

Donostia / San Sebastián Atlantic Charter

Local and citizen dimension in the future of the European Union

Donostia / San Sebastián, 2018, 15th June

Being one of its aims to achieve cohesion, competitiveness, European anchorage, value of the maritime dimension and international expansion of the Atlantic Arc together with the Atlantic Arc Commission and other local agents,

Having the sea as a working link, understood as the heart of the identity of the Atlantic territories, and conforming a global challenge for economic, social and cultural development, as well as for security and sustainable development.

On these days where we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the "Political Charter of the network: the San Sebastian Charter, for a sustainable urban development" publication, and being the European Year of "Cultural Heritage" we are again here in the Donostia / San Sebastián's City Plenary Hall and we mutually commit ourselves to respect and promote the Atlantic Charter:

"Local and citizen dimension in the future of the European Union " 2018

Preamble

The Europe of cities, regions and networks is closer to our interdependence's reality than in the formal structures configured by an European governance system anchored almost exclusively in the intergovernmental dimension.

In these uncertain times, Europe finds itself in an unbeatable position for promoting worldwide a new social and political organization based not on interests but, above all, on values. Never been before it was to be seen such a socio-economic development, democratic consolidation and cultural diversity as extraordinary as those currently existing in the European Union in such a limited geographic space.

We need a new and true European constitutional pact, respectful of all fundamental rights that gives a real role to both the people and organizations of the European civil society and also to the entities that make up that plural and diverse reality that is Europe.

We have to think both levels (for the state and for our cities) in terms of complementarity, not antagonism.

Europe raises today more questions than answers because we are living in our frames of reference a radical transformation time. The institutional realities closer to the citizenry know better the experience of living in European, open and globalized environments than those who assume the function of deciding to what point is

tolerable to extent this affectation and what degree of formal sovereignty they are willing to share. Somehow the States arrive late where the cities have arrived much earlier.

The European Union must therefore represent the response of political stability, economic prosperity, solidarity and security to the concerns and convulsions generated by globalization.

There is a reality in the Europe of cities and networks, in natural areas, the axes and cross-border spaces that articulate persistent spaces, suturing sometimes what the borders have divided with certain artificiality.

The European project, immersed in a serious identity crisis today, that will only acquire greater legitimacy insofar as it is built from the bottom up and where the sub-state territorial entities and in particular the cities will have increasing importance as agents that legitimize change in order to move towards a more integrated Europe.

Globalization takes place at the local level, where practices of solidarity and exclusion are carried out, where pollution and climate change impact. It is in the cities where most migrants are welcomed or not, in them we acquire human beings the experience of difference that is where our will to sustainable or chaotic development is credited, the business dynamism and cultural creation, the economy of the knowledge and sustainable development.

Therefore, recovering trust and enthusiasm of the citizens in favour of the European project (where ultimately the future of Europe is decided) should start again in the cities.

That is why the Mayors and Presidents of important cities of the European Atlantic Arc networks, we commit ourselves to:

Chapter 1. - Strengthen and defend the Europe of cities:

- ✓ Promote a new social and political organization, united in diversity and based, above all, on the sum of values and not so much on other types of interests.
- ✓ Promote inclusion as a model of social cohesion by applying the values of our European society.
- ✓ Move towards cities prepared to drive change in a scheme in which values take on essential importance
- ✓ Promote mutual recognition as a basis for peaceful and respectful coexistence, from the similarities and differences in relation to religions, languages, cultures, institutions, customs and traditions, as open identities and without hiding their heterogeneity.

- ✓ Defend the diversity caused by migration processes as positive values, opportunity bearers and dynamic changes useful to face common challenges.

Chapter 2. - Promote exchanges between the citizens of the Atlantic coast and strengthen cooperation among the people who integrate it in challenges such as:

- ✓ Collaborate around challenges and solutions for our adaptation to climate change.
- ✓ Lead the transformation processes of our model necessary for the climate change mitigation in an integrated way and also by supporting the circular economy.
- ✓ Strengthen the economy and activity, as well as maritime transport.
- ✓ Be very attentive to these changes and establish cooperative systems in the economic field to be able to be prepared and try to positivize them.
- ✓ Found an effective scheme of cultural, social, scientific and economic cooperation.

Chapter 3.- Grant the real protagonism to both people and civil society and entities that make up that plural, diverse and dynamic reality that is Europe:

- ✓ Promote transparency, democratic management of information and good governance based on proximity policies, close relationships of trust and co-responsibility
- ✓ Consolidate the proximity levels that occur in cities in relation to the people who inhabit them in order to improve coexistence.
- ✓ Promote equality and social inclusion of European citizenship based on active leaderships of its citizens, as well as shared sovereignties between different citizens, sharing rights and responsibilities.
- ✓ Consider citizen participation linked to the idea of democratic empowerment, as a process of empowerment, which improves capabilities and gives greater control and influence over resources and political processes to the people who exercise this right.

Chapter 4.- Recover the trust of citizens in favour of the European project of identity and construction in order to share challenges and alternatives

- ✓ Defend citizen participation and social cohesion in the cities of the Atlantic Arc and Europe, making possible the right of citizens to participate with the capacity to influence the construction of European policies.
- ✓ Encourage active European and Atlantic citizenship, promoting dialogue and the relationship between towns and cities and their citizenship.
- ✓ Generate relationships based on generosity and mutual trust, where all levels approach positions and contribute to common objectives.
- ✓ Promote the strengthening of multilevel network work, from the exchange of experiences, generating close collaborations and synergies in the Europe of diversity.
- ✓ Articulate policies that promote exchanges between people (officials, students, etc.) from different cities and countries. The relational activity is basic to know and share, generating an environment that allows a higher level of interaction.

Chapter 5. - Deepening the objectives European Cultural Agenda

- ✓ Encourage more people to discover and commit themselves to the culture and the European cultural heritage, to a feeling of cultural solidarity that transcends each of our borders, reinforcing the feeling of belonging to a common European space to humanize it more.
- ✓ Claim the importance of the material and immaterial cultural and natural Atlantic heritage that treasures and expresses the traditional knowledge of trades and other passions linked to their territories and the natural landscape; favors the conservation of the marine environment and the recovery of the trades linked to it, and contributes to the reaffirmation of the maritime identity of Europe.

Chapter 6. - Challenges and post-Brexit scenarios

The new situation derived from the Brexit affects especially to the networking among the Atlantic Arc cities. The network city members declare their willingness to continue working together through an Atlantic that unites us more than separates us, regardless of the circumstances of the Brexit.

Signing

the «San Sebastian Atlantic Charter:

The local and citizen dimension in the future of the European Union

the city of

is committed to implementing the objectives presented in this document.

In Donostia / San Sebastián, 2018, 15th June

Name and position of the political representant signing:

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