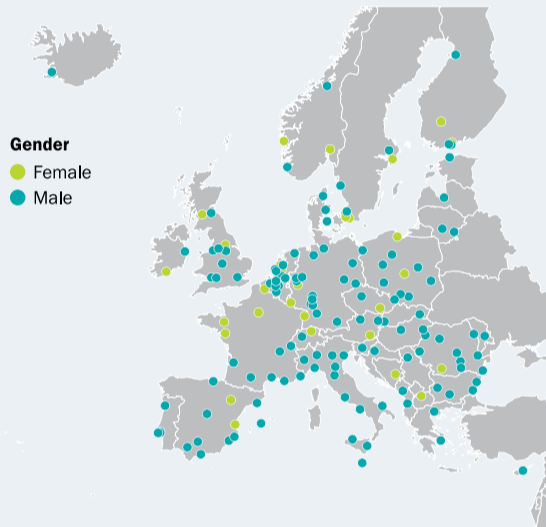


WHO IS LEADING EUROPE'S CITIES?

The majority of Europeans live in urban areas, giving cities a critical role in addressing the continent's most pressing policy challenges, from inequality to climate change. LSE Cities' **European Cities Programme** has created a knowledge hub of key data from nearly 160 of Europe's capital and largest cities, allowing them to track the changing nature of these challenges, and how cities approach them.

Among other things, they are monitoring the changing profile of Europe's elected city leaders, the extent to which they reflect Europe's growing diversity, and changes in the urban political landscape.

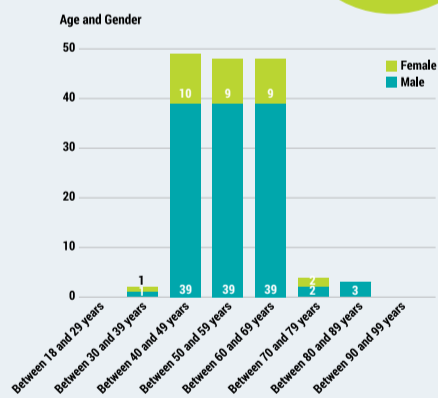
EUROPE'S CITY LEADERS ARE LESS DIVERSE THAN THE VOTERS THEY REPRESENT



GENDER AND AGE DIVERSITY

The average European mayor is a 54-year-old white man. There are far fewer female mayors – only one in five (20 per cent) of the leaders in our sample is a woman. Some countries are doing better than others when it comes to gender representation: five of the 11 French mayors are female.

20%
OF LEADERS ARE WOMEN



ETHNIC BACKGROUND

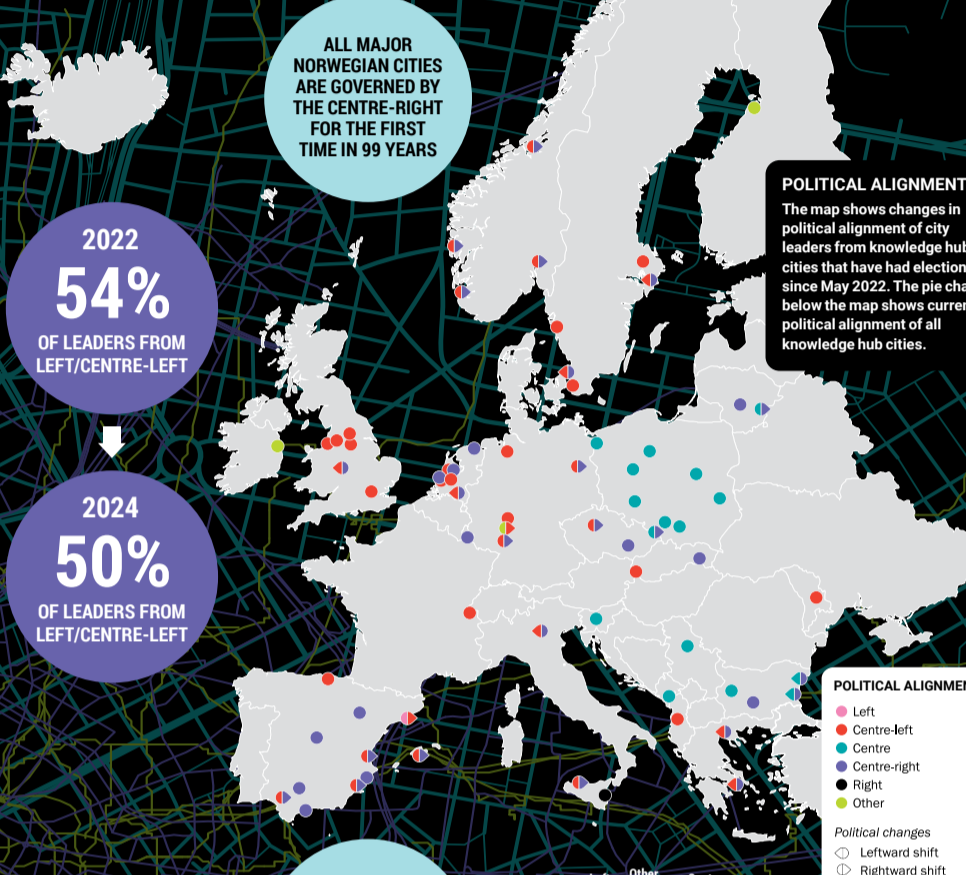
Europe's cities are becoming increasingly diverse, but at present only three per cent of cities are led by someone from an ethnic minority background.

Ethnic Diversity



3%
OF LEADERS FROM ETHNIC MINORITY

IS CITY LEADERSHIP SHIFTING TO THE RIGHT?

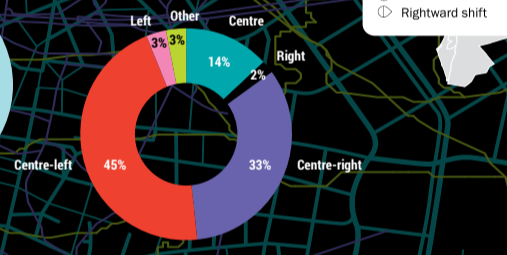


2022
54%
OF LEADERS FROM LEFT/CENTRE-LEFT

2024
50%
OF LEADERS FROM LEFT/CENTRE-LEFT

ALL MAJOR NORWEGIAN CITIES ARE GOVERNED BY THE CENTRE-RIGHT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 99 YEARS

IN SPAIN, THE CENTRE-RIGHT TRIPLED THE NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES IT LEADS IN RECENT ELECTIONS



Europe's cities have historically leaned to the left of their nation states, although a recent rightward turn in European politics is beginning to be felt in cities too.

This shift in Europe's urban politics is likely to be explained in part by familiar concerns over immigration, cost of living and labour market disruption, but also in part by distinctively urban issues, including city hall policies aimed at curbing car use. The recent re-election of Sadiq Khan as Mayor of London, however, suggests that it is still possible to win elections on relatively ambitious green policies.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR EUROPE?

Politics tends to be cyclical. We can't be sure if or how far Europe's cities will continue to swing right, or if and when they will swing the other way. But it seems clear that Europe's leaders will need to get better at designing and communicating green policies in ways that reconcile concerns for cost of living and day-to-day experiences of urban life with longer-term risks such as climate change.



RESEARCH BY BEN ROGERS, CATARINA HEECKT, FRANCESCO RIPA, NUNO DA CRUZ AND IMOGEN HAMILTON-JONES.
 SCAN TO HEAR MORE FROM CATARINA ABOUT THE RESEARCH

"IN MY SIX YEARS AS CITY LEADER THERE'S BEEN A SIGNIFICANT DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT WITHIN CITY POLITICS WITH MORE WOMEN, PEOPLE OF COLOUR AND YOUNGER PEOPLE IN MY COUNCIL GROUP YET WE'VE STILL SOME WAY TO GO."



Susan Aitken
 Council Leader of Glasgow (2017 - present)
Motivation? Having been a persistent proponent of gender balance mechanisms it was time to put my money where my mouth is.

Political hero? Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris. She has taken on vested interests, traditionalists and sexism to bring about genuine and tangible transformation on the streets of Paris. If Paris can transform its traffic-clogged, noisy and polluted streets to make much more open spaces that people can walk, cycle and move around more freely and safely, then it gives me hope that Glasgow can do the same.

"OVER THE COURSE OF HIS TWO TERMS AS MAYOR OF BRISTOL, MARVIN REES SAYS HE HAS UNDERSTOOD THE GROWING SIGNIFICANCE OF CITIES IN GENERAL AND CITY LEADERSHIP IN PARTICULAR."



Marvin Rees OBE
 Mayor of Bristol (2016 - 2024)
Getting more people into city politics? Anyone waiting for the perfect invitation from the perfect party to get involved in the perfect political system will be waiting a long time. We have to be prepared to bring our imperfect selves to imperfect structures.

Most encouraging change witnessed? Our city's increased willingness to begin to talk about race, class, poverty and inequality – and to understand and not hide from them.

"IF YOU ASPIRE TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON SOCIETY, ENGAGING IN CITY POLITICS CAN BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO ACHIEVE IT. IN BELGIUM, FEW PEOPLE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN NATIONAL POLITICIANS, BUT IN CITY POLITICS, IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO COLLABORATE CONSTRUCTIVELY AND TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE."



Mohamed Ridouani
 Mayor of Leuven (2018 - present)
Advice for new mayors? It's impossible to satisfy every citizen's needs and preferences. As a mayor, you're the keeper of the common good and the protector of the most vulnerable members of society.