

B40 Local Economic and Cultural Cooperation Summit Declaration

We, the Mayors and representatives of the B40 Cities Network, gathered in İzmir on September 4, 2025, under the gracious hosting of İzmir for B40 Local Economic and Cultural Cooperation Summit, standing united at this defining moment. The global challenges of climate change, inequality, migration and social division increasingly place local governments at the forefront of solutions. Cities today are not only service providers, but also key actors of social transformation.

We recognize that creativity, innovation and resilience must be rooted in local culture and strengthened by democratic participation. In this context, our cities will serve as open platforms where knowledge, ideas and talent circulate across borders. We underline the growing role of digital nomads, who bring new skills, entrepreneurial energy and cultural diversity into urban life. Equally, we highlight the potential of brain circulation, where the exchange of expertise between local and global communities enhances innovation ecosystems, nurtures cultural industries and supports inclusive economic growth. By integrating these dynamics into our policies, we aim to transform cities into hubs of creative economy, where cultural vitality and economic opportunity reinforce one another, ensuring that global mobility becomes a force for local empowerment and sustainable development.

We also express our concern regarding pressures and judicial proceedings that raise questions about the strength of local democracy. As B40, we firmly believe that the legitimacy of local governments stems from the free will of their citizens, and we do not accept any interference that undermines this principle. Safeguarding democratic values and the will of local governments is essential for building trust and resilience in our societies. ***In this context, our solidarity remains unwavering with Mayor of Istanbul and the Founding President of the B40 Network, Mr. Ekrem İmamoğlu, his family, the Istanbulites, and all Turkish citizens advocating courageously for democracy, freedom, and justice.***

Periods of instability also bring opportunities. We are determined to transform crises into engines of renewal, ensuring that our cities remain spaces of hope, trust and cooperation. This requires governance guided by shared goals, innovative financing, civic energy and cross-border solidarity.

We reaffirm that local governments are vital defenders of democracy and transparency. Regardless of national political orientations, we commit to cooperation based on our common values: democracy, sustainability, inclusiveness and human dignity. By sharing resources and best practices, B40 cities will stand as beacons of innovation and guardians of democratic principles.

This declaration is our collective pledge to future generations: united cities can overcome divisions and build a more just, sustainable and democratic world for all.