



TEN U.S. CITIES JOIN CENTRAL EUROPEAN PRO-DEMOCRACY COALITION

Alliance for Local Leaders International (ALLIES) Named Strategic Partner

BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA – The Pact of Free Cities (Pact), a global network of mayors dedicated to defending democratic values, civil rights, rule of law, and quality of life is proud to announce a major expansion. On May 12th, during the Pact's annual summit, ten American cities will join the alliance which has been consequential in the fight against rising authoritarianism in Europe. With its new members, the Pact furthers the message of democratic solidarity across the Atlantic while adding a powerful bloc of pragmatic U.S. voices to the organization.

As a democracy promotion network, the Pact is committed to regular communication, the exchange of experiences, and the coordination of common positions. Member cities define shared problems, establish task forces to address them, and collaborate on joint letters, declarations, and projects. They also offer one another solidarity and mutual support, particularly those operating under hostile or authoritarian national governments, where cities continue to serve as bastions of freedom and democracy.

To support this historic expansion, the U.S.-based nonprofit [Alliance for Local Leaders International \(ALLIES\)](#) has been officially designated as the Pact's Strategic Partner. In this advisory role, ALLIES will help facilitate the growth and operations of the Pact, including mayor exchanges and working to bring new cities into the coalition.

On the Front Lines of Democratic Leadership

Founded in 2019 by the mayors of Bratislava, Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw, the Pact of Free Cities was created to counter rising authoritarianism and protect shared democratic values. Member cities demonstrate the powerful role of local government in sustaining democratic culture and putting residents at the heart of politics.

Since then, mayors have time and again shown up as democracy's front line of defense. Mayor Gergely Karácsony rebranded Budapest's Pride parade in Hungary as a municipal event, defying a national LGBTQ+ assembly ban imposed by former Prime Minister Viktor Orban, drawing hundreds of thousands in protest of discrimination. Mayor Michelle Wu testified before Congress in defense of Boston's immigrant communities at a time when few others dared speak out, while Mayor Jacob Frey prohibited city property from being used as ICE staging grounds, establishing support centers for Minneapolis's immigrant residents.



Consistently ranked the most trusted political leaders in America, the inclusion of these ten U.S. mayors marks a significant milestone in the Pact's evolution into a global network and sends a strong message of resistance to illiberal democratic trends and the centralization, and in some cases, abuse of power. These cities will now join Los Angeles, which has been a member of the Pact since 2021.

The newly joined U.S. mayors include those from:

1. Beaverton, OR
2. Boston, MA
3. Chicago, IL
4. Cincinnati, OH
5. Cleveland, OH
6. Montgomery, AL
7. Oklahoma City, OK
8. San Antonio, TX
9. San Diego, CA
10. Seattle, WA

"The addition of these great American cities brings a vital, pragmatic perspective to our shared global challenges" said Ambassador Nina Hachigian, Founder and CEO of ALLIES. "Mayors everywhere are on the front lines of the most pressing issues, from defending democratic institutions at the community level to tackling complex infrastructure needs. Their hands-on experience in delivering tangible results will be an invaluable asset to this coalition."

About the Pact of Free Cities

Founded by four Eastern European capital cities in 2019– Bratislava, Budapest, Prague and Warsaw–the Pact of Free Cities is a city alliance that includes Amsterdam, Barcelona, Kyiv, London, and Paris, along with some 35 others. It unites mayors from around the world committed to protecting and promoting democratic values, defending civil liberties, combating the climate crisis, protecting vulnerable communities and fostering transparent, inclusive local governance.

About the Alliance for Local Leaders International (ALLIES)



ALLIES is a nonpartisan nonprofit that connects local elected leaders with peers around the world to exchange ideas, solutions, and solidarity. By empowering mayors and governors to work across borders, ALLIES helps local officials tackle shared challenges such as the rise of AI, climate change, and restrictions on city autonomy. As the Strategic Partner for the Pact of Free Cities, ALLIES provides the infrastructure and knowledge needed for local leaders to strengthen democracy on a global scale. Learn more at www.allies.net.

For media enquiries please reach out to the Alliance for Local Leaders International at info@allies.net.

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