These processes are based on the assumption that the realization of good governance principles will increase the trust of citizens in public institutions. It is claimed that good governance would increase the level of trust and satisfaction while making public authority more participatory, responsible, responsive, inclusive and fair by ensuring more democratic, efficient and sustainable use of resources. By establishing and strengthening good governance in cities through local governments, it can be ensured that present risks and opportunities are managed in the best

possible way by different stakeholders.

Accordingly, many international organizations offer various policies and strategies to strengthen good governance at the local level. Particularly with the endeavors carried out by the European Union and the Council of Europe, the European Charter of Local Self-Government and Local Agenda 21, significant progress has been made towards local empowerment and strengthening the culture of governance. The objective behind these efforts is to strengthen good governance at local governments in finding solutions to global problems and building a common future.

THE EUROPEAN LABEL OF GOVERNANCE EXCELLENCE

There are various international approaches and methods for improving the quality and strengthening the level of good governance prevailing in municipalities. Among the most comprehensive and quantifiable approaches belongs to the Council of Europe. This organization, which was founded in 1949 and currently has 46 member states, carries out various activities to strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law relying on the joint decisions and commitments of the member states. In order to strengthen good governance in public administration, a document outlining the vision, called the Valencia Declaration, was signed and declared on 16 October 2007 at the Ministerial Conference where member countries, including Türkiye, were represented.

The main reason for this vision is that "effective democracy and good governance at all levels are essential for preventing conflicts, promoting stability, facilitating economic and social progress, and hence for creating sustainable communities where

people want to live and work, now and in the future ".[1] In order to realize this vision, it was aimed to implement the understanding of good governance and its reflecting 12 principles at local level in member states; these principles and their definitions are explained in Table 1.

For the implementation of the principles presented in Table 1 in municipalities, there is a framework of 96 indicators based on 12 principles. If it is proven that the indicators in this framework have been implemented in a local government, the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) is awarded to the local government by the Council of Europe for a year. The label is currently available to the local governments of 22 member states of the Council of Europe. Türkiye has joined these countries as of November 2022.

Table 1. Principles of good governance at the local level and their definitions.

Principles	**Definitions**
Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation	Ensuring that citizens can express their opinions on local issues in governance processes.
Responsiveness	Ensuring that local governments take into account the legitimate wishes and expectations of citizens.
Efficiency and Effectiveness	Achieving objectives by making the best use of resources.
Openness and Transparency	Ensuring that citizens have access to information and understand how local government processes are carried out.

[1] Valencia Declaration, Conference of European ministers responsible for local and regional government, Council of Europe, 16 October 2007 (Access Date: 28.02.2023) https://rm.coe.int/1680701699

Rule of Law	Ensuring fairness, impartiality and predictability.
Ethical Conduct	To ensure the public interest is put before private ones.
Competence and Capacity	Ensuring that locally elected representatives and municipal employees have the competence, skills and capacity to fulfill their duties.
Innovation and Openness to Change	Adapting good practices and innovations to the organizational system and achieving effective results.
Sustainability and Long-term Orientation	Considering the interests of future generations while making decisions.
Sound Financial Management	Using public resources responsibly and efficiently.
Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion	Ensuring that all people and communities are included, protected and their expectations and needs are respected without exclusion or discrimination.
Accountability	Elected officials and municipal employees to be aware of their responsibilities and be accountable for the consequences of their decisions.

INTEGRATED MUNICIPALITY GOVERNANCE MODEL

In Türkiye, there are numerous legal arrangements for the adoption and strengthening of local governance. Additionally, the 11th National Development Plan includes the strengthening of good governance in cities and municipalities as an objective.

However, the authority and will for implementation is left to the local decision makers. Various projects have been initiated by numerous institutions to strengthen the implementation process. Projects are important intervention tools for ensuring good governance in municipalities and building common experiences.

During 2021-2022, under the coordination of Argüden Governance Academy and Marmara Municipalities Union, "Integrated Municipal Governance Model Project" was conducted in partnership with the Council of Europe, Sultanbeyli Municipality and Şişli Municipality. The project aimed to implement the Council of Europe's 12 principles of good governance in an integrated and effective manner, to support the governance culture in Türkiye and to obtain the European Label of Governance Excellence for the first time by Sultanbeyli and Şişli Municipalities.

The main reason for developing the Integrated Municipal Governance Model (IMGM) was to make the good governance culture more functional and effective throughout the governing structures and processes of municipalities, thereby contributing to the sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life. The model's function is to strengthen all the principles of good governance by integrating them into the structure and governing processes of municipalities, including their political, administrative and financial dimensions, and to continuously improve them by evaluating them regularly with a specific approach. Ultimately, the goal was to obtain the ELoGE which is granted by the Council of Europe, and to pave the way for the continued ownership of the Label. The fact that a new perspective has been added to the European Label of Governance Excellence from the Turkish context during the implementation process of the project. It was also important in terms of aligning the local to the global realities and objectives.

The aim of the IMGM was to realize the principles of good governance in all of the governing mechanisms, tools and

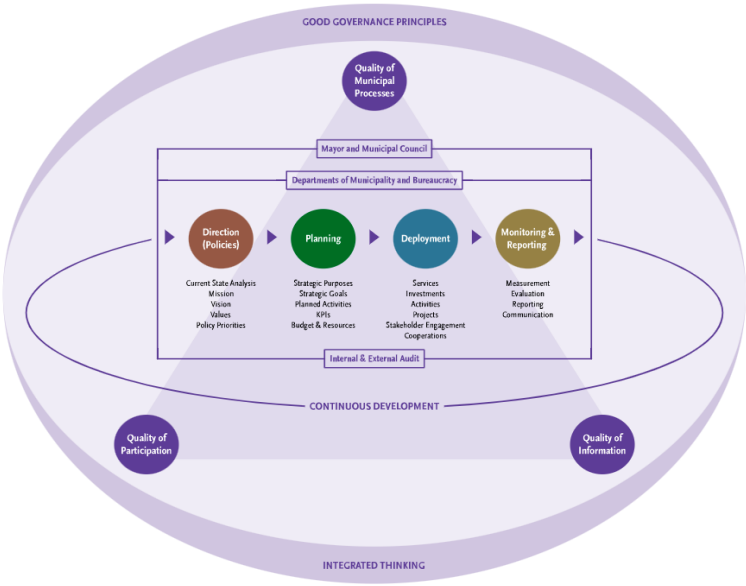
structures of an organization at the same time in harmony with each other and to strengthen them continuously while monitoring the process. By this means, it was aimed to achieve the following benefits:

- Increasing the level of trust between citizens and municipalities,
- Pre-emptive, holistic and effective identification of various risks and opportunities (environmental, economic, people, etc.) at the local level,
- Design and delivery of services, investments and all activities in a holistic, inclusive and participatory manner,
- Addressing the problems, requirements and demands of different social groups and individuals quickly, holistically and inclusively,
- Promotion of the application of data analysis, evidence and assessment in the decision-making and utilization of resources,
- Reinforcing administrative resilience and agility through continuous learning,
- Finding an optimal balance between short-, medium- and long-term decisions and activities,
- Maximizing communication, cooperation and coordination between municipal governing levels and units,
- Effective and efficient use and development of financial resources, human resources, technological and other resources in an impact-oriented manner in terms of administrative functioning,
- Promoting local democracy, the right to city and active citizenship,
- Establishing holistic, coherent and effective communication and collaboration with the citizens, NGOs and other stakeholders,
- Dissemination of exemplary practices of good governance among municipalities and strengthening mutual learning

processes,
- Increasing harmonization with the related global and national policies and plans.

IMGM was developed to achieve and sustain the above-listed benefits and also to obtain and maintain the European Label of Governance Excellence. This model was recognized by the Council of Europe and implemented by Sultanbeyli and Şişli Municipalities which are members of the Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU). Both municipalities conducted a self-evaluation relying on the 12 principles of good governance and its 96 indicators. In order to make progress in the identified areas, tools such as in-depth interviews, questionnaires, workshops and action plans were used in the project. At the end of the implementation process, the evidence submitted by those two municipalities was evaluated by an independent jury composed of academicians, experts and ex-bureaucrats. As a result, for the first time in Türkiye, two district municipalities were awarded the European Label of Governance Excellence. In order to maintain the label, it is necessary to make an application every year and to meet the necessary criteria. The aim is to maintain and continuously improve the quality standard of governance at local governments.

This process also offered the opportunity to develop and implement the Integrated Municipal Governance Model. With the results obtained from the two municipalities in a short period of time, it is proven that the model provided the expected benefits. Argüden Governance Academy and Marmara Municipalities Union are planning to continue their efforts for the dissemination and further improvements of the IMGM in the near future. The approval and support of the Council of Europe has also been a great motivation. Furthermore, the international acceptance and support of a model developed in Türkiye indicates that there is a significant accumulation of knowledge and experience in the field of good governance in Türkiye.



Source: https://integratedgovernance.argudenacademy.org/introduction

IMGM was developed to achieve the following objectives:

- *Strengthening of the culture of good governance holistically, at the local level in general and in municipalities in particular,*
- *Standardizing the quality of governance in municipalities and contributing to its labeling,*
- *Operationalization in all governing processes and steps with an integrated governance approach, in accordance with the good governance principles of the Council of Europe,*
- *Continuous improvement of good governance in municipalities, holistically and quantitatively.*

Achieving these goals requires three steps within the scope of IMGM:

1. Implementation of good governance practices in municipalities through adoption of integrated thinking perspective,

2. Implementation of good governance practices in all governing structures, decisions, and processes of municipalities,

3. Measurement of the quality of implementation of good governance practices in a continuous manner and ensuring continuous development of good governance practices.

STRENGTHENING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN MUNICIPALITIES AND ITS POSITIVE RESULTS

Promoting good governance culture in municipalities, as envisaged by the legislation and development plans of the country, will bring many benefits. In this respect, good governance refers to a culture that is not only ethical, but also has practical and beneficial outcomes.

Good governance prioritizes a citizen-centered approach in the relationship between the constituent (principal) and the elected (agent). In accordance with the concept of national sovereignty, each citizen is a "shareholder" who has a share in the governance of a country. At the same time, citizens are revenue generators whose taxes fill the country's coffers (the public budget). Similarly, municipal councils and mayors are "entrusted" with powers and resources from the moment they are elected by citizens. Utilizing these powers entrusted to them for five years, to keep citizens informed about what is being done and how it is being done, to seek citizen's opinions and to find the most effective solutions will increase citizens' trust and satisfaction in public institutions. The good governance culture offers the sole approach to ensure that this endeavor is prevalent and effective in municipalities every day. In this respect, it also demonstrates the ways and methods to increase trust and satisfaction levels towards the ruling institutions and actors.

Moreover, as a local government administration, municipalities are the closest institutions to the citizens. Municipalities make investments and provide services in a number of fields. They also implement regulations that affect public health and welfare, such as food safety, housing safety and social services. In short, they carry out actions to protect and improve the quality of life of the individuals and society. They even affect the living conditions and opportunities of the future generations. The holistic and effective implementation of good governance in municipalities will serve to further development and quality of life efforts in

more inclusive, sustainable and effective manner.

Additionally, municipalities with a strong good governance culture support cooperation of and coordination with the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Trustworthy local governments will attract the attention of other stakeholders, stimulate their willingness to work together and encourage the use of resources for common goals. Ultimately, more comprehensive solutions will be found by enabling cities to create and realize the shared goals with a collective mind. In other words, by strengthening good governance, municipalities will support non-governmental organizations and businesses to ensure their common interests in the cities. In order for municipalities to produce common benefits with their citizens and other stakeholders of the city, they need to improve governance culture and mechanisms, and ensure their functionality for producing inclusive new solutions to answer the requirements of the current age.

For the purpose of establishing democratic and fair city governance, it is important to share existing knowledge and experience, and also to disseminate the experience and good practices built at the local and global level in order to contribute to global peace by strengthening international cooperation. Indeed, as global actors, local governments influence the world through the local level. For example, many municipalities have aligned their strategic plans with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals in order to realize this vision.

The European Label of Governance Excellence also offers a common ground for cities that have become increasingly important in the international arena with their global cooperation with other cities. Taking action, especially at the local level, is essential for solving global problems. Solution and decision-making processes are carried out through governance, partnerships and collaborations. In this context, international cooperation of cities is also important for improving governance

and local needs necessitate international partnerships. It is necessary to use local diplomacy as an effective instrument in developing a culture of cooperation, solidarity and dialogue with international stakeholders, building an environment of international peace, and reconciliation and solving global problems with local impacts such as climate change and migration. It is of great importance in this process that municipalities' local diplomacy activities are in line with the national policies and international conventions and associated with the global agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals. This requires alignment of national and international norms and agenda with the demands and needs of the municipalities.

On the other hand, the European Local Governance Excellence (ELoGE) and similar awards are encouraging cities to take a step forward. As cities become more socially, economically and politically active, it is necessary to carry out these activities within the framework of certain principles. In order to improve the principles of good governance, it is possible for local governments to share good practices, develop cooperation models in line with common goals or use this label in the promotion of cities. In this context, the vision of local good governance created and supported by the Council of Europe and the reflection of this vision ELoGE provide a platform for the creation of common benefits and the promotion of governance at the global level.

Hence, for effective local diplomacy, first, the existing capabilities and capacities of cities should be assessed and the requirements that reveal their strengths and weaknesses should be analyzed. It is important to develop action plans with a systematic approach in order to determine the trajectory and develop a strategic perspective. Second, strengthening good governance mechanisms at the local level is important for ensuring international cooperation and governance. In addition, cities can share their knowledge and experiences for benefiting

from the know-how of other cities. It is also important to ensure sustainability in order to maximize the mutual benefit of the inter-city/municipal cooperation. In this respect, strengthening good governance in municipalities will contribute to many direct and indirect gains in addition to the basic benefits mentioned above. From this perspective, the Integrated Municipal Governance Model is significant for its approach and practical guidance. The model was developed to ensure that good governance in municipalities improves towards excellence in a holistic, continuous and effective manner. Accordingly, the European Label of Governance Excellence is valuable as a means of recognition and promotion in this pursuit.

FROM "LOCAL AGENDA 21" TO "NEW URBAN AGENDA"

Sadun Emrealp *

INTRODUCTION

The City & Society journal, published regularly by Marmara Municipalities Union since 2014, has devoted its 22rd issue to the theme of "Sustainable Development Goals", which has facilitated the content of my article in the 24th issue of the journal with the theme of "Local Diplomacy", enabling me with a transition between these two significant topics.

While developing the framework and content of this article, it was rather inevitable to lay a finger on those topics that left their imprint on me during my 40 years of work in the field of local authorities. While I was working since its establishment in 1987 in Istanbul-based International Union of Local Authorities, Section for the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Region (IULA-EMME), working directly with the United Nations (UN) agencies and international networks of local authorities within the context of the UN Habitat II Istanbul City Summit during which we hosted many events of local authorities in close collaboration with Marmara Municipalities Union has been seminal in influencing my subsequent work. Undertaking the position as the National Coordinator of Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program launched shortly after the Istanbul City Summit enabled me to enjoy the unique experience of working closely

* This article has been translated by its author from Turkish into English.

with local authorities, civil society organizations and other local stakeholders from all over the country that, despite facing numerous problems and bottlenecks, successfully conducted ground-breaking activities toward localizing sustainable development via "good governance" practices. Subsequent to the termination of this program, I've concluded my active career by working together with local authorities and Citizens' Assemblies, and supporting town twinning initiatives that constitute outstanding examples of local diplomacy within the framework of a number of European Union (EU) funded projects conducted under the umbrella of relevant ministries and supported by the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye. In this context, I'm trusting that the importance and high value I tend to place on the international city networks and local diplomacy initiatives, as well as on the Citizens' Assemblies will be welcomed.

Within the context of this article, starting with the first steps taken about half a century ago that laid down the foundations of "sustainable development", the path leading to the launching of "Local Agenda 21" action planning processes for localizing sustainable development is summarized. Subsequently, the importance of the Habitat II process, particularly in terms of opening new avenues for Türkiye is underlined. These are followed by the Local Agenda 21 implementations under Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program, and the Citizens' Assemblies established during this process. Under the next heading, brief information is provided on the UN Millennium Development Goals and on their successor, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which currently constitute one of the main global agendas. In order to complete this framework, the "New Urban Agenda" and its connections with both SDGs and 2015 Paris (Climate) Agreement are summarized. Last but not least, the framework of the article is completed by focusing on the significance and functions of local diplomacy and international city networks that are in the forefront in line with the current theme of the City & Society magazine.

TOWARDS "LOCAL AGENDA 21"

The concept of "sustainable development", currently conceived within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, has started to take shape around half a century ago. In raising awareness at the global level on environmental and development problems faced by humanity, a significant role has been played by a major event which is difficult at first glance to link with the subject, namely the landing on the moon for the first time in 1969. The sight of the Earth from space was not only marveled with admiration, but it was also apprehensively realized that this unique blue planet is indeed a small and fragile "marble".[1]

Accelerating through the 1970s, the arguments on the negative impacts of human life on our planet gained strength and increasing attention has started to be drawn to the deteriorating natural balance of the world. The final quarter of the 20th century signifies a period during which environmental and development problems and concerns started to climb in the higher echelons of the global agenda, and a notably dark and pessimistic future was depicted for humanity. In a world rapidly being polluted and its scarce natural resources being dangerously consumed, attention was drawn to increasing environmental degradation, encompassing desertification, deforestation, declining biological diversity, water and soil pollution, solid and liquid wastes, acid precipitation, global warming, depletion of the ozone layer etc., while the need for a new and wider perspective has started to be underlined to cope with environmental problems in such a manner as to also address the pressing problems in the world, including population growth, increasing poverty and unemployment, rapid urbanization, and deepening international

[1] See Sadun Emrealp, Gündem 21 Uygulamalarına Yönelik Kolaylaştırıcı Bilgiler [Handbook on Facilitative Information for the Implementation of Local Agenda 21] (Istanbul: IULA-EMME publications, 2004). (Second Edition: February 2005).

inequality.

The way out for humanity was linked to reinforcing the essential bridge between environment and development, and ensuring that development is "sustainable". Pursuant to the global consensus that the realization of sustainable development is directly related to participation, and that the cities provide the most suitable environment for the realization of pluralist and participatory policies, the essential need for local authorities to prepare for the 21st century with a brand-new approach has started to be emphasized.

The first major international step in this process was constituted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment which was organized in June 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden. Although hardly remembered apart from its naming of the UN World Environment Day, the main output of this summit, the Stockholm Declaration, has laid down the main pillars of the concept of "sustainable development" by drawing attention to the "carrying capacity" of the environment, seeking equity between generations in the utilization of natural resources, linking economic and social development with the environment, and underlining the interwoven nature of development and environment.[2]

The World Commission on Environment and Development was set up in 1983 by the UN General Assembly to assess the extent of the realization of the outputs of the 1972 Stockholm Conference, and in the light of this evaluation, to identify pressing environmental and development problems at global level, and to develop strategies toward solving them. This Commission published in 1987 the celebrated report entitled "Our Common Future". The report, also known as the "Brundtland Report" by the name of the Chairperson of this

[2] *UN Conference on Human Environment – Stockholm Declaration* (UN publications, 1972).

Commission, has not only provided a rich content for the concept of "sustainable development", but also paved the way for a global action plan towards the realization of this global target. The definition of "sustainability" brought forward in the Brundtland Report still maintains its validity: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[3]

Pursuant to global repercussions and a strong political support to "Our Common Future" Report, activities were launched toward the organization of a new United Nations summit for the preparation and adoption of a global commitment document and an action plan to realize the proposals delineated in the Report. Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly decided in 1989 to organize a "Conference on Environment and Development" with the target date of June 1992, namely 20 years after the 1972 Stockholm Conference. Following the preparatory process enriched with extensive participation, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the "Earth Summit", was held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

During the 1992 Rio Earth Summit "sustainable development" was endorsed by all UN members as the common goal of humanity, along with the global action plan entitled "Agenda 21" delineating the principles and areas of action to cope with environmental and development problems and to move towards attaining the goal of sustainable development in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 28 of this global Action Plan is entitled "Local authorities' initiatives in support of Agenda 21". In this chapter wherein "Local Agenda 21" is introduced, local authorities in each country are called upon to undertake a consultative process with

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[3] UN World Commission on Environment and Development, *Ortak Geleceğimiz* [Our Common Future], (Ankara: Türkiye Çevre Sorunları Vakfı (on behalf of Oxford University Press), 1991.

the local stakeholders to identify their problems and priorities, and achieve a consensus on the "Local Agenda for the 21st century" for their communities. Local Agenda 21 local action planning process is envisaged to be based upon participation and local partnerships, ensuring the active participation of the women and youth in this process.

Following the Rio Summit, as one of the most effective mechanisms of attaining sustainable development at the local level, Local Agenda 21 processes have started to be implemented in thousands of cities all around the world. The international networks of local authorities have played a significant role in promoting, expanding and supporting the respective processes.

During the preparatory activities for the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the networks of local authorities and in particular the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and its sister organization the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) have played a very significant role, especially in the development of the content of Chapter 28 of Agenda 21. Under this chapter, alongside presenting the Local Agenda 21, taking steps toward increasing the cooperation between the international community and local authorities, and strengthening the collaboration amongst the local authorities at the global level are encouraged. In this context, the launching and implementation of the Local Agenda 21 processes have also provided a unique opportunity for the promotion and increasing of "local diplomacy" initiatives.

HABITAT II: A NEW ERA FOR TÜRKİYE

Although Türkiye was amongst the participants of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and has formally endorsed Agenda 21, the repercussions of this summit remained notably feeble in the country. Consequently, the launching of Local Agenda 21 processes in Türkiye were delayed until significant momentum was gained by virtue of the 1996 Istanbul Habitat II City Summit.

Organized in 1976 in Vancouver (Canada), the impacts of Habitat I remained markedly restricted due to its rather short-sighted approach that has orbited primarily around the central governments. After two decades, it can be seen that Habitat II has adopted the broad-based approach of the Rio Summit rather than following Vancouver's narrow path. In particular, Chapter 7 of the Agenda 21 entitled "Promoting sustainable human settlement development" constitutes the skeleton of the Habitat Agenda and underlines the essential need to conceive "sustainable development" in a comprehensive framework also encompassing "urban rights".

UN Habitat II City Summit, via underlining the "facilitation" role of local authorities, bringing forth the basic principles of "good governance" and promoting partnership between local authorities, civil society and the private sector, has strengthened and enriched the Local Agenda 21 movement launched in Rio.

The 1996 Istanbul City Summit has also constituted a turning point in terms of the promotion of local diplomacy. The World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities (WACLA), convened in Istanbul in conjunction with the Summit, provided an exceptional opportunity whereby representatives of local authorities from all over the world have established bilateral and multilateral relations, and "sat around the same table" with international organizations and central government representatives. The hosts of WACLA in Türkiye, Istanbul-based IULA-EMME, together with Marmara Municipalities Union, assumed a major role in promoting and supporting the municipalities in Türkiye to display outstanding examples of local diplomacy initiatives. In a parenthesis, it needs to be underlined that the strong nation-wide unions of local authorities from various countries participating in WACLA has drawn attention to the lacuna stemming from the lack of a similar national union in Türkiye at that time, and therefore Habitat II Summit has also paved the way for the establishment of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (or rather, the

conversion of the former modest association into a strong nation-wide union) in 2005.

The foundations of WACLA convening in Istanbul in conjunction with the UN Habitat II Summit organized in June 1996 were laid down by the decision to join forces and act together by the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), United Towns Organization (UTO) and METROPOLIS, comprising the Local Authorities Habitat II Steering Committee (G4+). Engaging in consultations directly with the relevant UN agencies during the preparatory activities for the Habitat II Summit, this Steering Committee ensured that the local authorities participated in the Summit not under the title of "Non-Governmental Organizations" (NGO) as it was in the case of the 1992 Rio Summit but, as recognized for the first time in global summits, with their full-fledged "local government" status.

WACLA was regarded by all parties as a great success, with substantial repercussions. Over 600 representatives of local authorities from all over the world, including a significant number of eminent mayors, have mandated the large local government organizations comprising the Steering Committee to act together to pave the way for establishing the permanent unified voice of local government to act as interlocutor of the UN and other inter-governmental organizations on behalf of all local authorities. In the next few years following the Habitat II Summit, significant progress in this respect was attained and in 2004 the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) was established as the new global umbrella organization, bringing together under its roof the major networks of local authorities including IULA, UTO and METROPOLIS. Local authorities joining UCLG as well as to other networks functioning under its umbrella such as Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and other regional sections have started to carry out their local diplomacy initiatives more efficiently and in a wider scope by virtue of their membership to such international local government organizations and networks.

Pursuant to the call in the WACLA Declaration addressed to the central governments and the international community for taking into consideration the experience gained by local authorities during the implementation of Local Agenda 21 programs within the framework of global Agenda 21 endorsed in the 1992 Rio Conference, the UN has decided to implement the Habitat II Agenda at the local level via Local Agenda 21 processes. Paragraphs 103, 211 and 213 of the Habitat Agenda and Article 12 of the Istanbul Declaration related to local authorities have further reinforced the bridges established with the Local Agenda 21.

In this context, the commencement of Local Agenda 21 implementations in Türkiye in conjunction with the Habitat II Summit can hardly be looked upon as a mere coincidence. Whereas the Rio Earth Summit fell short, the Istanbul City Summit enabled the local authorities in Türkiye to get acquainted with, and subsequently develop an ownership of Local Agenda 21.

It is stipulated in the Habitat Agenda that "Democracy, respect for human rights, transparent, representative and accountable government and administration in all sectors of society, as well as effective participation by civil society, are indispensable foundations for the realization of sustainable development."[4] Thereby the basic framework of "governance" was drawn up within the context of the Istanbul City Summit.

In the same manner, the "governance" principle constitutes one of the main pillars of the National Report and Plan of Action of Türkiye, annexed to the Habitat II Global Action Plan. In particular, within the context of Priority Topic 25 entitled "Development of the Capacities of Local Authorities and their

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[4] *BM Habitat II İnsan Yerleşimleri Konferansı: Habitat Gündemi ve İstanbul Deklarasyonu* [UN Habitat II Human Settlements Conference: Habitat Agenda and Istanbul Declaration] (T.C. Başbakanlık Toplu Konut İdaresi Yayınları, 1999).

Enablement", it is stipulated that, "in order to enlarge the competences of local authorities and to make an impact on enhancing democracy and governance, it is essential to develop a transparent and effective monitoring mechanism, be accountable to the public, improve participatory processes, and establish the relevant institutional channels."[5]

A parenthesis needs to be opened at this point to underline that this approach was consolidated by the definition of "governance" brought forward by the Commission of the European Communities. In the document published in 2001 entitled "European Governance: A White Paper", the principles underpinning "good governance" are laid down as openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.[6] In order to temporarily close the parenthesis, it needs to be underlined that the definition of "governance" brought forward in the By-Law of the Citizens' Assembly enacted in 2006 is not only fully coherent with the "good governance" principles adopted by the European Union, but also further enriches its content.

Following the endorsement by the Government of Türkiye of the international documents constituting the outputs of Habitat II Istanbul City Summit, Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program was launched, which enabled the development of a new "local governance" model and "demonstrated its potential to trigger social transformation that accelerates the decentralization and democratization process in the country."[7]

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5 *Türkiye Ulusal Rapor ve Eylem Planı*, [National Report and Plan of Action of Türkiye], (The official report of the Government of Türkiye submitted to Habitat II Conference, June 1996), 141.

6 Commission of the European Communities, "*European Governance: A White Paper*" (Brussels, 2001).

7 See the project document published in the Official Gazette of Türkiye No. 26502, dated 24 April 2007.

TÜRKİYE LOCAL AGENDA 21 PROGRAM AND CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES

Local Agenda 21 implementations in Türkiye were launched in 1997 by a project coordinated by IULA-EMME (after 2004 under its new structure as United Cities and Local Governments, Middle East and West Asia (UCLG-MEWA)) with the support of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which was converted into the full-fledged "Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program" in subsequent years. During 1997-2010, eight projects in the form of "International Agreements" were conducted under the umbrella of the Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program. Identified in the Framework Agreement between UNDP and the Government of Türkiye as "the main tool in the development of good local governance and local democracy,"[8] Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program has attained international success.

Marmara Municipalities Union has also been a supporting partner of Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program from the very beginning, promoting on the one hand its members to participate in the respective process, while encouraging and supporting other regional unions of municipalities in the country in being actively involved in international activities and local diplomacy.

Local Agenda 21 implementations, initially starting with tentative steps taken by a modest number of pilot local authorities, have turned out within a few years to be a "local movement", encompassing a broad spectrum of local authorities from all over the country, ranging from largest metropolitan cities to smallest municipalities. By virtue of this momentum, Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program was able to reinforce its target to localize sustainable development with "democratic and participatory governance" implementations at the local level.

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[8] See Sadun Emrealp, City (Citizens') Council as participatory-democratic local governance model developed in Turkey (Istanbul: UCLG-MEWA publications, 2011.) (Second edition)

During the initial years of implementation underlined by the establishment of Citizens' Assemblies one after another, the women and youth councils developing nation-wide networks amongst themselves, the working groups displaying impressive performances, and activities geared toward special interest groups have accelerated, the UN World Summit for Sustainable Development organized in 2002 in Johannesburg (South Africa) constituted another cornerstone in the process. Being the first global summit of the 21st century, the UN World Summit for Sustainable Development has targeted the assessment of the progress in the aftermath of the 1992 Rio Summit, organized a decade earlier. Regarding the extent to which Agenda 21 was realized at the global level, paragraph 166 of the report prepared by the UN Secretary-General lays down that, "At the local level, the most successful umbrella for participation has been the Local Agenda 21 initiatives."[9]

In the background of this assertive evaluation, it needs to be underlined that the activities of local authorities and the broad spectrum of local stakeholders taking part in the Local Agenda 21 processes in Türkiye, successfully conducted despite confronting the multi-faceted bottlenecks stemming from being the initial examples and pioneers, have played a significant role.[10] As a concrete indicator of this success, Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program was selected by UNDP in 2001 as "one of the most successful experiences of local governance in the world", and presented as a "best practice" during the 2002 UN Johannesburg

[9] Kofi Annan, *UN Secretary General's Report on Implementing Agenda 21*, the framework report prepared by the UN Secretary-General for the Johannesburg Conference, No. DPI/2244, (New York, January 2002).

[10] For a comparative evaluation of these activities in Türkiye with a number of countries in Europe, see Sadun Emrealp, "Localizing Sustainable Development in Central and Eastern Europe", *Development Policy Journal*, Vol. 1, (August 2002), UNDP publications, New York, 109-133.

World Summit for Sustainable Development. This success played a key role in the incorporation of the Citizens' Assemblies, as the primary participatory platforms of Local Agenda 21 processes and displaying remarkable examples of local governance, in the new Municipal Law enacted in 2005.

The international success of Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program is justified on the grounds that it has enabled the development of a new "local governance" model in Türkiye whereby public institutions, local authorities and civil society organizations form the triangle of the local decision-making processes. The Citizens' Assemblies constituting the core of this model have evolved as a "partnership" structure conveying the cities to a sustainable future on the basis of "ownership by citizens", "active participation" and "partnership in solution" principles. The presentation of the Citizens' Assembly model in Türkiye as one of the most successful implementations in the area of "democratic governance" during the "7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government" organized by the UN in June 2007 in Vienna (Austria) also manifested that the pertinent international success has not been ephemeral.

This unique partnership model, bringing together the local stakeholders under the facilitation of the municipality and enabling the formation of a "common wisdom" embracing the whole city, also provides a very suitable umbrella for other participatory structures and processes, in particular for the Women's and Youth Assemblies, platforms for the disabled, children and elderly, participation at the neighborhood level, and working groups.

In this context, one of the primary achievements of Türkiye Local Agenda 21 Program is that, the Citizens Assemblies as outstanding examples of "local governance" became acknowledged in general as "legitimate" participatory structures by the end of 1990s, and subsequently attained their legal stronghold via Article 76 of the new Municipal Law (No. 5393)

enacted in 2005.

The Municipal Law, having a special place amongst the relatively recent legislative and institutional arrangements aiming to attain a framework for more democratic and efficient local authorities, has introduced new instruments for the implementation of participatory mechanisms and "governance" principles. Article 76, which is of particular importance in this respect, brings forth in its first paragraph a definition Citizens' Assemblies that significantly diverges from the accustomed terminology of legislation: "The Citizens' Assembly seeks to realize the development of a city vision and responsible citizenship, preservation of urban rights and the rule of law, sustainable development, responsiveness to environment, mutual social assistance and solidarity, transparency, accountability, participation and subsidiarity in urban life."

The By-Law of the Citizens' Assembly, prepared pursuant to the provision in the final paragraph of Article 76 which reads "The procedures and principles for the operation of the Citizens' Assembly shall be determined by the By-Law to be prepared by the Ministry of Interior", has entered into force in 2006.[11] The By-Law of the Citizens' Assembly has not only pioneered in the inclusion of the term "governance" within the Turkish legislation, but it has also introduced a comprehensive definition: "Governance: Method of governing based on criteria including transparency, accountability, participation, coherence, subsidiarity and effectiveness, and on multi-actor and social partnerships." This definition of "governance", manifesting a full coherence with the "governance" principles adopted by the European Union, also further enriches its content.

[11] The By-Law of the Citizens' Assembly entered into force via its publication in the Official Gazette of Türkiye No. 26313, dated 8 October 2006. Subsequently the revised By-Law entered into force via its publication in the Official Gazette of Türkiye No. 27250, dated 6 June 2009.

Looking over the shoulders to more than a quarter of a century of implementations, it is not easy to make an overall evaluation on the Citizens' Assemblies, as well as that being outside the scope of this article. On the other hand, providing a few examples in relation to the areas of improvement may give an indication about the magnitude of the bundle of problems faced by the Citizens' Assemblies.

One of the rather early criticisms channeled to the Citizens' Assemblies from outside Türkiye was reflected in the survey entitled "*Evaluation of Local Authorities' Self-Assessment of Local Agenda 21*", followed by a broader survey entitled "*Second Local Agenda 21 Survey*" conducted by ICLEI and summitted to the 2002 Johannesburg Summit. In the light of the set of criteria specified for these surveys and the respective grading, the strongest aspect of the Citizens' Assembly model in Türkiye was identified as "broad-based participation", whereas the "weakest link" was indicated as the lack of emphasis on "sustainable development planning". In summary, it was underlined that participation was regarded as an "end" in itself rather than a means, and thus broader participation was sought whereas less enthusiasm was displayed in the channeling of participation into local action planning.[12]

This constructive criticism was taken into consideration during the preparatory activities of the By-Law of the Citizens' Assembly and as a remedy, the following clause was incorporated amongst the duties of the Citizens' Assembly: "Achieving sustainable development, and the preparation and implementation of plans towards addressing the pertinent issues and problems."

The level of progress made by Citizens' Assemblies in subsequent years may be found in the following statement

[12] See UN Sustainable Development Commission, "*Second Local Agenda 21 Survey*" presented to the Johannesburg Summit, Report No. 15, ICLEI, January 2002.

provided in the Progress Report for the year 2008, prepared by the European Commission: "City councils, which are designed to be a platform to enhance citizens' participation in local government, have been functioning effectively in only a limited number of cities. Efforts are needed to strengthen all city councils. Accountability systems and transparency also need to be strengthened."[13] In subsequent years, it can be seen that notable progress could not be attained in this respect and despite the provisions of the respective legislation, difficulties continue to be encountered in increasing the number of cities with effective and functional Citizens' Assemblies.

As a final note, the "Action Plan for the Development of Citizens' Assemblies"[14], prepared following the joint activities conducted under the umbrella of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Türkiye during 2012-2013 in seven different geographical regions with the participation of all existing Citizens' Assemblies, provide an outstanding example of self-evaluation by the Citizens' Assemblies. The common problem areas identified directly by the representatives of Citizens' Assemblies, in summary, included "participation" (conception of participation, conception of voluntarism, Municipality-Citizens' Assembly relationship, impacts of political processes…), "institutionalization" (restrictions of the pertinent legislation, *modus operandi*, institutional set-up and positioning, establishment

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[13] *Turkey 2008 Progress Report*, Commission of the European Communities, No. COM(2008)674 dated 5 November 2008, Section 2. Political Criteria, p.8. (As a further footnote, the initial English translation as "City Council" was subsequently replaced by the central government with "Citizens' Assembly" to avoid confusion with the elected Municipal Council.)

[14] *Action Plan for the Development of Citizens' Assemblies* (in Turkish) The report prepared under the EU-funded project entitled "Improving Participatory Strategic Governance at Local Level", conducted by the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Türkiye. Ankara: June 2013.

of the organs of the Citizens' Assembly, conception of "success"...), "monitoring" (action planning, monitoring of the realization of Assembly decisions by other institutions, participatory monitoring methods...) and "communication" (deficiencies in promotion and communication, vague identity, perception of Citizens' Assemblies by others...).

Despite confronting these bundles of problems, it can be seen that a significant number of Citizens' Assemblies in different parts of the country continue to function successfully in a manner that justify their *raison d'être*. It is anticipated that the problem areas and proposals for their solution brought forward by local stakeholders will be considered by relevant public institutions, and activities toward further developing and improving the Citizens' Assemblies in every aspect will gain pace in the upcoming years. If a reminder needs to be made in this respect, in order to ensure the maintenance of the essential link of their activities with "sustainable development", the stipulations under the "Guiding Principles" (Article 7) of the By-Law of the Citizens' Assembly, in particular clause (a) "Within the context of the Local Agenda 21 process, guiding the cities toward sustainable development under the intertwined principles of 'ownership of citizens', 'active participation' and 'partnership in solution", and clause (b) "Realizing the basic principles in relation to cities and urban life delineated in United Nations Summits and other international agreements endorsed by the Republic of Türkiye" need to be closely pursued by the Citizens' Assemblies.

FROM "MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS" TO "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS"

In order to consolidate the outputs of the UN summits organized on different topics in the final quarter of the 20th century and to agree upon common targets to address pressing global problem areas, 189 heads of States and Governments (including Türkiye) have gathered at the UN Headquarters in

New York from 6 to 8 September 2000 "at the dawn of a new millennium" to organize the Millennium Summit. As the main output of this summit, the UN Millennium Declaration was signed by the world leaders as one of the most far-reaching global commitment documents of the new century.

Reaffirming the basic commitment for "a more peaceful, prosperous and just world", the Declaration stipulates that the central challenge faced today is to "ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people." The backbone of the Declaration encompasses eight goals ("Millennium Development Goals") agreed upon for development and poverty eradication. These eight goals, envisaged to be achieved by the year 2015, consist of the following:

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Paragraph 22 of the Declaration adopted in the 2000 UN Millennium Summit reaffirms the support for the principles of sustainable development, including those set out in Agenda 21, agreed upon at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, whereas in paragraph 13 and under heading 5, the path laid down in 1996 Istanbul Habitat II City Summit is followed by indicating that the success in attaining the Millennium Development Goals depends on "good governance", defined as "democratic and participatory governance".[15]

[15] *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, UN Resolution No. 55/2, New York, 18 September 2000.

In the targeted year of 2015, despite significant achievements at the global level,[16] in the face of the overall shortcomings in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, a global consensus was reached on the need to define more inclusive and comprehensive global goals. As the outcome of the respective preparatory process, Resolution No. 70/1 entitled "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" was adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015. Signed by 196 UN member countries including Türkiye, this document, referred in short as "2030 Agenda", encompasses 17 SDGs, reinforced by 169 associated targets (and complemented by 232 global indicators) foreseen to be attained by the end of the year 2030.

The 2030 Agenda, albeit not a binding document for UN members, calls upon all countries to collectively act and take concrete steps for realizing the 17 SDGs and associated targets. Generally known by their abbreviated names, the SDGs consist of the following:

- SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of

[16] In the process of attaining the respective achievements, the celebrated campaign entitled "*Our City Supports the Millennium Development Goals!*", conducted under the umbrella of the UCLG with broad-based participation at the global level, has played a significant role.

water and sanitation for all

- SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

The UN monitors the process in relation to the realization of 2030 Agenda and SDGs via reports entitled "Voluntary National Reviews" that are not compulsory, but prepared voluntarily by the UN-member states. These reviews reflecting the efforts,

achievements and experiences of the member states in implementing the 2030 Agenda, are shared with the public via the UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. The relevant information and data provided by the public agencies responsible for preparing these reviews are overseen by high-level monitoring and audit institutions in each country. In this context, the respective evaluation and monitoring process in Türkiye is undertaken by the Court of Accounts.[17]

TOWARDS THE "NEW URBAN AGENDA"

The New Urban Agenda constitutes the main output of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador. This Agenda, based on the outputs of 1976 Vancouver (Canada) Habitat I and 1996 Istanbul (Türkiye) Habitat II Summits, as well as on other related global summits and international commitment documents, is anticipated to serve as a road map for the central and local governments and all relevant stakeholders on the path towards attaining sustainable cities.

It is stipulated in paragraph 5 of the Quito Declaration that, "By readdressing the way cities and human settlements are planned, designed, financed, developed, governed and managed, the New Urban Agenda will help to end poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions; reduce inequalities; promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in order to fully harness their vital contribution to sustainable development; improve human health and wellbeing; foster

[17] See Turkish Court of Accounts, "*Sürdürülebilir Gelişme Amaçlarının Gerçekleştirilmesine yönelik Hazırlık Çalışmalarının Değerlendirilmesi: Sayıştay Raporu*" [The Report of the Court of Accounts on the Evaluation of the Preparatory Activities toward the Realization of Sustainable Development Goals], (Ankara: December 2020).

resilience; and protect the environment."[18]

The New Urban Agenda reaffirms the global commitment to sustainable urban development as a critical step for realizing sustainable development in an integrated and coordinated manner, with the participation of all relevant actors. In this context, it is stipulated in paragraph 18 that "We reaffirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development…"

As anticipated, Sustainable Development Goals constitute one of the main pillars of the New Urban Agenda, as stipulated in paragraph 9 of the Declaration: "The implementation of the New Urban Agenda contributes to the implementation and localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including Goal 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."

Another main pillar of the New Urban Agenda is the 2015 Paris (Climate) Agreement. The path leading to this Agreement was laid down by the United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP), being organized each year since over a quarter century, beginning with the first Conference (COP1) held in 1995 in Berlin. During the course of the COP meetings, in conjunction with the ever-increasing issues and problems related to global warming and climate change starting to impose their imprint upon the global agenda, the preparatory activities for a climate agreement binding for all parties have gained pace, particularly in the past decade. The negotiations for a climate agreement started to take shape especially with the "Bali Road Map" endorsed during COP13, and the draft content of the agreement was annexed to the "Lima Call for Action" endorsed within the

[18] For the English and Turkish versions of *Habitat III "New Urban Agenda"*, see https://habitat.csb.gov.tr/yeni-kentsel-gundem-new-urban-agenda-i-5733.

context of COP15.

The 2015 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (in short, Paris Agreement), adopted at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) held in Paris (France), targets to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5 degrees. The Agreement, as a legally binding international treaty, provides a framework for implementation procedures to enhance the global response to climate change, including national contributions, reductions in emissions, mitigation measures, adaptation, losses, incentives, financing, know-how and technology transfer, capacity-building, transparency, monitoring and other relevant issues. Türkiye signed the Paris Agreement on 22 April 2016 together with the representatives of 175 countries, and subsequently ratified it on 7 October 2021.[19]

Whereas the Paris Agreement establishes firm connections with the SDGs, it has been in a sense inevitable for the New Urban Agenda to be built upon these global pillars. Completing this framework, bridges are established with the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030" adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai (Japan) in March 2015, as well as with other relevant global summits and documents.

Regarding the New Urban Agenda, the topic of "gender equality" also needs to be mentioned as another important point since, albeit integrated within all global summits since the 1992 Earth Summit, the targeted progress could not be attained in this respect. This topic, directly addressed under SDG 5, manifests a different dimension when climate change and disasters are in

[19] See Law No. 7335 on "Paris Anlaşmasının Onaylanmasının Uygun Bulunduğuna Dair Kanun" regarding the ratification of the Paris Agreement, published in the Official Gazette of Türkiye No 31621, dated 7 October 2021.

question. As reflected in a number of decisions and reports of the United Nations, it can be seen that a global consensus has started to be developed in relation to acknowledging that gender inequality makes women more vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and disasters. As reflected in the reports of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the results of a series of global researches covering more than 4.500 disasters spreading over a period of a quarter of century have strikingly demonstrated that around three-quarters of all disaster victims were women.[20] In this context, a concerted effort needs to be made at all levels in order to realize the actions depicted in various sections and paragraphs of the New Urban Agenda to be undertaken for attaining gender equality.

The New Urban Agenda provides a vast area for maneuver in terms of local diplomacy. Paragraph 21, stipulating that "We urge all national, subnational and local governments, as well as all relevant stakeholders, in line with national policies and legislation, to revitalize, strengthen and create partnerships, enhancing coordination and cooperation to effectively implement the New Urban Agenda and realize our shared vision" strongly encourages the development of bilateral or multilateral local diplomacy initiatives by local authorities in virtually all areas covered under this global road map.

As a final point, albeit not built upon the New Urban Agenda, the document entitled "Urban Agenda for the EU",[21] having a

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[20] Amongst the numerous relevant publications, see in particular E. Neumayer and T. Plümper (2007) "*The gendered nature of natural disasters: the impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002*", Annals of the Association of American Geographers No. 97, pp. 551-566.

[21] See "Establishing the Urban Agenda for the EU: Pact of Amsterdam", Agreed at the Informal Meeting of EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters on 30 May 2016 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

particular importance for the local authorities in Türkiye, also needs to be mentioned in this context. This Urban Agenda, agreed upon by the EU Ministers responsible for urban matters on 30 May 2016 and subsequently endorsed by the EU's authorized organs on 24 June 2016, encompasses 12 priority themes including circular economy, urban poverty, climate adaptation, energy transition etc. These priority topics encompass a vast area for maneuver in terms of local diplomacy relations to be developed particularly with EU-member countries.

In the same manner, the policy initiatives entitled "European Green Deal", approved in 2020 by the European Commission with the overarching aim of making the EU climate neutral by the year 2050, will have its repercussions not only on the central government organizations, but also on local authorities in Türkiye. The Green Deal, targeting to make the EU's climate, energy, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels) and turning the EU into the first climate neutral continent by 2050, entails significant policy changes and commitments for the local authorities in Türkiye, whereas presenting new and vast opportunities for them in the field of local diplomacy, in particular via joint projects to be supported by grant programs.

"LOCAL DIPLOMACY" AND INTERNATIONAL CITY NETWORKS

The global goals and commitments, as well as the related roadmaps and action plans that were developed and endorsed throughout the process launched over half a century ago via the first UN summit bringing forth sustainable development reflect the general consensus that, although the cities are the primary source of many global problems, they in turn play a key role in the solution of these problems. Accordingly, outputs of all these UN summits promote "global partnerships", whereas a special

emphasis is placed on local authorities as essential stakeholders.

Local authorities, currently acknowledged by the international community as "global actors", follow a path different from traditional diplomacy by utilizing local diplomacy for developing bilateral or multilateral connections and collaboration with local authorities in different countries, establishing thematic town twinning relationships, initiating new or joining existing international city networks, and engaging in a broad spectrum of international activities toward attaining the global targets at the local level.

As an example to the broad spectrum of areas that may be the themes of local diplomacy initiatives, in a research conducted by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, it is concluded that local diplomacy is conceptualized under 6 main dimensions consisting of security, development, economy, culture, networks and representation.[22] (Within the context of this research, environment and climate is arguably placed under the "economy" dimension.) As outstanding examples from recently emerging topics, the head-spinning advancements in communication and information technologies have enabled the emergence of new areas of cooperation and collaboration focusing on the topic of "Smart Cities". In the same manner, particularly in connection with the 2015 Paris Agreement, climate change (and related sub-topics) provide an ever-expanding area of maneuver for local diplomacy. Similarly, each of the SDGs and the associated targets provide a very suitable framework for bilateral and multilateral local diplomacy implementations.

Currently, major broad-based and multi-purpose international city networks, in particular UCLG and CEMR (which simultaneously functions as UCLG's regional section for Europe) allocate a special niche in their organizational structures

[22] Rogier van der Pluijm & Jan Melissen, *City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics*, (Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael, 2007).

to the topic of local diplomacy, establishing special departments, boards, working groups and similar units focusing on local diplomacy, as well as providing multi-faceted support on the topic to their member local authorities.

Increasing number of city networks are being established with a focus on specific targets and areas, granting local authorities the opportunity to join an international network in virtually any topic that correspond to their priorities and characteristics. As notable examples, the Covenant of Mayors, which brings together local authorities committed to implementing climate and energy objectives; Energy Cities, which brings together local authorities around the theme of energy transition; C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, which is a network of the world's megacities committed to addressing climate change; ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (previously, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives), which supports sustainable development since 30+ years; CIVITAS and POLIS networks of cities and regions on urban transport innovation and accessibility; Smart Cities Network (SCN), which supports "Smart City" implementations of local authorities; Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC), which brings together cities having on their territory a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List; Mayors for Peace network, which targets to attain and maintain peaceful coexistence between the whole of humanity; European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA), which is dedicated to the promotion of "good governance" and citizen participation at the local level, are only a few amongst the elongated list of such international city networks.[23]

[23] For the dataset of international city networks which is open to the membership of local governments in Türkiye, see Marmara Municipalities Union, Uluslararası Kent Ağları Veri Seti [International City Networks Dataset 2022], accessed February 9, 2023, https://data.marmara.gov.tr/yerel-diplomasi/uluslararasi-kent-aglari-2022.

The international city networks are of great importance to, and have virtually unlimited benefits for local authorities. Providing a very suitable environment for sharing knowledge and experience, learning from each other, promoting and disseminating good practices in relevant areas, strengthening the solidarity and cooperation between local authorities, supporting sister city or thematic town twinning relationships, circulating the know-how and information in relation to innovative areas, encouraging and supporting the local authorities in implementing joint projects and programs, facilitating the access of local authorities in particular to grant funds, advocating for the local government vis-à-vis international organizations, supporting the realization of the outputs of global summits and international agreements at the local level are only few of the elongated list of the benefits for local authorities joining international city networks.

It can be observed that in the past decades, an increasing number of local authorities in the country have started to play an active role in international platforms and city networks. Virtually all local authorities whose successful activities are recognized outside the borders of Türkiye, displaying good practices in their respective cities inspired by the relevant examples in other countries can be seen to have membership ties with international city networks, many going beyond being passive members and playing an active role within these networks. Supporting the pertinent efforts of the local authorities in the country at the national level, the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye lays an increasing importance to local diplomacy. In the same manner, Marmara Municipalities Union that has maintained for decades its forerunner and strong position amongst the regional unions of municipalities, continues to place due emphasis on local diplomacy. Marmara Municipalities Union supports its member municipalities to ensure that local diplomacy activities comply with international conventions, and link them to the global agendas, especially the SDGs. Marmara Municipalities Union, in

particular via the Local Diplomacy Platform established under its umbrella, continues to promote the utilization of local diplomacy as an effective tool in developing a culture of cooperation, solidarity and dialogue with international stakeholders, building an international peace and reconciliation environment, and solving global problems with local implications such as climate change and migration.

CONCLUSION

The premise made over half a century ago in the outputs of the respective global summit that sustainable development is not a target that can be attained in a few steps, but requires long-term efforts and global commitments spreading over to different generations is more clearly acknowledged in today's world. Regarding the problem areas that pose a serious threat for our world and thereby joint action is envisaged toward their elimination or reduction, as the result of intense efforts made at the global level as well as at other levels, notable success is achieved towards the solution of these problems and valuable knowledge and experience are gained in the process. On the other hand, despite positive and encouraging developments, an overview of the priority "to-do-list" of the global agenda, in particular the UN Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, manifests that there is still a long way to go in the thorny path of this journey.

Carrying out activities connected with the current global commitment documents such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2015 Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the New urban Agenda will be a priority not only for the local governments, but also for the Citizens' Assemblies, particularly in the light of the aforementioned Article 7(b) of the By-Law of the Citizens' Assembly. It is of particular importance in this context to ensure that the local authorities and Citizens' Assemblies recently

involved in respective activities would benefit from the knowledge, experience and local capacity accumulated in their counterparts that were engaged in the process relatively earlier. In this context, both the nation-wide and regional unions of municipalities (Local Government Associations) in Türkiye may provide multi-faceted benefits, and particularly with the support of international city networks, may provide facilitation and support to ensure that these activities would evolve into exemplary local diplomacy initiatives.

As the closing words, it only remains to wish a clear path and unlimited success to all stakeholders involved in, supporting, contributing and continuing with the endeavor of sustainable development, which will proceed throughout a lifetime, and be sustained by the next generations.

LOCAL DIPLOMACY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Yasemin Okay *

INTRODUCTION

A sustainable future refers to just and inclusive societies and a liveable planet for all. As home to more than half of the world's population and spaces where economic and social inequalities and environmental damage caused by pollution are felt the most, cities have a critical role in building such a future (Acuto et al., 2016, p. 1). The manifestation of the same global challenges in different localities encourages cities to establish international collaborations and expand their sphere of influence in the global arena. Instead of acting alone against complex and pressing problems, cities work together under the common goal of a sustainable future by using local diplomacy and uniting under city networks. In other words, cities utilize the tools of local diplomacy to develop and implement sustainable solutions to global challenges.

This paper will examine the possibilities local diplomacy offers to cities in building a sustainable future through the roadmap provided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations (UN) in response to global development challenges. After a brief introduction to the SDGs,

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This article has been translated by its author from Turkish into English.

the relationship between cities and local diplomacy will be examined. The following sections will focus on local diplomacy[1] activities organized by cities towards building a sustainable future. These activities will be analyzed under the headings of exchange of knowledge and know-how, development of joint projects, contribution to the global sustainable development agenda and promotion of global peace and trust. Although these elements are discussed under separate headings, in practice, they are intertwined and contribute to each other.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Marking the 21st century, sustainability emerged as a solution to the social, environmental and economic crises threatening the world. To be able to protect future generations and life on earth, it points to the necessity of establishing new strategies and practices around the notions of the equal right to life and environmental awareness. In this regard, sustainable development refers to the society, environment and economy growing in a balance. The global dimension of the crises threatening the world necessitates the cooperation of different stakeholders and actors to realize sustainable development.

With the vision of a sustainable future, "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" was prepared in 2015 (Kanaat et al., 2022, p. 17). Intended as a guide between 2016-2030, this 'Global Agenda' sets to tackle the social, environmental and economic dimensions of global crises (ibid.). Under this Agenda, which all UN member states have adopted, 17 SDGs have been identified (Figure 1) (ibid.). These SDGs include considerations for sustainable development based on social justice, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth. The SDGs are further elaborated with 169 sub-

[1] In this article, the term 'local diplomacy' is used in a narrower sense and refers only to international cooperation.

goals (ibid.).

The Global Agenda recognizes that global challenges, with their intertwined social, environmental and economic dimensions, require solutions that emerge from holistic and inclusive partnerships. In this context, achieving the SDGs is the responsibility of everyone, from the international, national and local levels. As SDG 17 'Partnerships for the Goals' underlines, solutions to global threats can only be possible through global partnerships. Achieving the SDGs requires the effective and systematic cooperation of stakeholders from different sectors, levels and scales. In other words, the future of humans and other species requires local, national and international solidarity.

Figure 1: Sustainable Development Goals (Source: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)

CITIES AND LOCAL DIPLOMACY

Cities, with their rapidly growing economies and populations, are becoming powerful global actors (Kosovac et al., 2020). Their roles, as well as their spheres of influence, are expanding with the impacts of globalization (ibid.) As the closest governmental unit to the public, they can represent the people and have proven their ability to quickly identify problem areas and intervene

directly (ibid.). On the other hand, cities are sites where inequalities and global challenges are generated, and their impact is strongly felt. For example, cities are responsible for 70% of greenhouse gas emissions, the leading cause of the climate crisis (Dasgupta et al., 2022). Floods, extreme heat, droughts and food shortages caused by the climate crisis are increasingly evident in cities (Leighton, 2019).

Given their part in creating global challenges, how they are directly affected by them but also their potential, cities play an essential role on the path to a sustainable future. Accordingly, the significance of cities in achieving the SDGs has been acknowledged at the international level with the inclusion of SDG 11, 'Sustainable Cities and Communities', on the Global Agenda. This goal states that sustainable development is only possible through liveable, inclusive, resilient and equitable cities. In addition, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), local and regional governments need to play an active role in order to reach 105 of the 169 sub-goals (OECD, 2020). In short, cities need to be actively involved in the problem-solving process to establish a sustainable future.

Cities benefit from local diplomacy activities to realize shared goals. They increase their potential to reach the SDGs by acting together with other cities and institutions or within city networks.[2] In this regard, capacity-building activities, such as training, workshops, awareness-raising activities, and exchange of knowledge and know-how, can support municipalities in realizing the SDGs. By sharing good practices, they can be disseminated among different local actors. Partnerships and joint activities can lead to joint projects in order to reach the SDGs. At the same time, cities can join forces in city networks to increase their influence and voice in the global arena. Through advocacy

[2] The term 'city networks' used in this paper refers to international city networks.

activities, powerful city networks can highlight urban challenges and voice sustainable local solutions to global crises. Finally, cities' close relations, cooperation and solidarity can contribute to the global environment of peace and trust. The following sections of the article will examine these topics in detail.

EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW-HOW

Cities benefit from local diplomacy through exchanges of knowledge and know-how. In order to strengthen their capacity to serve the public and respond to changing needs, cities operate across regional and national borders through bilateral city relations or city networks. Local diplomacy thus paves the way for sharing knowledge, expertise and know-how that cities cannot acquire on their own or would otherwise cost them time and resources (Acuto et al., 2016, p. 4). Awareness-raising activities underline the SDGs' importance and the cities' potential to achieve sustainable development. Capacity building through training and workshops and sharing know-how can help cities reproduce good practices by adapting them to different localities. Thus, through international partnerships between local actors, the capacity of cities to deliver services and reach the SDGs can increase.

City networks can be considered in this regard. These networks serve as capacity-building platforms for cities by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and know-how. For example, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, established together by 200 cities in 1990, is an international city network that encourages cities to take concrete steps towards sustainable development and supports them through capacity-building activities. ICLEI, which currently has more than 2500 local and regional governments from 160 countries as members, enables cities to establish regional, national and international connections and aims to achieve sustainable development through local diplomacy activities (ICLEI, 2021). It carries out

capacity-building activities in line with the needs of its members. In 30 years, it has organized more than 1,000 training activities attended by 50,000 local government representatives and has paved the way for peer exchanges and joint projects under its active sustainability initiatives (Roberts, 2020). The knowledge and know-how exchange provided by ICLEI increases the capacity of local governments to develop effective and integrated solutions towards the SDGs.

DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT PROJECTS

In addition to exchanging knowledge and know-how, cities also develop projects in partnership with various international organizations. These projects provide an opportunity for cities to put their experience and the knowledge they gained from each other or through city networks to practice. At the same time, partnerships help projects to be implemented more quickly and effectively. Collaborative sustainability projects contribute to cities' capacity to serve the public and help them gain experience and know-how. According to Marmara Municipalities Union's 'Local Governments Sustainable Development Goals Studies' report conducted with its member municipalities in the Marmara region, in their activities related to the SDGs, 42% of local governments cooperate with other municipalities, 25% with international organizations, and 23% with their twin cities (Kanaat et al., 2022, p. 64).

Partnerships between cities can be established through municipalities' own initiatives as well as through institutions. ICLEI, for example, paves the way for joint project development alongside its capacity-building activities. In addition to offering networking opportunities, ICLEI provides five roadmaps to guide cities in collaborative projects. These roadmaps aim to implement effective and efficient projects to achieve the SDGs. These five roadmaps include 'Nature-Based Development Projects' aimed at protecting biodiversity and the ecosystem,

'Low Emission Development Projects' to curb climate change, 'Circular Development Projects' prioritizing sustainable production and consumption, 'Resilient Development Projects' to increase the capacity to respond to crises, and 'Equitable and People-Centered Development Projects' to build more just, livable and inclusive cities (ICLEI, 2021). Within the scope of the ICLEI Montreal Action Plan, a total of 146 projects were realized between 2018-2021 with the participation of 1278 local and regional governments (ICLEI, 2021, p. 39). Building on that success, the ICLEI Malmö Action Plan aims to realize a total of 141 development projects with the participation of more than 1100 local and regional governments between 2021-2024 (ICLEI, 2021, p. 40). These projects, carried out jointly with the cooperation of different stakeholders under the leadership of ICLEI, are concrete steps taken for a sustainable future.

In this regard, cities can access the support they need for social, environmental and economic sustainable development through the possibilities of local diplomacy. Thematic cooperation between cities can be developed to design projects centred on specific SDGs. Economic cooperation projects can support sustainable and circular economic development, facilitate access to resilient and equitable economic growth by supporting sustainable sectors and enhance the capacity of cities to attract investment and talent by increasing local attractiveness. Clean and environment-friendly production can be achieved through partnerships developing resilient and inclusive infrastructure. Partnerships involving the sharing of information and communication technologies and know-how regarding digital innovation can improve the quality of life and access to services for residents. Innovative and inclusive collaborations can contribute to the social sustainability of cities through productive projects focusing on access to food, public health, social justice, social equality, educational opportunities and access to decent work.

The 'Clean Quelimane' (Quelimane Limpa) project, jointly developed by Milan and Quelimane, serves as an example. The city of Quelimane in Mozambique was experiencing waste management problems due to rapid urbanization and population growth with increasing migration from rural areas. The waste brought by floodwaters was causing environmental damage, primarily water pollution, and adversely affecting public health by causing the spread of diseases. At the same time, the climate crisis was severely affecting the agricultural sector, reducing local food production capacity. The 'Clean Quelimane' project began with the municipality of Quelimane reaching out to its counterpart in Milan, Italy, to address this problem, using their previous connection from the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (Grandi, 2020, p. 57). In 2016, the two municipalities established a joint European Union-supported project (ibid.). Under the project, Milan's waste management company provided training, equipment and technical support to its counterpart in Quelimane to help them reorganize their waste management strategy (Platforma, 2020). Various civil society organizations also participated in the process, and awareness-raising activities were carried out (Villa et al., 2022). Through the collaboration, the knowledge and know-how of Milan was transferred and adapted to Quelimane, and a new waste collection system was launched in the city. This new waste collection system reduced floodwater pollution by removing solid organic waste from informal dumpsites (Platforma, 2020). Thus, local agricultural products became safer and of better quality. Organic waste, such as fruits and vegetables, was collected separately from urban markets, and an urban composting industry managed by local agricultural associations was created (ibid.). The compost was then applied to the agricultural soil that had become unhealthy and unproductive due to the climate crisis and floodwaters, enriching the soil and increasing the quality and yield of produce (ibid.). Employment increased as a result of the expansion of the waste management sector (Villa et al., 2022). Thus, the two cities co-

created a project to solve Quelimane's waste management problem, combat environmental pollution, contribute to public health and promote composting. In other words, a sustainable project was developed in accordance with the locality and needs of Quelimane. By developing a sustainable waste management system, reducing water pollution and the diseases caused by it, increasing the production of safe local crops, promoting the use of compost in agriculture and creating new employment opportunities, important steps have been taken towards social, environmental and economic sustainable development.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The power and influence of cities are increasing as their economies and populations grow, and their role in sustainable development is recognized (Kosovac et al., 2020). By combining their economic, social and cultural strengths with the opportunities of local diplomacy, cities can make their voices heard on a global scale (Marchetti, 2021, p. 38). Through international city networks, they can increase their international visibility and capacity to form public opinion (ibid.). By representing cities on the international stage, city networks shape the global agenda in line with their shared vision (Kosovac et al., 2020). Gaining their strength from their members, city networks engage in advocacy and lobbying activities in the global arena regarding the potential of cities and their role in sustainable development and raise awareness towards urban challenges.

The sub-national goal SDG 11, 'Sustainable Cities and Communities' is a product of local diplomacy and represents the vitality of cities for a sustainable future. It was included in the Global Agenda as a result of the lobbying activities by the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (UCLG, 2021). Founded in 2004 with the goal of advocating for a sustainable future, UCLG has more than 240,000 member cities and regions,

representing 70% of the world's population (ibid.). The inclusion of the SDG 11 to the Global Agenda is an indication that city networks are increasing their influence in the global arena and gaining more acknowledgement and importance. In addition, 'The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' is a coordination and consultation mechanism established in 2013 with the initiative of the UCLG President (ibid.). This Global Taskforce brings together international city networks in order to engage in joint advocacy (Global Taskforce, 2022). It works to bring local and regional perspectives to the implementation of the SDGs, the climate crisis agenda and the New Urban Agenda, and include the voices of the cities in the global policy-making processes (ibid.). It thus increases the global representation power of cities, plays an active role in localizing the SDGs, and brings local perspectives to global problems.

City networks can also bring together local decision-makers and enable them to achieve their common goals on a global scale. The U20, established in 2017 by cities from G20 member and observer countries, is another local diplomacy initiative with strong global engagement (Marchetti, 2021, p. 71). Its members are large economies and politically influential cities; the U20 collectively represents the third largest economy in the world after China and the United States, and accounts for 8% of the global GDP (ibid.). The total population of the U20 members is larger than the fifth most populous country in the world (ibid.). The network aims to create common positions by discussing global issues such as the climate crisis and sustainable development and carry out international advocacy activities (ibid.). They present their proposals, shaped by their shared vision and goals, to the G20 President and heads of G20 member states. Thus, urban challenges and local perspectives are brought to the forefront of the G20 agenda (ibid.). Advocating the importance of the participation of cities in global processes, the U20 creates a productive dialogue between local and national governments to achieve the SDGs.

PROMOTION OF GLOBAL PEACE AND TRUST

Alongside providing cities the opportunity to act together to achieve the SDGs, local diplomacy also builds trust between cities by creating political, economic and cultural ties. As the oldest and most widespread form of bilateral local diplomacy, twinning is based on a close and long-term relationship between cities, encouraging joint events, mutual institutional visits and capacity-building activities (Grandi, 2020). It is also an important symbol of peace and friendship (Grandi, 2020, p. 12). During the reconstruction of the damaged cities after World War II, twin cities provided financial support to each other (Grandi, 2020, p. 54). Before the Elysée Treaty was signed in 1963, ending the centuries-old rivalry between France and West Germany, 130 twin-city agreements were signed between cities of the two countries (Grandi, 2020, p. 54). Throughout history, twin cities have been pioneers of peace and contributed to the global culture of trust, coexistence and peace.

Cities also contribute to an environment of peace by increasing their capacity to respond to global challenges. These collaborations contribute to social sustainability and promote the stability and prosperity necessary for sustainable development. The support cities provided to each other during the COVID-19 pandemic serves as an example. During the pandemic, Milan received medical masks from Wuhan, Bristol from its twin city Guangzhou, and Yokohama and Shanghai provided each other with masks when they were experiencing a peak in cases (Pipa & Bouchet, 2020). Thus, these cities contributed to public health and global stability and created a more equitable burden-sharing network. In other words, in the face of global challenges, cities utilized the possibilities of local diplomacy and chose cooperation over competition.

In addition to bilateral cooperation between cities, city networks can also assist cities in tackling global crises, such as security crises, radicalism and terrorism, in a more substantial and

comprehensive manner. In this context, the Strong Cities Network (SCN) was established in 2015 to identify the local factors behind global threats like hate, polarization and extremism in order to prevent them (SCN, 2022). It is an independent global network with more than 150 local government members (ibid.). It adopts a rights-based approach, taking concrete steps towards establishing an environment of peace, stability and prosperity (ibid.). Furthermore, SCN provides a roadmap for cities on what to do before, during and after a crisis (ibid.). Through global summits, city exchange programs and international policy work, it enables the exchange of local knowledge and know-how on a regional, national and international scale (ibid.). It provides grounds for the co-creation of policies and the establishment of cooperation and coordination between cities (ibid.). In addition, it offers training workshops and capacity-building programs and conducts local needs assessments and consultations in Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, the Western Balkans and the Middle East (ibid.). Hence, SCN aims to build social cohesion, security and peace through capacity-building and collaboration. Through its datasets, it also facilitates easy access to information (ibid.). The online database "Resource Hub" includes various training modules, strategies, research, member city profiles, and local and national action plans (ibid.). The "Responding to a Terror Attack" toolkit aims to guide local governments during a terrorist attack or suspected incident, supporting cities with practical tools to respond in critical situations (ibid.).

Similarly, Mayors for Peace was founded in 1982 with a call for solidarity against nuclear weapons and the preservation of global peace (Mayors for Peace, 2022). It was established under the leadership of the Mayor of Hiroshima, Japan, a city which has personally experienced the destructive effects of nuclear weapons (ibid.). Currently, 8222 cities from 166 countries are members of the network (ibid.). The network's goals are to contribute to global peace by providing lasting solutions to problems that

threaten human life, focusing on the elimination of nuclear weapons, hunger and poverty, maltreatment of refugees and rights violations and climate crisis (ibid.). By using local diplomacy, Mayors for Peace contribute to global peace and trust, reduction of violence and promote inclusive social development.

Local diplomacy not only contributes to building trust and solidarity between cities through bilateral relations but also works to ensure global peace by tackling global crises. It supports the creation of safe cities, contributes to public safety and builds an environment of peace and stability that enables sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

A sustainable future requires the establishment of just, liveable and environmentally friendly cities and societies. As the SDGs state, sustainable development can only be achieved through 'Sustainable Cities and Communities' and 'Partnerships for the Goals'. In line with this, cities utilize the possibilities of local diplomacy to achieve sustainable development. Cities share their knowledge and know-how, conduct capacity-building activities and put the information they gain into practice with joint projects. Through partnerships, good practices are shared and adapted to different localities. Thus, cities increase their service capacities and take concrete steps towards achieving the SDGs. By gaining representation and influence through international city networks in the global arena, urban challenges are brought to the global agenda, and local perspectives and solutions towards global problems come to the fore. At the same time, local diplomacy fosters friendship and trust between cities and contributes to global peace through crisis management. In other words, local diplomacy provides the knowledge, cooperation, power and stability necessary to build a sustainable future. The continuation of future generations necessitates sustainable development, and sustainable development necessitates local diplomacy.

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THE COLLECTIVE VOICE OF THE CITIES IN EVOLVING DIPLOMACY: INTERNATIONAL CITY NETWORKS

Özge Sivrikaya [*]

INTRODUCTION

Once we lift the veil of "traditional knowledge and established ideas" in front of our perception and set our minds free, we can see that the practice of "diplomacy" has expanded. In this expansion, we can mention three main reasons that are particularly influential. First of all, in the international arena that was once occupied only by central governments other actors are now present: non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, universities, banks, international organizations and political institutions at other levels, including local governments, are now important and influential figures in the international "agora".[1] The second reason is that issues such as "wars" and "peacemaking", which determine the balance of power between countries, are no longer the only issues being discussed at the international political scene.[2] Social, environmental and economic problems that we refer to as "global problems", such as climate change, inequalities, pandemics, etc. that know no borders and effect multiple (or all) countries, endangering not only the lives of people today but also those of future

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[1] Cooper et al., 2013.

[2] Ibid.

generations, are also being discussed. In these discussions, the focus is no longer only on the human beings, but also on the survival of other living beings. Collective actions are being formulated to create a world that is inclusive, fairer, protective of the diversity and life of all creatures and sustainable. Finally, in this multi-actor framework, the notion of "interest" has gone beyond "national interests". Different actors pursue their own interests in the international arena (ibid.).[3] [4]

Briefly, there is now a multi-actor, multi-dimensional "international political platform" in which different interests are trying to expand their sphere of influence by competing for dominance. Although they have yet to find their rightful place in the mainstream international relations literature, city authorities are poised to become one of the most important actors in this scene. Benjamin R. Barber even goes a bit further in his book *If Mayors Ruled the World* and argues that central governments are incapable of collectively finding solutions to "interconnected" global problems due to their inherent "competition" and "mutual exclusion" tendency; on the contrary, cities "defined by notions of "cooperation, pragmatism, creativity and multiculturalism" can be the saviors of the world and should therefore rule the "global". It remains to be seen whether the cities will assume the "leadership" role Barber attributes to them or whether other powerful actors will vacate the stage for them. Nevertheless, it looks like we will feel their presence more and more in international platforms and academic debates in the future. This is because urban issues are becoming a part of the global political agenda more and more and the city authorities are increasingly gaining a foothold in the international arena through their individual efforts and/or through the collective organizations we call "city networks" that represent their interests.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Perhaps a fourth reason could be added: "diversification of diplomatic activities".

This article will take a closer look at "International City Networks"[5] (ICNs) that represent the multilateral diplomatic side of the international activities carried out by the cities to which we refer to as "local diplomacy" or "city diplomacy" and discuss the opportunities offered to cities by these networks in order to have a better understanding of this development. Then, the "International City Networks Dataset - 2022" published by Marmara Municipalities Union in October that contains information from which both municipalities in Türkiye and researchers working on this field can benefit will be evaluated.

KEY ACTORS IN MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: INTERNATIONAL CITY NETWORKS

Today, a number of cities around the world are voluntarily uniting under the umbrella of "International City Networks". The first examples of ICNs established to represent the interests of the cities in the modern sense, date back to the early 1900s. Some sources cite the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), founded in 1913 under the League of Nations, as the first international city network.[6] According to the article of Acuto and

[5] City networks can also be established at the national and subnational level. Local government associations such as Marmara Municipalities Union and the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye are some of the examples of such organizations within Türkiye. These networks can also engage in international activities on behalf of their members. However, this article focuses only on "international" city networks. Although there are similarities, especially in fields of action, between national and subnational city networks and international city networks, there may be differences in terms of authorization or application for membership. For this reason, this article focuses only on "international city networks" that are open to members from different countries.

[6] For one of these examples, see Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi, City Diplomacy, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, p. 12.

Leffel, there was a slight increase in the number of international city networks from that period until the 1960s.[7] Beginning from the 1960s onwards, more international city networks began to be established. There was a significant increase in the number of ICNs with approximately 48 networks especially between 1985 and 1995.[8] Today, the number of networks, although not very clear, is thought to be over 300.[9]

Although the fact that these structures have passed the test of time and even increased in number provides a clue to their effectiveness, usefulness and necessity in the international arena it would be useful to list explicitly what they contribute to both city governments and international policy-making in order to grasp their significance better.[10]

Creating a Platform for International Cooperation: ICNs are, first and foremost, organizations that bring together city administrations from different countries under the status of "membership". Membership in a network makes it easier for city governments to reach out to their peers through the network's various mechanisms. Additionally, most city networks have close ties with the institutions from different sectors such as the

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7 According to the dataset of Acuto and Leffel, the number of ICNs in the 1960s was 36. See Michele Acuto and Benjamin Leffel, "Understanding the Global Ecosystem of City Networks", *Urban Studies*, 58 (9), (2021): 1758-1774.

8 Acuto and Leffel state that the main reason for the increase in the number of networks during this period was "environmental concerns" highlighted in the UN "Earth Summit" held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and its outcome, Agenda 21 (See Acuto and Leffel, 2021, 4).

9 (Acuto and Leffel, 2021, 4).

10 It is important to emphasize that not all networks perform the mentioned actions. Some networks prioritize and focus on sharing knowledge and experience among members while others may focus only on advocacy. Some networks carry out all of the actions mentioned above.

academia, private sector and finance either as their "members" or simply as "partners". Therefore, membership in these networks facilitates not only partnerships among peers, but also the multi-sectoral collaborations incentivized by international agendas and documents such as the 2030 Agenda. Events such as meetings, networking events or conferences organized by the networks are critical in establishing such collaborations. Such events that involve both members and stakeholders of the network as well as organizations working in urban affairs are one of the most important tools offered by the networks to meet and get acquainted with different organizations facing similar problems, to share relevant goals and plan and to talk about possible collaborations.[11]

Defending the Interests of the Cities in the International Arena: As mentioned in the introduction of this article, we no longer have an international political arena where only the interests of the nations compete. Other actors also strive to ensure that their voices, needs and demands find a place in the international agendas, agreements or policies. The ICNs are one of the main organizations working to draw attention to the problems and potentials of the cities, to ensure that their issues are included in the international documents and to ensure that they are taken into account as local actors with serious potential in solving global problems.

[11] An example of such an event is the "C40 World Mayors Summit" organized by C40 every three years with a focus on climate action. Within the scope of this event, C40 members and other institutions that have climate change on their agenda gather and discuss what can be done at the city level in terms of "adaptation" or "mitigation" to the impacts of climate change, and how they can contribute to this global effort locally. This physical event is also an effective platform for organizations to get to know each other. Further information on the summit organized by C40, see "About the C40 Summit", C40 Summit, Accessed 31 October, 2022. https://c40summit.org.

ICNs develop policy recommendations to be used in the operations of central government policy-making bodies, such as the European Union (EU) or the United Nations (UN) and draw attention to urban issues by participating in their commissions or working groups and/or attending their meetings. For example, the UN Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA) includes the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability as members. This committee endeavors to strengthen the UN's relationship with the local governments and ensure that the perspectives of cities are incorporated into the UN system.[12]

Conducting Studies for Information Generation and International Knowledge Exchange: A significant number of ICNs conduct activities to facilitate knowledge and experience exchange among their members or between their members and other organizations. Some of the tools that ICNs utilize to share knowledge include publications focusing on good practice, social media, internal communication channels and events such as conferences or meetings.[13] These kinds of efforts inspire municipalities seeking to develop solutions to problems in their own regions, and provide the right tool for municipalities seeking to improve their image by promoting their projects abroad. Moreover, in a crisis where effective practices need to be implemented quickly, efforts that can mobilize information quickly become critical. For example,

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[12] For more detailed information on UNACLA, see "United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities", UNACLA, Accessed 31 October, 2022. https://www.unacla.org.

[13] For example, Metropolis has created a platform titled "Case Studies" on its website. Municipalities, academics or researchers working on urban issues can upload their best practices to this platform. The uploaded practices are accessible to everyone. To access the Metropolis website, see "use.learn.explore.", Metropolis, Accessed 3 November, 2022. https://use.metropolis.org/case-studies?page=50&session=%23%3CActionDispatch%3A%3ARequest%3A%3ASession%3A0x000000000d68c420%3E#pagination-content.

some networks created a platform on their websites to share best practices which allowed local authorities to benefit from these practices and quickly develop their own responsive services during the COVID-19 pandemic.[14]

In addition to exchanging knowledge and experience, ICNs are also information generators. The research they conduct in this capacity and the resulting reports are invaluable in revealing the current situation and developing policy recommendations. These publications can serve as a guide to the works of many local, national or international organizations.

Contributing to the Realization of International Goals: International city networks hold the potential to contribute to the realization of goals set out in globally agreed policy documents such as the UN 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Regarding this, Gordon and Johnson's article in 2018 concerning the role of ICNs in achieving the goal of keeping global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius that is set within the framework of the Paris Climate Agreement mentions that the literature they reviewed emphasizes that networks have both direct and indirect roles in the related subject. Standardizing carbon emission measures falls under the direct role of networks. Through this standardization, cities can easily compare their situation with other cities around the world[15]. ICLEI's reporting tool developed in collaboration with the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) is an example of this standardization effort.[16] As

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[14] For information on these networks and related web pages, see "Uluslararası COVID-19 Yönetim Kaynakları ve İyi Uygulama Örnekleri" [International COVID-19 Management Resources and Good Practice Examples], Marmara Municipalities Union, Accessed 3 November 2022. https://marmara.gov.tr/covid-19-uygulamalari-2/

[15] Gordon and Johnson, 2018.

[16] Further information on the ICLEI-CDP reporting tool, see "Cities", CDP, Accessed 3 November, 2022. https://www.cdp.net/en/cities.

for indirect contributions, incentivizing national governments to develop more effective policies towards achieving the 1.5 degrees target is one of the examples.[17] The other is to build their capacities to take "transformative actions" and lay the groundwork for collaboration.[18] UCLG's initiative "climate training" for local politicians, focused on mitigation and adaptation, developed in cooperation with the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), PLATFORMA and Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) is one of the efforts to raise awareness and increase knowledge that could be regarded as the first step in building transformative action at the local level.[19]

Conducting Capacity Building Works: As briefly mentioned in the article above, ICNs carry out capacity building activities to help local governments provide better services, produce more creative and innovative projects and access national and international resources. One of the most widely used mechanisms in this field is training. Trainings provided by the networks can be face-to-face or online. For example, UCLG provides both face-to-face and online trainings on different subjects such as Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction under the umbrella of UCLG Learning.[20] Technical support provided by networks is another mechanism that can be considered within the field of capacity building. For example, C40 provides technical support to municipalities under the C40 Cities Finance Facility program to

[17] Gordon and Johnson, 2018, 37.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Further information on the training, see "Climate Training Academy for Politicians on Adaptation and Mitigation", UCLG, Accessed 3 November, 2022. https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/climate-training-academy-politicians-adaptation-and-mitigation.

[20] For UCLG Learning's trainings see "Welcome to UCLG's learning community!" UCLG Learning, Accessed 3 November, 2022. https://learning.uclg.org/.

enable them to access different types of financial resources for their sustainability-related projects.[21]

Facilitating Access to Financial Resources: ICNs assist municipalities in accessing the financial resources they require to implement their projects. In addition to providing technical support and training to municipalities on different financial sources (international grant programs, bank loans or new financing methods such as crowdfunding), ICNs can also directly involve them as partners in their own projects.

The items mentioned above summarize the contributions of ICNs to cities and the international political agenda. The general trends regarding these networks will be evaluated in the following section of the article based on the dataset published by Marmara Municipalities Union in October 2022.

AN EVALUATION: MARMARA MUNICIPALITIES UNION INTERNATIONAL CITY NETWORKS DATASET

"International City Networks Dataset" research was conducted by Marmara Municipalities Union between April and October 2022. Within the study, the list of international city networks[22] that municipalities in Türkiye are eligible to be a member of was created through an internet search. A total list of 69 ICNs[23] included different indicators ("establishment date", "focus

[21] Further information on the C40 Cities Finance Facility, see "About", C40 Cities Finance Facility, Accessed 3 November, 2022. https://www.c40cff.org/about.

[22] ICNs that do not currently recruit members are excluded in the dataset.

[23] In this research, the definition of international city network is used in the broader sense; not only the networks that include local governments or representatives of local governments, but also the ones that accept organizations from different sectors together with local governments are included.

subjects", "inclusion zones", etc.) and headings (such as social media addresses and Turkish names of the municipalities) considering the information that would be beneficial to the municipalities. Except for the Turkish names of the networks,[24] the official websites of the relevant networks were examined to fill in the information on the indicators included in the dataset. For missing information on the websites, the social media accounts of the networks (Linkedin, Facebook and Twitter) were checked as a first step, and secondly, a broader search was conducted on the internet. As a result, the dataset was finalized in October 2022 and published on Marmara Municipalities Union's website.[25] The dataset aims to increase the awareness and knowledge of municipalities about the international city networks and provide ready-to-use data to facilitate the work of researchers producing information on this subject; the general trends that stand out in the dataset are as follows:

Establishment Date: As mentioned in the previous section, the first international city networks were established in the early 1900s. Among the networks listed in the dataset, the earliest establishment date belongs to the IULA founded in 1914; the most recently established network is the B40 Balkan Cities Network founded with the leadership of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Considering the distribution of the establishment dates of city networks over the years, it is observed that there has

[24] For Turkish translation of the names, we examined the translations of the official institutions in Türkiye. When a translation of the relevant network could not be found on the websites of these institutions, a general search was conducted and the translations of other institutions were evaluated. In cases where absolutely no information could be found from this search, Marmara Municipalities Union used its own translations.

[25] To access Marmara Municipalities Union's "International City Networks Dataset" see "Uluslararası Kent Ağları Veri Seti 2022", Marmara Municipalities Union, Access Date: 31 October 2022, https://data.marmara.gov.tr/yerel-diplomasi/uluslararasi-kent-aglari-2022

been a significant increase in the number of networks, especially since the mid-1970s (Figure 1). Based on the networks in the dataset, it can be said that the 10-year intervals with the highest number of established networks are 2003-2012 and 2013-2022 with 16 networks each. These two intervals are followed by 1983-1992 with 12 networks.[26]

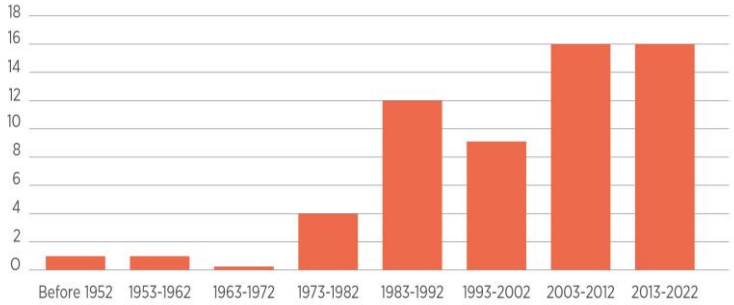

Figure 1. Distribution of the establishment dates of International City Networks by year (n: 59). [**]

Focus Subjects of the Networks:[27] According to Acuto and Leffel, the majority of the existing networks focus on multiple issues rather than a single topic.[28] When we examine Marmara Municipalities Union's dataset, we observe that 18 networks focus not only on a single or a few specific issues, but on most of

[26] In Acuto and Leffel's article, the period from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s was cited as the period with the highest establishment rate. In this analysis, the mentioned period ranks third, not first. This discrepancy is due to the fact that Marmara Municipalities Union's dataset's limited to the networks that include municipalities in Türkiye as members. Acuto and Leffel reach a slightly different conclusion based on a larger dataset.

[**] Special thanks to İrem Kurtuluş for her contribution to data visualization in this article.

[27] While coding this category, the networks' definition of themselves and their work was taken into consideration.

[28] Acuto and Leffel, 5.

the issues that fall under the urban issue.[29] 51 networks are thematically established. Most of these networks were established around the themes of "sustainability", "climate change", "social inclusion" and "culture".

Inclusion Zones: According to a study, about 58% of the world's international city networks are global, while about 42% are regional.[30] While preparing Marmara Municipalities Union's dataset, an indicator was also set for the inclusion zones of these networks. According to the dataset, about 62% (43 networks) of the networks in the dataset accept members from all countries around the world, while about 38% accept members from only a specific zone, such as the European continent (Figure 2). Similar to the Acuto and Rayner's study, the number of the global international networks is higher in Marmara Municipalities Union's dataset.

[29] In the dataset, such networks are coded as "General" in the column of focus subjects.

[30] Acuto and Rayner, 1151. Acuto and Rayner included national and subnational networks in the dataset they employed in their article. According to their analysis of the dataset of 170 networks, regional international networks account for 21% of the total, while global international networks account for 29%. Since international networks are taken into account in this article, the number of national and subnational networks was subtracted from the available data and then according to the recalculation the proportion of regional and global international networks was determined accordingly.

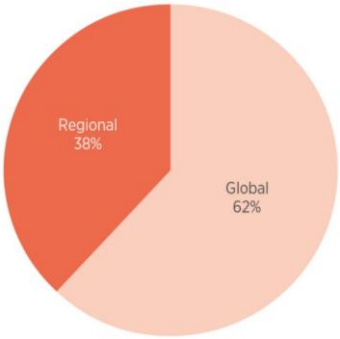

Figure 2. Inclusion zones of the related networks (n=69).

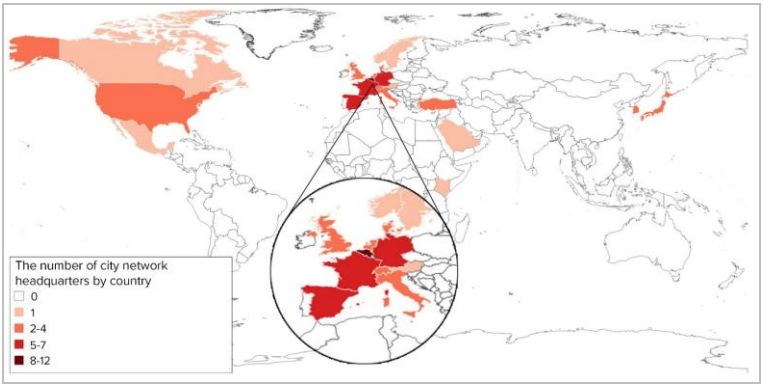

Figure 3. Countries where the headquarters of International City Networks are located. (n=62)

Headquarters: There is no analysis, to the best of our knowledge, of the countries and cities in which the headquarters of all ICNs around the world are located. According to the information in Marmara Municipalities Union's dataset, Brussels in Belgium, the center of the European Union, is the city with the highest number of networks headquartered with the number

of 11 networks.[31] 9 of these networks are regional networks. Brussels is followed by Barcelona in Spain with 6 networks, while Paris in France ranks third with 5 networks among the cities with the highest number of networks.[32] When we look at the countries instead of cities about the network's location (Figure 3), Belgium hosts the highest number of network headquarters, followed by Germany and France with 7 networks each. This is followed by Spain with 6 networks.

Membership Fee: One of the most important factors determining the decision of many institutions to become a member of a network is the membership fee. Out of 53 networks whose fee information is available in Marmara Municipalities Network's dataset, approximately 64% have a membership fee, while approximately 36% are free of charge (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Membership fee information of the networks (n=53).

Number of Members: The number of network member cities and other institutions is another factor that determines a

[31] Locating these networks in Brussels may be an indication of the tendency of these institutions to closely follow the policies of the European Union or to influence these policies in favor of the cities.

[32] Istanbul hosts 3 networks, ranking fourth along with London, UK and Copenhagen, Denmark.

municipality's decision to join a network. The number of members of a network provides an insight about the reach and potential collaborations that a municipality can achieve upon joining the network. The majority of the total 56 networks in the relevant dataset, whose number of members can be accessed, have 100 or less members. This is followed by the networks with between 101-200 or 500 or more members, respectively (Figure 5).

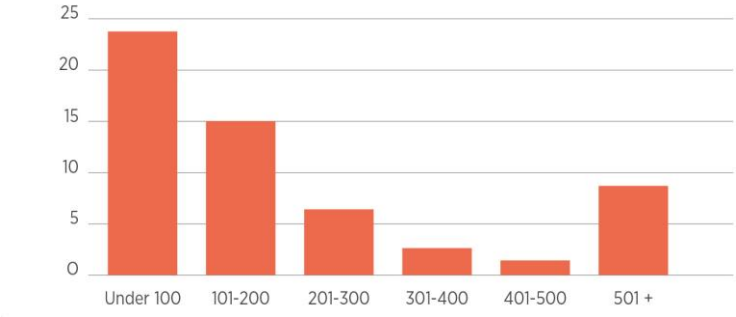

Figure 5. Distribution of networks by the number of members (n=56).

CONCLUSION

This article focuses on the international city networks, one of the most important figures in today's expanding diplomacy practice. The contributions of these networks, considered as the collective voice of the cities, to both cities and the international political arena are discussed. Although networks vary at the level of action, a general framework is drawn regarding the potential benefits of these networks. According to this framework that was established by literature research on the subject and the websites of the relevant networks, it was revealed that they aim to create a platform for cooperation, to defend the interests of the cities in the international arena, to contribute to the realization of the international goals, to contribute to information generation and international information and experience exchange, to build the

capacities of their members and to facilitate their access to financial resources. In the last section of the article, general trends related to international city networks were evaluated through the "International City Networks Dataset" published by Marmara Municipalities Union in 2022.

Overall, the article shows that international city networks that are increasing in number according to the current trends can assist their members in solving problems in their respective regions through capacity building, generating and/or sharing information, facilitating access to financial resources and creating platforms for cooperation. Moreover, these networks can also play a role in solving international problems that have different projections at the local level and can be important "mediators" in the relationship between local and international levels based on reciprocal influence and transformation.

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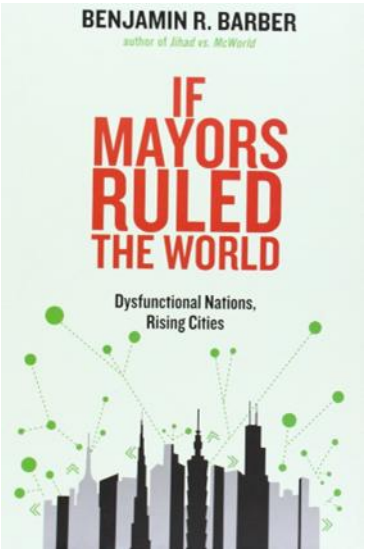
BOOK REVIEW: IF MAYORS RULED THE WORLD

M. Cemil Arslan *

INTRODUCTION



Political science professor, Benjamin R. Barber, who passed away on 24 April 2017, was an influential figure who believed in the importance of refocusing on the civil society and active citizenship to build a strong democracy. At the inaugural meeting of the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM), that he pioneered its establishment in 2016, he argued that while nation states are

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unsuccessful at addressing global challenges, cities and urban networks are developing more effective solutions to these. This article analyzes Barber's book "If Mayors Ruled the World"[1] on which he bases his argument.

NATIONAL AND SUPRANATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN BUILDING GLOBAL PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Benjamin R. Barber introduces his book with a quote of Jean Monnet from 1943: "There will be no peace in Europe if the States are reconstituted on the basis of national sovereignty. The countries of Europe are too small to guarantee their peoples the necessary prosperity and social development."[2] He then continues, extending and consolidating Monnet's argument by pointing out that, today, state systems are dysfunctional: "There will be no peace or prosperity or sustainable economic development on the basis of national *or* supranational sovereignty. For neither sovereign states nor the international bodies built on their foundation can any longer provide a reliable foundation for human survival."[3] A bold claim, of course, bold and provocative.

How should states respond to great crises of our time such as climate change, terrorism, poverty, income gap, inequality and migration? Could paralyzed national state systems and dysfunctional international organizations overcome these problems? If so, then how? If not, who or which institutions/ organizations can overcome these problems and with what capabilities?

Each and every one of us undoubtedly has answers to these crucial questions. Our answers are sometimes based on

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1 Benjamin R. Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (Yale University Press, 2013).

2 Ibid., xi.

3 Ibid.

preconceived notions shaped by our ideological and political choices and sometimes on our experiences and observations. Even if the starting point and answers differ, what stands in the center is the collective search for the solutions to the issues humanity's facing. One of the people who has answers to these questions is Benjamin D. Barber. Let's say the final word at the beginning and proceed: according to Barber, under the present and dire circumstances, only cities can offer a genuine ray of hope for democratic governance at the local and global levels. Only the pragmatic problem-solving approach of mayors can take us to the goal of a sustainable global and local ("glocal") future. In short, only cities and the mayors who govern them find satisfactory solutions to the problems of this age of crisis.

THE GLOBAL PARLIAMENT OF MAYORS

Barber, in addition to being enthusiastic and prolific in gathering and presenting the evidence to support his argument, is also a global activist and pioneer of action to put his theory into practice. This is the reason he personally pioneered the establishment of the Global Parliament of Mayors. The Parliament, whose inaugural meeting was held in The Hague in 2016, seeks to develop effective and practical urban solutions to the global challenges with the participation of mayors from all around the world.

The book is divided into two parts: "Why cities should govern globally" and "How it can be done". Barber has also developed these two parts in a very functional and persuasive method, first with theoretical discussion and then with practical application through the example of mayors, in six sub-sections each. In this context, he has strengthened his claim by linking mayor profiles to the relevant themes; he used Michael Bloomberg (New York), Leoluca Orlando (Palermo), Boris Johnson (London), Wolfang Schuster (Stuttgart), Lee Kuan Yew and Tony Tan (Singapore), Yury Luzhkov (Moscow), Ayodele Adewale (Lagos), Sheila Dikshit

(Delhi), Tedoy Kollek (Jerusalem), Qadoura Moussa (Jenin), Antanas Mockus (Bogotá), Park Won-Soon (Seoul) as examples.

MAYORS AND CITIES AS GLOBAL ACTORS

Although Barber mostly emphasizes cities and mayors together, in contrast to the problem-solving dysfunctionality of the national and supranational level, he puts the cities' capacity for problem solving at the center of his argument. He emphasizes mayors as the only credible actors governing cities. His concern is to take a stand in favor of the local in the comparison of local, national and supranational. Indeed, in his book, he clearly states his city-centered approach with this quote: "mayors change, while cities remain...". In doing so, he gives the national level its credit, as if to prove that he does not fall into the trap of the ideological certainties that he criticizes; democracy in its current form is in too deep a crisis to manage differences. The national level, which was once quite successful in solving the problems of democracy, especially those arising from scale, is now an obstacle to the globalization of democracy. According to him, this is precisely the problem. Could cities lead our world out of this crisis?

Barber highlights the exceptional qualities of cities at the global level compared to the national and supranational levels: these are pragmatism, the trust of civil society, participation, being free from the constraints of borders and the notion of sovereignty, democratic tendency for networking, creativity, innovation and cooperation. He tries to show how cities and mayors, individually and collectively, respond to problems more effectively than nation-states stuck in ideological conflicts and competition for sovereignty and dysfunctional supranational institutions.

Briefly, Barber's main argument is that nations and supranational organizations, driven by heavy ideological and political arguments, have evolved to produce conflicts and problems that pose a threat to democracy and co-existence rather

than solving issues such as climate, migration, hunger and inequality. He claims that if salvation is possible, it can only be possible through mayors who govern cities with a high level of trust of its citizens and with their approaches that are practical and pragmatic, such as solving daily and actual problems.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned at the introduction, today's world system and international institutional structures have been shaped on the basis of the nation state. There has long been a general consensus that this system is the best method for both democracy and development. However, with his book "If Mayors Ruled the World", Barber offers a vision of governance that focuses on the city and city governance and that is the best alternative for democracy and the hope for a sustainable future in a globalizing world. Indeed, one of the fundamental issues of democracy in the modern world is how to reconcile "participation" which is "local", with the "power" which is "centralized".

Without giving any more details, it is time to leave the curious reader alone with this provocative book that expresses the argument that "cities are our destiny". Happy reading.

THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENTS: THE CASE OF BARCELONA METROPOLITAN AREA

Xavier Tiana *

THE METROPOLITAN DIMENSION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Imagine for a moment that you travel to Barcelona for work, study or tourism. Ordinary things such as taking the airport bus (*Aerobus*), the metro or a taxi to get from the airport (in the metropolitan municipality of El Prat) to the city centre are managed on a metropolitan scale. Imagine also that you decide to spend a part of your life in the coastal town of Castelldefels, 24 km from Barcelona. Basic services such as water from the tap, waste treatment, different means of sustainable mobility, the maintenance of urban parks and the beaches are services managed on a metropolitan scale.

The world is becoming increasingly urbanised and in most countries there are metropolitan realities that go beyond the administrative boundaries of the central city or surrounding municipalities. According to UN-Habitat, in 2020 2.6 billion people lived in 1,934 metropolises representing approximately 60% of the world's urban population or one third of humanity. 34 metropolises have surpassed 10 million inhabitants; while 51

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This article has been written by its author in English.

have a population of 5 to 10 million; 494 of 1 to 5 million; and 1,355 of 300,000 to 1 million.[1] Following the UN-Habitat projections, the number of people living in metropolises in 2035 will increase to 3.47 billion representing 39% of the global population by then. Almost 1 billion people will become new metropolitan inhabitants and during the next decade, 2,363 metropolises are projected to exist by 2035 meaning 429 metropolises more than today.

However, this metropolitan reality does not always have a legislative and institutional framework that enables its management. Professor Mariona Tomàs distinguishes four main models of metropolitan governance according to the type of existing institutional arrangements: a) Metropolitan governments or structures created expressly to deal with metropolitan challenges on a single level (after the merger of municipalities or a designation as a 'metropolitan city') or on two levels (maintaining the municipalities, but with a metropolitan level of coordination). b) Sectoral metropolitan agencies with an average degree of institutionalisation to manage or plan a single service c) Vertical coordination, in which metropolitan policies are not carried out by a specifically metropolitan body, but de facto by other levels of government that already exist. d) Less institutionalised models based on municipalities' voluntary cooperation, whether through a grouping or association of municipalities, or by means of strategic planning.[2]

THE BARCELONA METROPOLITAN AREA AND ITS INTERNATIONALISATION PLAN 2021-2025

The Barcelona Metropolitan Area (BMA) is a local government unique in Spain and singular at European and global

[1] UN-Habitat, *1st Global State of Metropolis: Preliminary Findings and Key Messages Booklet* (2022).

[2] Mariona Tomàs, *Metropolitan Trends in the World*. Metropolis Issue Paper no. 1, (2016).

level. The BMA is composed of 36 municipalities around Barcelona, with a territory of 636 km^2 and 3.3 million inhabitants. The BMA was created by Law of the Parliament of Catalonia in 2010 to give shape to a long experience of supra-local cooperation of more than 40 years. The BMA manages transport and sustainable mobility, water, waste, urban planning and public space. It also has competences in large infrastructure management, housing, social and economic development, strategic planning and its government has a clear will to work in the field of international relations and cooperation. The Metropolitan Council is its highest governing body with the 36 mayors and 54 city councillors according to the size of the population of their municipalities. The BMA has recently approved its budget for 2023, which amounts to 2,470 billion €.

There is no doubt that the Barcelona brand has assets and potential to bring economic, social and positioning benefits but that at the same time these also generate negative effects such as the impact on the environment, the overcrowding from tourism, security challenges or the high price of housing.

Barcelona is globally renowned for FC Barcelona, Gaudí heritage, urban planning, big international events such as the Mobile World Congress, the Mediterranean Sea, its gastronomy,

etc. However, are these the assets that we want to continue promoting in order to attract new opportunities? The metropolis of Barcelona develops extremely innovative projects that are worth considering, such as the Low Emission Zone around Barcelona to improve air quality, which is one of the largest in southern Europe with 95 km^2, the Alba Synchrotron to conducting edge-cutting synchrotron light based research and development, the D-Factory in the field of 3D printing and Industry 4.0, metropolitan green infrastructure projects around the Llobregat and Besós rivers, natural parks and green connectors, and so on. Barcelona also has global leadership in sectors such as health, food, creative industries, mobile or video games that concentrate an ecosystem of companies, research centres and administrations that attract new opportunities.

Barcelona hosts the headquarters of numerous city networks and different international organisations as well. Among the networks we can highlight United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Metropolis, MedCities, EIT-Urban Mobility, Educating Cities, CIDEU, ASCAME, etc. Some International institutions and organisations as the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Mediterranean Forest Institute and the UN-Habitat Resilience Hub are represented in the city. The headquarters of these organisations generate relevant institutional and economic activities and are a good source of local and international talent-attraction. Barcelona is also one of the non-capital cities with the largest presence of consular offices with over a hundred delegations.

Having an internationalisation strategy is a way to set one's own profile, define priorities, generate local and international alliances, and be accountable to the citizens. The Barcelona Metropolitan Area has a long tradition of working in the International arena. With an important political backing, the BMA approved its first internationalisation plan 2021-25 in July 2021. It is one of the first internationalisation plans made by a metropolitan government. The Plan goes beyond the current

political mandate and for its drafting more than 30 individual interviews and meetings with focus groups (city councils, BMA technical services, public and private stakeholders and international partners of the AMB) have been held with the participation of more than 100 people.

The Plan is structured in five strategic lines that mark the international action of the AMB: 1) Influence on the European and international political agenda 2) Attraction of European and international funds 3) Innovation and knowledge management 4) International economic outreach 5) International cooperation. These lines prioritise different projects and different ways of action such as coordination with metropolitan city councils, bilateral relations with other metropolitan areas, international city networks and alliances with strategic partners. The Plan also proposes how the BMA intends to act in the different geographic areas of the world with a clear commitment to Europe, the Mediterranean, the United States, Canada and Latin America. Asia and Africa have an important role to play but due to lack of resources, they have a different priority level. The Plan defines a set of measures for annual monitoring and reporting, mid-term evaluation and the possibility to adapt it to new priorities or changes in the global context.

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS: THE CASE OF THE EUROPEAN METROPOLITAN AUTHORITIES NETWORK

As mentioned before, city networks play a key role in the BMA strategy. Some of the most relevant international city networks are based in Barcelona (UCLG, Metropolis, MedCities or EIT Urban Mobility) and the BMA and Barcelona City Council make financial and in-kind contributions to them in order to promote the leadership role and positioning the city and the metropolis in the global context.

One of the strategic networks for the BMA is the European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA) that was born in 2105 after a political meeting of European metropolitan Presidents and Mayors held in Barcelona. This meeting gave way to other annual forums so that EMA has emerged as a space for dialogue between European metropolitan political representatives and as an interlocutor on metropolitan issues with the European Union (EU) and national governments.

EMA is a network in which its members participate on a voluntary basis, without a legal framework, fees and a permanent secretariat. The ecosystem of international networks is very saturated and today it would not make sense to create new structures. However, a space for dialogue for metropolitan presidents, mayors and political representatives was lacking, and that is the reason why EMA has been created. EMA currently has 55 members from 21 EU countries plus Norway and the United Kingdom, representing some 93 million citizens. In the case of Türkiye, Marmara Municipalities Union has started working with EMA to bring a new territorial reality. In partnership with UN-Habitat, the EMA working model has been shared and transferred to other geographical areas such as Latin America and in the near future it will be done in Africa.

In most countries and in the European Union there are more or less defined policies for cities, provinces or regions. This is not the case for metropolitan areas where the lack of a homogeneous and shared vision means that the EU and some countries do not give them the importance they deserve. Metropolitan institutions play a key role in policies and provision of basic services for the big cities such as climate change, urban planning, transport, water and waste management, housing, economic promotion and social

cohesion. They also mitigate territorial imbalances and help generate urban-rural linkages.

EMA organises annual policy meetings to discuss topics such as energy and digital transition, housing policies, the EU budget, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, metropolitan governance and financing. EMA also holds meetings with top representatives of the EU institutions and is part of high-level working groups promoted by the European Commission. At a technical level, the EMA members submit joint projects to the European Commission's calls for proposals, exchange experiences, carry out studies of good practices and hold conferences that allow metropolitan governments to innovate and share knowledge.

FINAL REMARKS

Metropolitan institutions play a key role in the urban and regional ecosystem, also generating balances and synergies with the peri-urban and rural areas. The competencies and governance of metropolitan institutions are not homogeneous, but there are some common elements such as the generation of global visions, the provision of supralocal services in an aggregated form, the generation of economies of scale, planning, lobbying before national governments, the European Union and other international bodies.

The metropolis of Barcelona has a specific form of governance through the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. It is an institution with specific powers whose mission is eminently technical focusing in service provision for city councils and citizens. The BMA still has some imperfections but is unique in the European and global context.

The BMA has adopted a five-year internationalisation strategy focused on its areas of competence with a clear vocation to generate alliances at local level with the 36 city councils of its territory, research centres and universities, and economic and social stakeholders. The BMA's internationalisation strategy has

different tools and networking is one of the most important. The BMA is involved in global and regional networks of cities and metropolitan areas with a long history and headquarters in Barcelona (Metropolis, UCLG, MedCities) but new types of networks are also emerging, more flexible, less bureaucratised and just as effective and useful, as is the case of EMA.

TOOLS OF LOCAL DIPLOMACY: INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND AWARDS

Merve Ağca *

Globalization has increased the importance of cities and their social, economic and political influence. There are also changes in the division of responsibilities between states and sub-national regions and cities on important issues at the international level. In this context, local governments, as primary authorities and key actors in addressing local and common needs, also stand out as important actors in decision-making processes at the international level. It is essential to raise awareness to this fact and take action, especially at the local level, to solve global problems. Solution and decision-making processes are conducted through governance, partnerships and collaborations. From this point of view, international cooperation of cities is also important for improving governance and local needs necessitate international partnerships and greater presence in the international arena.

We can mention different tools when it comes to the subject of representation in the development of local diplomacy. Some of these tools include special days and weeks celebrated with an emphasis of unison and encouragement with intent of raising awareness on a wide range of issues related to the cities and award programs designed for cities. Special days and weeks that

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are given special importance and celebrated with various activities throughout the year contribute to the effort of making cities more sustainable, resilient and livable and building their capacities. Indeed, these events that are designed to support local democracy, climate change mitigation, waste reduction, urban mobility, social justice, urban sustainability and many other thematically different quality, involve and mobilize many stakeholders of cities from local to global, from local governments to other public institutions, from non-governmental organizations to academia and citizens, increase the interaction between each other, their role and the recognition at the international level.

SPECIAL DAYS AND WEEKS TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCALE

Every year, a great number of events are organized with the participation of cities from all over the world to raise awareness, build capacity and disseminate good practices at the local level in the fields of climate change, waste reduction, mobility, governance, inclusiveness, local democracy and sustainable development. These events are often marked by special celebrations on dates set by international organizations, especially by the European Commission, while awareness is raised through events organized throughout the year. Within the scope of the events that also aim to create a network by increasing communication and interaction, cities, local governments, universities, non-governmental organizations, private sector organizations, other relevant organizations and individual city residents come together and carry out activities that contribute to governance processes at the local level. These events that bring stakeholders together to find solutions to common problems in cities are important opportunities to take action and are also important for ensuring inclusiveness.

European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC)

The European Week of Regions and Cities is the largest annual event dedicated to the cohesion policy, celebrated in Brussels by the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). The week is a unique communication and networking platform for bringing together regions and cities from across Europe, policy makers and administrators, experts, academics and media. During the week, events are organized to share knowledge and experience and disseminate good practices in order to find solutions to the common problems of local and regional governments, and work is carried out to improve cooperation for capacity building and shared learning. In 2021, more than 300 sessions were organized online with over 590 stakeholders and over 18.000 participants. During the 20th annual week, which was celebrated between 10-13 October 2022, the events were organized in a hybrid format. Organized in collaboration with nearly 500 partners, the events were attended physically by nearly 2.000 participants and online by nearly 20.000 participants.

Website: https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities/

European Local Democracy Week (ELDW)

The European Local Democracy Week that aims to increase citizen participation in decision-making mechanisms at the local and regional level has been celebrated by the member states of the Council of Europe since 2007. Within the scope of the activities carried out under the coordination of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, it is aimed to spread awareness of local democracy through activities organized during the year and particularly during the week of October 15. In addition to public events organized by local governments and various institutions from 46 member states of the Council of Europe, local governments from other countries also conduct many events during the European Local Democracy

Week. In 2021, 611 events were organized during the week with the participation from 15 countries.

Website: https://www.congress-eldw.eu

European Week of Waste Reduction (EWWR)

Established in 2009 as part of the LIFE+ project funded by the European Union, the European Waste Reduction Week (EWWR) aims to promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling strategies (reduce-reuse-recycle). It has been established by the Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management (ACR+), French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), International Association for Environmental Communication in Italy (AICA), Bruxelles Environnement (Leefmilieu Brussel), Public Administration for Environment and Energy in Brussels Capital Region of Belgium, Waste Agency of Catalonia (ARC) and National Waste Management Directorate for Hungary (NWMD). Marmara Municipalities Union is the Türkiye Coordinator of the EWWR. Within this scope, municipalities, public institutions, waste management companies, private companies, non-governmental organizations, schools, universities and citizens have the opportunity to organize events individually. Each year, EWWR Coordinators nominate up to five actions (one for each action developer category) from their region as candidates for the EWWR Awards. In 2022, the theme of the European Waste Reduction Week was "Circular & Sustainable Textiles" and over 16.000 events were organized in 30 countries around the world

between 19-27 November 2022.

Website: https://ewwr.eu/

European Mobility Week

The European Mobility Week led by the European Commission aims to raise awareness on sustainable urban mobility seeks to change behavioral habits through active mobility, public transport and the use of other clean and smart transport solutions. During the week, celebrated annually between September 16-22, local governments' efforts to improve air quality and use new technologies through innovative planning approaches and new infrastructure solutions are encouraged. The week was organized in previous years with the themes of "Safe Walking and Cycling", "Zero-emission Mobility for All" and "Safe and Healthy with Sustainable Mobility". The theme of the European Mobility Week in 2022 was "Better Connections" (#betterconnections). Nearly 3.000 local authorities from 51 countries participated in the events in 2022.

Website: https://mobilityweek.eu/home/

European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW)

The European Sustainable Development Week, celebrated since 2015, is a European-wide initiative to increase the visibility of activities, projects and events promoting sustainable development by connecting them on a common platform. It aims to raise awareness about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that calls for urgent action by all stakeholders around 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Events organized during the week are open to public institutions, research centers, educational institutions, museums, foundations, associations, business and non-governmental organizations, as well as individual citizens. In 2022, 6671 event applications were received from 24 countries for the week that was organized between 18 September-8 October and the main events were celebrated on the week of 20-26 September 2022.

Website: https://esdw.eu

URBAN OCTOBER

Urban October that has been celebrated since 1986 brings together various stakeholders at local, regional, national and international levels and encourages them to organize activities throughout the month, starting with the World Habitat Day celebrated on the first Monday of October and ends with the World Cities Day celebrated on October 31. Urban October, coordinated by the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) and through the activities carried out throughout the month, aims to contribute to the formation of the cities with high standards of living at the local scale and to offer visions that will improve the competence of local governments in this field. Urban October offers an opportunity for anyone interested in sustainable urbanization to be a part of the discussions.

Website: https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org

World Habitat Day

Urban October starts with the World Habitat Day, celebrated on the first Monday of October. World Habitat Day reminds people that they possess the power to shape the future of the cities and towns they inhabit. The theme of the 2022 World Habitat Day in which the situation of human settlements is addressed from different perspectives every year, was "Mind the Gap: Leave No One and Place Behind". The official events of World Habitat Day, which was celebrated simultaneously in many parts of the world on October 3, were held in Balıkesir, Türkiye in 2022. The Habitat Scroll of Honor is an award given as part of the World Habitat Day.

Website: https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/whd

UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award

The UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award that has been awarded since 1989 as part of the World Habitat Day is one of the most distinguished awards on human settlements. Governments, intergovernmental organizations, cities, local governments and local government institutions, non-governmental organizations, private sector organizations, research centers, academic institutions and media organizations, also individuals can apply for the awards. In 2022, as part of the World Habitat Day celebrations, the city of Paris, France was awarded the Scroll of Honor for its 15-minute cities project. In addition to individual awards given in Nigeria and India, various organizations from Brazil, Poland and Spain were among the projects that were evaluated and awarded in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 11.

Website: https://unhabitat.org/scroll-of-honour

World Metropolitan Day

World Metropolitan Day is a global campaign led by Metropolis and UN-Habitat to build more equitable and prosperous metropolises. Celebrated since 2018, World Metropolitan Day invites governance mechanisms at all levels to embrace the metropolitan vision and join forces to ensure that metropolitan areas are places that guarantee and promote good standards of living for people even beyond their borders. October 7th World Metropolitan Day provides a stage for global discussions on the importance of metropolitan governance. In 2022, it was celebrated during the week of 1-7 October with various events all over the world and the main event was hosted by the metropolitan city of Bogotá, Colombia on the 7th of October for the first time.

Website: https://www.metropolis.org/world-metropolitan-day-2022

World Cities Day

Celebrated for the first time in 2014, World Cities Day is held every year on October 31st in a different city with a specific theme and marked as the last day of Urban October. 31 October 2022 was celebrated in Shanghai, China with the motto of"Act Local to Go Global".

Website: https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/wcd

EUROPEAN CAPITALS

European organizations support cities in many areas such as culture, democracy, smart tourism, ecology, innovation, inclusiveness and youth by awarding them the title of European capital. While European capital titles distinguish cities in thematic areas, the cities that are awarded the title of European capital become more internationally recognized and also become popular destinations for tourism. Events organized throughout the year are important in terms of turning cities into centers of attraction and supporting local development.

European Capital of Culture

The European Capital of Culture, aiming to turn the focus of the cities across Europe towards the issue of culture, started in 1985 with the selection of Athens as the European Capital of Culture. As of 2005, with the change of the system, multiple cities have started to be awarded the title of European Capital of Culture in the same year. Every year, the European Union awards the title of European Capital of Culture to various cities. In 2010, Istanbul was among the Capitals of Culture, while in 2022, three cities, Esch in Luxembourg, Kaunas in Lithuania and Novi Sad in Serbia, were awarded the title of European Capital of Culture.

Website: https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/culture-in-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-of-culture

European Capitals of Democracy

The European Capital of Democracy Initiative, founded in Vienna in 2019 as a project, aims to promote democracy at the local level by creating a strong network of cities. Barcelona has been awarded as the first European Capital of Democracy after a citizens jury and will host a series of events and activities in cooperation with the civil society and the citizens from September 2023 until August 2024. The call for cities is open for 2024-2025 and cities with over 100,000 inhabitants in the Council of Europe member states can apply to become a European Capital of Democracy.

Website: https://capitalofdemocracy.eu

European Capital of Smart Tourism

The European Capital of Smart Tourism initiative led by the European Commission's Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs and supported by the Programme of Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME) aims to strengthen smart destinations in Europe by fostering innovation and developing new mobility opportunities and partnerships for the visitors. Smart tourism involves responding to rapidly changing new challenges and demands in the sector including the evolution of digital tools, products and services, ensuring equal opportunities and accessibility for all visitors, thereby supporting local sustainable development and

creative industries, local talent and heritage. The 2022 winners of the European Smart Tourism Capital, evaluated in 4 areas of accessibility, sustainability, digitalization as well as cultural heritage and creativity, were Bordeaux, France and Valencia, Spain. The winners of the 2023 competition are Pafos, Cyprus and Seville, Spain.

Website: https://smart-tourism-capital.ec.europa.eu/about_en

European Green Capital Award (EGCA) & European Green Leaf Award (EGLA)

The European Green Capital Award (EGCA) that is given by the European Commission to promote environmentally friendly urban life is awarded to a European city with over 100,000 inhabitants and demonstrates leadership in environmental, social and economic sustainability. The European Green Leaf Award (EGLA) is awarded to a town or a city between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants to acknowledge and support the city's efforts to better environmental management. In this context, financial support is given to the cities to fund their activities during the European Green Leaf year. In addition to the financial reward, winning the European Green Capital Award or the European Green Leaf Award brings many benefits such as increased focus on environmental projects, international media coverage, increased tourism and foreign investment, local economy boost and increased employment. EGCA and EGLA winners and shortlisted cities also have access to the European Green Capital and European Green Leaf Networks, providing a common platform for sharing experiences and good practices. The first nomination process was officially launched in 2008 and the first award was given to Stockholm, Sweden in 2010. The European Green Capital title was awarded to Lahti, Finland in

2021, Grenoble, France in 2022, Tallinn, Estonia in 2023 and Valencia, Spain in 2024.

EGCA Website: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban-environment/european-green-capital-award_en

EGLA Website: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban -environment/european-green-leaf-award_en

European Capital of Innovation Awards (iCapital)

The European Capital of Innovation Awards (iCapital) is an annual award given to European cities to encourage innovation and the role cities play in shaping local innovation ecosystems. In order to improve the standard of living in cities, it is important to find innovative solutions to the social and sustainability challenges they face and overcome them. Supported by the European Innovation Council (EIC) as part of Horizon Europe and awarded for the eighth time this year by the European Commission, a total of six prizes were awarded in the categories of "European Capital of Innovation" and "European Rising Innovative City".

Website: https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-prizes/european-capital-innovation-awards_en

European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award

The European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award gives recognition and visibility to the cities or regions that emphasize inclusion and aim to create discrimination-free societies. Cities within the European Union that aim to create equitable societies and promote diversity and inclusion can apply for the award which has importance for laying the groundwork for fostering a sense of belonging and adopting the shared values. The winners of the award that was organized for the first time in 2022 were the cities of Andalusia, Antequara and Barcelona from Spain; Gothenburg from Sweden; Koprivnica from Croatia;

Gradinari from Romania; Ingelheim am Rhein and Cologne from Germany in three different categories: gold, silver and bronze.

Website: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/tackling-discrimination/diversity-and-inclusion-initiatives/european-capitals-inclusion-and-diversity-award_en

European Youth Capital (EYC)

The European Youth Capital (EYC) is a title awarded to European cities by the European Youth Forum, designed to increase youth participation and empower young people through projects focusing on youth-related cultural, social, political, economic life and development. In 2009, the initiative started with the selection of the Dutch city of Rotterdam and the Albanian city of Tirana was selected as the European Youth Capital for 2022. The Belgian city of Ghent was announced the European Youth Capital for 2024 and Polish city of Lubnin for 2023. For the 17th edition of the award, Lviv, Ukraine was announced the 2025 European Youth Capital. Fuenlabrada from Spain, Izmir from Türkiye and Tromso from Norway were other shortlisted candidates for 2025. Municipalities from member states of the European Union or the Council of Europe can apply for the award and are expected to organize events involving the active participation of young people throughout the year.

Website: https://www.youthforum.org/topics/youthcapital

https://youth.europa.eu/news/tirana-european-youth-capital-2022_en

OTHER AWARDS BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Other than the capital city titles mainly awarded by the European organizations, it is also meaningful to mention the thematic awards at the global level as instruments of local

diplomacy. In order to promote sustainable development in cities, many international organizations alongside the European Commission and UN-Habitat give awards focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals to achieve livable cities. The common goal of all these awards is to pave the way for the development of cities, sustainability and new projects.

World Habitat Awards

The World Habitat Awards, conducted for over 35 years in partnership with World Habitat and UN-Habitat, highlight pioneering approaches to housing challenges by providing international acknowledgement to exceptional projects and programs. More than 360 projects in total have been recognized until 2022. Each project is changing the lives of individuals, families and communities through housing efforts. Housing projects or programs that provide practical, innovative and sustainable solutions to existing housing problems are transferable or adaptable to other countries around the world, are already implemented or completed, i.e., not in the design phase or very early stages of development, address the concept of habitat from a broad perspective and provide a range of other benefits are encouraged to enter the competition.

Website: https://world-habitat.org/world-habitat-awards/

European Diploma & Flag of Honour & Plaque of Honour & Europe Prize

The European Prize developed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1955 to recognize cities and municipalities that are active in promoting the European ideal aims to promote European values and foster solidarity between cities across Europe. There is a 4-step award process including the European Diploma, Flag of Honour, Plaque of Honour, Plaque of Honour and finally the Europe Prize. For the European Diploma winners, an award ceremony is held in Strasbourg while for the Flag of Honour or Plaque of Honour a public award ceremony is organized by the winning municipalities with the active participation of young people. For the European Prize, the Sub-Commission organizes a public ceremony and presents a cheque worth 20.000 euros to the young people of the city. In Türkiye, Istanbul was awarded the European Prize in 1959, Bursa in 1991, Ankara in 2009 and Izmir in 2022. In the Marmara Region, Büyükçekmece Municipality was awarded the European Flag of Honor in 2018, Şişli Municipality in 2020 and Ahmetbey Municipality in 2021; while Nilüfer Municipality in 2016, Çorlu Municipality in 2020, Kırklareli Municipality in 2021 and Edirne Municipality in 2022 was awarded the European Diploma.

Website: https://pace.coe.int/en/pages/europeprize

European Forest City

The European Forest Institute has been awarding the title of European Forest City to the cities hosting the European Forest Annual Conference since 2014. Awarded to the city of Barcelona, Spain in 2022, the award recognizes the existence of a city and metropolitan area management that encompasses research on the conservation and development of forested areas and a new urban model that promotes nature-based solutions. In this framework, the city and metropolitan area of Barcelona has encouraged public participation in events related to the theme of 2022 "Bioeconomy for Cities", addressing how biocities can change the way we live on the planet. Novi Sad in Serbia is awarded the European Forest City 2023.

Website: https://efi.int/explore/city

European Mobility Week Award

The European Mobility Week Award is given to local authorities for raising awareness on sustainable urban mobility during the main event week. The winners of 2021 are Kassel from Germany (for larger municipalities) and Valongo from Portugal (for smaller municipalities). Amadora from Portugal and Lüleburgaz from Türkiye (for larger municipalities), Alimos from Greece and Miajadas from Spain (for smaller municipalities) were among the finalists of 2021. Applicants for the award require to fulfill three criteria by the local authorities: organizing activities with a focus on sustainable mobility, taking permanent transport measures and organizing a car-free day.

Website: https://mobilityweek.eu/about-mobilityawards/

https://mobilityweek.eu/europeanmobilityweek-award/

European Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (SUMP) Award

The European Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (SUMP) Award aims to recognize local authorities that have developed an outstanding sustainable urban mobility plan and contributed to the annual theme of the European Mobility Week (EMW) project. The Award is distributed each year in the spring during a co-hosted annual ceremony with the European Mobility Week Award. The 2021 finalists for the award that has been given since 2012 were Madrid, Spain and Mitrovica South, Kosovo and the winner of the 10th Award for Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning was the city of Tampere, Finland.

Website: https://mobilityweek.eu/past-awards/sump-award/

https://www.eltis.org/mobility-plans/project-partners/sump-award

Urban Road Safety Award

The European Union Urban Road Safety Award organized annually by the European Commission aims to draw attention to the importance of local efforts to improve road safety and to disseminate innovative practices in light of the fact that 38% of traffic fatalities and 50% of traffic injuries occur on roads in urban areas. The Urban Road Safety Award is presented in a joint ceremony with the European Commission's other sustainable urban mobility awards. Applications for the 2021 EU Urban Road Safety Awards are evaluated by a jury of experts based on 5 criteria: consistency with the local road safety and transport strategy, impact on improving road safety, innovation, collaboration with other stakeholders and level of inspirational value. While Florence from Italy and Warsaw from Poland were among the finalists, Rethymno from Greece has been the winner of the 2021 EU Urban Road Safety Award.

Website: https://mobilityweek.eu/past-awards/urban-road-safety-award/

https://mobilityweek.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/awards/Urban_Road_Safety_Award/2021/2021_04_20_EU_Urban_Road_Safety_Award_Call_for_Applications.pdf

Barcelona 2030 Agenda Awards

The Barcelona 2030 Agenda Awards organized by Barcelona City Council aims to highlight inspiring and innovative practices that have a measurable impact on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to increase recognition and dissemination of these practices. Among the awards that will be given in 10 categories, applications for the 10th category, "Award for the city with the best practices for achieving the SDGs", are open to all local authorities worldwide with over 50,000 inhabitants.

Website: https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/agenda2030/en/projects/barcelona-2030-agenda-awards

IOPD Award Best Practice in Citizen Participation

IOPD Award Best Practice in Citizen Participation organized for the 16th time this year by the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) is a process that evaluates successful experiences and public practices in the areas of citizen participation, participatory budgeting, city councils and city assemblies, public relations, transparency, democratic innovations and open government. Within the scope of the award aiming to raise awareness about public policies implemented by local governments, the winning cities are invited to the conference held in Grenoble, France and the practices of all participant cities are compiled and published.

Website: https://oidp.net/distinction/en/

Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation

The Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation organized since 2012 in cooperation with the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the World Association of the Major Metropolises (Metropolis) and Guangzhou Municipality of China aims to improve the quality of life in cities and regions by improving social, economic and environmental sustainability through innovative approach. The biennial award evaluates applications on innovation, efficiency, replicability, relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Shortlisted applicant municipalities are invited to the Guangzhou International Urban Innovation Conference, Expo and Award Ceremony.

Website: www.guangzhouaward.org

Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award

Following the assassination of the late Mayor of Gdansk, Poland, Paweł Adomowicz, in January 2019, the Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award was created to promote solidarity and equal

opportunities, social integration and fundamental rights against racism, intolerance, radicalization, hate speech, oppression and xenophobia. The global award presented in cooperation with the European Committee of the Regions, International Cities of Refugee (ICORN) and the City of Gdańsk aims to highlight the efforts of courageous defenders of fundamental rights and values. Individuals or organizations working for peace, solidarity, equality, combating xenophobia, hate speech and discrimination can be nominated for the award. A nomination can be proposed by a city from the ICORN network, by a group of 15 members of the Council of Europe, by an official decision of a city or regional council or by an official decision of an international organization. The award is presented annually at a ceremony in Brussels, Belgium.

Website: https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/mayor-paweł-adamowicz-award.aspx

Prince Talal International Prize for Human Development

Established in 1980 under the leadership of Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz and with the support of Gulf Cooperation Council leaders, the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND) launched the Prince Talal International Prize for Human Development to support projects that would achieve sustainability and investment in people. Launched in 2019, the prize aims to encourage innovation and creativity in human development. For 2022 applications, the main theme is the 13th of the UN Sustainable Development Goals that is "Climate Action" which focuses on "climate action and urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts".

Website: https://agfund.org/en/thePrize

We can mention various approaches of humanity in solving its problems. War and diplomacy are the two most prominent ones. The more destructive one is, more constructive the other is; the more power-based one is, more negotiation-based the other is; and the more closed to dialogue one is, the more open the other is. Local diplomacy is an important instrument for both negotiating global and national unresolved issues and utilizing the world's resources and opportunities through responsibility and cooperation. It must be admitted that the very concept of "local diplomacy" is off-putting for those who think that diplomacy is only applicable on the national and supranational level. In fact, the increasing importance of local diplomacy both in overcoming crises at the national level and in building a more just and equitable world is becoming more and more evident every day.

This book covers the place of local diplomacy in the discipline of international relations, diplomacy practices of cities, local diplomacy tools, the role of cities in global agenda and peace building effort, the relationship between national foreign policy and diplomacy practices of local governments, international city networks, town twinning and sister city relations, and the importance of international projects and cooperations. We hope that this book focusing on local diplomacy, a subject that has not yet found its rightful place in the international literature and which is quite open to development in practice, will open a new horizon for the readers.

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Editors

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