

TUZLA DECLARATION

*adopted on the Seventh Conference
on the European Charter of Human Rights in the City
held in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

Cities are the past, the present and the future of Europe. The essential power of citizens is at the local level: it is the place where democracy is built, where human rights live and develop.

The European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City, adopted ten years ago in Saint-Denis, wishes to ensure a permanent connection between the development of cities and the advancement of human rights. Values such as freedom, equality, tolerance, dignity, peace, brotherhood, solidarity, healthy environment and non-discrimination need to be preserved and improved for the sake of humanity's future.

Certain fundamental rights of citizens (the right to housing, to quality public services, to dignified living conditions, to work, etc.) and their accessibility are brought into question today due to economic crisis, increasingly impoverished living conditions, but also because of centralizing processes, discrimination and disregard for the living environment.

The participants of Tuzla Conference, as well as the signatories of the Declaration, support the European Charter of Local Self-Government and reaffirm the principles enshrined in the European Charter of Human Rights in the City. The Charter has allowed us to proclaim a "right to the city", embody the "right to a civic community" and join together local authorities to strengthen and protect human rights. We are dedicated to the vigorous promotion of human rights on our territories, without intending to substitute states or regions in their obligations regarding human rights' protection.

Thus, on a Conference held in South-East Europe for the first time, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Tuzla, a city which history stands as a reminder of the importance of human rights and the strengthening of solidarity between cities, we hereby adopt

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Local authorities and local communities' actors, the participants of the Conference support the exchange of experiences aimed at strengthening human rights at the local level.

Signatory cities will transform the local level into a privileged space of social innovation, true solidarity and resistance to neo-liberal globalisation and employment crisis.

Signatory cities from the states that do not yet allow a right to vote to foreign residents engage to act for the concretization of this right.

Signatory cities are in favor of creating, in connection with the Council of Europe, a Human Rights Observatory in the cities which will propose measures necessary for ensuring human rights and evaluate the practices of local authorities.



We call upon European institutions to admit the role local authorities have in defending and promoting human rights as well as to take measures that will contribute to a stronger position of cities as places which guarantee human rights, non-discrimination and harmonious coexistence.

We call upon enactment of true decentralisation processes that will reach every citizen. At the same time, recession and global crisis should not be constant excuses for continuous decrease of public funds belonging to local communities. We hereby accentuate the fact that local communities satisfy the basic and increasingly important needs of the citizens.

We call upon European institutions to invite their member states to enact legislation which will enable all citizens to enjoy equal rights and equal opportunities for participating in social processes.

We call upon said institutions to demand that funds aimed at environmental protection projects be at the disposal of not only national governments but also cities with efficient and useful projects.

We call upon European institutions to oblige national governments to introduce rigorous provisions on the prohibition of the spread of racism, discrimination on any grounds, extremism and other violations of human rights.

We call upon the Council of Europe to invite its member states to enact measures so that natural, cultural and historic heritage of the cities are excluded from privatisation, while basic public goods, such as water and energy required for heating, can be subjected to negotiated prices defined according to the social criteria.

We demand that the world association "United Cities and Local Governments" (UCLG) disseminates the Tuzla Declaration and contributes to the implementation thereof.

We address European institutions and member states to finally include fundamental rights, such as the right to vote of foreign residents, the right to high-quality public services or to a sustainable development, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union.

We invite all cities signatories of the European Charter of Human Rights in the City and of this Declaration to reinforce their cooperation, making our network for a "Europe of cities" stronger and enabling us to achieve goals stated in the abovementioned documents.

This Declaration will be delivered to all relevant European and global institutions, to the signatory cities of the Charter, and to international associations of local authorities, which will be invited to contribute to the process of promoting the Charter and strengthening its role as an international instrument of human rights.

In Tuzla, 9 October 2010.