

# PRESS RELEASE

## **POLIS and Toyota Mobility Foundation launch challenge to help European cities tackle mobility inequalities**

New programme will support three to five cities in developing and implementing solutions to persistent mobility challenges, with a focus on inclusion, accessibility, and transport poverty

- The Inclusive Mobility Cities Challenge will help cities address mobility challenges that existing approaches have failed to resolve.
- Three to five Champion Cities will receive project funding, technical expertise, and implementation support over a period of up to four years.
- The programme will support cities in developing people-centred solutions that improve access to essential services and opportunities, particularly for people facing transport poverty and other mobility barriers.
- Applications open on 12 October 2026 and close on 11 December 2026 at 23:59 CET.

**Brussels, Belgium, 12 October 2026** – European cities are working to make mobility more sustainable, accessible, and affordable. However, for many residents, commuting to work, accessing education and healthcare, or participating in social life remains difficult, if not impossible. Existing transport services and infrastructure do not always meet people's needs, and conventional interventions may not be enough to overcome persistent barriers.

To help cities address these challenges, **POLIS and the Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF) today launch the Inclusive Mobility Cities Challenge**, a multi-year European programme supporting local and regional authorities in developing and implementing more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable mobility solutions.

The Challenge recognises that cities are uniquely positioned to understand local mobility needs and bring together the communities, public authorities, and stakeholders needed to address them. However, turning ambitious plans into lasting change can require additional funding, specialised expertise, and the capacity to test approaches that go beyond established practice.

Through the Challenge, **three to five cities will be selected as Champion Cities** to develop solutions to clearly defined mobility challenges that have not been sufficiently resolved through existing approaches. The programme combines TMF's experience in advancing human-centred mobility solutions with POLIS' network of cities and regions working to make transport more sustainable through innovation, supported by implementation partner Rupprecht Consult.

### **Helping cities deliver a just mobility transition**

For cities, the transition to sustainable mobility expands beyond reducing emissions or changing how people travel, and broadly involves ensuring that residents can access the opportunities they need, regardless of their income, age, gender, disability, or place of residence.

Transport poverty, gaps in public transport provision, inaccessible infrastructure, and the cost of everyday journeys can all limit people's opportunities. These challenges (and barriers) are often interconnected and may affect groups differently, making solutions based on a single intervention insufficient.

The Inclusive Mobility Cities Challenge places **transport poverty and unequal access to mobility** at the centre of its approach. It encourages cities to identify who is affected by a challenge, understand why existing measures have fallen short, and involve residents and relevant stakeholders in developing solutions.

The emphasis is on practical, people-centred approaches that respond to local needs and have a credible pathway towards implementation and lasting impact.

### **From local challenges to practical solutions**

The Challenge is designed for cities that have identified a real and persistent mobility problem but need additional support to move towards a solution. Rather than funding routine activities that can be delivered through existing approaches, the programme will help selected cities explore what needs to change, develop their proposed interventions, and put them into practice.

Champion Cities will **receive project funding, technical and independent expertise, implementation guidance, monitoring and evaluation support, capacity-building, and opportunities for peer learning and exchange through the POLIS network.**

**Karen Vancluysen, Secretary General of POLIS,** said:

‘Cities and regions are on the front line of addressing mobility inequalities: they understand where transport systems are falling short for their residents, but tackling persistent challenges often requires more than “business as usual”. Through the Inclusive Mobility Cities Challenge, POLIS and the Toyota Mobility Foundation will help cities turn local needs into practical solutions, supported by funding, expertise, and collaboration. This is an important contribution to a just transition in mobility, where sustainability goes hand in hand with accessibility, affordability, and opportunity for everyone.’

**Andy Fuchs, Programme General Manager, Toyota Mobility Foundation Europe,** said:

‘Inclusive mobility is fundamental to ensuring that everyone can participate fully in society. Through this partnership, TMF and POLIS are creating an opportunity for cities to test and scale practical solutions that address real mobility challenges while generating knowledge that can benefit communities across Europe.’

### **Who can apply?**

The Challenge is open to eligible POLIS member cities and regions, as well as cities and regions with an existing relation with TMF.

Eligible applicants can access the full application guidance, eligibility requirements, selection criteria and application documents through the POLIS Members' Area.

[POLIS members: find out more about the Inclusive Mobility Cities Challenge](#)

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For information on POLIS, TMF, and Rupprecht Consult, check **Note to editors**.

## Note to editors

**POLIS** is the leading European network of cities and regions working together to develop innovative solutions for more sustainable and inclusive mobility. POLIS brings together local and regional authorities and other mobility stakeholders to exchange knowledge, develop partnerships and promote policies and practices that improve transport at the local and regional levels. Through its thematic working groups, projects and events, POLIS supports its members in addressing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of mobility.

The **Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF)** was established in August 2014 by Toyota Motor Corporation to support the development of a more mobile society in which everyone can move freely. Drawing on Toyota's expertise and technologies, TMF works with universities, governments, non-profit organisations, research institutions and other partners to address mobility challenges and reduce disparities in access to mobility. Its programmes support initiatives aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

**Rupprecht Consult – Forschung & Beratung GmbH** is an independent research and consultancy company based in Cologne, Germany. Established in 1996, it works with partners in Europe and worldwide to support sustainable development in cities and regions through research, innovation and the implementation of practical solutions. Its interdisciplinary team works across urban mobility, sustainable transport and related policy areas, helping translate concepts into effective action.