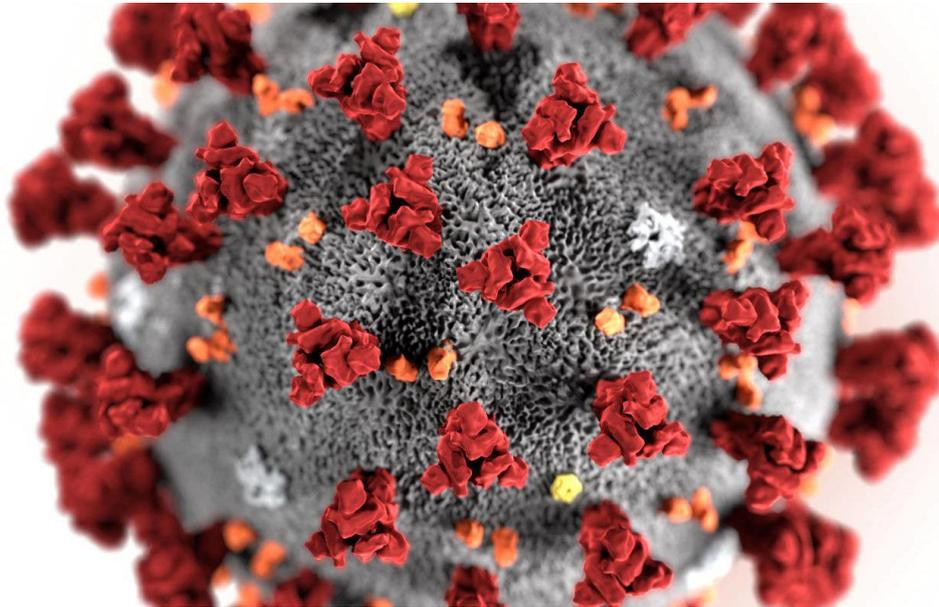


# Statement from the International Urban Cooperation Programme: Cities and the new Coronavirus (COVID-19)



The crisis caused by the new Coronavirus highlights the need for strong and vigorous responses from public policies that demonstrate the enormous responsibility that falls on the governmental public sphere and, in particular, on local governments, which are directly responsible for urban managements and operation of cities. Mayors' offices and municipal administrations are directly involved with the welfare, health, safety and well-being of their citizens. Today, we know that the struggle for the sustainability of our planet and the implementation of policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change highlight the role of local governments.

Mayors and local leaders have had a greater role in this period of crisis caused by COVID-19 at an unprecedented level. The responsibility for the development and implementation of short- and medium-term policies and strategies for keeping the cities functioning and dealing with their various challenges rests on their shoulders and their teams, while they must adopt measures to address the pandemic. Integrating rather than segmenting, maximizing rather than wasting, cooperating rather than individualizing, preventing rather than reacting, thinking globally and acting locally should rule the municipal actions.

In this regard, the International Urban Cooperation Programme of the European Union for Latin America and the Caribbean (IUC-LAC) convene mayors of more than 400 cities to participate in the initiative for rapid and efficient local action, aimed at minimizing the spread of the new coronavirus COVID-19. The cities are better positioned to help the population implement preventive actions and, when necessary, implement restrictive measures of collective interest at the local level. It is important to follow the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health in each country.

Local authorities and governments should inform the population, through available communication channels, regarding symptoms, hygiene care, prevention and, in particular, regarding the collective use of public and recreational areas, which should be minimized during this period. The fight against the pandemic in the cities will be decisive in guaranteeing the population's wellbeing, and the security and the economic recovery of the countries.

Our regional partners in the different countries where we are working on climate actions, such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), are supporting local governments by informing and providing guidance to local leaders. Know more.

### **City-to-City Exchange and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy**

The current crisis caused by COVID-19 has completely affected the working agenda of the IUC-LAC Programme. Travels between Europe and Latin America linked to the city-to-city exchange, as well as the activities of the Global Covenant of Mayors, including national seminars and conferences, and classroom training, were cancelled and postponed for to the second semester, considering a stabilization scenario in the world situation, in the different countries and cities.

Events in Argentina, Cuba, Mexico and Peru, as well as the exchanges planned for 2020 – Trujillo (Peru) / Pitesti (Romania); Temuco (Chile) / Kavala (Greece); Cordoba (Argentina) / Zagreb (Croatia); São Paulo (Brazil) / Milan (Italy); Viña del Mar (Chile) / Almada (Portugal); Cartagena (Colombia) / Malaga (Spain); Barranquilla (Colombia) / Veletri (Italy); and Quilicura (Chile) / City of the European Union not yet defined – have been postponed until further notice.

The coordination of the IUC-LAC Programme is considering alternative dates to implement this agenda until the end of 2020, and also evaluating the possibility to conduct virtually our events, meetings, seminars and webinars, making use of various information technologies and digital communication tools available. Our team will be happy to provide additional information.

On behalf of the entire IUC-LAC team, I wish a prompt recovery and normalization of life in our cities.

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