



## **Intervenció de l'Alcalde, Xavier Trías – Recepció al Eurocities Social Affairs Forum**

- **Mr. Henk Kool**, deputy mayor of The Hague and EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum chair
- **Ima. Sra. Maite Fandos**, tinenta d'Alcalde de Qualitat de Vida, Igualtat i Esports.
- Vice Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Councillors,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

As Mayor of Barcelona, **it's a pleasure to welcome you to the City Hall, in this magnificent "Saló de Cent", the Salle of the One Hundred.**

This is a hall **built in the 14<sup>th</sup> [fourteenth] Century** and it was here were the first **municipal government of Barcelona**, what was called the **"Council of the One Hundred"**, used to gather.

Nowadays, it's the venue where the most important events of the city take place.

For Barcelona, **it is a great honor to host for the first time the Eurocities Social Affairs Forum.** This is a great occasion to share knowledge and experiences, mutual learning and the exchange of good practices.

**Barcelona is convinced of the importance of cities in the construction of Europe and their commitment to ensure a social Europe.**

In this sense, I am very satisfied that Barcelona has been chosen to work on the new Social Investment Package, adopted by the European Commission.

Cities and local governments must work together to claim a more active role. **We are the level of government that is closest to people, and therefore cities must be taken into account in the design, promotion and implementation of social policies.**

Barcelona has always defended this idea. **We are a capital with a strong European vocation and we have become a European reference in social affairs.**

Barcelona is a **city of culture, knowledge, creativity, innovation and wellbeing.** Our first priority is to attend those who are suffering the effects of the economic crisis.

**We have increased our social budget by 30% [thirty per cent] in the last two years, and we are developing a model of collaboration with the third sector of social action.**

**A model of social collaboration that has been recognized at European level, because the civic and voluntary sector is essential for social cohesion and economic recovery.**

Together, **we are promoting equity with policies and initiatives to assure people's wellbeing and quality of life.**

**As a result of the crisis, we have new profiles of poverty and social exclusion.** We have families that suddenly don't have income; families that are evicted; or young people that have little chances to find a job.

We must give responses to all of them. As you have seen today, **we have increased the number of centers for homeless people, and we are opening new social care equipments.**

**We have also improved important services like the telematics home care for the elderly and we are covering people's basic needs, like food, energy and utility supply, and affordable housing.**

**Cities and metropolitan areas are the engines of economic growth.** But they also concentrate economic inequality and unemployment. This is why cities must work together to face these challenges with determination.

**We are proud that Eurocities has chosen Barcelona to celebrate its Social Affairs Forum. Together we will lead the claim of cities to have a more active role in the new European Social policy.**

Thank you very much for all your work, and I hope that you enjoy your stay in Barcelona.

Thank you very much.