

Laia Bonet – Deputy Mayor of Barcelona



Laia Bonet is the Deputy Mayor of Barcelona for the Digital Transition, Mobility and International Relations. In this capacity, she leads the City Council's European policy, including the EUROCITIES' ExCom work. She is also the current Chair of the EUROCITIES' Knowledge Society Forum.

Laia Bonet is a lawyer by training. She is a professor of Administrative Law (Pompeu Fabra University) and Communications Law (Blanquerna- Ramon Llull University). Prior to her current role as Deputy Mayor of Barcelona, she was Secretary of the Government of Catalonia (2007-2010), and a member of the Parliament of Catalonia (2010-2012), where she was deputy spokesperson for the Socialist Parliamentary Group.

Alison Gilliland – Mayor of Dublin



Councillor Alison Gilliland was elected the 353rd Lord Mayor of Dublin at the Annual Meeting of Dublin City Council held on 28th June 2021 in the Round Room at the Mansion House. Councillor Joe Costello was elected the Deputy Lord Mayor.

Originally from Ballybay, Co. Monaghan, Cllr Gilliland has called Dublin her home since 1995. A member of the Labour Party, she was first elected to Dublin City Council (DCC) in 2014 representing the Beaumont/Donaghmede local electoral area and, following a boundary change, was re-elected in 2019 representing the Artane/Whitehall local electoral area.

She was Chairperson of the DCC Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) on Housing and is a member of the Finance SPC. She is also an alternate member to the European Committee of the Regions and sits on the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX).

Cllr Gilliland worked as a Senior Official with the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO). She headed up the INTO Learning Section and was their Equality Officer, supporting the union's Equality Committee and working on issues pertaining to LGBT+ inclusion, racial, ethnic and cultural diversity and member reproductive health related matters. She represented INTO on the Irish Congress of Trade Union's Women's Committee and on the European Trade Union Committee for Education's Standing Committee for Equality and was a member of the Advisory Group leading the ETUCE's Embracing Diversity in Education project.

Graduating with a Bachelor in Education from Trinity College Dublin, she is a former primary teacher. She taught for several years in Spain before returning to Dublin to teach in both Our Lady Immaculate JNS and SNS in Darndale, Dublin 17 and in Swords Educate Together NS.

Cllr Gilliland believes in lifelong learning. She holds a doctorate in Education and Research from the University of Nottingham awarded for her research into young teacher union activists' views and experiences of involvement, voice, and agency in their union and its influence on their concept of professionalism. She has also completed studies with Dublin City University and the London School of Economics in the area of leadership and with Community Law and Mediation in the area of housing. Alison Gilliland is the 10th woman to hold the office of the Lord Mayor of Dublin.

Mohamed Ridouani – Mayor of Leuven



Mohamed Ridouani (41) is Mayor in the city of Leuven since January 2019 and was previously responsible for Education, Sustainability, Economy and Urban Development.

He stands for positive change and aims to turn Leuven into one of the most caring, green and prosperous cities in Europe, in cooperation with the citizens, knowledge institutions, companies and organisations.

He's the inspirer of Leuven 2030, in which more than 500 companies, organizations and citizens are united to turn Leuven into a sustainable and CO2-neutral city. He also initiated Leuven MindGate, an economic platform with 400 members that will boost Leuven as the world's hotspot for health, technology and creativity.

For this groundbreaking governance model based on innovation and inclusion, Leuven has recently been named European Capital of Innovation by the European Commission.

Erion Veliaj – Mayor of Tirana



Erion Veliaj was re-elected as Mayor of Tirana in June 2019. His first term in office is marked by an urban transformation of the city, oriented towards the implementation of child-friendly policies as part of his vision of giving the city back to the citizens.

Prior to his tenure, Veliaj served as a Member of Parliament of Albania and Minister of Social Welfare and Youth from 2013 through 2015.

Veliaj was also the leader and founder of the youth movement "MJAFT", a civic organization which gained huge popularity for inspiring peaceful protest since its creation in 2003. Veliaj has also worked with several international humanitarian organizations in the Americas, Eastern Africa and Kosovo.