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# BARCELONA DECLARATION ON TIME POLICIES

**Acknowledging that time is a political issue and can be conceptualised as a right for all citizens;** that it is regulated by several organisations both public and private, and that the importance and potential benefits of urban and regional time policies were already recognized by the Council of Europe's [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on its meeting in October 2010](#);

**Attesting that the right to time is currently unequally distributed amongst citizens and time poverty in its various forms exist** within all countries and regions, as recognised by [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\)](#),

**Accepting that time use and time social organization directly impact the health of individuals** through the disruption of their circadian rhythms, which have been linked to several health issues such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, overweight and mental dysfunctions, amongst others, and recognised by the [2017 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine](#);

**Noting that the organization of time can positively affect sustainability and decrease our collective carbon footprint** through the promotion of sustainable mobility by [designing proximity services](#), as the idea of the 15-minutes cities which has been promoted by different networks of cities as Eurocities, C40, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Metropolis, among others; **the reduction of energy consumption** by reorganizing work hours and aligning our lives with the sunlight and the design of policies that take into account natural and social uses of time to minimize disruption on natural environments;

**Acknowledging that**, latest research on chronobiology, neuropsychology and other related fields, **links healthier schedules to an increase on productivity and on learning capacity.**

**Agreeing that time policies can be a tool to recover from the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for the [future scenarios of work as stated by the International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#)**, which includes at least, industry 4.0, automation, digitisation, ICT-based mobile work and other similar trends;

**Recognizing that women are disproportionately affected by time poverty**, and that a gender gap exists regarding uses of time, with less time available to women for themselves and most of the care-related activities disproportionately falling under their responsibility, as stated in the [EU Gender Equality strategy 2020 -2025](#), promoting as well a higher work-time balance.

**Acknowledging that time policies offer opportunities** to improve health and well-being of all citizens, increase equality and improve productivity at different levels and that these opportunities are especially **relevant on the post-COVID19 recovery plan and are**

**closely related to the objectives of UN 2030 Agenda, Green Deal Agenda and European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>1</sup>.**

**Considering that public institutions, social stakeholders, civil society and the private sector have major roles to play in defining and implementing effective time policies, bringing experience, innovation and campaigns and mainstreaming the critical need for a socially inclusive and a rights-based approach to time policy;**

**Recognizing that the European cities and towns, that are part of the informal [European Cities Network for Time Policies](#), which was created in Barcelona in 2008, together with metropolitan and regional institutions are the major public institutions promoting and implementing time policies since the last century but they need more support from other international, European and regional stakeholders;**

**Acknowledging that the [New Urban Agenda of United Nations](#) and the [Urban Agenda for the European Union](#) recognise the role and relevance of the urban areas as actors to achieve a more sustainable, just, green and healthy future, but they do not include any direct mention regarding the right to time or time policies.**

**Appreciating that currently there are many research groups, and especially the [International Association for Time Use Research \(IATUR\)](#) which since 1978 has provided evidence on the economic, social, environmental and health impact of our current uses of time in the society but it needs to be enhanced and effectively translated into effective public policies and practices;**

**Taking into account the Memorandum “[The Right to Time - An Urgent Topic on the European Agenda](#)” (signed on July 2020), that specified the need for time policies, particularly on a local and regional level, and agreed on the need of establishing a **European Academy for Time Policies**, as a space where theoretical and practical reflection and exchange on time policies take place. The Academy-project has been submitted to the President of the European Commission and is now under scrutiny of the EU-General Secretariat.**

**Recalling that in September 2018, the [European Commission](#) presented a proposal to end seasonal time changes throughout the EU, while leaving Member States the freedom to decide their standard time and this decision has not been put in place yet.**

**Acknowledging that based on scientific evidence the [International Alliance for Natural Time \(IANT\)](#) advocates for permanent, worldwide observation of natural time, facilitated by geographically appropriate, sun-based time zones.**

**Recognizing that previous mentioned stakeholders have made commitments to promote sustainable, equal, and healthy uses of time within their competence areas but that a truly interdisciplinary and inter-institutional approach is yet missing to place time and the citizens’ right to time at the centre of international and European policies related to health, well-being, equality, and productivity.**

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<sup>1</sup> Key social stakeholders have already sent their key priorities for it, such as [BusinessEurope](#), [European Trade Union Confederation \(ETUC\)](#) or [European Centre of Employers and Enterprises](#) .

Gathering in Barcelona, on the occasion of the Time Use Week 2021, we hereby state:

**BY SIGNING THE BARCELONA DECLARATION ON TIME POLICIES,  
WE COMMIT, WITHIN OUR AREA OF COMPETENCE AND POSSIBILITIES, TO THE  
FOLLOWING:**

- 1. We will work to generate awareness, develop, and implement time policies that advance towards a healthier, equalitarian, more productive, and sustainable society, that ensure that the right to time is acknowledged as a fundamental right of all citizens and is equally distributed.**
- 2. We will promote the dialogue, and work with all relevant sectors within each topic** (including public authorities, private and social organizations, civil society, and the Academia) in the formulation, implementation and assessment of all time-related policies, programmes and initiatives; **and seek coherence between them.**
- 3. We will encourage interdepartmental and cross-sector coordination** at international, European, national, regional, municipal and community levels, working to **integrate time policy considerations into social, gender, economic and environmental policies, programmes and initiatives**, including the ones related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the European Green Deal, the European Social Pillar and the “Future of Europe” Process.
- 4. We will participate in the development of a “Time Policies Framework for Action (2022-2023)”<sup>2</sup>**, with the objective to generate political consensus and make recommendations for a Global Time Policy agenda and develop an Urban Time Agenda.
- Based on this consensus, **we will review and amend existing policies, plans and regulations** to implement time policy recommendations in all the institutions and organisations responsible for it.
- We will promote and support the [Time Use Week](#)**, as a yearly international, **interdisciplinary, and inter-institutional** event to encourage time policies and share the progress on time policies and research.
- We will collaborate further to formalise the international Urban Time Network**, as a dynamic network to share good practices on local and urban time policies, to share major recommendations and demands and to enhance the visibility of local and regional time policies and networks.
- We will promote, conduct and share relevant research** on time use from all fields in order to contribute to the existing knowledge, **find a higher integration between research and time policies**, and work together for the creation of the European Academy of Times Policies.
- We will promote the debate among the scientific community and the relevant policy makers regarding the end of seasonal time changes**, establishing health and well-being as main criteria while respecting individual freedom.
- 10. We will encourage other relevant stakeholders to join this Declaration.**

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<sup>2</sup> For more detail, see the annexes in this document.

## ANNEX – TIME POLICIES FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION (2022-2023)<sup>3</sup>

**The Time Policies Framework for Action aims at generating and providing recommendations for different stakeholders that can help shape time policies on basically two policy levels: European and urban.** All recommendations will be shared and agreed upon by the relevant stakeholders in each area.

**Once the Declaration is signed, and to build the recommendations, [Barcelona Time Use Initiative for a Healthy Society](#) will set discussion spaces during the period 2022-2023.** The discussion will include the relevant signatories and the key stakeholders of each area, such as experts and public institutions, as well as social stakeholders, grassroots organizations, and private organizations.

### **European dimension.**

Taking into account the [areas of EU action](#), the sectoral areas in which the signatories will work to elaborate concrete recommendations at the European level will, at least, be:

- **WORK AND LABOUR RELATIONS**  
*This stream discusses time-related measures to approach new labour models and to tackle the impact of work trends such as digitisation, industry 4.0., automation, night-time and shift work and teleworking, among others. Proposals may include recommendations regarding reduction of working hours or regulation of the right to disconnect, among others.*
- **SEASONAL TIME CHANGES**  
*This stream will promote the debate among the scientific community, civil society organisations and the relevant policy makers regarding, European Institutions and EU Members States, to the end of seasonal time changes in Europe and agreeing on time zones, establishing health as main criteria.*
- **ENSURE THAT RIGHT TO TIME IS RECOGNISE AND TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION IN THE FOLLOWING AGENDAS:**
  - *HEALTH, ensuring that proposals made from a public health perspective health are aligned with circadian rhythms and promote healthy schedules and time organization.*
  - *GENDER EQUALITY, to ensure that gender perspective is taken in all recommendations, and that specific steps are proposed to reduce the gender gap on time poverty.*
  - *SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVITY based on the achievement of SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS and GREEN TRANSITION, ensuring that recommendations proposed relate to each of the SDGs and look for potential synergies with key actions being taken as part of the global effort to attain 2030 Agenda, the Green Deal Agenda, European Social Pillar and the “Future of Europe” Process.*
  - *DIGITIZATION, to ensure that right to time, as right to disconnect, it is considered while defining the EU digital agenda.*

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<sup>3</sup> This Action of Framework is a first draft and will evolve as the discussion spaces are created during 2022-2023.

### **Urban dimension: Time Urban Agenda.**

*With the aim of having an integrated and coordinated approach to deal with the urban and metropolitan dimension of time policies and legislation and to concrete priorities on time recommendations to improve the quality of life and work life balance in urban areas, a Time Urban Agenda, will be define with cities and cities networks and other relevant stakeholders.*

### **This agenda will include, at least, the following topics:**

#### **MOBILITY AND CITY OF 15 MINUTES**

*This stream revolves around mobility both at city and regional level and how it can be organised to promote sustainability, proximity and facilitate healthy daily habits of the inhabitants of each region. Proposals may take models already being developed such as the 15-minutes city or other related proposals.*

#### **CULTURE**

*This stream discusses current time organization within the culture ecosystem and actions that can be taken to make it healthier and more sustainable. Issues that may be discussed within it are current duration and schedules of theatre, films, and other cultural events or internal work habits of culture-related employees, among others.*

#### **LOCAL COMMERCE AND BUSINESS**

*Shopping hours have evolved in the last decades towards longer opening hours and weekend shopping. At the same time, e-commerce has significantly changed our consumption patterns. Both trends have affected commerce worker schedules and consumption patterns of the consumers. This stream looks at how commerce can promote a healthier schedule and consumers patterns can be nudged towards more sustainable models for both commerce workers and consumers.*

#### **EDUCATION**

*This stream discusses current educational models and how findings about chronobiology and its relationship to learning ability, concentration and memory can be introduced on them. Proposals may discuss issues such as educational schedules at different ages, start and finish times of schools, pedagogical programmes at education centres, among others.*

#### **PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRACY**

*This stream discusses current participation models and how findings about reducing the time poverty and having more leisure time can enforce the civic participation.*

#### **PUBLIC SERVICES**

*This stream discusses how we can adapt key public services being delivered at local, regional, and national level to align with their beneficiary's life habits and circadian rhythms. Examples*

*of such changes are opening and closing schedules of public services or digital services for the citizens, among others.*

#### *WORK-LIVE-BALANCE AND CARE*

*This stream discusses how to find a healthier and more egalitarian work-life-balance between individual life, care tasks and work , in which the data show a great imbalance between men and women.*