

Four cities selected to pilot a digital rights governance framework

Barcelona, Nairobi, Amsterdam, Brussels - 25 March 2022 - Four European cities have been selected to pilot different digital rights governance projects that could prove models for countries around the world.

Brussels, in Belgium, Dublin, in Ireland, Sofia, in Bulgaria and Tirana, in Albania, will work with experts in digital governance to co-create, design and pilot a [Digital Rights Governance Framework](#).

The four cities will receive technical advice, ad hoc support, and advisory input to address the pressing challenges related to the ethical and digital rights aspects of their local digital strategies and projects. The cities were selected in an open call for European cities to share their digital rights challenges.

UN-Habitat, the [Cities Coalition for Digital Rights](#), Eurocities, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), with support from Open Society Foundations, developed the framework as a normative and technical support for the upholding of human rights in the digital context of local governments.

Through the pilot phase, the four cities' governments will increase their capacity to advance digital rights in their local contexts and share the learnings with cities from all around the world.

Because digital technologies influence change at a fast pace in society, and might have unforeseen or unexpected impact on individuals and communities, there is a need for enhanced models of governance to manage opportunities and risks driven by technology and ensure digital rights are protected and promoted.

From planning the city's actions to fight the digital divide to creating a capacity building programme for the municipality's staff, the pilot projects will aim to implement digital rights at a city level in a coherent and sustainable manner, and to provide insights for other cities wanting to increase capacity in their local contexts.

The toolkits created during the pilots will be made available for other cities in a Digital Rights Helpdesk, a platform with a repository of digital rights resources that will also include on-demand expert advisory support, which will be launched later in the year.

Partners

The Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, launched by the Cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona, and New York in November 2018 and now with a membership of over 50 cities worldwide, is a network of cities helping each other in the greenfield of digital rights based policy-making. The Coalition is committed to promoting and defending digital rights in urban context through city action, to resolve common digital challenges and work towards legal, ethical and operational frameworks to advance human rights in digital environments. United in spirit and ambition, the Coalition supports principled actions and pragmatic guidance through city-to-city collaboration.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the United Nations agency working towards a better urban future. In close coordination with national and local governments, the agency leads the monitoring of SDG11 on sustainable cities and communities as well as the New Urban Agenda. In its Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and in the New Urban Agenda, frontier technologies are driving forces for inclusion and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, but require proper governance, mechanisms and capacity to address inequalities and leave no one behind in digital transformation strategies.