



20.10.2023, Izmir

Dear Members,

We, the local elected representatives of European communities, must make every effort to improve collective actions of local and regional authorities in dealing with European and global challenges. In this way, we can progress toward more inclusive, transparent, just, democratic, participatory and legitimate local, European and global governance. For this reason, as the Metropolitan Mayor of Izmir, I dedicate considerable time and effort in decentralised trans-border cooperation. In this respect, I stand for the position of Presidency in the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. This responsibility allows me to contribute, promote and disseminate the good works of the Council of Europe on a variety of subjects essential for the citizens of my city and the citizens of Europe, such as democracy, human rights, rule of law, equality, nature and climate action, women and youth participation.

Izmir is a city of 4.5 million inhabitants with 31 sister cities from all around the world. The geographical location and history of Izmir allow the city to build good economic, cultural and social interactions with cities from other countries. 8500 years old Izmir is one of the largest port cities in the Mediterranean. The city is open to the world thanks to maritime and land routes that mingle Eastern and Western civilizations

People of Izmir are very committed to the European values. Naturally, as the Mayor of Izmir, I resolutely advocate these values. The posts that I hold in international and national umbrella organisations give me an important power to promote European values and priorities that my people cherish. I, currently proudly serve as the Vice-President of the Chamber of Regions and a member of the Executive Bureau. In addition, I am an active member of the Global Executive Committee of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability which holds official partnership agreements with UN bodies on behalf of local governments from all around the world. As a result of Izmir's commitment to international cooperation, in 2020, the city has been invited as a permanent member of Urban20 which brings the local perspective to the G20 and global economic cooperation agenda. I serve as the Vice-President of the International Network of Cittaslow, which raises new awareness of citizenship and human rights. I'm also a member of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Executive Bureau and the World Council. Within the Euro-Mediterranean context, I hold the position of a full member of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), representing MedCities. At the national level, I am the President of the Association of Social Democratic Municipalities,

Türkiye (SODEM). At regional level, I am the President of the Union of Aegean Municipalities which brings together 122 Municipalities. Thanks to various posts that I and Izmir hold in prominent international and national umbrella organizations, I promote Congress and Council of Europe values and priorities at many levels and many platforms. Consequently, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) awarded Izmir the 2022 Europe Prize, which is the highest recognition for a city actively promoting European ideal. Thus the resolute efforts of Izmir spreading the ideal of European unity is officially upheld by the Council of Europe.

My motivation for the Presidency in the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is exceptionally high. I firmly believe that both I and the City of Izmir possess the necessary qualities, resources, and community support to bring significant value to the Congress's endeavors. With the diverse assets, engaged stakeholders, and active citizens of Izmir, I am confident that we can make a substantial contribution to the Congress's objectives. We are here to build a solidarity bridge; from people to people, from cities to cities.



Tunç SOYER
Mayor of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality



Mayor Tunç SOYER – İzmir Metropolitan Municipality

Born in Ankara in 1959, Tunç Soyer has lived in Izmir since his early childhood. After graduating from Bornova Anatolian Highschool as a boarder, he completed his university degree at the Ankara University Faculty of Law. Tunç Soyer has a Master's Degree on “International Relations” from Webster College in Switzerland and on the “European Union” from Dokuz Eylül University.

He was elected as the Mayor of İzmir Metropolitan Municipality at the local elections held in March 2019. As the Mayor of a historically major port city in Mediterranean, he attributes significance to international collaboration. He was elected as a Board Member and Executive Bureau of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in July 2019 and continues in his role for the period 2022-2026. October 2019 he was elected Vice President of the Chamber of Regions of Council of Europe (CoE). Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. He is also Bureau member in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the CoE. Mr. Soyer is a member of Global Executive Committee of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, a network of more than 2,500 cities across the world.

Mayor Soyer’s International Roles:

- The Vice-President in the Chamber of the Regions and the member of Bureau in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe which represents over 130,000 local/regional authorities from 46 countries.
- The member of Global Executive Committee of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, a network of more than 2,500 cities across the world
- The Vice President of International Network of Cittaslow which has 287 member cities from 33 countries
- The member of United Nations Food Systems Summit Champions Network
- The member of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Executive Bureau and the World Council
- The Policy Councillor in the UCLG Policy Council on “Opportunities for All, Culture and City Diplomacy: Keys to Sustainable Development and Peace”
- The member of UCLG Committee on Local Economic and Social Development
- The full member of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), representing MedCities.

Under the leadership of Mayor Soyer, the City of Izmir:

- was awarded the 2022 Europe Prize, which is the highest recognition given each year by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) for actively promoting European ideal
- opened a representation office in Brussels and organized the Terra Madre Ecological Gastronomy Reception at the European Parliament in 2022
- selected for two EU Missions titled the “100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities” and the “Adaptation to Climate Change”

- is the first city in Türkiye to join the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Green Cities Network and to prepare its Green City Action Plan (GCAP) and its Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) with the support of the EBRD
- organized a COP27 panel on “Circular Agriculture” with high-level speakers from the United Nations World Food Programme, the World Bank, the EBRD and the Climate Youth Negotiators Programme
- is the first Cittaslow Metropolis pilot city in the world
- is currently preparing Türkiye’s first Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) with a €3 million EU grant
- hosted an increasing number of international summits and meetings, including;
 - UCLG Culture Summit in 2021 which attracted almost 1,000 participants from all around the world and produced a significant output, namely the Izmir Declaration, advocating for the role of culture in sustainable development
 - 3rd Mayors Summit on Living Together in 2021, in partnership with the International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together, based in Montréal
 - 2021 Délice Network Gathering with participants from 10 global cities that are members of Délice, an international city network on food and gastronomy
 - Terra Madre Anatolia Izmir 2022, which is an international ecological gastronomy fair, took place for the first time in Türkiye
 - Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) plenary session in 2022
 - International seminar for urban experts and decision-makers from all over the Mediterranean, organized in 2022 by the Agency of Sustainable Mediterranean Cities and Territories (AVITEM), based in Marseille
- will host the AIPH International Horticultural Expo 2026 Izmir
- awarded UCLG International Prize - Mexico City - Culture 21 Special Mention
- is a finalist in the European Youth Capital 2026
- became a Permanent Member City of G20’s engagement group titled Urban 20 which brings together leading cities from G20 countries
- chaired the Urban 20 Task Force on Inclusive Prosperous Communities in 2020
- joined the “Cities Race to Zero”, a global campaign supported by the United Nations and many more international organizations such as C40, UCLG, and ICLEI