

European Capital of Democracy Consortium

As the very first City to hold the title of European Capital of Democracy, Barcelona plays a very special role in the European Capital of Democracy (ECoD) initiative and within the European City Network (ECN). Together with Vienna and Cascais, recently announced as ECoD 2026, Barcelona is a member of the ECoD Consortium - a high-level Advisory Board of representatives from title-holding cities, international organisations and European institutions.

Besides Barcelona, Vienna and Cascais, current members include Steven Bosacker, Cathryn Clüver Ashbrook, Executive Vice President & Senior Advisor for the Program Europe's Future at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, and Laura Thornton, Senior Director for Global Democracy Programs at the McCain Institute.

In addition to the long-time patronage and support by the Council of Europe, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has offered to take on a formal role within ECoD NPO and is currently exploring the option to join the Consortium. Furthermore, a strategic partnership with the European Parliament has been established in 2024, a similar arrangement with the Directorate-General for Communication at the European Commission is currently in preparation.

Benefits of Consortium members within the European City Network are:

- Helping secure the legacy of ECoD, especially best practice exchange and collaborations, by constantly growing and renewing the network - together with the other title-holding cities - Barcelona and Vienna
- Joint applications for European fundings, including prestigious and lucrative lead roles in projects
- Optional contribution to physical ECN meetings (held every 3-4 months)
- Extended access to international experts and organisations
- Selected access to our constantly growing network of the ECoD Citizens' Jury (over 4,500 European citizens in all Council of Europe member states and Kosovo)

Benefits of Consortium members with external visibility:

- Invitation to join events like Democracy Year opening + closing, [Innovation in Politics Awards](#), [ACT NOW Mayors' Conference](#), etc. and contributions in the form of speeches, best practice presentations etc.)
- Participation of a local/national team at the [Truth, Lies & Democracy](#) game jam
- Being featured as an institutional partner in our communication activities and taking a public position for democracy
- An active and visible contribution to the further development of the initiative and to supporting the continuous selection of title-holding cities as a lasting legacy
- Joint initiatives to lobby/advocate for cities & push the urban democratic agenda towards European Institutions

Responsibilities of Consortium members

- Participation in one yearly meeting (hybrid)
- Strategic advice on the further development of the initiative
- Communication partnership for main highlights
- Financial contribution (for institutional members and European Capitals of Democracy)
- Participation in one highlight event per year