

PRESS RELEASE

Cities and regions call for paradigm shift in road safety policy

BRUSSELS, 28 November 2019 – At the closing plenary of the Polis Conference 2019, cities and regions expressed their support for “The New Paradigm for Safe City Streets”, a city-led declaration developed by Polis and EUROCITIES.

With this declaration on road safety, local and regional authorities reaffirm their key role in building safe systems. Karen Vancluysen, Polis Secretary General, said: “Cities are sending a strong message: they are willing to act now to make their streets safer. We hope that this declaration will inspire many more cities across Europe and beyond to not only promote walking and cycling but to also invest in making these modes safe. Death and serious injuries are not an inevitable by-product of urban mobility.”

Jeannot Mersch, President, European Federation of Road Traffic Victims, said: “We are happy to see so many cities showing support for a new paradigm for safe city streets. The ten principles of the declaration are in line with our vision to achieve zero road deaths in urban areas by 2030.”

Matthew Baldwin, European Coordinator for Road Safety and Urban Mobility at the European Commission, said: “POLIS, now aged 30, goes from strength to strength! A wonderful conference that shows that a real step change in our urban mobility mindset is really under way. Safe, sustainable and liveable cities are becoming a reality.”

Lilli Matson, London Chief Officer for Safety, Health and Environment, said: “Our experience shows that when we invest in improving cycling infrastructure, the number of deaths and injuries involving cyclists go down. Nevertheless, improving infrastructure alone is not enough – we need a cultural shift too. We should frame our efforts on road safety around what kind of cities we want to build.”

Suzanne Andersson, Development Strategist at the City of Gothenburg’s Transport Department, said: “Working on road safety measures since the 1980s, we have achieved successful results in reducing collisions on our streets. Today, if we are to achieve Vision Zero, we need to go a step further and reduce single-pedestrian and single-bicycle crashes as well as other injuries including stumbling, slipping and falling. Good street design and the maintenance of areas with high density of pedestrians and cyclists must be a top priority.”

At the closing plenary session, the City of Dublin was awarded the **Thinking Cities Award** for their work on improving safety for cyclists at intersections using smart radar detectors.

The session closes the 2019 edition of the Annual Polis Conference, which also marks the 30th anniversary of Polis. The event brought together more than 600 urban mobility professionals and experts in Brussels for two days of debates on how cities and regions are tackling today’s most pressing urban mobility challenges through innovation. The Polis Conference 2020 will take place in Arnhem, Netherlands, on 2-3 December 2020.

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Note to editors

Polis is the leading European network of cities and regions on urban transport innovation. European local and regional authorities work together within Polis to promote sustainable mobility and exchange good practice in the deployment of innovative transport solutions.

The Polis Annual Conference provides an opportunity for cities and regions to showcase their transport achievements to an international audience, and for the wider transport community to engage with representatives of local and regional authorities on innovative transport solutions.

