

## **Ricardo Rio – Mayor of Braga**



Ricardo Rio is the Mayor of Braga since 2013. President of the Euro-region “Eixo Atlântico” who brings together 38 of the biggest cities from the North of Portugal and Galicia, Spain, he is a member of the Executive Committee EUROCITIES since 2020 and the Daily Board of the Global Parliament of Mayors since 2019. In 2021, he received The World Mayor Sustainability Award for his efforts to deliver Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) at local and regional level in the EU the award of World Mayor of Sustainability.

Through his years as Mayor of Braga, was invited to be a part of the Champion Mayors initiative from OECD, which brings together mayors of the five continents, who are committed to the sustainable and inclusive growth. He was one of the Portuguese representatives at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and he is a member of the Portuguese delegation of the Committee of the Regions since 2018.

During his term, Braga joined several international organizations besides EUROCITIES in 2016, such as ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and UCCLA - Union of the Portuguese Speaking Capitals. In his previous professional life, he was the Secretary-General of the Portuguese Association of Financial Analysts and the Director of the Capital Markets Institute of Euronext Lisbon. At the same time, he kept working as a public and business consultant for several years, having participated in several Programmes of the Porto Business School. Ricardo was also a lecturer in several universities in Portugal.

## **Pascal Smet – Secretary of State Brussels Capital**



Pascal Smet, born July 30th 1967, Haasdonk, studies law at the University of Antwerp. Aged 17, he engages in the political movement. Soon he is elected both as a municipal councillor in Beveren and as a provincial councillor for East Flanders. During that period, he is also president of the young socialists.

In the early 1990's, Pascal Smet leaves East Flanders and moves to Brussels. At that time he is a civil servant at the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons. In 2000 he becomes the Commissioner General for Refugees. In September 2003, he becomes the new Brussels State Secretary for Mobility for the political party sp.a. Following the June 2004 elections, Pascal Smet becomes the Minister of Mobility and Public Works in the Brussels government. In 2006, he is elected municipal councillor for the City of Brussels and he becomes the (detained) alderman for public works, participation and equal opportunities.

After the June 2009 elections Pascal Smet moves over to the Flemish government to become the Minister for Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels.

In 2014, Pascal Smet once again chooses for Brussels. As the Minister for Mobility and Public Works he can make his dream come true: to foster a sustainable urban development. This implies a new way of designing public space. A bigger emphasis on public transport, more space for cyclists and pedestrians.

In 2019, Pascal Smet becomes State Secretary of the Brussels-Capital Region, responsible for Urbanism and Heritage, European and International Relations, Foreign Trade and Fire fighting and Emergency medical Assistance.

### **Markus Lewe – Mayor of Munster**



Mayor Markus Lewe was elected First Mayor of Münster/Germany in 2009 and re-elected in 2015 and 2020. As head of the municipal administration he is the speaker of the council and represents the city of Münster.

From summer 2018 until summer 2019 Markus Lewe was elected President of the German Federal Association of Cities and Towns. Since 2019 he fills the position as vice-president of the association.

With his degree in public administration Markus Lewe started his career as an advisor for the Westphalian state council administration. Between 1997 and 2009 he worked for the general vicariate of the bishop of Münster and was elected deputy mayor representing the south-east part of Münster since 1999 before taking full-time responsibility as First Mayor of Münster.

Markus Lewe is married and has of 5 children.

### **Anna-Kaisa Ikonen – Mayor of Tampere**

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### **Aziza Akhmouch – Head of Division Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities at the OECD**



Aziza Akhmouch is the Head of the Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development division within the Centre for entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities of the OECD. She oversees a team of 30+ experts providing governments with new data, evidence, analysis and guidance in a wide range of urban policies to foster smart, inclusive, competitive and sustainable cities. Amongst others, she oversees the OECD metropolitan and National Urban Policy Reviews, and a broad range of thematic work

related to housing, transport, cities and inclusive growth, cities and environment, metropolitan productivity and governance, and localising the Sustainable Development Goals. Aziza Akhmouch spearheaded the OECD Principles on Urban Policy and the OECD Water Governance Initiative. She also manages the OECD Champion Mayors Initiative for Inclusive Growth, the OECD Roundtable of Mayors and Ministers, and the OECD-UN Habitat-Cities Alliance National Urban Policy Platform. She holds a PhD and Ms Degree in Geography, specialised in Geopolitics from the University of Paris 8-Vincennes, and a Master's degree in international relations.