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PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CIVITAS Awards recognise European sustainable mobility success stories

*Sustainable mobility trailblazers took centre stage at today's 2020 CIVITAS Awards. **Las Palmas de Gran Canaria** (Spain) and **Funchal** (Portugal) took home two leading European prizes for clean and green mobility. Aachen (Germany), Larissa (Greece), Porto (Portugal), and Rome (Italy) were the runners-up.*

In a special session at the European Commission's first Urban Mobility Days conference, Matthew Baldwin, Deputy Director-General, DG MOVE, presented awards for remarkable resilience and boldness in response to COVID-19, and for using the CIVITAS Initiative as a springboard to reach new sustainable mobility heights.

Combining a rapid reaction with a long-term vision, **Las Palmas de Gran Canaria** was the deserving winner of the "**CIVITAS Resilience**" award for its extensive ad-hoc initiatives. These include increased space for pedestrians and cyclists, and car-free access to key roads on weekends – in the context of its "Mobility Plan for the New Normal", which heralds the scaling up and replication of short-term solutions. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria set itself apart from other cities by adapting its crisis response as the basis of a new mobility reality.

"In the tough times we face, there are few opportunities for joy. This is why this CIVITAS Award is so special", commented Jose Eduardo Ramirez, Councillor for the Mobility Department, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. "We are proud that this European-level initiative has rewarded our efforts to improve people's lives through sustainable mobility. For us, this is fundamental to everyone's wellbeing."

The wide-ranging responses of **Porto** and **Rome** made them very worthy runners-up. By opening temporary pedestrian zones, replacing parking spaces with 'parklets' for various uses, introducing an e-scooter sharing programme, and closing streets at weekends, Porto kept its residents safe, its neighbourhoods alive, and its businesses afloat. The Italian capital's support of physical distancing included promotion of walking and cycling, enabling safe public transport, and developing a plan for 150km of temporary cycle routes. Of these, 20km are already in place. Many of the aforementioned measures drew on ones already in the city's SUMP.

A CIVITAS member since 2008, **Funchal** scooped the "**CIVITAS Legacy**" award with its decision to address traffic head-on by imposing multiple traffic access restrictions and closing city centre streets to vehicles. This change was driven by involvement in the CIVITAS Initiative, which has also helped Funchal become a testbed for innovative solutions, such as automatic traffic counters. Politicians from the Portuguese city have also served as members of the CIVITAS [Political Advisory Committee](#).

Reacting to Funchal's victory, Bruno Martins, City Councillor for Urban Mobility, commented: *"Winning the CIVITAS Legacy Award marks a real high point for us and we are extremely honoured to have been selected. It is an important acknowledgement of all the work we have*



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done to make Funchal a more liveable, inclusive and sustainable city. This will motivate us to go even further in pursuing more integrated and state-of-the-art solutions.”

Both Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Funchal are involved in the [CIVITAS DESTINATIONS](#) demonstration project.

Further plaudits in the “CIVITAS Legacy” category went to **Aachen** and **Larissa**. Involved since 2011, Aachen has a rich CIVITAS legacy and remains active in the CIVITAS community. Its pedelec-sharing system, sustainable business trip policy, ongoing SUMP process, and the electrification of the city’s bus fleet have their roots in CIVITAS project participation. A founding member of the CIVITAS local network for Cyprus and Greece, Larissa packs an admirable sustainable mobility punch: its extensive pedestrianisation scheme and its new low-density city centre streets represent only two of its extensive array of mobility solutions.

The winners were selected by a four-person jury made up of prominent local politicians and mobility experts.

Matthew Baldwin warmly commended the achievements of all the award winners, finalists and other cities from across Europe: *“It’s incredible to see that these cities have shown such resilience, resourcefulness and adaptability in what was already a constantly evolving mobility landscape - even before the COVID-19 crisis. They have understood that exceptional times require bold action.”*

“Ad-hoc initiatives – such as pop-up cycle lanes, extra space around public transport stops, and swathes of new pedestrian zones - have been essential in helping people to move around and meet safely throughout the pandemic”, he remarked. *“Here’s hoping that many of them become permanent features. But many cities are also facing a threat to the provision and financing of public transport, which is a major challenge.”*

He emphasised that *“the Commission is ready to step up our partnership with cities and regions through our urban mobility programmes. As our mobility systems – and all of us in our daily lives – try to adjust to the new reality, we need to avoid a return to car-dependency and all that implies in terms of air quality, congestion, road safety and CO2 emissions.”*

Looking to the future, he implored Europe: *“Let’s keep our eyes on the prize as the European Green Deal takes shape: we need our urban mobility to be inclusive, affordable, green and safe! We need partners and programmes like CIVITAS more than ever before to help make sure this happens.”*

See videos from all CIVITAS Award winners and finalists [here](#).



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Notes to the Editor

About the CIVITAS Awards

2020 marks the 17th year of the [CIVITAS Awards](#), which provide a platform for towns and cities to demonstrate excellence in sustainable transport policymaking and measures.

About the CIVITAS Initiative

[CIVITAS](#) is a network of over 320 cities dedicated to cleaner, better transport in Europe and beyond, supported by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 funding programme. Launched in 2002, CIVITAS is now in its fifth phase. It supports three "Living Lab" projects implementing a wealth of sustainable urban mobility measures and 14 research projects.