



**Balkan Cities Network**



**ORGANISATIONAL  
STRUCTURE AND  
WORKING  
PRINCIPLES**

January  
2024

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**Better  
Cooperation,  
Better  
Future**

# B40

## Balkan Cities Network

### Declaration

This declaration was finalized by the participating mayors and municipality representatives after the first B40 - Balkan Cities Network kickoff meeting hosted by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality on 29-30 November 2021.

We, as the leaders of the local governments of the participating Balkan cities and the founders of the B40 - Balkan Cities Network;

- Being aware of the potential that sustainable development and peace present for the cities in our region,
- With a shared vision for a European future,
- Aspiring to establish a fruitful cooperation in areas of common interest,
- Knowing that climate change and other global challenges we face requires working together towards common solutions at local, regional and global level,
- Recognizing that good governance requires a resilient, democratic, transparent, and inclusive local governance, based on data, science and shared wisdom for future cities,
- Emphasizing the critical importance of the localization of the New Urban Agenda and other international agreements and plans, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals,

Under the framework of the B40 - Balkan Cities Network, established at the Istanbul Summit, in line with the abovementioned common values, we declare to;

- Work together through this Network to strengthen the dialogue among our cities,
- Cooperate in the fields of economy, culture, innovation, sustainability, and solidarity,
- Develop new areas of cooperation focusing on reversing the effects of the climate change, and strengthening local democracy and good neighborly relations in our region,
- Evaluate the difficulties encountered at the local and regional levels within the framework of reciprocity and dialogue in common platforms by sharing solutions and good practices with the parties,
- Contribute to the recommendation development processes for decision makers at all levels,
- Assist in the planning of the Network meetings and the specification of the meeting agendas in line with the annual priorities to be determined by the Network members and participating in the meetings with Mayors and technical personnel,
- Host and participate in the Network meetings,
- Encourage participation of local communities through participatory activities,
- Provide support to the Network Secretariat.

Istanbul,  
30 November 2021

# Article 1

## A Regional Network

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The B40 Balkan Cities Network- hereinafter referred to as the B40 Network- is an international association of cities in the Balkan Region that are working together to promote peace, stability, and quality of life for all people living in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Türkiye. Member cities recognise the shared heritage and common future for all cities in the region and the great value that may be gained from cooperation and mutual support.

Mayor of Istanbul Ekrem İmamoğlu, is the Founding President of the B40 Network.

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

## Article 2

# Conceptual Descriptions

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**B40 Balkan Cities Network Annual Summit:** A minimum of 1.5 days event that takes place once a year and brings together the mayors and delegations from the members. The General Assembly meeting takes place during the Annual Summit.

**General Assembly:** Governing body of the B40 Network that consists of members and convenes at least once a year at the B40 Network Annual Summit.

**B40 Balkan Cities Network President:** The B40 Network's highest-level representative in the global area. Carries out the leadership and is responsible for the executive functions of the B40 Network.

**Executive Committee:** The executive body that consists of the President, former and next Presidents and four (4) voting representatives elected by General Assembly priority is given to the mayors of Working Group Leaders' local governments.

**Permanent Secretary:** Executive official in charge of the administrative operation of the B40 Network, appointed by the Mayor of Istanbul.

**Working Groups:** Units that produce concrete projects in line with the targets set and work in the technical fields that are on the agenda of the B40 Network.

**Workshops:** Cooperation and experience-sharing events that bring together technical staff from member cities. Workshops can be organised by Working Groups.

**Youth Summit:** An event that happens once a year to bring young individuals from B40 members together in the President's city. The Youth Summit serves as a platform to deliberate upon the future of local governance and the involvement of young people in local community affairs.

**Member:** All local governments in countries in the Balkan Region that have signed the B40 Declaration and complete the necessary membership requirements defined.

**Observer:** Local governments not located in the region with a population of more than 500,000; local government associations; and international organizations working in accordance with the mission and vision of the B40 Network.

# Article 3

## Aims

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Membership in the B40 Network strengthens the relationships between cities by establishing mechanisms for trust and communication at multiple levels, including mayors, city councillors, civil servants, citizens groups, and youth in order to share their city strategic plans, projects, actions and joint initiatives for addressing regional and global challenges, promoting human centred solutions for supporting the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The B40 Network contributes to the achievement of coherence and complementarity among the local, regional and global levels.

The aim of the B40 Network is to encourage cities in the Balkan Region to become genuine partners by supporting city governments addressing global challenges, and exchanging best practices and expertise in order to:

- establish resilient and environmentally-friendly cities that contribute to a sustainable future for their residents;
- implement inclusive and democratic governance models that benefit all individuals living within local communities;
- enhance the quality of life through the utilization of intelligent technologies and data analysis;
- promote the growth and prosperity of the local economy, enabling individuals to thrive and progress;
- support the preservation and promotion of diverse cultural heritage and values within the region.

The aims which are developed and implemented by the Working Groups are described in Article 14.

## Article 4

# Activities

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The B40 Network creates opportunities for members to learn about the best practices and experiences of other cities. The B40 Network provides a variety of in-person and online venues for sharing knowledge, highlighting funding opportunities, and supporting common projects that expand the capacity of cities to tackle urban challenges. The B40 Network may give its support to, or take an interest in, any activities that relate directly or indirectly to its aims in addition to its annual activities as follows:

- Annual Summit & General Assembly
- Working Group Meetings
- Workshops
- Youth Summit

## Article 5

# Membership Criteria

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Membership is open to all local governments of the Balkan Region with a democratically elected city government following the criteria defined by the United Nations.

A candidate for membership may submit a written application to the Permanent Secretariat for consideration by the Executive Committee. The written application must be made on the standard application form and be accompanied by a letter, signed by the Mayor, and/or additional documentation relating to the size, national and international role of the city. Any city may be determined eligible to become a member after unanimous approval of the application by the Executive Committee. The application may be approved based on criteria such as:

- A pledge to make a significant contribution to important projects/initiatives of the B40 Network,
- Substantial contribution to the fulfilment of the above-described aims defined in Article 3.

The symbolic signing ceremony for new members takes place at the Annual Summit, headed by the outgoing President.

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## Article 6

# Observers

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Observers who share the interests and aims of the B40 Network may be invited by the President to attend the General Assembly or Working Group meetings as non-voting participants who makes a substantial contribution to the exchange of knowledge or may contribute to the common projects of the B40 Network as partners. Observers are:

- Local governments outside the Balkan Region with a population of at least 500,000,
- Local Associations from the Balkan Region,
- International bodies and networks working in line with the B40 Network's aims.

The Permanent Secretariat maintains a list of any organisation that has requested or granted observer status.

## Article 7

# Representation by Members

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Each member is entitled to field a delegation for participation at any B40 Network events and meetings. The head of the delegation shall be the highest-ranking city official. (Mayor or a designated proxy).



## Article 8

# Rights and Obligations of Members

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Each member has the right to one (1) vote at the General Assembly, which should be cast by the head of the delegation or a designated proxy. A member may be represented by another member at the General Assembly, but each member may only represent one other member during the meeting. Proof of proxy should be sent to the Permanent Secretary and the President before the General Assembly. All members of the delegation shall have the ability to attend the meeting of the General Assembly. The rules for participation by the members of the delegation are established by the President who presides over the meeting, which should be announced prior to each meeting. All members have the obligation to respect these Statutes.

## Article 9

# Removal of a Member

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All Members are free to end their membership in the B40 Network at any time by informing the Executive Committee. The end of the membership is enforced at the end of the calendar year.

Membership status of a local government that has statements or actions which may violate the B40 Network principles may be suspended by the President or Executive Committee.

A member who is acting against the aims and/or purposes of the B40 Network may be removed from participation in the B40 Network activities only upon a decision by the General Assembly with an absolute majority. The removal must be indicated in the convening notice circulated before the General Assembly in which the motion is voted.

## Article 10

# Annual Summit & General Assembly

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The Annual Summit is to be held in January of each year for 1.5 days, in the city that holds the next Presidency, with the participation of the Mayors of the B40 Network. The host city accepts to cover the costs of the Annual Summit.

The General Assembly, the Executive Committee Meeting, and bilateral meetings are held within the framework of the Annual Summit. The name of the Annual Summit is referred to by the name of the President's city and named in English as "B40 (name of the city) Summit".

The General Assembly to be held within the scope of the Summit has one session which is organized according to the following sub-sections:

- The outgoing President presents the Annual Activity Report.
- Presidency Handover Ceremony is held.
- The signing ceremony is held for the cities accepted for membership during the past calendar year, headed by the outgoing President.
- The mayor who has taken over the Presidency delivers a speech about the work that will be carried out the following year.
- The mayors who would like to take the floor present their views.
- At the end of the Annual Summit, a Closing Declaration is prepared and signed by the participating members.

The B40 Network is governed by a General Assembly made up of by the members of the Network and convenes at least once a year at the B40 Network Annual Summit. A quorum of 2/3 of members must be present or represented at the first roll call before any decision-making procedure may be considered by the General Assembly.

The General Assembly holds the final decision-making power of the B40 Network and it shall be empowered to observe all the powers mentioned in the "Organisational Structure and Working Principles" document. The following decisions are taken by absolute majority by the General Assembly:

- a) Nomination of the President,
- b) Approval of the draft agenda and Annual Activity Report,
- c) Removal of a member.

The following decisions are taken with the 2/3 votes of all members of the General Assembly:

- a) Amendment of the "Organisational Structure and Working Principles" document,
- b) Dissolution of the B40 Network.

The official language of the organization is English. But during the deliberations of the General Assembly, the representatives can express themselves in their own language with a simultaneous translation covered by the host city.

## Article 11

# President

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The President is approved by the General Assembly for a one-year term. The candidates are determined by the Executive Committee and priority is given to capital cities during the first round of candidacies, according to the English alphabetical order of their respective countries.

In addition to the criteria above, the President is chosen among the mayors who have at least one (1) year of mandate left.

The President hosts, organizes and finances the Annual Summit of that year. The President chairs the General Assembly and the Executive Committee and is responsible for developing priorities for the organisation during the one-year term.

The President promotes dialogue and good intentions among the members and shall work to maintain the prestige of the institution of the Presidency and the Network. The President is the highest representative of the B40 Network and may organise meetings or international visits in order to promote the aims of the Network. The President may support common projects among the members by promoting access to the financial instruments of international institutions.

The President sets the annual agenda of the Network, taking also into consideration the recommendations of the Permanent Secretariat and Executive Committee.

## Article 12

# Permanent Secretary

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The headquarters of the B40 Network and its Permanent Secretariat are located in Istanbul. The Permanent Secretary is appointed by the Mayor of Istanbul. The Permanent Secretary is responsible for ensuring all kinds of administrative coordination of the B40 Network.

The Permanent Secretary supports the President with the implementation of decisions of the General Assembly and Executive Committee and ensures that all members are informed in a timely way about the implementation of these decisions, in addition to making necessary announcements about the B40 Network activities, under the guidance of the Presidency. The Permanent Secretary assists and helps with the implementation of the President's program.

The Permanent Secretary works in consultation with the current and next Presidents during the planning and execution of the next Annual Summit. When necessary, the Permanent Secretary also handles the practical organisation of high-level meetings. The Permanent Secretary also prepares, edits and publishes information on the B40 Network's activities to the media and/or the general public, under the guidance and approval of the Presidency. The Permanent Secretary prepares the General Assembly Final Report under the guidance of the President and shares it with the members, after approval of the Presidency.

The Permanent Secretariat serves as an archive of information about the participation of each member by maintaining a membership dossier and providing any urgent and up-to-date information to the President and the Executive Committee.

## Article 13

# Executive Committee

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The B40 Network is managed by an Executive Committee consisting of the President, the former President, the next President and four (4) voting representatives elected by General Assembly priority is given to the mayors of Working Group Leaders' local governments.

The Executive Committee is presided over by the President after the election at the General Assembly and serves as the chair for one (1) year. The Executive Committee meets whenever necessary, convened by the President, or at the request of two members of the Executive Committee.

Members of the Executive Committee can be re-appointed and can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. No more than two cities from the same country may take part in the Executive Committee at the same time/period.

Any member of the Executive Committee is free to resign from their duties, by sending a notice to the President and the Permanent Secretary. In the case that all members of the Executive Committee desire to resign, such resignations should be announced to all members of the B40 Network.

The General Assembly retains the authority to dismiss members of the Executive Committee at any given time.

For a meeting of the Executive Committee to be deemed valid, it is necessary for a majority of the committee members to be in attendance or represented. Decisions are made through a simple majority vote from the participating or represented members of the Executive Committee. In the event of a tie vote resulting from an absence, the President holds the deciding vote. The Executive Committee takes decisions on the following matters by voting:

- a) Approval of the Annual Work Program
- b) Approval of the membership application
- c) Suspension of a member
- d) Determination of candidates for President

A member of the Executive Committee may be represented by another member of the Executive Committee when the authorisation is made in writing and submitted to the President and the Permanent Secretary. A member of the Executive Committee may not act as a proxy for more than one other member at a time.

## Article 14

# Working Groups

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Working Groups consist of experts in their fields from member cities. Working Groups develop concrete projects in line with the aims of the B40 Network. Each Working Group should have one leader who has been designated by the President. The leader may be chosen by the Presidency from any member city. Working Group Leaders prepare their Annual Work Program with concrete goals in consultation with the President followed by the approval of the Executive Committee, and reports, notes and minutes of meetings.

The four permanent working groups are:

- Local Climate Action
- Local Democracy and Migration
- Smart Cities and Digital Transformation
- Local Economic and Cultural Cooperation

The President may choose to assemble a one-year special working group to develop projects related to the specific themes or priorities of the Presidency.

Working Groups shall meet at least three times a year at minimum, (at least one of them is face-to-face). Face-to-face meetings are hosted by the city of Working Group Leader. The official language of the meetings is English.





[www.b40network.org](http://www.b40network.org)