

**CRISIS
AND POLITICS:
FROM FACTUAL
ANALYSIS
TO CREATIVE
STORYTELLING**

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BEYOND CRISIS - ANTICIPATING LOCAL AUTHORITIES DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES. THE EXAMPLES OF *LISBON*, *LONDON* AND *ZAGREB* THROUGH RECENT CRISES AND ESPECIALLY COVID-19.

Zagreb, Lisbon and London are three European capitals with a proven and recognised dynamism. In the cultural, heritage, tourism, creative and artistic sectors; but also in their construction, their urbanism, and their perpetual movement. Almost 19 million people live in these dense and narrow territories, usually described as capital-cities. However, the daily life of these large populations is governed by decisions taken by local authorities. Each has its own history, each has its own local political system influenced by the democratic struggles of their country. While London has a centuries-old political history, recognition of the role of the Zagreb municipality is more recent. Each at a point of the compass in Europe, they face similar challenges and their citizens share common concerns.

Each in its own way seeks to tell a story about itself to the world and to its own people. As a city of light, as a national pride, as an eternal avant-garde capable of inspiring the world. And thus, their local leaders are facing daily challenges to invent their own narrative and are

convinced that the decisions they make for their territory will make history.

All three cities have undergone major changes in the last three years. Some were similar and led to shared experiences; others were specific to each of its identities, the expected result of an electoral temporality or a natural event unpredictable in its consequences as well as in its extent.

At a time when local authorities claim to take part in world governance, the first aim of this research is to observe how each city reacts to these changes with its own political and administrative culture.

This project takes part in a larger thinking about how exogenous events gathering unexpected changes, contaminating all crucial activities, creating potential social and public protest, shortening the political leaders' capacity to build up a long-term collective project, i.e crises, change the way political leaders talk and make policy.

The Covid-19 unprecedented pandemy, through its impacts, its effects and its results, embodies

every component of this definition of the crisis, which makes it a highly appropriate study case. Beyond this universal pandemic, other major and second-order crises will be analysed in this study. Thus, the sudden death of the leader or the first local political authority leads to unexpected movements. The same is true for the unpredictable earthquake that hits a city, its inhabitants and upsets the expectations and needs of the citizens. Finally, a news item and personal story that suddenly finds a political resonance and changes the configuration of the public debate on an issue.

One perspective of this research relates to the public policy field, which includes the instruments, mechanisms and measures of national and local public policies implemented to react, adapt and prevent both immediate and long-term impacts of the crisis.

Analysing the discourses and the potential actions led by certain cities, local authorities and local governments in Europe, this project offers a unique opportunity to have a relevant panorama of local chronology and decisions made (or not) by three major local authorities.

Since March 2020, the exogenic crisis of the Covid-19 has been directly affecting the cities, their mayors and their decision-making process. In common understanding, European states appear to be the only actor in charge of leading political policies. Especially in this Covid-19 context, both media attention and citizens' expectations were focused on national decisions and announcements. However, cities can't be relegated to a minor position, thanks to their key contribution in providing solutions on the citizens' table. Finally, mayors and local authorities are on the leading edge to tackle contemporaneous urgent issues and in creating the conditions for everyone, everywhere, to thrive.

In order to have a panel of diversity in terms of size, position, impact and influence, three cities will be the core materials to be studied (i.e London, Lisbon and Zagreb). The urban areas of London, Lisbon and Zagreb are gathering 19 millions of citizens, representing a diversity of historical backgrounds, governance models and administrative and political cultures. Their

diversity will be a huge asset to fully understand each storytelling, from their unexpected divergences to their common priorities.

It is envisioned that the individual and the collective experiences of Covid have changed public policy priorities both from the perspective of the citizens and the decision-makers. From simple sectoral priorities carried by specific communities, environment and culture now seem at the heart of a common agenda that has become urgent to translate into actions.

This is why we have chosen to focus our study on these two fields of intervention, appreciating them in the diversity of the issues to be considered. Thus, with regard to environmental policies, we will examine the development of sustainable mobility, the reintroduction of nature into the urban environment and the issue of air quality. In terms of cultural policy, we will report on the way in which the leaders approach the challenges of international influence, support for creative industries and independent cultural players, and the issues of proximity and accessibility of cultural offerings.

Will the Covid crisis make the environment and culture more central and tangible in the government of European cities?

This study does not pretend to be an exhaustive academic analysis: it consists of the analysis of discourses, media messages, citizen reactions as well as shared scientific thoughts, in order to restore and reflect the history of this narrative and reposition each voice in the overall public debate. Once these words have been analysed, the study wants to share the measures, the announcements and the reorientations of each, following each major change. Finally, not only through specific lexical analysis, but also by putting into perspective the speeches and storytelling of each political leader, the strength of the crisis will become apparent in the sudden superficial changes as well as in the in-depth adjustments with major political and societal consequences.

ZAGREB ZAGREB

CHAPTER 01

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1/ INTRODUCTION

Zagreb has undergone a shift in its City government, after 20 years of governance by former Mayor **Milan Bandic** (*Bandic Milan 365 – Labour and Solidarity Party, Bandic Milan 365 – Stranka rada i solidarnosti* in Croatian, abbreviated to *BM365*, centre-left party). On February 28th 2021, Milan Bandic suddenly died and was temporarily replaced by **Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic**, one of the two Deputy Mayors at the time. **Tomislav Tomasevic** (*We can!, Mozemo!* in Croatian, left-green coalition) was elected on May 30th 2021 and took office on June 4th 2021.

The President of Croatia is Zoran Milanovic (*Social Democratic Party, Socijaldemokratska partija* in Croatian, abbreviated to *SDP*, left party) since 2020. The Prime Minister is **Andrej Plenkovic** (*Croatian Democratic Union, Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* in Croatian, abbreviated to *HDZ*, conservative party) since 2016. Zagreb acts as a City and as a County, and has a general competence clause.

Decision-making relies on the Municipal Council and the Assembly, which votes the rulings. The current City government holds 23 seats (on 47). The next elections are to be held by 2025.

CARTOGRAPHY OF *KEY PLAYERS*

DEPUTY MAYORS

- DANIJELA DOLENEC**
Deputy Mayor of the City of Zagreb since June 2021.
- LUKA KORLAET**
Deputy Mayor of the City of Zagreb since June 2021.
- IVICA LOVRIC**
Deputy Mayor under Milan Bandic's term.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICERS

- IVAN IVANKOVIC**
Head of the office for Energy & Climate since July 2020 (advisor to the Head of office for Energy & Climate from 2018 to 2020).
- TEDI LUSETIC**
Head of the office for Culture until 2019.
- MILANA VUKOVIC RUNJIC**
Head of the office for Culture from 2019 to 2021.
- JAZNA TOMAZIC**
Head of the office for Culture from 2021 to May 2022.
- EMINA VISNIC**
Head of the office for Culture since May 2022.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

- ANKA MRAK-TARITAS**
Member of the croatian Parliament and member of the Municipal Assembly, leader of the Civic Liberal Alliance (Građansko-liberalni savez in Croatian, abbreviated to GLAS, centre-left party).
- RENATO PETEK**
Member of the Municipal Assembly and head of the opposition during Milan Bandic's term, independent but close to SDP.

NON-ELECTED KEY PLAYERS

- VLADIMIR HALGOTA**
Head of the task force on mobilities for Mozemo!'s program of 2021.
- PETAR BUJAS**
Head of Zagreb's Cultural and Information Centre, and head of Kino Europa.

CHRONOLOGY OF *THE CRISIS* IN ZAGREB

COVID-19 RELATED

MARCH 11TH 2020

Vili Beros, the Ministry of Health, states the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

MARCH 12TH 2020

The Prime Minister announces the first restrictions.

MARCH 19TH 2020

The shops are being closed and public events are being cancelled.

MARCH 23RD 2020

Prohibition of leaving the place of residence.

MARCH 25TH 2020

First quarantine in Murter Island.

MAY 10TH 2020

End of the e-pass to control people's travels.

MARCH 25TH 2020

Reopening of bars and restaurants.

CHRONOLOGY OF *THE CRISIS* IN ZAGREB

NON-SANITARY RELATED

JULY 24TH 2019

JAKUSEVEC'S FIRE

On the 24th of July, 2019, a fire broke out at the Jakusevac landfill. 130 firefighters and 45 fire trucks were needed to put it out. While not being the first or last incident of this kind, it was the most severe one in 17 years. During the fire, black smoke covered a big part of the city, raising worries amongst citizens and experts concerning the health of Zagreb residents.

MARCH 22ND 2020

ZAGREB'S EARTHQUAKE

The 22nd of March, 2020, Zagreb was hit by an earthquake of magnitude 5.3 Mw, followed by numerous aftershocks (over 30 within 7 hours of the main tremor), including one of magnitude 5.0 Mw. The hardest hit was sustained by the historic city center and its monuments, public institutions and museums. Out of the 26 197 touched buildings, over 1900 were declared uninhabitable. In total, 27 injured and 1 dead were reported.

FEBRUARY 28TH 2021

DEATH OF MILAN BANDIC

Milan Bandic, mayor of Zagreb since the 5th of May, 2000, died suddenly of the aftermath of a heart attack on the 28th of February, 2021. His death occurred during the municipal election campaign period where he was a candidate, running for his 7th term in office. Deputy mayor Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic became acting Mayor of Zagreb and assumed Milan Bandic's role as candidate of the BM365 party.

2/ MAJOR STORYTELLING SHIFT

A/ MAJOR SHIFTS IN *ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STORYTELLING*

Three major enlightening developments in the executive's narrative about its environmental policy:

01

For many years, the City leadership has had little regard for the voice of the citizens in Zagreb, aside from in response to very specific and contentious protests. Over time, there has been a gradual shift: the outgoing majority is promoting a slightly different narrative, aiming first and foremost to inform and raise awareness among the inhabitants. The change of power in 2021 has had a decisive influence in this respect: abandoning this vertical approach of citizen participation, the new leadership explicitly states that the environmental policy must be based on citizens' expectations, and gives them a leading role in its implementation.

02

Reversing the previous narrative presenting a powerful mayor, capable alone of deciding upon all public policy instruments (procurement contracts, municipal budgets, etc.), the new Mayor builds a brand new storytelling: elected officials take a leading role to settle proportionate, transparent and coordinated public measures, based on shared priorities and goals, and involving relevant technical expertise. A less spectacular narrative, which values professionalism rather than hierarchical mayoral power.

03

Finally, there is a shift from a short-termist emergency response on health issues during the crisis to the incremental development of a complete narrative on a genuine health public policy (and particularly environmental health).

Both in waste management and in transport fields, the voice of the citizens seemed to be little taken into account. Although some protests made it possible to make the voice of the inhabitants heard and to halt a few projects launched by the Mayor, in general the Mayor took most decisions without having consulted his constituents.

Even when crises hit, a short-termism narrative took over, without consideration for the expectations of citizens. As an example, the day after the Jakusevec fire, Milan Bandic focussed on everyone's "good health" despite air pollution, stating that he would "solve the problem" as soon as possible, without really giving any details to back up this statement.

Systematically, a paternalistic approach was used to dismiss the concerns expressed by citizens, either to show that the situation was under control after the fire or to boast about the city's leadership in terms of the bicycle network, at a time when citizens were testifying to the dangers of traffic for cyclists and the inadequacy of the infrastructures created by the municipality.

Opposition and the civil society are still making their voices heard through the media, denouncing the lack of citizen involvement in the framing of public policies. The Mayor is certainly setting up a programme to raise awareness and inform them about environmental issues, particularly regarding waste management. However, this is not enough for many of the inhabitants of Zagreb, who were calling for an in-depth reform of the city's waste policy rather than communication campaigns.

In his run for the City Hall, Tomislav Tomasevic said that the voice of citizens was the *raison d'être* of his movement. A platform bringing together ecologists, left-wing movements, but also associations and representatives of civil society, *Mozemo!* seems to be a response to the frustrated expectations of Croatians, who had been little heard and poorly considered in the elaboration of municipal public policies. To the unilateral rulings of Milan Bandic, his opponent responded by proposing wide-ranging consultations to decide collectively on the direction of policies.

This new grassroots opposition force quickly made Jakusevec much more than a sectoral failure of the Mayor: the fire was presented by the opposition as the symptom of a vertical governance that fails in every area because it refuses to confront the reality experienced by citizens and to rely on them to transform the city.

When coming to office in 2021, the new regime confirmed its will to create a new governance model for the city by really involving Zagreb citizens. Their interests are presented as having been neglected to the benefit of the private sector, which was for example not interested in reducing the amount of waste produced in the city. In addition to symbolically placing citizens' expectations at the heart of decision-making processes, the new executive declared their intention to make the inhabitants the driving force to successfully transform the city.

01

Milan Bandic embodied a very personal political *modus operandi*. With nearly 20 years in office, he presented himself as the sole decision-maker, responsible for every policy implemented by the municipality, not hesitating to put himself on stage (for example, by accompanying his editorial on mobility with a photo showing him on his bicycle). His conception of politics was based on a one-time delegation of power by the citizens, when voting, and not on a long-term dialogue that would punctuate his mandate in order to reach a common definition of the objectives and implementation of municipal public policies. In short, the inhabitants are asked to trust his personal intuitions. Hence there was an absence of a clearly stated strategy that would allow his rule to be publicly accountable to Zagreb inhabitants.

The example of the announced construction of new waste centres, like that of the cable car, attested to the opacity that marks certain key decisions of the City Council. Faced with this, the opposition finds alternative strategies: for example, it invokes the international standards of its Viennese neighbour in terms of mobility and demands reliable studies to objectify the reality of Zagrebians' practices in terms of transport, in order to be able to produce credible and well-founded strategies.

After Milan Bandic's sudden death, his successor Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic, president of the *Bandić Milan 365 - Labour and Solidarity Party*, sought to rely on a more technical discourse, using a tried and tested method. Her narrative draws on a new language, which aims as much at masking the failures of the past municipality as at asserting her own tone on the local political scene and not being seen as a mere copy of her mentor.

Once in power, Tomislav Tomasevic and his new executive rely on a storytelling they previously launched in opposition, trying to appear more realistic and objective, less spectacular than the outgoing regime. However, if this tone of voice was primarily intended to respond to a public demand for professionalism and efficiency, it has also caused disappointment, as the new mayor does not hesitate to put forward technical obstacles to justify the delay in implementing some of his electoral commitments.

02

Both in the actions carried out in the waste management and in the transport fields, the health issue firstly seems largely ignored. Although health is an entire part of public environmental policies, it is almost never mentioned by the Mayor.

In the aftermath of the fire, it was more of an emergency that dictated its relationship to health, Milan Bandić only stressing that no one was at immediate risk. However, both the opposition and the media denounced this omission, and sounded the alarm about the air pollution in the city.

Milan Bandić's successor does not seem to pay greater attention to health issues, focusing on curbing traffic jams by building new roads: traffic congestion is presented as an issue of day-to-day life, never as a source of concern in terms of air pollution.

It is only the emergency caused by Jakusevec fire and the ensuing air pollution that allows the issue of public health to be publicly commented and discussed. From that moment, the issue of health however seems to have become a permanent fixture in the Zagreb public debate. The new executive is thus making it a motivation of the waste management reform, but is also connecting it to other aspects of its environmental policy, notably the development of active mobility.

In Tomislav Tomasević's narrative, the development of active mobility serves environmental and urban purposes, as they lead to the reduction of the number of car journeys in the city, but they also have an impact, widely emphasised by the executive, on the individual health of the people of Zagreb.

B/ MAJOR SHIFTS IN CULTURAL POLICY STORYTELLING

One major development can be noted in Zagreb's leadership narrative about Zagreb cultural policy: initially committed to the goal of gaining international recognition as a first rank cultural city in Europe, it gradually shifts to consider Zagreb peer-to-peer among other European cities, willing to cooperate with EU and to benefit from its support schemes.

This narrative twist is directly reflected in the tone of the executive discourses. At first, the arguments put forward by the Mayor persistently refer to the city's cultural soft power and to the excellence of Zagreb artistic offer, generating a feeling of pride among local politicians.

With the crisis, new and more concrete urgencies emerge: repairing the material damage caused by the earthquake, and paying more attention to the many endangered and hitherto ignored cultural institutions. Local politicians needed to adapt quickly to the actual reality being faced by the Zagreb cultural scene, leading them to publicly demonstrate a new humility.

It can be reported in Milan Bandić's discourses, but even more significantly once the new executive came in office. Tomislav Tomasevic and Emina Visnic thus mention the urgent need for cooperation with the government as well as with the European Union: despite significant resources devoted to culture and a remarkable heritage, Zagreb cannot and will not shine alone.

Relying on substantial municipal resources (7% of the city's budget), Milan Bandić was resolutely committed to a demonstrative cultural policy, aiming to testify to Zagreb's stated ambition as much as to his personal ambition. The Mayor, known for the creation of many majestic monuments, financed and produced large-scale cultural events, with a clear ambition: "to become the *European Capital of Culture*", as he explained as early as 2015. The advocacy of an unrivalled cultural offer in Europe was a common figure of speech in the municipal communication until 2020. Culture was described as a showcase for Zagreb, a window offered to the world to serve the attractiveness of the Croatian capital.

The successive crises of Covid and the earthquake suddenly brought to light the vulnerability of Zagreb's cultural infrastructure: on the one hand, the policy of pomp and circumstance had relegated to the back burner the ordinary maintenance of creative venues, including the major institutions; on the other hand, too little attention seemed to be paid by the municipality to the independent sector, which was the most exposed to the social and economic consequences of these crises.

Over time, there was a real change in tone on the part of the executive, with the abandonment of superlatives and a permanent attention to justify its policy in the face of opposition criticism of the weakness of municipal support for an endangered

cultural sector. This shift can be analysed as a result of the damages affecting the municipal administration itself: local officials and politicians too experienced the consequences of the crises, their own buildings having been substantially damaged, making their action even more limited.

The opposition took the opportunity to denounce a superficial and biased cultural policy, incapable of anticipating shocks and providing the necessary support to cultural professionals in their diversity. There was also a genuine dispute on Zagreb governance model: in the face of the executive's centralised cultural policy, the opposition called for "decentralisation and the integration of culture into the daily life of small communities".

Jelena Pavičić Vukičević, Milan Bandić's successor, took into account this critical remark, naming the cultural section of her 2021 electoral platform "Culture for all", even stating that "culture certainly takes place in the heart of the capital, but also in the outskirts of the city".

For his part, Tomasevic considers that the top priority is to support "derelict buildings, infrastructures in which no investment has been made so far". As soon as he came to office, he made the decision to reduce the budget devoted to "large institutions and major events" in order to prioritise post-earthquake reconstruction. This did not prevent Tomasevic and his team, through the voice of Emina Visnic, from making use of a voluntarist and ambitious discourse to claim the cultural vitality of Zagreb. In a major shift of policy and language, this plea for Zagreb cultural vigour is considered through a dialogue with the world and neighbouring cultures rather than through the affirmation of the greatness of Zagreb and the Croatian heritage.

**DESPITE
SIGNIFICANT
RESOURCES
DEVOTED TO
CULTURE AND
A REMARKABLE
HERITAGE,
ZAGREB CANNOT
AND *WILL NOT*
*SHINE ALONE.***

3/ FOCUS ON...

A/ POLITICAL LEADERS NARRATIVE ABOUT CYCLING IN ZAGREB

1/ Under the Milan Bandic mandates

CORPUS STUDIED

1. This editorial introduces the Report on the cycling subsystem within the traffic system of the City of Zagreb, published on the 31st of December, 2017. It is signed by the Mayor of Zagreb, Milan Bandic.
2. This official press release by the executive authority of Zagreb, published on the 9th of November, 2020, announces the conceptual and documentary preparations for the building of a state cycling highway, dubbed *Greenway* project.

3. This interview was given on the 10th of April, 2021, by the acting Mayor of Zagreb and mayoral candidate of the *BM365* party to the 2021 municipal elections Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic. The interview is part of the Sindikat biciklista's Cyclorejting project which aims at making sustainable transport a topic of discussion in Croatian political debates.

ANALYSIS

In 2017, in a column written to introduce a report on the cycling subsystem of the city of Zagreb, Milan Bandic expressed his satisfaction with the results of the City government’s mobility policy.

The column shows a clear intention to highlight the City’s progress in terms of cycling infrastructure, which “makes Zagreb a cycling city”. This is particularly the case when compared to the rest of the country. Milan Bandic states that Zagrebians are “the first in Croatia to introduce shared traffic with motorised vehicles in the city centre”, or that the bicycle training ground built in Travno is the “largest and most modern for the education of children and young people in Croatia”. The vocabulary used is explicitly based on the satisfaction of the City government who speak of “noticeable” and “recognised progress” and the need to be “satisfied with what has been done”.

Milan Bandic puts forward two arguments to promote cycling in his city: its “usefulness as a hobby” and the prospect of “increasing the mobility of citizens”. For the Mayor, by investing in cycling, Zagreb is also showing real ambition in terms of influence and attractiveness. The goal of extending its influence beyond the Croatian borders is asserted: the Mayor expresses his willingness to see Zagreb appear on the “European map of cycle tourism” and insists on the cycling event strategy laid out by the City of Zagreb, mentioning the “numerous sporting and recreational cycling events”, such as the construction of the “first enduro track” in Sljemen.

The emphasis placed on this strategy of investing in the attractiveness of the city and its ability to radiate is not enough to fulfil the lack of a specific strategic plan for the cycling system and the daily use of bicycles, which is moreover admitted

half-heartedly by the Mayor. He justifies it using a sibylline formula: “all our strategic documents as well as our operational plans contain important points aimed specifically at cycling”.

A somewhat abstract statement, confirmed by the notable lack of concrete figures communicated by the Mayor, with the exception of the number of kilometres of cycle paths, which have increased from 20 to 270 in fifteen years. As for the rest, he merely mentions “thousands of bicycle parking spaces” made available.

Milan Bandic uses all the registers of communication: the legitimacy brought by international recognition (*European Mobility Week award in 2012*)¹; the commitment to a multitude of projects “such as the *Greenway* project, the eastern motorway and the connection of the city’s network of cycle paths”; or the personal embodiment of the cycling cause, his column being supported by a selfie with his own bike.

Despite this rhetorical display, it is not enough to overcome the lack of long-term planning, as the Mayor himself concludes: “you have to be satisfied with what has been done, but you also have to work intensively on long-term plans”.

^{1/} This prize was awarded to the city after the signing of the Treaty of Accession of Croatia to the European Union in 2011 and before its entry into force on 1st January 2013.

In November 2020, after the containment and while the health crisis was still in full swing, the municipality issued a press release on the *Greenway* bicycle highway project. This press release, although it has its own limits in terms of analysis since it is not an official speech committing the speaker, attests to a first City Hall response to the growing environmental aspirations of citizens. Indeed, between 2014 and 2019, a few more Croatians each year consider environmental protection as important or very important (81% in 2014, 87% in 2017, 92% in 2019)². New expressions are clearly coming forward: from now on, the goal is to “increase the use of a type of transport with zero CO2 emissions”, referring to a scientific-sanitary vocabulary. This commitment is part of an overall plan to promote “sustainable mobility”, making cycling the core of it and describing it as an “environmentally acceptable mode of transport”. This argumentative and lexical register of environmental preservation was totally absent from Milan Bandić’s column.

A second intention appears for the first time: “to improve the safety of bicycle traffic”. The citizens are indeed expressing their dissatisfaction with the safety of cyclists at this time, as reported in the newspaper *Global* ³, which may explain the stated ambition to “create a positive effect on the environment and the undisturbed and safer movement of cyclists”.

Jelena Pavić Vukićević, who succeeded Milan Bandić, gave a long interview on April 10th 2021 for the *Cyclorejting* project. Several developments can be observed, the most striking of which is a new tone of humility and sobriety, in contrast to that of her predecessor.

This caution is reflected in the less peremptory words of Jelena Pavić Vukićević. She immediately confesses the City’s mistakes by admitting there is no specific strategy for the development and riding of bicycles in Zagreb.

Beyond this more modest review of Bandić heritage, the candidate remains unclear about her project and her vision for the cycling system, blaming a lack of strategy at national level. Indeed, she indicates that as “the strategy for the development of cycling in the Republic of Croatia is currently being drawn up”, she will “certainly coordinate the development plans of the City of Zagreb with the national strategy”. It is true that Zagreb will follow the flow set in motion at national level; the capital is no longer, as in 2017, presented as the leader of change in Croatia. As such, Zagreb now seems to be more interested in becoming part of the national territory and in being the connection point between the different cities of its agglomeration. The *Greenway* project, with a total length of 132 kilometres dedicated to bicycles, is now presented as the best tool for this purpose.

Moreover, the symbolic staging observed with Milan Bandić is dropped, Jelena Pavić Vukićević admitting that she “rarely uses” the bicycle, despite “unquestionably” supporting its use for fun or hobby.

More humble and cautious, she proclaims her interest in the opinion of citizens, in contrast to her predecessor, who was often judged to be out of touch with the priorities of Zagrebians. Jelena Pavić Vukićević verbalises the need to take into account the people’s demands, announcing she intends to “include citizens’ associations in these processes” and inviting them “to actively participate in the decision-making process concerning the planned projects that are implemented in the region where they live”. This new recognition of a role for citizens in the framing of mobility policies is also reflected in the inclusion of some of their priorities and the recognition of actual changes in their mobility habits. She states that she will take into account “the increase in the use of zero-emission modes of transport”, for example, a remark that may relate to the increase in the number of cyclists as a result of the health crisis and the earthquake.

1/ Under the Tomislav Tomasevic mandate

CORPUS STUDIED

1. This interview was given by the 2017 mayoral candidate for the *Zagreb je NAS!* newly formed party Tomislav Tomasevic. Ahead of the 2017 municipal elections, Sindikat Biciklista questioned each candidate about their strategies for the cycling traffic system. The exact date of release of the interview is unknown but understood to be somewhere between the creation of *Zagreb je NAS!* (21st of February, 2017) and voting day (21st of May, 2017).

2. This interview was given on the 10th of April, 2021, by the mayoral candidate of the 2021 municipal elections for the *Mozemo!* coalition Tomislav Tomasevic. The interview is part of the Sindikat biciklista’s *Cyclorejting* project which aims at making sustainable transport a topic of discussion in Croatian political debates.

3. This interview was given on the 10th of November, 2021, in Glasgow by the newly elected mayor of Zagreb Tomislav Tomasevic during his participation in the 2021 *UN Climate Change Conference*. He was one of the spokesperson of the conference.

ANALYSIS

In 2017, Tomislav Tomasevic has just launched *Zagreb je NAS!* and is interviewed on cycling policy issues.

Tomislav Tomasevic states in this interview his priorities in case of election, with the ambition to put in place “a strategy for the development of bicycle traffic [...] within a year”, a strategy that did not exist until then.

2/ Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment, Eurobarometer (2017; 2020)

3/ <https://www.globalnovine.eu/drustvo/ni-pravilnik-nije-pomogao-zagreb-nema-niti-jednu-legalno-napravljenju-biciklisticku-stazu/>

4/ Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment, Eurobarometer (2017)

5/ Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment, Eurobarometer (2020)

Firstly, the candidate points out a lack of raw data at both municipal and national level, which prevents the formulation of an effective strategy. Indeed, the “obsolete data” from 1999 mentioned in the *Croatian Transport Development Strategy 2014-2030* “cannot be used for quality planning of traffic development in the future”. The young candidate thereby denounces a lack of transparency that would be an obstacle to the good governance of the city and to a quality democratic confrontation. A concern that echoes those of his fellow Croatians, as evidenced by the 2017 Eurobarometer survey: with 28% of them describing it a priority to have better information to be able to deal with the environmental emergency, this is the only item in which the Croatian population is on a par with the EU citizens ⁴.

In addition to this will to end this statistical shortfall, the candidate’s second priority is the involvement of citizens, with the promise of a “broad public debate”.

This goal to involve the citizen in the decision-making process can be read throughout the interview, probably deriving in part from the genesis of *Zagreb je NAS!* which was born out of local citizens’ movements and initiatives. He mentions the need to move towards a form of direct and local democracy, with the

candidate planning to “use the mechanisms of direct democracy that exist in the statute of the City of Zagreb, such as local assemblies and consultative referendums”.

The future evolution towards a necessary lifestyle change is itself rooted in the citizen’s prioritisation. This change would be achieved through “solutions that involve discouraging car use and traffic calming, while encouraging the use of public transport, walking and cycling”. The words “encourage” and “discourage” are repeated throughout the text, supporting this intention.

The citizen consultation, while rooted in the nature of Tomislav Tomasevic’s political platform, also helps to explain why there is no tangible strategy, as it is “the citizens who ultimately choose the solutions to be adopted”.

Tomislav Tomasevic takes care to reassure his supporters, stating that it is “important to ensure a quality public debate with the participation of all stakeholders”, speaking of actions that are “certainly necessary”. He uses Vienna as a comparison city, indicating that Zagreb city’s modal split targets “should not be less ambitious” than those of the Austrian capital.

In a more symbolic way, he underlines his own use of cycling, explaining that “as a means of transport I use a bicycle and I do not own a car”. This is supported by the photograph illustrating his statement, reminiscent of Milan Bandić staging.

In April 2021, one month before the vote, Tomislav Tomasevic seems to want to project himself into the actual exercise of power, speaking several times about “his mandate” as if he was already elected. Since 2017, he has developed his plan for bicycle paths and can now, for example, present his 5 major infrastructure projects for bicycle transport.

This may be due to the growing importance of cycling during the health crisis. The candidate

speaks of the “potential for growth of bicycle traffic in Zagreb”, as demonstrated by the “great interest of citizens in buying bicycles last year, when thousands of our citizens cycled on half-empty streets without the usual danger of car traffic”. The priorities in Tomislav Tomasevic’s speech are therefore still citizen-led.

However, this will change between 2017 and 2020. Although there is still mention of a “public consultation”, Tomislav Tomasevic asserts an important change in allowing associations to guide and orient the elected officials in their choices. Thus, *Mozemo!* intends to “change the practice whereby traffic and public service projects are planned without involving the interested public, VGC and VMO, as well as professional and interest associations and organisations”.

In addition to the issues of citizen participation, Tomislav Tomasevic includes the citizens’ own priorities into his speeches. Thus, in 2021, a strong orientation towards “sustainable mobility” appears, taking into account the demands and sensitivities of citizens of the period. Tomislav Tomasevic thus promises the creation of a “participatory process for the creation of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, which will also include measures for the development and encouragement of cycling”.

The new emergence of the issue of road safety can also be explained by this permanent citizen priorities thinking in *Mozemo!*. Tomislav Tomasevic explains, for example, that he wants to reform all traffic rules that “need to be changed in order to increase the safety of all road users”.

Tomislav Tomasevic is not only going to give a voice to the citizens: he is showing that he is already listening to them, and that he is ready to introduce the regulations best adapted to their needs. A call to the citizens that echoes their aspirations, as expressed by the *2020 Eurobarometer* ⁵: in order to deal with environmental problems, Croatians seem to be particularly in favour of introducing more

restrictive regulations if they are adapted to their needs (31% of Croatians are thus in favour, compared to only 23% of EU citizens).

However, one can observe a new prudence in the discourse of the candidate Tomislav Tomasevic. Then given as winner by various opinion polls ⁶, he explains that “due to the complexity and slow pace of the process of amending the urban planning documentation, we cannot give precise deadlines for implementation”.

This delay is partly attributed to the mistakes and negligence of the outgoing City government, as “several decades of neglect of bicycle traffic will require significant investments in order to catch up and enable the realisation of Zagreb’s cycling potential in the shortest possible time”.

Six months after his election, Tomislav Tomasevic participated in the COP26 in Glasgow. The Mayor’s participation in the COP is highly symbolic and illustrates the importance that the new executive now wants to give to environmental issues.

In terms of content, the temperance of the discourse previously observed seems to be confirmed. Indeed, this speech marks a clear change compared to the radical discursive approach of the leader of *Mozemo!*, Tomislav Tomasevic underlining that “it will take time to transform the city”. The measures presented are also moderated: there is no longer any question of a grand strategy but of a “budget soon to be presented” and of “projects related to cycle highways”. The initiatives highlighted by the Mayor are not the broad public consultations expected but “shared traffic zones” and the “expansion of pedestrian zones” which is the “trend all over Europe”.

6/ A survey conducted for N1 by the MASMI agency and unveiled on Hrvatska Danas on March 17th 2021 gives Tomislav Tomasevic as the clear favourite in the first round with 37.6% of voting intentions, compared to 11.7% for candidate Josko Klisovic in second place. These figures can be found here: <https://hrvatska-danas.com/2021/03/17/anketa-masmi-koga-bira-zagreb/>

3/
FOCUS
ON...

B/
CULTURE:
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AT THE HEART
OF POLITICAL MUTATIONS

CORPUS STUDIED

1. This interview was given to *Nacional* by Tedi Lusetic on the 13th of June, 2019, on the occasion of his departure from the role of Head of the office for Culture, where he was replaced by Milana Vukovic Runjic.
2. This interview was given to *Jutarnji List* by the Head of the office for Culture Milana Vukovic Runjic, on the 15th of May, 2020. She uses this opportunity to talk about the City's actions for culture in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

3. This extract is the program for culture of the acting Mayor of Zagreb and mayoral candidate of the *BM365* party to the 2021 municipal elections Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic.
4. This interview was given to *Tportal* by the newly arrived Head of the office for Culture Emina Visnic on the 1st of June 2022. In it, she introduces the new executive priorities for culture.

ANALYSIS

In an interview in June 2019 following his departure as Head of the Culture Office, Tedi Lusetic paints out a broad picture of Milan Bandic's cultural policy, starting with the specific case of the *ZG classic* festival before moving on to discuss the executive's policy more generally.

The vocabulary used shows a City government that asserts its intention of accessibility and democratisation of culture: "the main objective is the democratisation and strengthening the accessibility to art and culture". This accessibility is based above all on a classic pricing action, with Tedi Lusetic⁷ insisting that "all programmes are free". Through this free access policy, the City wants to "attract a new audience to classical music, presented in a different way and thus able to interest a wider public".

A second striking intention can be underlined: mobilising culture as a lever for the Zagreb soft power and for the development of tourism. A real mantra for the City government: "after all the successes we have had during Advent⁸ and the increase in the number of tourists, it is extremely important to increase not only the quantity, but also the quality of all the cultural content in the city". And the interviewee makes the connection with "cultural tourism", those "tourists with extremely high purchasing power who travel around the world and visit cultural events".

This approach is not only aimed at attracting international tourists, but also contributes to the city's international standing. The *ZG Classic* seems to serve as a showcase, "to

show the many guests that we are a city of culture". Tedi Lusetic highlights his invitation to the "*Schönbrunn Festival* [in Vienna]" in the same year, which he hopes will strengthen the "cooperation" between the two cities.

On the other hand, Tedi Lusetic's intervention is fed by an institutionalised culture approach, dominated by cultural events at least partly financed and produced by the municipality, such as the *Zagreb Cultural Summer* or the *Bundek Summer Stage*. In addition to these events, Tedi Lusetic refers to pillar institutions of Zagreb cultural scene, such as the Zagreb Quartet "which is celebrating 100 years of uninterrupted existence and is unique in Europe". Tedi Lusetic presents a classical and even traditional culture, referring to the "folk show" of the *Zagreb Cultural Summer* and presenting the *ZG Classic festival* as a "true Croatian cultural product" that the City is "honoured to be able to offer to foreign guests".

The upcoming projects presented by Tedi Lusetic support this vision, explaining that he can "proudly name the future completion of the new municipal library" and the "construction of a new concert theatre".

Milana Vukovic Runjic succeeds Tedi Lusetic and takes over the office of culture during the double crisis period in Zagreb. The interview given in

^{7/} Personality close to the Mayor, several times head or member of the culture office between 2014 and 2020.

^{8/} Zagreb Advent is the city's Christmas market, which was voted the best Christmas market in Europe in 2016, 2017 and 2018. This event is part of the strategy to extend the tourist season beyond the summer period.

May 2020 is primarily intended to respond to the criticism of the City government’s cultural action, which denounces the weak support from the executive to the cultural sector. In this respect, the interviewer even considers that Milan Bandic and his party are “undermining it in an unprecedented way”, and points this out to Milana Vukovic Runjic.

The latter responded in three stages. Firstly, she backs herself thanks to the dramatic consequences of the crises, creating a “rather complex situation”, not only for cultural actors but also for her administration, whose own building “suffered considerable damage during the earthquake”. She insists on the impossibility of working under these conditions, notably due to the “rough estimate of the damage [which] is still too approximate for a detailed and thorough statistical analysis to be carried out on all the buildings”.

She goes on to stress the crucial support to be provided by the European Union through the mobilisation of EU funds: “for larger and more complex damage, we certainly have EU funds in mind. We have already expressed our interest to the Municipal Office for EU programmes and projects to use possible co-financing from EU funds”.

Once these two justifications have been largely developed, she underlines the executive’s awareness of the situation of independent cultural players, indicating that they “will be our priority when using the funds of the budget once they are received, as soon as possible. We pay particular

attention to the independent community, that is, to cultural workers who are not employed in our institutions and therefore do not have a guaranteed regular income”. This awareness does not seem to be followed up, at least at the national level: the *Kultura Nova Foundation* points out that “at the sub-national levels in Croatia we can see a sudden interruption or drastic decrease in the funding of non-institutional actors in the field of culture and arts. At the same time, public bodies did not react quickly and effectively to the crisis that threatened the survival and functioning of the non-institutional cultural sector”⁹.

In her electoral platform, candidate Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic, successor to Milan Bandic, immediately praises the extent of the outgoing municipality’s financial investment in culture, serving its European influence. She reminds that “with a total of 5,000 cultural and artistic events per year, Zagreb is a real living scene that nurtures and promotes cultural and artistic activities and invests substantial financial resources to make Zagreb a European City of Culture”.

This introductory paragraph, which is in line with the Bandic era, may come as a surprise, as it seems to stand in stark contrast to the title chosen for the cultural section of the project submitted to Zagreb citizens by Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic, “Culture for all”, a slogan that is quite used in the cultural sector to designate everything related to policies for democratising access to culture.

This theme of outreach and soft power is further developed throughout the document, with the candidate mentioning “numerous cultural events for which Zagreb is known in Europe and the world” and the municipality’s support for cultural initiatives that make the Croatian capital an “attractive city for tourists”.

However, beyond this continuity with several specific orientations of her predecessor, a new stance is emerging especially based on so far neglected themes.

First of all, there is the will to reveal the artistic potential living in every Zagrebian citizen, specifying that “every individual has the right to participate in the cultural life of his or her city/town/street”. Now recognised as a “pillar of sustainable development”, culture and its impacts are now seen in a new light, in that it would contribute “significantly to the development of a pleasant living environment and the revitalisation of the economy, but also to the reduction of unemployment”. A real “boost for change, social cohesion and economic growth”, in other words, a development lever for society and no longer a mere accessory to the municipality’s attractiveness policy.

Furthermore, the candidate takes a further step in recognising the contribution of the independent cultural scene, a stance already emerging during the crisis with Milana Vukovic Runjic. She praises “initiatives that come from outside the institutional cultural sector and that contribute significantly to cultural pluralism, diversity and innovation in art”, and explicitly values her “full awareness of the importance of cultural and creative industries”.

The new Head of the Office of Culture, Emina Visnic, spoke out as soon as she took up her post to mark the substantial reorientation that the new City government, just elected, wishes to promote.

She insisted on the municipality’s role as “coordinator”, leading a cooperative network, accompanying access to European funding and supporting projects that bring about change for society and the inhabitants of Zagreb. It emphasises a “culture of openness and dialogue”, which is “the basis” of the strategy that will be deployed. The emphasis is on a culture that enables citizens to better understand each other and neighbourhoods to better interact with each other.”

The transition from a municipality focused on its operators and public events to an administration focused on civil society and citizens, to promote a culture of emancipation “based on citizen participation” rather than a culture of entertainment, is thus complete.

In addition to these new priorities, she is very directly critical of the policy implemented until now, “without strategic orientation (...), guided by clientelist principles (...), with insufficiently articulated funding criteria creating a non-transparent system”. In the face of this damning assessment, she uses the lexicon of “efficiency” and “transparency” to obtain the “expected changes”.

9/ https://kulturanova.hr/research_covid_earthquake/report/

4/ ZAGREB LOGBOOK

A/ ENVIRONMENT AND THE CITY OF ZAGREB: THE AFTERMATH OF BANDIĆ AGE AND ITS POTENTIAL TURMOIL

1/ Waste management: from civil society to the political arena?

● BEFORE CRISIS

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The waste management plan does not indicate a will to deeply change the existing system. Indeed, the promises focuses on improvements or continuity of the existing system, or the simple reinforcement of educational actions, as indicated in the plan’s priorities: “Improving the waste management system [...] special waste and [...] hazardous waste, [...] the continuous implementation of educational and informative activity programmes and [...] improving the information system around waste management”¹⁶. Despite this lack of change, the Mayor Milan Bandić highlights the City’s successes in terms of waste management in every speech. He underlines that “Zagreb is the first city in Croatia to adopt a waste management plan and will be the first in terms of separate waste collection”¹⁷, as reported by the *Telegram*¹⁸.

The lexical field mobilised by his team is mainly in the areas of incentives and education of citizens. Milan Bandić, in a campaign video for the *Stavi pravu stvar na pravo mjesto* initiative, tells citizens that “we will learn how to sort intelligently in the kitchen”¹⁹. Senka Knežević, spokesperson for *Zagrebacki Holding*²⁰, goes on the same path and explains that the municipal will is to “encourage [people] to sort waste”²¹ and that “the aim is to animate people, to encourage them to sort waste. We are part of the EU and we just have to do it”²². The spokeswoman’s words were reported by In *Portal*²³ and *Vecernji List*.

Milan Bandić also puts emphasis on the ecological concern in his speech, explaining that “recycling is a prerequisite for living in an environmentally friendly city, but also a way of adjusting the capacities of the waste treatment system to the right extent”²⁴, as reported by *Vecernji List*.

FACTS

In 2014, a national law was adopted providing for the harmonisation and updating of public policies ruling waste management systems, to come into force in early 2018. A *Plan for Waste Management in Zagreb (2018 - 2023)* was drawn up and published, setting out the official priorities of the executive¹⁰. Among these, a major change in the waste collection process is reported by *Vecernji List*¹¹ through the distribution from 2014 of a specific number of waste bags to households, and initiatives such as the educational campaign to encourage households¹² to sort to meet the 2018 requirements, *Stavi pravu stvar na pravo mjesto*¹³.

In 2017, in preparation for Zagreb local elections held the same year, *Zagreb je NAS!*¹⁴, a new opposition voice, entered the political scene as a left-ecological citizen collective led by Tomislav Tomasević¹⁵, which made waste management a central issue in its criticism of the outgoing municipality.

^{10/} <http://eko.zagreb.hr/UserDocImages/arhiva/dokumenti/Okoli%C5%A1/Otpad/Plan%20gospodarenja%20otpadom%20GZ%202018-2023.pdf>

^{11/} Croatian daily newspaper, the second most followed newspaper in the country, with a centrist orientation.

^{12/} <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/kako-to-da-gradani-ne-zele-koristiti-posebne-vrecice-za-odvajanje-otpada-937146>

^{13/} Putting the right thing in the right place” in English.<https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/m-bandic-stavi-pravu-stvar-na-pravo-mjesto-940793>

^{14/} “Zagreb is ours!” in English.

^{15/} Future Mayor, long-time environmental activist, notably involved in Zelena Akcija (“Green Action” in English). He entered politics in 2017, and founded Zagreb je NAS! the same year.

^{16/} https://eko.zagreb.hr/UserDocImages/Dokumenti/Okoli%C5%A1/Otpad/PLAN%20GOSPODARENJA%20OTPADOM/Izvjescje_o_proved-bi_PGO_GZ.pdf

^{17/} <https://www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/bandic-je-danas-ozbiljno-rekao-da-ce-zagreb-bit-prvi-u-zbrinjavanju-smeca-sto-je-s-obzirom-na-kaos-sa-smecem-u-gradu-dosta-cinicno/>

^{18/} Information site specialising in social and cultural issues, with a liberal slant.

^{19/} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4xDRXMPVDk>

^{20/} Company wholly owned by the municipality. Its subsidiary Cistoca is responsible for part of the waste collection.

^{21/} <https://www.in-portal.hr/in-portal-news/sport/4824/gradonacelnik-bandic-stavi-pravu-stvar-na-pravo-mjesto>

^{22/} <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/m-bandic-stavi-pravu-stvar-na-pravo-mjesto-940793>

^{23/} The first Croatian news website for people with disabilities, a project initiated by the Institution for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities (URIHO).

^{24/} <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/kako-to-da-gradani-ne-zele-koristiti-posebne-vrecice-za-odvajanje-otpada-937146>

25/ Croatian People’s Party (Hrvatska narodna stranka - Liberalni Demokrati, abbreviated to HNS). Anka Mrak-Taritas left this party and participated in the foundation of GLAS following the 2017 elections. She still chairs GLAS today.

26/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/jakusevac-zatvaram-i-saniram-a-energanu-otvaram-na-zitnjaku-1142034>

27/ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH9ETYx6jAk\\$](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH9ETYx6jAk$)

28/ <https://www.facebook.com/ZagrebJeNAS/posts/416047982106696>

29/ Croatia’s third largest daily newspaper in terms of circulation, with liberal and social-democratic leanings.

30/ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/zagreb/tomislav-tomasevic-iz-platforme-zagreb-je-nas-magistrirao-sam-na-cambridgeu-i-vec-se-petnaest-godina-borim-za-zagreb-5961089>

31/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/kako-to-da-gradani-ne-zele-koristiti-posebne-vrecice-za-odvajanje-otpada-937146>

32/ The most followed news site in Croatia, owned by the Austrian Styria Media Group. Categorised as a tabloid.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Despite the relatively factual coverage, a few articles highlight both the poor results obtained in the short term and a lack of interest from the citizens.

A few months after the announcement, the daily *Vecernji List* reports on the lack of interest towards the new system: “only 1.2% [of citizens] responded to the experimental project” for the use of the new rubbish bags distributed by the City³¹.

An article in *24sata*³² questions a City government that makes opportunistic choices above all: “this year, the *Waste Management Plan* was adopted only to be able to apply for the European competition for co-financing of bins, trucks and other items”³³.

*RTL.HR*³⁴ also described the situation as “Zagreb is choking on waste”, citing photos of full waste containers³⁵.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

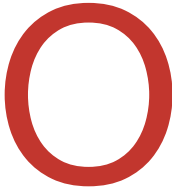
Several voices are being heard in the municipal opposition, taking advantage of what they assume to be inefficient waste management. Anka Mrak-Taritas, leader of the centrist-liberal *HNS* party²⁵, points out at a press conference followed by *Vecernji List* that “in Zagreb, all the lights are red, like above the bed at the hospital. When you sweep the problem under the carpet, it creates a big hill and you can trip over it”²⁶.

Coming from another political side but knocking at the same door, the new ecologist and left-wing opposition *Zagreb je NAS!*: the civil society coalition and especially its leader have made waste management a springboard for its political climbing, as Tomislav Tomasevic announced on the symbolic site of the largest Zagreb landfill, Prudinec-Jakusevec (nicknamed Jakusevec), that “the City government was not able or willing to solve this problem”²⁷.

Tomislav Tomasevic is also calling for fairer pricing and is putting forward proposals in this vein, notably promoting on his Facebook page “waste collection charges based on the actual amount of other waste produced”²⁸. This line is consistently repeated at every opportunity, particularly in his media conversations. Thus in this April 2017 interview given to the *Jutarnji List*²⁹, he details that in the event of victory, “as a long-term solution, we will set up a system of separate waste collection at the door and a fair charge based on the amount of waste produced by citizens in order to encourage them to recycle”³⁰.

FIRST CRISIS
FIRE OF JULY 24TH 2019

FACTS



On July 24th 2019, a major fire breaks out in the Jakusevec landfill.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

Milan Bandic’s first statements focus exclusively on the management of the emergency situation caused by the fire. In his speech reported by *N1*³⁶ following the fire, he highlights the prompt action of the City services and a situation that was not dangerous for the population: “I am happy that nothing happened to anyone, that there was no danger to people and that the firefighters showed at 6pm that they were the best equipped in Croatia. They proved that we have the best men and equipment. We have shown once again that we are up to the task.” He reassured that “everyone was worried about people’s health, but people’s health is fine and that is the most important thing”³⁷.

The fire initially led to a discourse of (moderate) “urgency” from the Mayor and his team, on the case of the Jakusevec landfill. However, if the *Waste Management Plan* foresaw that the landfill would continue to operate until 2029³⁸, Milan Bandic announced in the aftermath of the fire that “finally, the time has come to solve the third part - the mechanical biological treatment and composting. [...] The concrete solution for Jakusevec must be found within the next three years”³⁹.

Cautious and in order to face possible criticism, Milan Bandic is careful to share responsibility and explains that the stalemate in the Jakusevec landfill situation is partly caused by the lack of stability in the national government: “during my six mandates, there was always a different prime minister [and a turnover of environment ministers]. Now we have enough hands in the government to close the landfill”⁴⁰.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

On the opposition side, the first reactions do not focus on Jakusevec but on the broader and systemic problem of waste management in Zagreb. Matej Misis, a politician and candidate for the presidency of the Zagreb branch of the *SDP* in 2021, illustrates this by posting on Twitter a photo of dirty streets in Zagreb with this caption: “this is Zagreb according to Milan Bandic. The containers are full, *Cistoca*⁴¹ is nowhere to be seen”⁴².

The leader of the opposition in the municipal assembly, Renato Petek, independent but close to the *SDP*, shares this thought. Although he mentions the landfill in a tweet, he mainly snipes the overall situation that is “not acceptable”, listing “[...] in addition to increasingly cluttered garbage bins, unsolved Jakusevec, loss of drinking water supply, tourists and its citizens are ‘enjoying’ increasingly dirty and smelly public transport”⁴³.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The environmental association *Zelena Akcija*⁴⁴ reacts immediately to the fire and shares on Twitter its concern for the health of citizens, insisting on the blatant responsibility of the municipality and the national government, tagging directly the latter: “We call on @wwwzagrebhr and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Energy to take responsibility for yesterday’s fire in #Jakusevec and the threat for the health of the citizens of #Zagreb and to carry out a detailed investigation into the causes of the fire!”⁴⁵.

33/ <https://www.24sata.hr/news/kontejneri-prepuni-miki-je-na-putu-a-zagreb-se-gusi-u-smecu-598291>

34/ Croatian news website, owned by the private Luxembourg-based RTL Group.

35/ <https://www.rtl.hr/vijesti/foto/zagreb-se-gusi-u-smecu-kante-za-otpad-redovito-prepune-pa-smece-ispada-iz-njih-e1799426-b9ec-11ec-add3-0242ac120037>

36/ First continuous local and regional news channel and platform, affiliated with CNN (affiliated with left-wing ideas).

37/ <https://hr.n1info.com/vijesti/a422072-novo-obecanje-milana-bandica-rjesenje-za-jakusevec-kroz-tri-godine/>

38/ <http://eko.zagreb.hr/UserDocsImages/arhiva/dokumenti/Okoli%C5%A1/Otpad/Plan%20gospodarenja%20otpadom%20GZ%202018-2023.pdf>

39.40/ See footnote 28.

41/ *Cistoca*” is not only the branch of Zagrebacki Holding that deals with part of the municipal waste management, but is also the Croatian word for “cleanliness”.

● POST FIRE

FACTS

In the run-up to the campaign for the parliamentary elections (which take place early in July 2020), demonstrations against Milan Bandic broke out in December 2019 and February 2020, led in particular by *Zelena Akcija*. During these protests, the population denounced in particular the management of waste by the City government, following the announcement of an increase in taxes for waste collection.

Zelena Akcija is not the only voice to report this anger⁴⁶ as *Vecernji List* covers it too⁴⁷. *24sata* newspaper focuses on Milan Bandic reaction, as the Mayor announces lower prices for waste collection⁴⁸.

The March 2020 earthquake put further pressure on the system with a huge amount of waste and rubble that the City services were slow to collect, a situation highlighted by *Jutarnji List* among others⁴⁹.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

When Milan Bandic announced the lowering of the price of rubbish collection for households, for the first time he explicitly mentioned a restructuring of the waste management system, not just improvements: “by April 1st we will manage to reduce collection costs by at least 25% through restructuring, including staff, organisation and other things in Cistoca’s rubbish in Zagreb. This is my main concern in the next two months” reports *24sata*⁵⁰.

Waste thus becomes the “concern” of the City government. Milan Bandic confirms his willingness to deal systemically with the difficulties with waste, explaining that “today I am about to instruct Cistoca to collect plastic and paper waste every week (not twice a month)”. He added that the aim is that “within a month we will have cleaned up the city”, during a speech on cleanliness in January 2020⁵¹.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

The opposition is stepping up its criticism and continues to denounce inconsistencies in the waste management system. Following the reversal of the sudden rise and fall in prices in less than a month, Renato Petek believes that Milan Bandic has “lost his compass”, as reported in the same *24sata* article⁵².

The lack of transparency in the system is increasingly being denounced by all opposition parties. Renato Petek thus takes issue with new appointments within *Cistoca*, of which it is “not known on the basis of which tenders and decisions they were recruited”⁵³. The same

goes for Tomislav Tomasevic, who agrees with the opposition leader about “scams”, saying on Twitter that “without a change of government in Zagreb and at state level, there will be no order in the waste system!”⁵⁴.

As for the substantive arguments, *Mozemo!*⁵⁵, main leftist opposition force, focuses on the necessary overhaul of the collection system and the introduction of fair pricing. Jakusevec “cannot be closed until municipal waste management is changed and a fair waste collection system is introduced”⁵⁶, Tomislav Tomasevic said in a statement reported by the *Telegram*.

Moreover, it incorporates new issues into its critique, raising health and ecological concerns that had previously been relegated to the background. Tomislav Tomasevic thus asks that all those who “want a sustainable waste management system, all those in Zagreb who are bothered by the unbearable stench of Jakusevec” vote for *Mozemo!* so that “the environment and health will finally take on political importance”⁵⁷.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The protests seem to be primarily driven by criticism of unfair pricing and mismanagement. On its Instagram account, *Zelena Akcija* echoes this, stating that the December 9th demonstration is taking place “because of the chaos with rubbish in Zagreb and the increase in the price of waste collection”⁵⁸. While referring to an “unacceptable tax for citizens’ pockets, contrary to legal provisions”, *Zelena Akcija* promises that the “resistance will not stop until citizens have a good and fair waste management system!”⁵⁹.

In addition to the waste management system and the tariff issue, the media coverage shows a lasting impact of the fire on the minds of Zagrebians, with strong concerns emerging, especially in terms of health. For example, an October 2019 article on *Tportal*⁶⁰ states that “the Jakusevec smoke that hung over the metropolis two months ago after the fire was not as harmless as claimed”⁶¹.

On February 6th 2020, *Vecernji List* covered a citizen happening around another Zagreb landfill, Zitnjak. This one denounces again the lack of differentiated treatment of sorted waste, which would simply be stored by the company paid for its recycling, despite a prior sorting made by the citizens. The shadow of “a new Jakusevec” looms large, Zitnjak being described as “an ecological bomb” in the same way as Jakusevec⁶².

42/ <https://twitter.com/MisicMatej/status/1146119173145333763>
43/ <https://twitter.com/RenatoPetek/status/1176415476798373889>
44/ Green Action, an environmental association founded in 1990, of which Tomislav Tomasevic was an active member before running for Mayor. It is a very active association with strong support in Zagreb.
45/ <https://twitter.com/Zelenaakcija/status/1154344105763319808>
46/ <https://www.instagram.com/p/B52LeErJGwi/> et <https://www.instagram.com/p/B5-CMWqJdNP/>

47/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/kamioni-za-46-milijuna-a-biootpad-se-nema-gdje-zbrinuti-1372291>
48/ <https://www.24sata.hr/news/bandic-najavio-jeftiniji-odvoz-smeca-u-zagrebu-za-25-posto-670262>
49/ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/je-li-potres-bio-prije-30-minuta-ili-30-dana-sto-je-sve-dosad-napravljeno-u-sklopu-obnove-u-zagrebu-i-povratka-stanara-u-svoje-domove-10233526>
50.51.52.53/ See footnote 39
54/ <https://twitter.com/ttomasevichr/status/1222909882459938816>

55/ *Mozemo! (We can! in English)* is a coalition formed in 2019 and running in the 2020 Croatian parliamentary elections and the 2021 Zagreb municipal elections. Composed of various left-wing and green initiatives and citizen movements, including Zagreb je NAS!, it is led by Tomislav Tomasevic.
56/ <https://www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/platforma-mozemo-obecaje-da-ce-zatvoriti-odlagaliste-otpada-jakusevec-kroz-dvije-ili-tri-godine/>
57/ See footnote 47
58/ <https://www.instagram.com/p/B52LeErJGwi/>

59/ <https://www.instagram.com/p/B5-CMWqJdNP/>
60/ One of the five most popular news sites in Croatia, owned by Hrvatski Telekom and tending to reflect its views, although it remains relatively independent of political parties.
61/ <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/hocemo-li-ikada-doznati-koliko-je-opasan-po-zdravlje-bio-pozar-na-jakusevcu-20191001>
62/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/ekoloska-bomba-na-istoku-zagreba-ovako-završava-plastika-koju-gradani-odvajaju-1377365>

● SECOND CRISIS
DEATH OF MILAN BANDIC

FACTS

The Zagreb municipal elections of June 2021 follow the national parliamentary elections of July 2020, setting the pace of life in Zagreb for a year. However, the electoral process was disrupted by the sudden death of Mayor Milan Bandic, in office since 2000 and once again up for re-election, who suffered a heart attack on February 28th 2021.

During this campaign and for the first time, waste management and the specific situation of Jakusevec are among the key issues for all candidates.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic, a former deputy, was hastily appointed to succeed Milan Bandic. From her first speeches, a change of tone and discourse appeared, particularly on the issue of waste management, by the outgoing executive. This became one of the five priorities of the new candidate's electoral programme. The very accessible and performative speeches of Milan Bandic were followed by more technical speeches. For example, on the subject of the closure of Jakusevec, she said: "The completion of the documentation and the obtaining of the necessary permits are expected in the second half of 2022, and the start of the construction of the Waste Management Centre in 2024 and the start of the Centre in 2025. After that, it will be possible to close the Jakusevec landfill for the treatment of unsorted waste". This shows a new willingness to respond very directly to the growing concerns of Croatians on environmental issues.

Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic prioritises the construction of waste sorting and management infrastructures, including a recycling facility. This prioritisation is explicitly reflected in her speeches, stressing the need for "independence from the private sector", describing the development of new infrastructures as "the key to Zagreb self-sufficiency and independence", this is in contrast to the rhetoric of Milan Bandic, who initiated the privatisation of certain activities in the sector.

However, she defends Milan Bandic's record, saying that City Hall action over the past four years "has led to a sharp increase in the rate of waste separation in the city of Zagreb, which now includes bulky waste from households and amounts to 44%". It is also a continuation of some of the City's initiatives, such as the civic education campaign *Stavi pravu stvar na pravo mjesto*.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Campaign speeches by the opposition forces show that there is no shift in priorities, especially on the issue of a necessary comprehensive overhaul of the waste management system and a quick solution to the Jakusevec situation. Nationalist candidate and popular singer Miroslav Skoro promises that "the Jakusevec landfill will be closed and that waste management will be improved", as reported by *Total Croatia*. He denounced the inaction of Milan Bandic's term of office, explaining that this era is now over and that it is high time to introduce "a new model of managing Zagreb in accordance with the needs of its residents and the 21st century". The discourse of the traditional left (*SDP*) follows this line, reminding every people in Zagreb, as reported by *Zagreb.info*, the failed promises of the City government candidates, in particular on the closure of Jakusevec. For his part, the candidate of Mozemo! Tomislav Tomasevic emphasises closure, "a priority of my mandate", and the overhaul of the waste management system through the "reform of Zagreb Holding", as he explains on the TV set of *Vecernji List*.

Josip Klisovic, the *SDP* candidate, has two priorities: to rid the city of "garbage bins and containers that dominate the streets and spread the stench"; and to introduce fair pricing based on "the amount [citizens] throw away, not on volume or some other unfair variable".

The lexicon of health issues was also widely used by the opposition during the election period. Firstly, by Renato Petek and his running mates,

who denounced, in reference to Jakusevec and the fire that took place there, "the poor quality of the air that citizens breathe". Also by Tomislav Tomasevic who deplores "poor air quality" in a speech on Jakusevec.

This election period is finally the opportunity to bring out the new theme of the circular economy, a third solution to the problem of waste in Zagreb. Josko Klisovic wants to "make Zagreb a waste-free city by creating a new circular economy business zone, where we will solve the problem of waste in Zagreb in a comprehensive way". For *Mozemo!*, the objective is clear and included in the electoral programme: "to establish a circular economy in which waste is a precious raw material".

The last angle, on which only *Mozemo!* ventures, is the difficult public/private management of waste. The left-wing ecologist denounces private companies that "have no interest in reducing the quantity of waste because more waste brings them more profit". Hence the need to "put the competence of waste management back in the hands of the City". A perspective that requires the construction of missing infrastructures for a waste management managed solely by the municipality.

63/ <https://www.365ris.hr/jelena-pavicic-vukicevic-predstavila-izborni-program-stranke-rada-i-solidarnosti>

64/ See footnote 54

65.66/ Especially through a contract between the City and the company CIOS, which led to his arrest in 2014 on suspicion of corruption, events reported by Dnevnik among other media. <https://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/afeta-gram-optuznica-protiv-bandica-pred-optuznim-vijecem---431634.html>

67/ Total Croatia News is a news website launched in 2016 by a British expat with the aim of promoting Croatia abroad and informing about what is happening in the country in general.

68/ <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/news/51210-mayoral-candidate-miroslav-skoro-promises-free-zagreb-kindergartens-closure-of-jakusevac-landfill>

69/ General news website about the City of Zagreb, to be read with caution as some consider it as a tabloid.

70/ <https://www.zagreb.info/aktualno/zg-politika/zahvalio-antifasistima-klisovic-subotu-iskoristio-za-posjet-jakusevcu-i-porucio-mi-cemo-se-reviziji-povijesti-uvijek-snazno-suprotstaviti/334321/>

71/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/tomasevic-vec-u-svom-prvom-mandatu-zatvorit-cu-odlagaliste-jakusevac-1469671>

72.73/ See footnote 61

74/ See footnote 62

75/ See footnote 61

76/ <https://zagreb.mozemo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Mozemo-ZJN-Program-za-Zagreb.pdf>

● POST-CRISIS AND CURRENT SITUATION (UNTIL MARCH 2022)

FACT

The results of the municipal election were marked by the fall of the traditional parties and the City government’s party, which had been in power for 20 years. The second round led Tomislav Tomasevic and Miroslav Skoro to compete. The former was elected Mayor and took office on June 4th 2021.

In September, the new executive reaffirmed the vision presented during the campaign and confirmed its project for the waste management system, specifying its plan: the construction of infrastructures (sorting facility, composting and recycling centre) and the recovery and sale of waste⁷⁷.

Tomislav Tomasevic first announces a reform of the payment system on January 21st 2022⁷⁸, then an in-depth reform of the waste collection system, unexpectedly postponed to October 1st 2022⁷⁹.

THE NEW EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

In September 2021, Danijela Dolenec, Tomislav Tomasevic’s deputy, presented the new executive’s plan for waste management. We find in her comments shared on Facebook most of the themes previously presented as well as a questioning of the previous City government, recalling “that the previous Mayor did not deal with the issue of waste in 20 years”. However, the situation described is more radical: *Mozemo!* has claimed so far that the waste management system needed to be reformed; Danijela Dolenec now underscores “there is no system” and that “to close Jakusevec, we need to build a system”⁸⁰.

When in power, the discourse of the new City government thus evolves, illustrating its will to protect itself from criticism of its own action. When the Mayor announced the imminent opening of a new warehouse in Jakusevec to deal with the saturation of sorting warehouses, some talking points recall Milan Bandic’s vocabulary. Tomislav Tomasevic spoke in particular of the need for greater cooperation with the state via “the harmonisation of waste management rules with the new law”⁸¹ in a statement reported by *Tportal*. The new Mayor also wants “each household to really pay for the collection service according to the quantity of unsorted waste emitted, in order to give them as much financial incentive as possible to sort”⁸². This is a variation of a discourse that until now has focused on the issue of equity, and not on the need to financially

encourage citizens to sort, which echoes the *Stavi pravu stvar na pravo mjesto* campaign initiated by the former Mayor.

The new executive will also use the motivation of a City in the vanguard, explaining about the reform of the management system that “it is one of the most ambitious projects in Croatia, Zagreb is the only city that has gone in this direction”⁸³.

In March 2022, the new City government underwent demonstrations by residents of Jakusevec. The new Mayor gradually became independent of the citizens’ demands and, astonished, declared at a press conference reported by *Nacional*⁸⁴ “not understanding how it is possible that these protests are starting now, after 20 years when nothing has been done to close the Jakusevec dump”⁸⁵.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Still sitting in the opposition, Renato Petek does not seem to mark any difference in his speech between Milan Bandic and Tomislav Tomasevic’s mandates, and expresses on Facebook his surprise at a “new slow and indecisive government”⁸⁶.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Citizens seem to regret the lack of progress, especially in relation to the situation in Jakusevec. An article in *Vecernji List* reports on a forum in Jakusevec called “Je li dosta”⁸⁷, which clearly echoes the anti-Bandic slogan hammered out during the 2019 protests: “Dosta je!”⁸⁸.

The management of the new municipality is described as “ignorant, irresponsible and chaotic” by Stanko Ursic, a physical chemist at the Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry⁸⁹.

The same criticisms of lack of transparency as during the Bandic era are also present, with Josip Pavlovic denouncing “abuse of power”⁹⁰ in comments reported by Nacional. Criticism comes

from all sides, including ecological associations such as *Zelena Akcija* and *Ekologija grada*⁹¹, formerly close to Tomislav Tomasevic.

The health issue is prominent, with environmental groups focusing on the “impact on human health” of Jakusevec. The media are now careful to put figures on the seriousness of the situation, indicating for example that “emissions of harmful particles at Jakusevec in 2020 were up to 287 times higher than those authorised”⁹².

The president of the *Ekologija grada* association, Josip Pavlovic, reports the results of analyses carried out at the Jakusevec site: “the air was saturated with bitumen and tar particles, in abnormally high concentrations”⁹³.

77/ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=187079760064357>
78/ <https://www.ekovjesnik.hr/clanak/4755/za-zeleniji-zagreb-uvodi-se-novi-model-naplate-odvoza-komunalnog-otpada>
79/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/uskoro-uzivo-hoce-li-tomasevic-odgoditi-primjenu-novog-sustava-odvoza-otpada-1596221>
80/ See footnote 68.
81/ <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/tomasevic-novo-skladiste-na-jakusevcu-rjesenje-za-glomazni-otpad-i-pretrpana-reciklazna-dvorista-foto-20211223>

82/ See footnote 72.
83/ See footnote 70.
84/ News site derived from a weekly magazine that was created in 1995 to criticise HDZ politics. The magazine - and thus the site that reflects it - moved away after 2000 from this very oriented editorial policy, incorporating more economic and entertainment topics.
85/ <https://www.nacional.hr/tomasevic-20-godina-nije-nista-napravljeno-da-se-odlagaliste-jakusevac-zatvori-zato-me-cudi-danasnji-prosvjed/>

86/ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=950660448816676&id=167462170469845
87/ “Is this enough?” in English.
88/ “It’s enough!” in English.
89/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/na-jakusevcu-zbog-smeca-ljudi-umiru-od-raka-1565639>
90/ <https://www.nacional.hr/pavlovic-cijenu-odlaganja-otpada-na-jakusevcu-zagrepcani-placaju-svojim-zdravljem/>
91/ “Urban ecology” in English.

92/ See footnote 80.
93/ See footnote 81.

2/ Transport: a long path toward sustainable mobility

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACT

During the different mandates of Milan Bandic (since 2000), transport and mobility developments will be primarily aimed at car traffic, addressing the problem of congested traffic in Zagreb⁹⁴ as reported by *Dnevnik.hr*⁹⁵. One of the main projects launched is the reconstruction of the Remetimec bypass in December 2018, a project that is being followed by the *Vecernji List*, among others⁹⁶. Several promises of road “mega-projects” were made during the 2000s, such as the construction of a 27 km bypass around the city, promised in 2005 but never realised during the Mayor’s lifetime, leading *Vecernji List* to question the future of these projects after the Mayor’s death⁹⁷.

Milan Bandic is also known for his plans to develop underground car parks in the capital’s city centre. *Vecernji List* reports that these car parks are one of the reasons why in 2018 he announced his intention to reform the municipality’s urban plan, which hinders his action in this area by prohibiting the construction of such car parks in

certain areas of the city⁹⁸. This draft new urban plan will be the starting point of a strong citizen mobilisation, marked by large demonstrations at the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, which *Total Croatia News*⁹⁹ is following for example. Led by citizens’ and ecological associations, the protesters are demanding the resignation of Milan Bandic. The large-scale mobilisation was victorious, as the new plan did not pass the negotiation stage.

As regards public transport, many promises have been made. In August 2015, Milan Bandic announced the construction of a metro within the next two years. In 2017, during the election campaign, and while the construction work had not yet started, *Tportal* reported that he repeated his promise¹⁰⁰. During his mandates, several extensions and constructions of tram lines were also announced, including a line to connect the airport to the city (announced in 2013 and again in 2016)¹⁰¹. However, these projects never saw the light of day, as *Tportal reports*¹⁰².

The situation is different for the municipal bus service. *Narod.hr*¹⁰³ informs about a project financed at 15% by the City and at 85% by European funds which will thus see the light of day¹⁰⁴, with the allocation of HRK55.8 million for the acquisition of 29 buses for *ZET*¹⁰⁵.

Finally, with regard to the development and management of the cycle network, the changes are cosmetic, such as the “white marking now yellow”¹⁰⁶, as noted in an article by *Revija HAK*¹⁰⁷. The few progress also provoke criticism: a “particularly clumsy construction” of the new lanes is denounced, leading the Mayor to apologise to cyclists in 2013 as reported by *24sata*¹⁰⁸.

Furthermore, there is no separate municipal plan for bicycle mobility. A national law came into force in 2016 and forces municipalities to upgrade bicycle paths within 2 years. At the end of this period, the necessary facilities have not been provided in Zagreb¹⁰⁹.

Last but not least, the Sljeme aerial cableway reconstruction project. Opening on January 25th 2019, the cost of the work, which *Total Croatia News* says was initially estimated by the municipality at €15 million^{110 111}, the increased costs will eventually require the approval by the assembly in the same year of a loan of more than €71 million, with *Tportal* reporting a lack of transparency noted by the opposition, unable to explain the reasons for this budget increase¹¹².

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

Milan Bandic’s actions seem to prioritise facilities for cars, as his major projects are mainly road projects. *Vecernji List* reports that the Mayor is quoted as saying that the city needs garages and parkings like a man “needs a drink every day”¹¹³. He still says he wants to increase the use of public transport by at least “2 to 3%” as reported by *Narod.hr*¹¹⁴.

The City government seems to focus on economic and quality of life issues. The Mayor declared at the time of the purchase of the 29 new buses that the City, by mobilising national and European co-financing, would optimise its budget and try to manage “each kuna as well as possible so that the increase in prices [for public transport] is as low as possible and so that we can provide the citizens with public [transport] services that are as accessible as possible”¹¹⁵. Tomislav Petric, director of SAFU, the Central Agency for the Financing and Contracting of EU Programmes and Projects, says he “hopes that this project will also contribute to more citizens taking the bus and to a better quality of life”¹¹⁶. This dual economic and quality of life issue can be found in the discourse surrounding the Sljeme cableway project. Milan Bandic explains that he will open “this beauty, and then nothing will

be like before, it will only be better”¹¹⁷ in words reported by *Index.hr*¹¹⁸. Milan Bandic justifies the cost of the project by explaining that it is “a kilometre longer” than the cable car leading to the Matterhorn and in fact “unlike the one in the Alps that costs €14 million, this one here costs €15 million”. To questions from the opposition about financing, *Total Croatia News* said that it was responding that “the money will be secured in the rebalances”¹¹⁹.

Soft mobility, including cycling, does not seem to be a priority for the executive, who state in an answer to a question from Sindikat biciklista (the Cyclists’ Union) in 2017 that cycling does not have its own strategy, “cycling traffic is not a separate traffic but one of the types of traffic”¹²⁰. However, the Mayor symbolically puts himself on stage with his bicycle and says that he has been “riding with the citizens for seventeen years”¹²¹. In addition, Milan Bandic highlights as much as possible the City’s progress in this area, stating in an editorial on the “cycling subsystem in the transport system” that “improvement are taking place and concrete, as the European Union’s environmental protection services says”¹²².

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Renato Petek blames Milan Bandic for a lack of organisation and talks on Facebook about the “chaos organised by Mayor Bandic and the City administration”¹²³, a familiar lexical field also used in his critique of the waste management system. Tomislav Tomasevic uses the same register, indicating that “the situation is much worse than 30-40 years ago” and explaining to *Hercegovina.info*¹²⁴ that he and his party strive to disclose “all the frauds of the municipal administration”¹²⁵. This discourse is illustrated in the political debates about the Sljeme cableway. Although none of the opponents refute the need for reconstruction, they are unanimous in their opposition to the cost of the project and its lack of transparency. Tomislav Tomasevic describes the management of the project and its financing as “unacceptable”.

^{94/} <https://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/uskoro-rjesen-problem-parkiranja-u-zagrebu.html>

^{95/} One of the most read news sites in Croatia, owned by the multimedia group Nova TV, known for having the most watched news in Croatia since 2010.

^{96/} <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/radi-li-tu-itko-ista-zaboravite-aute-buducnost-su-bicikli-1234105>

^{97/} <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/nasljednika-cekaju-13-milijarde-minus-a-i-razruseni-zagreb-1472964>

^{98/} <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/bandic-zeli-jos-garaza-u-centru-moze-i-kod-nas-biti-kao-u-becu-1269573>

^{99/} <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/41231-zagreb-mayor-bandic-protest>

^{100/} <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/koja-stara-obecanja-bandic-reprizira-pred-ove-izbore-20170127>

^{101/} See footnote 91.

^{102/} <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/bandic-tvrdi-da-nikad-nije-govorio-o-tramvaju-do-zracne-luke-provjerili-smo-govori-li-istinu-foto-20190603>

^{103/} News site maintained by the association *U ime obitelji* (“In the name of the family” in English), an association claiming to promote the values of marriage and the family, conservative and close to Catholics.

^{104/} <https://narod.hr/hrvatska/ugovoreno-skoro-56-milijuna-kuna-za-nabavu-29-autobusa-zet-a-bandic-kaze-da-prijevoz-nece-poskupjeti>

^{105/} To this end, an agreement was signed between the Minister of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure Oleg Butković, the Director of the Central Agency for Financing and Contracting of EU Programmes and Projects (SAFU) Tomislav Petric and the Director of ZET Ljuba Žgela.

^{106/} <https://revijahak.hr/2019/03/16/biciklisticka-infrastruktura-koprivnica-najbolja-zagreb-bi-morao-bolje>

^{107/} Press specialising in the automotive industry.

^{108/} <https://www.24sata.hr/news/bandic-biciklisticke-staze-su-crtali-oni-koji-sjede-u-uredima-262498>

Within the opposition, the motivation of safety for users, and in particular cyclists, and the illegality of the tracks already built, are used. Gordan Maras, a former minister and member of the *SDP*, is leading a symbolic action, publicised on Twitter, of crossing the “road of death” in order to show everyone, civil society and the media, the impracticality of the cycle tracks. He urges “Mayor Milan Bandić to get to work and solve this problem”¹²⁶. Vladimir Halgota¹²⁷ as reported by *Global*¹²⁸ fights against “the safety of cycling largely insufficient” and focuses on the issue of legality: “Zagreb does not have a single legal cycle track”¹²⁹.

Tomislav Tomasević’s speech denounced the lack of a strategy for cycling as well as for public transport in general, calling municipal action a “dead letter”. In response to a question from Sindikat biciklista, he insisted on the lack of planning, saying that it is “certainly necessary to develop a general traffic strategy first, and then a cycling strategy”¹³⁰. As early as 2017, he also advocates “solutions that involve discouraging car use and calming traffic”¹³¹. Less radical, Vladimir Halgota regrets that “one third of the entire area of Zagreb is occupied by infrastructure for cars”¹³².

The Liberal opposition seems to be the one most attached to the vocabulary of ‘sustainable mobility’ before the crisis period, the term appearing four times in the speeches of Sandra Svaljek, an independent candidate close to the progressive and liberal *HSL*S party¹³³ but also three times in Anka Mrak-Taritas’ one, candidate of the *GLAS* party¹³⁴, whereas it does not appear to any of the other parties in their responses to the Cyclists’ Union’s questions.¹³⁵

MEDIA COVERAGE

The press reports a lack of understanding among citizens about the priorities of the City government: this article from *RTL.hr*¹³⁶ headlines “Zagreb citizens demand better public transport, not new garages in the centre”¹³⁷. Media coverage by *RTL.hr* and *Revija HAK* highlights the idea that cyclists feel abandoned or even attacked by the decisions of the executive¹³⁸ and an overall feeling that Zagreb is “decades behind” other comparable cities¹³⁹. Furthermore, experts state in an article in *Vecernji List* that the City cannot finance the big projects promised by Milan Bandić and should favour projects requiring “smaller budgets”, such as setting-up “as many bicycle paths as possible”¹⁴⁰.

The issue of cyclists’ safety is a theme that is reported in the press, and thus we find in *Revija HAK*’s article an intervention by Davorin Belamarić from Sindikat Biciklista who explains that the state and configuration of the bicycle lanes is not “only a hypothetical risk, but there are several recorded cases of accidents due to confusing signage”. This safety discourse is based on the register of “legality”, as a reminder of the opposition’s discourse¹⁴¹.

Echoing the speeches of the opposition, the press also indicates a real support from the citizens to sustainable mobility, without being heard by the local government, as illustrated by this article from *Energetika-net*¹⁴²: “We are looking for sustainable mobility for Zagreb, not new parkings in town”¹⁴³. For its part, *RTL.hr* points out that one of the problems of having more garages in the city centre will be “more air pollution” and points to a discrepancy with Europe, which “pushes as much as possible for the sustainability of mobility”¹⁴⁴. Hak Revija’s article points to an increase in the number of cyclists because “many people are realising that it is the healthiest and most environmentally friendly way to travel”¹⁴⁵.

FIRST CRISES - COVID-19 AND THE EARTHQUAKE

FACTS

During the COVID-19 crisis, there is a peak in bicycle use in Zagreb. One seller testifies to *Index*. hr that he sold “in May 2020 as many bikes as in the first half of 2019”¹⁴⁶. This increase in the number of cyclists is exacerbated by the earthquake. Because of the material damage, *Vecernji List* notes “real difficulties in riding safely on the pavements in the city centre and the suspension of tram traffic”¹⁴⁷, leading residents to retreat to other modes of transport. These problems will last at least until the end of June 2020, with this article in *Jutarnji List* reporting that many tram lines will still not be operating by then¹⁴⁸. Cycling will therefore become “a solution to these short-term obstacles”, but unfortunately, *Vecernji List* says “that it is insufficiently valued and encouraged by the city’s local authorities”¹⁴⁹.

In February 2020, a *Master Plan for the Transport System of the City of Zagreb, Zagreb County and Krapina-Zagorje County* was published. This Plan aims to “create a long-term concept for the development of the transport system and a transport policy adapted to the local economy and population”¹⁵⁰. It consists of a first part dedicated to the diagnosis of the existing situation, and a second part to define the vision, the ambitions and the actions to be carried out in order to give a new impulse to the transport policy of Zagreb.

109/ See footnote 97.
110/ But eventually closer to €40 million.
111/ <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/lifestyle/33777-milan-bandic>
112/ <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/skupstina-odobrila-kredit-od-537-milijuna-kuna-za-zicaru-sljeme-ukupna-cijena-presla-650-milijuna-kuna-20191210>
113/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/bandic-zeli-jos-garaza-u-centru-moze-i-kod-nas-biti-kao-u-becu-1269573>
114.115.116/ See footnote 95.
117/ <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/video-bandic-predstavio-novi-projekt-zicaru-na-sljemenu-vise-nista-nece-biti-isto/960659.aspx>
118/ Popular news site in Croatia.
119/ <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/lifestyle/33777-milan-bandic>
120/ <https://sindikاتبiciklista.hr/sto-radimo/izbori/zagreb-2017/>

121/ See footnote 111.
122/ [http://web.zagreb.hr/sjednice/2017/sjednice_skupstine_2017.nsf/0/DB6B4E6C5200A4BFC125822E0040F9A2/\\$FILE/02%20Izvj%C5%A1%C4%87e.PDF](http://web.zagreb.hr/sjednice/2017/sjednice_skupstine_2017.nsf/0/DB6B4E6C5200A4BFC125822E0040F9A2/$FILE/02%20Izvj%C5%A1%C4%87e.PDF)
123/ <https://www.facebook.com/PetekRenato/posts/358901917992535>
124/ News site from Bosnia and Herzegovina, based in Mostar.
125/ <https://www.hercegovina.info/vijesti/politika/tomislav-tomasevic-nuzno-je-da-bandic-izgubi-na-izborima/182048/>
126/ https://twitter.com/01Portal_HR/status/1121740691586076672
127/ He is a sociologist, a specialist in mobility issues and a member of Zagreb je NAS! who will later join the Transports working group of Mozemo! in preparation for the 2021 elections.
128/ Journal published by the Faculty of Political Sciences of Zagreb (Fakultet Političkih Znanosti in Croatian), largely held and written by students.

129/ <https://www.globalnovine.eu/drustvo/ni-pravilnik-nije-pomogao-zagreb-nema-niti-jednu-legalno-napravljenubiciklisticku-stazu/>
130.131/ See footnote 111
132/ See footnote 120
133/ Croatian Social Liberal Party (Hrvatska socijalno liberalna stranka in Croatian).
134/ The Liberal Civic Alliance (Gradansko-liberalni savez in Croatian).
135/ See footnote 111.
136/ This piece, published in September 2019, echoes the turmoil created by the City government’s project to launch a new municipal urban plan providing to delete protected areas until then prohibited from construction for new parkings.
137/ <https://www.rtl.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/gradjani-zagreba-vape-za-boljim-javnim-prijevozom-a-ne-novim-garazama-u-centrubb345d90-b9f2-11ec-a59d-0242ac120053>
138/ <https://www.rtl.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/pauk-i-kazne-za-nepropisno-parkirane-bicikle-u-zagrebu-kako-licemjerno-opet-ce-gradjani-placati-neodgovornost-gradaebb3f6ba-b9f2-11ec-ab6a-0242ac130020>

139/ See footnote 97.
140/ See footnote 87.
141/ See footnote 97.
142/ Magazine specialised on energy issues.
143/ <http://www.energetika-net.com/vijesti/zastita-okolisa/trazi-se-odrziva-mobilnost-za-zagreb-a-ne-nove-garaze-u-centru-29202>
144/ See footnote 128.
145/ See footnote 97.
146/ <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/zbog-korone-u-zagrebu-nestalo-bicikala/2190854.aspx>
147/ <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/sutra-je-svjetski-dan-bicikla-ali-problemi-biciklista-nisu-rjeseni-1407008>
148/ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/izbori/vijesti/tramvaji-opet-u-zagrebu-voze-do-mihaljevca-i-gracanskog-dolja-medu-prvim-putnicima-bio-i-bandic-15003623>
149/ See footnote 138.
150/ https://www.zagrebacka-zupanija.hr/media/filer_public/13/a4/13a486f1-ef23-4542-9021-102d4af87591/master_plan_prometnog_sustava_grada_zagreba_zagrebacke_zupanije_i_krapinsko-zagorske_zupanije.pdf

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

For the first time, this *Transport System Master Plan* presents a municipal vision that integrates the issue of sustainable mobility: “the basis for transport development in the area of the City of Zagreb, Zagreb County and Krapina-Zagorje County is the approach of integration and sustainability, with a strong incentive for environmentally friendly, accessible and energy-efficient transport solutions. Through the improvement of mobility, the introduction of innovative and high-tech solutions with an increased level of safety will be encouraged to ensure an optimal and sustainable transport system at all times”¹⁵¹.

Milan Bandić’s election promises, which he puts into words in an interview with *Sesvete Danas*¹⁵², show a continuity in the precedence of road improvements and a priority given to decongesting car traffic: “We will certainly build the Branimir road extended to Sesvete [...] This will relieve the traffic considerably and connect Zagreb better and faster to the surrounding towns and villages that gravitate towards the eastern part of the city of Zagreb”. The projects he highlights are “Radnička cesta and the Domovinski bridge as the new entrance to Zagreb from the south, or the reconstructed bypass which is now, after reconstruction, faster and safer for traffic”¹⁵³.

Milan Bandić’s discourse on public transport keeps focusing on the quality of life and comfort of users. *ZG-KULT*¹⁵⁴ reports that when announcing the arrival of the buses ordered through the 2019 co-financing agreement, he explains that “we are raising the standard of public transport in order to offer passengers a better quality and more comfortable stay when using these vehicles”¹⁵⁵. We also find the discourse of valorisation of the capital city, notably in the interview given to *Sesvete Danas*: “I intend to continue, as I have been doing for 20 years, to concentrate my feelings, my thoughts and my actions on a better level and a better quality of life for our people”. He is particularly prolix on the subject of the

cableway, which he is “looking forward to [...] It has been a long and laborious preparation with a lot of problems, but by autumn 2020 we will have a new cableway, unique and the most modern in Europe”¹⁵⁶. He repeatedly expresses the idea that “ZET transport is the best and cheapest”, reiterating his concern for the accessibility of public transport¹⁵⁷.

However, a change in discourse within the municipality can be seen in the emergence of a vocabulary of sustainable mobility and cyclist safety, in line with the orientation of the new plan. This is particularly explicit in the presentation of the Greenway bicycle highway project,¹⁵⁸ which will not be implemented in the end. In the announcement on Facebook in June 2019, the focus is, once again, on the comfort of living and the issues of cooperation between the City of Zagreb and the County of Zagreb¹⁵⁹. In the official press release published in November 2020, the objectives expressed are “to promote sustainable mobility, to improve the safety of cycle traffic and to promote it as environmentally acceptable traffic”¹⁶⁰.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

The health crisis offers Tomislav Tomasević and his party a hook to demand that Milan Bandić follow the model of major European cities. In an Instagram post, *Zagreb je nas!* expressed itself as follows: “many cities have started to adjust traffic to facilitate physical distancing, but also to reduce pressure on public transport after the relaxation of segregation measures”¹⁶¹. The crisis is seen as an “opportunity” by Tomislav Tomasević’s party: “the earthquake and the pandemic must be an opportunity for Zagreb to replicate the model of other European cities”¹⁶².

An intervention by Renato Petek, reported by *N1*, appears as a thematic come-back to the issue of quality of life in the opposition’s discourse (previously seen mainly in the City government’s discourse), with Petek stating that “the reconstruction of the old tram routes [...] will increase the quality of life of the inhabitants of Zagreb”. There is also a constant discourse from the opposition side, denouncing a lack of organisation of the City government in this respect: Renato Petek describes the results of Milan Bandić’s public transport investments as “devastating”¹⁶³.

MEDIA COVERAGE

As with the opposition, the health crisis is seen by citizens as an opportunity to improve the cycling network. However, as this complaint from a Zagrebian citizen on Twitter illustrates, the municipality does not seem to be seizing the opportunity: “big cities have shifted their investments to bike lanes and other related infrastructure. Zagreb built a monument venue and a cableway”¹⁶⁴.

Citizens seem to be mobilising in the face of Milan Bandić’s broken promises. *Zelena Akcija* is launching an initiative on the occasion of the car-free day, with its members marching through the streets with a banner reading “A tram called “20 years of nostalgia”. Bernard Ivčić, a member of the association, told the *Telegram*

that “the promises of new railways are constant and opportunistic but there are no concrete results”¹⁶⁵. New metro promise leads to the same result. This same ecological focus can be found in the press. *Tris portal*¹⁶⁶ states that “Zagreb’s transport system would be of much higher quality and its environmental impact much lower” if the promises were kept¹⁶⁷.

Sindikat biciklista expresses on Facebook a feeling of abandonment by the municipality. Referring to a bicycle highway project announced in 2017, the union says that “three full years and HRK6 million in the budget later, there is no visible change in the realisation of the project or information about it”. Cyclists thus have the impression that the “needs of citizens who use bicycles remain only on the wish list”¹⁶⁸.

^{151/} See footnote 141.

^{152/} News portal dedicated to news about the Zagreb district of Sesvete.

^{153/} <https://www.sesvete-danas.hr/politika/intervju-milan-bandic-gradonacelnik-zagreba-i-nositelj-liste-svoje-stranke-u-ii-izbornoj-jedinici-11247>

^{154/} News blog. The writer behind the post, Zeljko Krznarić, is a well-known Croatian journalist and broadcaster who has received awards for his writing.

^{155/} <https://www.zgkult.eu/2020/06/25/novi-autobusi-zet-a-za-gradski-javni-prijevoz/>

^{156.157/} See footnote 144.

^{158/} The Greenway project is an infrastructure project for the construction of a 121 km long cycle track, or cycle highway, which follows the course of the Sava River from the border with Slovenia to the left of Dubrovnik. Realised by the City of Zagreb in cooperation with the County of Zagreb.

^{159/} <https://www.facebook.com/134639156599582/posts/2416042978459177/>

^{160/} <https://www.zagreb.hr/en/pilotprojekt-greenway-drzavna-biciklisticka-ruta-b/163542>

^{161/} https://www.instagram.com/p/B_m2Jy0p2aY/

^{162/} See footnote 152.

^{163/} <https://hr.n1info.com/vijesti/renato-petek-ulaganje-u-javni-gradski-prijevoz-mora-biti-zagrebacki-prioritet/>

^{164/} <https://twitter.com/ChrisNikolic4/status/1351087222011944962>

^{165/} <https://www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/sad-kad-bandic-najavljuje-metro-u-centru-grada-zgodno-se-prisjetiti-obecanja-koja-nije-ispunio-evo-ih-18/>

^{166/} News site that describes itself as practising independent journalism. Supported by EU funds and the Agency for Electronic Media (AEM), an independent regulatory body that promotes public interest and media pluralism.

^{167/} <https://tris.com.hr/2020/09/opu8tramvaj-zvan-20-godina-ceznje-otkad-vlada-bandic-u-zagrebu-ni-metra-nove-pruge/>

^{168/} <https://www.facebook.com/sindikاتبiciklista/posts/3650311875012379/>

● SECOND CRISIS - DEATH OF MILAN BANDIC

FACTS

The Zagreb municipal elections of June 2021 follow the national parliamentary elections of July 2020, setting the pace of life in Zagreb for a year. However, the electoral process is disrupted by the sudden death of Mayor Milan Bandic, in office since 2000 and once again up for re-election, victim of a heart attack on February 28th 2021.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The City government puts the issue of sustainable mobility on the agenda of candidate Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic, replacing Milan Bandic. The latter expressed herself on the subject in the following terms: “by 2035, we will introduce completely clean public transport in the city of Zagreb and we will considerably increase the share of public transport users in the city’s total transport”, in contrast to Milan Bandic’s lack of interest in the subject¹⁶⁹.

Despite these marginal evolutions, there is a continuity in the precedence of road developments: transport is a priority issue since it is one of the five main axes of the City government’s programme, and the first major orientation of the programme is dealing with road developments aimed at “eliminating traffic jams”¹⁷⁰.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

A reading of *Mozemo!*’s electoral programme reveals the importance they want to give to the issue of sustainable mobility. While denouncing the shortcomings of the City government, Tomislav

Tomasevic explains in the presentation of his programme for transport that “the development of sustainable transport has been systematically neglected” and regrets that “currently more than 46% of trips are made by car”¹⁷¹.

For Tomislav Tomasevic’s party, the main problem remains the short-termist projection of Milan Bandic’s projects, obsessed with “road and car traffic”¹⁷².

It was then announced that a *Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan* would be drawn up. The vocabulary shows a willingness to take into account citizens’ environmental concerns, with the programme stating that the plan aims to “guarantee a reliable, green, sustainable, accessible and safe transport system that is not solely dependent on cars, but also offers citizens quality opportunities for healthier (greener) forms of movement”¹⁷³.

The programme also takes into account the increase in bicycle users and the inadequacy of the Zagreb bicycle system, which is said to be characterised by “stagnation, improvisation and negligence, which makes its legality questionable”. *Mozemo!* promises in its programme to build a “an important amount cycling highways”¹⁷⁴ and, in an interview for the *Ciclorejting*¹⁷⁵ project, the latter pledges to make “the upgrading of illegal parts of cycling surfaces one of his priorities”¹⁷⁶.

The opposition also emphasises the need to support changes in the individual practices of Zagreb citizens, with Tomislav Tomasevic explaining that he will ensure “the implementation of the necessary measures to encourage sustainable mobility”¹⁷⁷.

As for public transport, Tomislav Tomasevic denounces the unreliability of the current system, which he describes to *HRT radio*¹⁷⁸ as “shameful”, suffering from “complete illogicalities”¹⁷⁹.

Vladimir Halgota denounces, during his presentation of the transport programme, the same “lack of logic” in Milan Bandic’s transport developments¹⁸⁰.

● POST-CRISIS AND CURRENT SITUATION (UNTIL MARCH 2022)

FACTS

The election of the new Mayor embodies a new stage for transport and mobility: Tomislav Tomasevic wishes to implement a global policy, including the electrification of vehicles (with the ambition of having a fleet of zero-emission buses by 2035), the improvement of public transport in order to “slow down the trend” of decreasing users and the improvement of cycling facilities¹⁸¹, as *N1* reports. Although there is no tangible progress yet, developments are expected by the end of this year, including the provision of more than 1,000 cycle parking spaces, the issuing of permits for the extension of a tram line announced on Facebook¹⁸² and the acquisition of 60 new buses and 20 new trams announced on Twitter¹⁸³. The ZET is heavily in debt, which Tomislav Tomasevic believes is the result of past choices, as reported by *Zagreb.info*, including the costly construction of the cableway¹⁸⁴. However, the Mayor states that it will carry out the necessary work until the partial opening¹⁸⁵ of the cableway by February 23th, 2022. On this topic, he believes that “this investment will never be profitable” and tells the *Telegram* that he wants to “look to the future”¹⁸⁶.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

Sustainable mobility is becoming an increasingly important part of the discourse, especially in 2022, with the City government confirming on Facebook the vision advocated during the campaign: “our City administration has a vision of ecological and sustainable Zagreb, and we believe that you too want a green, clean and sustainable city”¹⁸⁷. Sustainable mobility is now a priority.

The discourse remains focused on the need for everyday life change. Ivan Ivankovic¹⁸⁸ underlines, in an interview for *Eurocities*¹⁸⁹, the urgent requirement to “encourage people to get out of their cars and move to clean, efficient, affordable systems like buses and trams. There’s no running away from it. We need to improve and decarbonise the transport sector, and do so quickly, because the overall cost is simply too large to ignore. Clean transport is definitely one of our top priorities”¹⁹⁰.

On the occasion of events organised during the *European Mobility Week*, the City government confirms this new discourse. On his Facebook account, Tomislav Tomasevic says that “it is up to the citizens to use these forms of mobility as much as possible, and it is up to us, as a City, to provide the infrastructure”¹⁹¹. The question of the municipality’s responsibility is also raised by Ivan Ivankovic who explains that “part of the solution is getting people on board. That’s usually done via a ‘carrot and stick’ strategy (laughs) through carefully designed policies [...] but to do this well, we’ll need to offer alternatives that are safe, clean and affordable”¹⁹².

^{169/} <https://www.365ris.hr/jelena-pavicic-vukicevic-predstavila-izborni-program-stranke-rada-i-solidarnosti/>

^{170/} See footnote 180

^{171/} <https://www.mozemo.hr/vijesti/mozemo-i-zagreb-je-nas-predstavili-program-za-promet/>

^{172/} <https://zagreb.mozemo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Mozemo-ZJN-Program-za-Zagreb.pdf>

^{173.174/} See footnote 163.

^{175/} A national project launched by the cyclists’ union in preparation for the Zagreb local elections in May 2021 with the objective of “making sustainable transport a topic of political debate and putting sustainable transport development on the agenda of candidates and political parties in all elections in Croatia”. As part of this project, interviews are conducted with candidates and their programmes are rated.

^{176/} <https://www.ciklorejting.hr/intervju/tomislav-tomasevic-mozemo-zagreb-je-nas/>

^{177/} See footnote 167.

^{178/} Croatian national public radio channel.

^{179/} <https://radio.hrt.hr/radio-sljeme/vijesti/u-cetvrti-podsused-vrapce-samo-je-50-metara-biciklistickih-staza-3675084>

^{180/} See footnote 162.

^{181/} <https://hr.n1info.com/klimatske-promjene/tomasevic-za-n1-do-2035-svi-busevi-bit-ce-na-struju-ili-vodik/>

^{182/} <https://www.facebook.com/tomislav.tomasevic.hr/posts/313725394223573>

^{183/} <https://twitter.com/ttomasevichr/status/1517559995327524864>

^{184/} <https://www.zagreb.info/aktualno/tomasevic-poziva-zagrepce-da-vise-koriste-zet-jer-je-financijski-opterecen-a-on-se-vozi-biciklom/359578/>

^{185/} As a result of complaints, including noise pollution, further work is required and the cable car does not operate continuously.

^{186/} <https://www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/tomasevic-na-otvaranju-zicare-sljeme-nije-realno-da-ce-prihodima-zicare-bitivracen-ulozeni-novac/>

^{187/} <https://www.facebook.com/tomislav.tomasevic.hr/posts/313725394223573>

This emphasis on civic responsibility and necessary lifestyle changes is a political reaction to the negative effects of COVID-19. Thus, Tomislav Tomasevic observes in an official statement that “the number of personal vehicles has a tendency to increase - we have up to 400,000 cars for 800,000 inhabitants of Zagreb. The coronavirus epidemic has certainly contributed to this¹⁹³. An argument taken up by Ivan Ivankovic who regrets that “unfortunately, transport exhausts are constantly on the rise, the number of cars is constantly on the rise”¹⁹⁴.

The new Mayor also explicitly links and connects the issue of “health” of the population with the “reduction of car traffic” in a speech promoting “sustainable urban mobility” on Facebook¹⁹⁵. Ivan Ivankovic explains that the increased use of the car “is affecting residents, their health, and the good image of our city”. Hence the need to seize the crisis as an opportunity, according to Ivan Ivankovic: “with crisis come opportunities, post-pandemic recovery funds will be a one-time chance for Croatia and its municipalities to even out differences with fellow EU nations”¹⁹⁶.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Nikola Grmoja, a conservative member of the Croatian parliament, criticised Tomasevic for a lack of delicacy, especially in his suggestion that public transport should be used more to finance the ZET, joking on Facebook that the Mayor should be given “a PhD in economics, preferably from Osijek”¹⁹⁷.

MEDIA COVERAGE

An article in *Zagreb.info* seems to suggest that some citizens disagree with this new focus on mobility, stating that there are “more burning issues such as waste, the church in Savica or even more topical - the reconstruction of the city after the earthquake”¹⁹⁸. However, there seems to be a part of the population (especially cyclists, who are the first targets) that shows its support to the new municipal agenda, blaming the developments made under Milan Bandic, the former Mayor. Thus this tweet published in October 2021 evoking the creation of bike paths under the former Mayor: “as this was only done as PR it resulted in a horrible bike infrastructure”¹⁹⁹.

4/
ZAGREB
LOGBOOK

B/
CULTURE: FROM CROATIAN NATIONAL
HERITAGE TO EUROPEAN COMMON
BREATHING

THE CASE STUDY
OF ZAGREB SOFT POWER

188/ Head of the Energy and Climate Office since 2020, assistant to the former head since 2018.

189/ Network of more than 200 European cities aiming to be a policy platform that acts as an intermediary between cities and the European institutions.

190/ <https://eurocities.eu/latest/recovery-zagrebs-chance-to-play-catch-up/>

191/ <https://www.facebook.com/tomislav.tomasevic.hr/posts/182163150713132>

192/ See footnote 181.

193/ <https://web1.zagreb.hr/gradonacelnik-sudjelovao-na-panel-debati-savez-gra/174798>

194/ See footnote 181.

195/ <https://www.facebook.com/tomislav.tomasevic.hr/posts/182163150713132>

196/ See footnote 181.

197/ <https://www.zagreb.info/aktualno/tomasevic-poziva-zagrepcane-da-vise-koriste-zet-jer-je-financijski-opterecen-a-on-se-vozi-biciklom/359578/>

198/ See footnote 188.

199/ <https://twitter.com/BicycleCroatia/status/145337265839396455?s=20&t=9ZTSO-7Mhq4ZlvXTBkM1aw>

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

Milan Bandić focuses his policy on the financing of major cultural venues: he is notably behind the opening of a new space for the *Academy of Music*²⁰⁰. The building of a new municipal library was also announced in a press release, but the project was never finalised²⁰¹.

The City of Zagreb also finances and produces large-scale cultural events, such as *Zagrebacko Kulturno Ljeto* (ZgKUL)²⁰², described in a City press release as “a unique offer of cultural events during the summer in Zagreb” explicitly for Zagrebians and tourists²⁰³. It is through this policy of major events that the municipality seeks to reach the widest possible audience.

The Mayor is finally known for his policy of large ceremonial monuments and expressed in July 2016, in a speech reported by N1, the will to build “another forty fountains”, just after the commissioning of a fountain at the intersection of the shopping streets Radnička cesta and Zaharova and Zoranićeva²⁰⁴.

This policy of major works and massive support for major annual cultural events capable of bringing Croats together and attracting tourists is not without budgetary consequences: Tedi Lušetić tells *Nacional* that the City of Zagreb devotes nearly 7% of its operating budget to the cultural sector²⁰⁵.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

In the framework of its Cultural and Creative Development Strategy adopted in 2015, the municipality highlights a City that is “investing substantial financial resources to become a *European City of Culture*”. And thus, at the heart of this strategy, an explicit ambition: “to become the *European Capital of Culture*”²⁰⁶.

Whether in official communications or in the speeches of the Mayor, the most valorising qualifiers and superlatives are systematically used when Zagreb is mentioned. For example, the term “excellence” is used in many official press releases²⁰⁷, and this is reflected in the *Cultural and Creative Development Strategy (2015 - 2022)*: one of its objectives is explicitly “to ensure the excellence of cultural programmes developed by the City”²⁰⁸. The Mayor often invokes a historical reference when it comes to promoting the city’s cultural heritage: *Tportal* reports that he goes so far as to compare Zagreb to Rome, explaining that “Zagreb’s fountains are the most beautiful”²⁰⁹; he speaks about monuments and buildings in terms of “protected cultural property”, “cultural heritage”, both in press releases²¹⁰ and in newspapers like *Jutarnji List*²¹¹.

Both influence and excellence seem to be at stake and clearly part of the City’s tourism ambition. In his speech to *Nacional* on the ZG Classic and ZgKUL festivals, Tedi Lušetić²¹², explains that after “all the success we have had during Advent”²¹³ and the increase in the number of tourists, it is extremely important to increase not only the quantity, but also the quality of all cultural content in the city”²¹⁴.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

From their first statements on the subject, Tomislav Tomasević and his party have distanced themselves from this influence and attractiveness policy, focusing on a more citizens led policy, basing themselves in particular on the need to make urban spaces “abandoned” by the City government available for “young artists”, as it appears in the presentation of cultural priorities made at a press conference reported by *Dnevnik.hr*²¹⁵.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Ina Vukić, Croatian independence activist, writer and journalist, is a frontal critic of the Mayor’s show-off policy on her blog. In particular, she questions his cost, claiming that Milan Bandić “spends obscene amounts of money to raise monuments, fountains etc.”²¹⁶.

● FIRST CRISES - COVID-19 AND THE EARTHQUAKE

FACTS

The pandemic hit Croatia in mid-March, as it did all over the world, and stifled the capital’s cultural sector, many buildings, including cultural venues, were destroyed by the earthquake of March 22nd 2020²¹⁷, the City specifying the extent of the damage in a statement following the earthquake. In a study published in January 2021 by the *Kultura Nova Foundation*²¹⁸, 56% of Croatian cultural venues report having been indirectly or directly affected by the earthquake²¹⁹.

These various crises, with major consequences, did not interrupt Milan Bandić’s major projects, and in particular the contested construction of a Monument to the Fatherland, begun before the crisis and reported by *Tportal*²²⁰.

^{200/} This project started in 2004 ends more than a century of space renting for the Academy of Music. The new building was co-financed by the City of Zagreb, the University of Zagreb and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, for a total amount of HRK210 million.

^{201/} <https://www.zagreb.hr/en/zagreb-dobio-novo-srediste-glazbe/69565>

^{202/} Zagreb Cultural Summer in English.

^{203/} <https://www.zagreb.hr/zagrebacko-kulturno-ljeto-zgkul/110821>

^{204/} <https://hr.n1info.com/vijesti/a138662-milan-bandic-trebamo-izgraditi-jos-40-fontana-u-zagrebu/>

^{205/} <https://www.nacional.hr/zagreb-izdvaja-7-posto-proracuna-za-kulturu-zao-mi-je-sto-drzava-ne-slijedi-takav-primjer/>

^{206/} <https://www.zagreb.hr/userdocsimages/arhiva/04%20Strategija.pdf>

^{207/} <https://www.zagreb.hr/en/zagreb-dobio-novo-srediste-glazbe/69565>

^{208/} See footnote 196.

^{209/} <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/bandic-kad-cemo-mi-rim-stici-rim-ima-224-fontane-a-mi-sedam-osam-20160721>

^{210/} <https://www.zagreb.hr/kino-europa-priopcenje-gradonacelnika/140504>

^{211/} <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/bandic-komentirao-slucaj-o-kojem-zagreb-bruji-vec-danima-kino-europa-je-moje-dijete-da-nije-bilo-gradonacelnika-ono-bi-bilo-u-privatnim-rukama-8704643>

^{212/} Head of the Office for Culture under the mandate of Milan Bandić, until 2019.

^{213/} Zagreb Advent is the city’s Christmas market, which was voted the best Christmas market in Europe in 2016, 2017 and 2018. This event is part of the strategy to extend the tourist season beyond the summer period.

^{214/} See footnote 195.

^{215/} <https://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/tomasevic-predstavio-prioritete-za-kulturu-i-gredelj-i-paromlin-staviti-u-drustvenu-i-kulturnu-funkciju---476745.html>

^{216/} <https://inavukic.com/2018/06/10/shame-on-you-mayor-of-zagreb-milan-bandic/>

^{217/} <https://www.zagreb.hr/ostecene-ustanove-u-kulturi-u-vlasnistvu-gradagzag/156683>

^{218/} Foundation aiming at the promotion and development of Croatian civil society in the field of contemporary art and culture.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

There are some remarkable developments in Milana Vukovic Runjic’s speech²²¹. In an interview with *Jutarnji* List in May 2020 about the impact of the earthquake on the cultural sector, there is no trace of the superlatives previously used to describe cultural policy.

Her speech is refocused on the executive’s reconstruction efforts. Although the outlines of these efforts remain unclear, the speech is more technical than that of her predecessor. She lists the “registers of minor damage to the facilities of our institutions” which the City government will help to “repair as soon as possible”, the “collection of data” and the forecasting of emergency infrastructure projects in the “near future”: “an inter-museum and inter-theatre, and if necessary, a common stage for cultural centres, in order to help the most seriously damaged institutions to carry out their programmes”²²².

These are all indications of a new focus on maintaining an emergency cultural offer, aimed primarily at the inhabitants of Zagreb, temporarily putting aside ambitions for European influence to focus on everyday life.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

The opposition uses the crisis to blame the executive’s unpreparedness, insisting that the earthquake “revealed the level of neglect and years of non-investment of the HDZ and Bandić in culture”²²³, as explained by the curator and Director of the Visual Arts Department of *Culture of Change*, Marta Kis, speaking for *Mozemo!* when presenting the culture programme.

While the aim is to restore “the many cultural institutions”, *Mozemo!* goes beyond the institutional framework and indicates that it wants to “improve the spatial conditions of arts production” more generally²²⁴.

There is an affirmation of a political focus on the community-based culture, with many mentions of “decentralisation and the integration of culture into the daily life of small communities”²²⁵.

MEDIA COVERAGE

In the *Autograf* newspaper²²⁶, we can feel that ideological paradox. On the one hand, there is a budget that “has for many years exceeded the percentage allocated to culture by the State” and thus meets the stated ambitions of a City “that prides itself on its prosperity and progress and its culture, wanting to be on a par with the European metropolises”. On the other hand, “there have always been many problems in the equal distribution of this means and money”²²⁷. This article implicitly underlines that the City remains driven by its international ambitions.

While the question of investment in the reconstruction and renovation of post-earthquake buildings is combined with that of emergency support for independent actors, the author denounces a municipal executive that tries to protect itself, among other things, behind the economic consequences of the crisis in order to justify the blocking of appropriate aid, even though it was previously announced²²⁸.

● SECOND CRISIS - THE DEATH OF MILAN BANDIC

Focus on public support for the reconstruction of damaged buildings, which emerged during the crisis, disappears from the programme of the outgoing executive.

A new axis of her cultural project should be highlighted: that of local culture, illustrated by the very title of the cultural section of her programme, “Culture for all”. She thus specifies that in her eyes, “culture certainly takes place in the heart of the capital, but also in the outskirts of the city”²³².

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

In Tomislav Tomasevic’s programme, there is no such a thing as a European ambition in cultural matters. Four main priorities are highlighted in the programme, including “the reconstruction of infrastructure”. He explicitly refers to the earthquake and shows that he is fully aware of the importance of this crisis for the cultural sector, underlining the need for a real policy of support for cultural venues²³³.

The party’s discourse does not only focus on major “institutions” and key “cultural buildings”, but also on “derelict buildings, infrastructures in which no investment has been made so far”²³⁴.

The support of community-based culture is embodied in proposals for “decentralisation”, with the programme reminding the importance of “decentralising cultural production and ensuring the availability of diversified content in all areas of the City”²³⁵.

FACTS

The Zagreb municipal elections of June 2021 follow the national legislative elections of July 2020, setting the pace of life in Zagreb for a year. However, the municipal election is disrupted by the sudden death of Milan Bandic, Mayor since 2000, victim of a heart attack on February 28th 2021.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

In her programme, Jelena Pavicic Vukicevic shares and proceeds her predecessor’s strategy of “European influence”, taking up word for word the vision set out before the crisis, namely to invest “financial means to make Zagreb a *European City of Culture*”. She says that there is “not a single museum or cultural institution in Zagreb that has not prepared for this European breakthrough”²²⁹.

This continuity is asserted, as she explains that in the coming period, “we will continue our financial and logistical support for the organisation of the many cultural events for which Zagreb is known in Europe and the world”²³⁰.

The candidate seems to use the same laudatory language, referring to “artistic and heritage treasures” as one of the key elements of her programme to “intensify the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage”, echoing Milan Bandic’s speech²³¹.

219/ https://kulturanova.hr/research_covid_earthquake/

220/ <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/sef-zavoda-za-prostorno-uredenje-zagreba-objasnio-zasto-se-spomenik-domovini-i-dalje-gradi-foto-20200401>

221/ Head of the Office for Culture after Tedi Lusetic and throughout the crisis period.

222/ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/zagreb/milana-vukovic-runjic-nadam-se-da-ce-nam-eu-pomoci-kao-sto-je-i-nakon-potresa-1880-car-franjo-josip-i-sam-platio-sanacije-zgrada-u-zagrebu-10308628>

223/ https://www.mozemo.hr/media-release/s-kulturom-mozemo-bolje/?fbclid=IwAR1I2Qug_1q2K7jq94si1tVyolf3IPZ6FwRx1g-ulmpjNRp_gD1OYVGU1zA

224.225/ See footnote 214.

226/ *Autograf* is a news portal fed by volunteer writers, either journalists or intellectuals. It is described as politically progressive, and a media defending independent journalism. The article referred to was published a few days after the executive’s decision to cancel emergency aid for the cultural sector. Its headline “We still naively hoped that culture was important to the HDZ” denotes a disappointment not only with the City government but also with the traditional right.

227/ <https://www.autograf.hr/jos-jednom-smo-se-naivno-ponadali-da-je-hdz-u-vazna-kultural>

228/ See footnote 219.

229/ <https://www.365ris.hr/jelena-pavicic-vukicevic-predstavlja-izborni-program-stranke-rada-i-solidarnosti/>

230.231.232/ See footnote 221.

233/ <https://zagreb.mozemo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Mozemo-ZJN-Program-za-Zagreb.pdf>

234.235/ See footnote 225.

● POST-CRISIS
AND CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

Tomislav Tomasevic was elected Mayor and took office on June 4th 2021. One of his first acts in cultural matters was to meet with the Minister of Culture and Media, Nina Obuljen Korzinek, in July 2021, at a work meeting organised for this purpose. On the meeting agenda: the urgent need for reconstruction and restoration of cultural assets in the aftermath of the earthquake. An agreement is reached to support cultural heritage restoration projects worth HRK3.3 billion in Zagreb and neighbouring counties, announced in an official statement of the Ministry of Culture and Media²³⁶.

In the first budget of his mandate, presented in September 2021, the new Mayor suggests a new hierarchy of funding priorities for the cultural sector: *Jutarnji List* reports that funds for major events, large institutions (notably the National Theatre) and heritage protection are reduced, while the budget for post-earthquake reconstruction, notably the *Croatian Natural History Museum*, is increased²³⁷.

THE NEW EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

Nacional reports that Tomislav Tomasevic explains that “the priority will be to rebuild the buildings”²³⁸, remaining in line with his campaign speech, as repeated during his meeting with the Minister²³⁹.

On May 2022, Emina Visnic is appointed Head of the office for Culture, Interurban and International Cooperation and Civil Society²⁴⁰, as a major symbol of change. In this *Tportal* interview she explicitly asserts “for contextual reasons, the priority is the restoration of the heritage and cultural infrastructures damaged in the earthquake”, she calls for “a cultural vitality that supports and encourages those who strongly integrate an international dimension, mainly European, into artistic production and cultural projects”. However, this time it is no longer a question of being the *European Capital of Culture* but of integrating the “highly globalised world” in order to become an “important player in cultural and artistic events in the world”²⁴¹.

This new discourse can be largely explained by the career of Emina Visnic, formerly the general director of *Rijeka 2020, European Capital of Culture* in 2020.

^{236/} <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/vijesti-8/prvi-radni-sastanak-ministrice-kulture-i-medija-nine-obuljen-korzinek-i-gradonacelnika-grada-zagreba-tomislava-tomasevica/21208>

^{237/} <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/zagreb/kako-je-tomasevicev-rebalans-proracuna-pogodio-kulturu-manje-novca-za-hnk-i-zastitu-spmenika-15102208>

^{238/} <https://www.nacional.hr/kako-nakon-smjene-milane-vukovic-runjic-mozemo-krece-u-ciscenje-kaosa-u-kulturi/>

^{239/} See footprint 228.

^{240/} New Head of the Office for Culture, Interurban and International Cooperation and Civil Society. Tomislav Tomasevic has merged the Office for Culture with the other two, hence this new title.

^{241/} <https://www.tportal.hr/kultura/clanak/emina-visnic-intervju-20220601>

LONDON

LONDON

CHAPTER 02

LONDON LONDON

LONDON

LONDON

1/ INTRODUCTION

Sadiq Khan (*Labour*, left party) became Mayor of London in 2016 and was re-elected on 6 May 2021 with 39.08% of the vote against 35.1% for the Tory candidate **Shaun Bailey**. Labour has a relative majority on the City Council (11 out of 25 seats). The next municipal elections will be held in 2024.

Sadiq Khan also chairs the **Greater London Authority** (GLA), which is the relevant scale of analysis insofar as it is at this level that environmental policies are conducted. The Greater London Authority has competences in the fields of transport, urban planning, environment, culture and the fight against climate change.

The country is currently facing a change in the ruling executive: Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced his resignation in July and its successor has not been named yet.

CARTOGRAPHY OF *KEY PLAYERS*

GLA

- SADIQ KHAN**
Mayor of London since 2016.
- SHIRLEY RODRIGUES**
Deputy Mayor, Environment and Energy since 2016.
- JUSTINE SIMONS**
Deputy Mayor, Culture and the Creative Industries since 2016.

LONDON CITY COUNCIL OPPOSITION

- SHAUN BAILEY**
Member of the London Assembly since 2017, candidate in the mayoral election in 2020.
- SUSAN HALL**
Member of the London Assembly since 2017, leader of the London conservatives on the Assembly since 2019.

NATIONAL PLAYERS

- BORIS JOHNSON**
Prime Minister.
- NADINE DORRIES**
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN LONDON

MARCH 3RD 2020

The Government publishes the Coronavirus Action Plan.

MARCH 12TH 2020

Announcement of the first measures of self-isolation for people with symptoms.

MARCH 16TH 2020

Announcement of the first measures of social distancing by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

MARCH 18TH 2020

The schools are closing.

MARCH 20TH 2020

Announcement of the upcoming closing of bars, restaurants and stores.

MARCH 23RD 2020

Boris Johson addresses the nation and announces the first lockdown, starting on 26 Mars 2020.

MAY 10TH 2020

Boris Johnson announces the reopening strategy.

JUNE 1ST 2020

The schools are reopening.

JUNE 15TH 2020

Non-essential shops are are reopening.

JUNE 23RD 2020

End of the 2 metres social distancing rule.

JUNE 29TH 2020

Announcement of the first local lockdowns in Leicester and parts of Leicestershire.

APRIL 16TH 2020

Announcement of a three-week extension of the lockdown

THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The Government took action early in the crisis as the first measures were announced on March 12th. The country underwent three national lockdowns under March 2021. In London, cultural venues were closed during lockdowns.

ELLA ADOO-KISSI- DEBRAH’S DEATH

In December 2020, coroners attested that the death of Ella Adoo-Kiss-Debrah in 2013 from an asthma crisis was directly due to air pollution. Framed at the “first death of air pollution”, it reinforced the urgency to act. Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, the mother of Ella, became a leading symbol of the fight against air pollution.

JULY 4TH 2020

Restaurants, hairdressers and pubs are reopening.

JULY 18TH 2020

Local authorities gain powers to enforce social distancing.

AUGUST 14TH 2020

Indoor theatres are reopening.

SEPTEMBER 14TH 2020

Proclamation of the rule of six.

SEPTEMBER 22ND 2020

Boris Johnson announces new restrictions in England, including a return to working from home and 10pm curfew for hospitality sector.

NOVEMBER 5TH 2020

Beginning of the second national lockdown.

DECEMBER 2ND 2020

End of the second lockdown.

JANUARY 6TH 2021

Beginning of the third national lockdown.

MARCH 8TH 2021

Schools are reopening.

2/ MAJOR STORYTELLING SHIFT

A/ MAJOR SHIFTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STORYTELLING

Two major developments in the GLA’s narrative about the environmental priority:

- The GLA is shifting its approach to ecology from a discourse based on environmental and health motivation to a more inclusive storytelling, broadened to economic issues and the recovery of London society;
- The GLA moves beyond its focus of local intervention and seeks to involve, in the face of the government’s inaction, the whole of London society including economic actors, citizens and communities.

01

FROM THE LONDON ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY TO THE GREEN RECOVERY: LONDON AT THE FOREFRONT OF “GREEN GROWTH”

Prior to the crisis, London’s environmental policy was based on a set of sectoral schemes, formulated in the *London Environment Strategy*, published in 2018²⁴². This strategy is based on several key areas: air quality; green infrastructure; climate change and mitigation strategy; waste; adapting to climate change; ambient noise; transition to a low-carbon economy. The GLA accordingly led a range of sector-specific but interconnected policies to meet the objective of “a zero carbon city by 2050”. An environmental strategy that is driven by environmental advocacy, based on environmental motivations.

The pandemic provides an opportunity to give a new direction to the London’s global strategy, under the aegis of the *Green Recovery concept* (developed by the OECD). The aim of the executive is to take advantage of the crisis to promote a greener economy and involve all stakeholders in the ecological transition. A way for the Mayor to respond to the opposition’s main attack during the crisis i.e blaming the executive for prioritising the climate issue rather than the economic emergency, despite the damage caused to businesses by the pandemic and the restrictions; a speech shift to make it clear that the fight against climate change will serve all sectors instead of opposing them. Green recovery is based on a *Green New Deal*, with €14 million to create jobs in green tech, electric vehicles and solar panel installations. It is also based on a new priority: the thermal

^{242/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/london-environment-strategy>

renovation of buildings. This opportunity is reflected in the GLA’s guiding line: “we are putting the climate emergency at the heart of our recovery”²⁴³. The use of the lexical register of “recovery” clearly echoes the pandemic and the health issues that arose from it. This new vocabulary appears to be a relevant strategy for attesting to the correlation that the executive seeks to establish between environmental issues and the creation of a vital issue that the inhabitants experienced through the Covid-19 virus. This seems to reinforce the new storytelling of the GLA, favouring an all-encompassing theme against which it now seems more complicated to stand up.

The goal is green growth: doubling the size of the green economy in the next ten years. As the City Hall put it, “the green economy sector in London generates more sales (£40 billion) than the construction & manufacturing sectors combined. Putting the environment at the centre of our recovery is a chance to reverse the looming economic downturn. It will bring new investment to London, help businesses to see long-term growth, and provide decent, skilled, local jobs”²⁴⁴. The *London Plan*, an urban planning document published in 2021, is thus organised around the concept of *Good Growth*: “it plans not just for growth, but for Good Growth – sustainable growth that works for everyone using London’s strengths to overcome its weaknesses”.

This green growth relies primarily on one major effort: the strengthening of training to develop green jobs. A priority for Sadiq Khan, who announced a “jobs, jobs, jobs” objective in his election campaign. One of his campaign²⁴⁵ commitments is to create “a new green skills academy”, leading to the creation of 170,000 jobs.

Once again, the role of the health crisis can be measured here. The consequences of the pandemic, in terms of unemployment, have been dramatic in England, and in London in particular, with the labour market as a whole exposed to the precariousness caused by

the crisis and to unequal support from public authorities. Therefore, while the environmental issue must remain a priority for London, both popular and civic support can only be won if this environmental commitment also makes it possible to respond to the everyday problems to which Londoners face in the aftermath of lockdown. The logic of “green jobs” therefore legitimises the efforts and public investments to tackle climate change, in that they would also allow those who need it most to return to the job market.

Initially based on a sectoral approach, the GLA’s discourse on the environment is expanding and changing in scope. It is becoming a cornerstone of the Mayor’s narrative, feeding directly into the recovery of post-pandemic society; it is finally becoming a priority component of the local storytelling, directly supporting the Mayor’s social project developed for all Londoners and even beyond, for the UK inhabitants.

02

LONDON VS. THE GOVERNMENT: BRINGING ON BOARD THE WHOLE OF LONDON SOCIETY TO TRIUMPH OVER GOVERNMENT INACTION

All the environmental policies conducted by the GLA are based on a clear attractiveness objective: London must be at the forefront of environmental policy. The Mayor’s philosophy: “cities are leading the way in tackling the climate emergency by taking bolder actions than Governments”.

Sadiq Khan has changed, from being a willing and proactive mayor on environmental issues to a leading politician who has strongly condemned the government’s inaction and lack of investment in environmental policies. It is therefore understandable that the Mayor is not only denouncing this failure at the national level; he is active in multiplying local mechanisms and initiatives to reveal the gap of ambition between the two public authorities, which goes beyond the rhetoric field, and takes shape through actions.

This can be seen in London’s relationship with the Government in two ways: The GLA regularly criticises the government for its climate inaction and calls for shared responsibility: “We need Government Ministers to follow London’s lead and help clean our filthy air once and for all, by toughening up targets to meet the WHO air quality guidelines by 2030 and supporting a national vehicle renewal fund that will help all UK motorists to ditch their polluting cars”²⁴⁶. The GLA calls on the Government to share some of the responsibilities through the allocation of funding (particularly in the case of *Transport For London*)²⁴⁷.

Noting that the government is not living up to expectations, the Mayor calls for the growing mobilisation of private sector partners to set up an environmental programme with shared responsibilities.

Actually, the involvement expected from the private sector to join the fight against climate change led by the City Hall evolved to respond to the opposition attacks and to demonstrate a business-friendly dynamic, thus showing that such a fight can only be won when all public and private sectors are brought together.

The Mayor became proactive, raising private funding to implement his environmental policy priorities: informing and raising the awareness of citizens throughout London; providing them with the tools to get involved to meet the challenge. A good example is the extension of the *Breathe London* programme in October 2021, thanks to the major support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Finally, the *Green Recovery* formalises this new impetus, giving a central role to the economic issue in the fight for the climate. Private players are being asked to participate in financing the energy transition, as illustrated by the *Business Climate Challenge*, which invites them to finance the reduction of carbon footprint from the buildings in which they operate. On this subject, Sadiq Khan announced: “London’s businesses have a crucial role to play in addressing the climate emergency and driving a green recovery from the pandemic”²⁴⁸.

After isolating the government through repeated attacks denouncing its meagre involvement compared to the issues at stake, the Mayor chose to use a narrative based on the participation of the greatest number of people (i.e including the driving forces of private sector and of civil society mobilisation²⁴⁹), a sine qua non for the emergence of a consensus and the success of this policy.

243/ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMdQESI88KM>
244/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/londons-recovery-coronavirus-crisis/recovery-context/green-new-deal>
245/ <https://www.cityam.com/sadiq-khan-london-mayor-election-manifesto-everything-you-need-to-know/>

246/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/urges-ministers-to-toughen-uks-toxic-air-targets>
247/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/budget-is-taking-london-for-granted>
248/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayors-new-scheme-for-businesses-to-cut-carbon>
249/ For example, initiating and holding the London Climate Summit just before COP26

B/
MAJOR SHIFTS IN CULTURAL
POLICY STORYTELLING

The executive’s discourse has been constant in its themes throughout the period under observation, revealing two key features:

- 01
- The centrality of culture as an instrument of influence and attractiveness. The centrality of culture as a tool for empowerment and social cohesion.
- 02
- Whilst these key themes have been constant, the pandemic shifted priorities and discourse to highlight inequalities in the cultural sector and within society, as well as shifting emphasis on the ways in which culture can support individuals, communities and London as a whole.

The crisis firstly results in the GLA developing an empathetic discourse, aimed at demonstrating their understanding of the human aspect of the pandemic. Sadiq Khan underlines he is aware of the suffering caused to individuals, especially independent cultural workers and freelancers, and thus advocates a strong public intervention that is both compassionate and effective.

This human dimension was not disregarded in the policies implemented by the GLA before the pandemic. On several occasions, both the Mayor and the administration stressed the importance of a cultural scene that represents “all Londoners” and that “leaves no one behind”. However, the way to deal with it seems very different in the face of the crisis: the precariousness caused by the crisis hit the most disadvantaged groups in London. The GLA had to strengthen their focus and policies on the most disadvantaged in order to provide emergency assistance.

For example, BME cultural workers and freelancers, who had been a focus in Sadiq Khan’s speeches in the past, now become the priority recipients of several emergency plans initiated by the GLA. For example, London artists, who already benefited from dedicated support to continue living and working in the city’s central districts, gained recognition of their freelancer status from the municipality in light of the crisis²⁵⁰. One example was in the programming of *Let’s Do London*, initiated by Sadiq Khan, a cultural and marketing programme to revive the hospitality, retail and cultural sector of the Central London zone (CAZ).

This is also true of Londoners themselves: until now, they have been recognised and encouraged in the diversity of their cultural practices through their community of belonging, but now they appear to get support as individuals, with culture seen as a useful response to the individual physical and mental health problems generated by the crisis. The link between health and culture is used in the majority’s discourse²⁵¹.

²⁵⁰/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-announces-boost-for-creative-freelancers>: Sadiq Khan announced £250,000 programme to support a collaboration between freelancers and cultural institutions to improve their working conditions.

²⁵¹/ For instance, Justine Simons stated in an interview granted to the *Financial Times*: “Creativity can help us lead healthier and happier lives.” <https://www.ft.com/content/10465454-fa0b-4656-8987-18eb3efeaeaa>

The second major consequence of the crisis is the widespread promotion of the economic contribution of the creative industries to the vitality and attractiveness of the British capital.

It is no longer just a matter of rejoicing at the cultural sector dynamic development, but now of considering it as a more decisive economic lever, both for maintaining top line professionals in the City, for reviving the tourism machine and its spin-offs for the local economy, and for kick-starting the city's general economic recovery.

The *Let's do London* campaign, "unprecedented", reflects this shift in discourse, as the programme aimed to increase domestic tourism to the central zone of London in order to increase income and therefore the economic recovery in the retail, hospitality and cultural sectors of central London (CAZ).

It is all the more essential for the GLA to underline the outcomes of this £6 million of public investment in the cultural sector as the government imposes a reallocation of public arts funding from London to the English regions. Sadiq Khan counters this attempt to set the English regions against London, stressing the interdependence between the British economic recovery and that of the capital.

Once the first phase of the *Let's do London* came to an end in March 2022, the GLA published an initial assessment aiming at putting forward the significant revenue and the new audiences generated by the campaign. The Mayor immediately showed his intention to build on this success and placed the cultural dynamism of the capital as a spearhead for its future development. By claiming and announcing from New York that London intends to "welcome the rest of the world", Sadiq Khan testifies to a thriving cultural sector that has maintained its ability, despite the

crisis, to seduce and attract visitors and investors from all over the world. Logically, this is an opportunity for Sadiq Khan to announce a follow up £10 million campaign aimed at international tourists, promoting "London's cultural gems".

The evolution of Sadiq Khan's narrative appears quite clearly: relying on the strength and vitality of the cultural sector before the crisis, he comes to the support of those who keep it alive during the pandemic, convinced that culture is such an important part of London's life and DNA that it has to be an integral component of the recovery.

The way GLA created new programmes (such as *Creative Land Trust* and *Creative Enterprises Zones*) showing how the same values that GLA showed pre Covid led the GLA to prioritise new programmes and partnerships aimed at the most vulnerable in the cultural community. The focus of all these grant giving bodies was on small organisations and individual artists and freelance workers who were slipping through the net of national schemes.

However, once the crisis has passed and the lessons have been learned, allowing for a cultural public policy that is more in tune with Londoners, their uniqueness and their life paths, the Mayor has chosen to send a clear signal to the world that London is back on the international stage.

02

THE MAYOR HAS CHOSEN TO SEND A CLEAR SIGNAL TO THE WORLD THAT LONDON IS BACK ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE.

3/ FOCUS ON...

A/ POLITICAL LEADERS NARRATIVE ABOUT THE *ULTRA LOW EMISSION ZONE*

CORPUS STUDIED

1. On April 8th 2019, Sadiq Khan launched its key promise, the *Ultra Low Emission Zone*. He made a speech on April 5th to announce this launch and the main ambition of the policy.

2. In the beginning of 2021, during the mayoral race election, Sadiq Khan advertised the extension of ULEZ to 18 London borough, due in October 2021.
3. Following a visit to a primary school deeply impacted by air pollution, Sadiq Khan made a speech at Barbican Centre, unveiling its vision for the environmental policy.

4. On March 22nd 2022, Sadiq Khan announced a new extension of *ULEZ* during an intervention at Forest Hill School.

ANALYSIS

One of the flagship promises of Sadiq Khan’s program in 2016 was the creation of the *Ultra Low emission Zone*. This measure was announced in reaction to the policies carried out by Boris Johnson’s local executive (2008 - 2016), which led, according to the new executive, to a “degraded environmental quality”.

Indeed, in his program Sadiq Khan stresses what he considers as a dramatic delay inherited from the outgoing executive: “when the *Conservatives* took over the City Hall eight years ago, they inherited a city that, in environmental terms, was leading the world with innovative policies and programmes. Fast forward to 2016, and our city has a record that is mediocre as best”. “Cleaning our air” is presented as the comeback to responsibility thanks to a *Labour* party able, unlike the *Tories*, to deal with the urgent issues society is facing, and very concretely to “our most pressing environmental challenge”, poor air quality.

The ULEZ was first introduced in 2016 and again in 2019 as the spearhead of the new executive air quality policy. From 2020 onwards, it will become the centrepiece of Sadiq Khan’s environmental policy, developed and structured around three main political goals: Londoners’ health, social justice and environmental ambition. Although these three objectives are deeply connected to each other and presented with a similar lexical field, one can notice remarkable changes in the choice of rhetorical register that mobilises it.

With regard to health, the GLA’s first speeches aim at sounding the bell, with air pollution being

described as a “silent killer”. Health is thus the key argument promoted when the *ULEZ* is officially launched, in 2019. It is the starting point and fundamental purpose of this policy, with the GLA sharing figures to remind the danger and deadly toxicity of London’s air. A real concern that calls for an urgent response: what is at stake here is the killing of “thousands of Londoners prematurely every year”.

It is all about a local and vital emergency, particularly with regard to the need to protect children. As a symbol of this focus on the most vulnerable sections of the population of London, the Major speeches on the fight against air pollution are given either in a children’s hospital or in schools, which are particularly affected by the measures to fight air pollution (Prior Western and Forest Hill). The issue of this unique fight and its impact on future generations already stands at the heart of the *Labour* Mayor’s speeches.

The focus on children is constantly reaffirmed, with the GLA using the example of schools that have seen improvements in air quality in their immediate environment as a direct result of the *ULEZ*. And referring to the example of the Prior Western Primary: “they’re reaping the benefits of the first of the world’s *Ultra Low Emission Zone* which covers central London as a result, prior Western now meets legal pollution limits for the first time”.

Future generations are the ones who have “the most at stakes”. This shift in argument is partly linked to the death of Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, which was documented as being directly linked to air pollution. Ella’s mother, Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, became a public figure, especially in the municipal fight against air pollution. The pandemic puts emphasis on this health discourse, which now includes an additional aspect: the proven link between air pollution, the health consequences of air pollution and the increased risk of suffering serious complications for people suffering from COVID-19, as illustrated by Sadiq Khan: “thousands of Londoners like me are still developing adult onset asthma and the evidence showing the wider dangers of air pollution just keep on mounting from the links to dementia and long-term poor mental health to the increased risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19”.

After the crisis, the fight against air pollution is framed within the global context of *Green Recovery*, and thus the executive adds an economic motivation: fighting air pollution is “not only saving lives but billions”. The savings to the National Health Service are quantified and valued. The comparison with the failure of public policies on tobacco prevention and control is used to illustrate the magnitude of the risk of a similar inaction on air pollution.

In the launch speech of Sadiq Khan in April 2019, as through his digital communication, the objective of social justice is underlined: the Mayor stresses that it is the most disadvantaged citizens who are most affected, stating “the shocking state of our air is quite clearly an issue of social justice”.

The discourse around social justice is the one that epitomises the tensions with the opposition: Shaun Bailey and Susan Hall remind on numerous occasions of the inequalities resulting from this municipal policy. In this respect, they use the black cabs symbol to embody these inequalities. The issue of air quality became a campaign issue, with the opposition putting forward the creation of a green bus fleet as a substitute to the executive policy.

It is clear the social justice motivation will become increasingly important in municipal speeches and in jousting with the opposition. The lockdown signals a truce on this issue, with Sadiq Khan favouring a pragmatic approach over a dogmatic one: he is suspending *ULEZ* for the duration of the lockdown, not only to ensure that essential workers can move around unhindered, but also to curb the isolation of precarious city centre businesses.

As soon as the city reopened, the Mayor set about countering the opposition’s attacks and responding with new projects and measures. In his platform, Sadiq Khan announced the extension of the *ULEZ*, but placed it in the context of a greening of buses and taxis, weakening mechanically the opposition’s criticisms. Furthermore, the extension of the *ULEZ* is based on health grounds, of course, but above all so that all Londoners can benefit from it: “I want more Londoners to benefit from cleaner air, so I’ll expand the *ULEZ* in October 2021”.

The Forest Hill speech on March 4th 2022 is a turning point in the executive approach. While the introduction of a scrappage scheme to compensate vehicle owners for the cost of the transition had been announced at the outset, it is now an imperative corollary, raised at the same level as the extension of the *ULEZ*. The Mayor then reminded the audience that although the most vulnerable populations are the most affected by air pollution, they are also the most directly targeted with these measures.

This is the first time that Sadiq Khan has given a speech explaining the reasoning behind his decision to extend the *ULEZ*. While he admits this is not an ideal solution, he underlines the ideal solution cannot be implemented quickly enough because “London can’t wait, lives are at stake”. The *ULEZ* was chosen as the solution because it presented the best balance between environmental emergency and “the rising cost of living, as a key consideration”.

The lexical field of public support is very explicit: “we’ll prioritise a just transition ensuring that the burden does not fall on those who are the least able to bear it.” And later, in the same speech, “in practical terms this means helping Londoners most in need to support and to adapt to the extended London wide *ULEZ*”. Fairness and acceptability are also emphasised: “it is not only right, it is fair”, for the young people; “it is also wrong that children attending school on one side of this borough get to breathe cleaner air thanks to the *ULEZ* but children on this side where this school are forced to inhale more toxic fumes because they are outside the *ULEZ* area”.

From the speech announcing the creation of the *ULEZ* in April 2019, the tone is clear: London will be a pioneering city, leading the way on the issue of air pollution. Its policy is ambitious: to create “the world’s first *Ultra-Low Emission Zone*” and adopt “the boldest and most ambitious plan of any major city in the world”. *ULEZ* components and technical specificities are associated with modernity, with the new face of London, away from the “Dickensian London”. This ambition is coupled with a responsibility for the Mayor, who was elected to serve and protect Londoners. In this respect, inaction is not an option, and this argument will resonate throughout the *ULEZ* speeches, embodied in a hard-hitting statement made at the Barbican Centre speech on September 23rd 2021: “it’s not enough to talk the talk we must walk the walk. And six months later: “we will walk the walk not just talk the talk”.

Moreover, if the ambition to make London a leading city in the fight against air pollution is still valued, it takes on a new face after the crisis: beyond the ambition, it is a clear responsibility that is imposed on the municipality, insofar as the Government is not acting and the emergency is becoming more and more critical.

Absent from the first speeches, the direct interpellation of the Government will become increasingly significant in the municipal discourse, by mobilising several registers: Sarcasm, in the Barbican speech: “imagine if the Government shared our passion and adopted the air quality guidelines from the World Health Organisation”; Disillusionment, in the Forest Hill speech: “if we are honest we do not know if national leaders will step up and make the difficult decisions that are required to protect our planet and its people”.

It is clear that the local leader is seeking to embody the camp of hope, then of responsibility. Indeed, Sadiq Khan first invited the Government, in September 2021, to join him in his fight by creating a “*National Clean Air Fund*”; he wanted to assure Londoners of his total commitment, responsible elected official that he is, in this fight which requires political leaders to take and endorse “difficult decisions”. Sadiq Khan therefore makes it a matter of personal responsibility: “I make a plea”; “I am not willing to make the same mistake by turning a blind eye”. He underlines, at the very beginning of the Forest Hill speech: “I acted straight away to start bringing down emissions so that we could clean our air and play our part in tackling the climate crisis”.

He does not hesitate to call upon great figures in the fight against climate change, who are not very debatable and have strong legitimacy, quoting Barack Obama, Al Gore or Greta Thunberg, thus walking in their footsteps.

4/

LONDON

LOGBOOK

A/

CULTURE: AN ENCOMPASSING

STRATEGY REORIENTED

AFTER THE PANDEMIC TOWARDS

ALL LONDONERS

FACTS

Sadiq Khan shows a real appetite for cultural policies, regularly featuring himself on social media participating in cultural activities²⁵². He initiated the creation of the post of Deputy Mayor for Culture²⁵³. His interest is also illustrated by the prominence given to culture by the candidate in both of his campaigns (“London Culture and nightlife will be front and centre if he is reelected”)²⁵⁴. This commitment is underlined by key players in the sector, such as Ben Evans, director of the *Design Festival*: “the Mayor recognises the power and importance of culture by making it a top priority”²⁵⁵.

In 2018, the City Council is presenting the *Culture Strategy for London*, which focuses on four areas²⁵⁶:

- *Love London*: more people experiencing and creating culture on their doorstep;
- *Culture and Good Growth*: supporting, saving and sustaining cultural places;
- *Creative Londoners*: investing in a diverse creative workforce for the future;
- *World city*: a global creative powerhouse today and in the future.

01/

INFLUENCE AND SOFT POWER

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

Four out of five tourists say they visit London for its culture and heritage²⁵⁷. It is thus an essential component of the city’s touristic attractiveness. This dimension has been defended by the Mayor since his 2016 campaign and reaffirmed in the context of Brexit, with the launch of the *London is Open* campaign, which consists of confirming that despite Brexit, London will always be open to talents and businesses from all over the world²⁵⁸.

This soft power policy also involves supporting and promoting “major events”, with the Mayor announcing in his platform his intention to “build on the success of the Olympics and attract more global events to the city”²⁵⁹. Finally, as part of this attractiveness policy, the municipality is promoting the implementation of a specific nightlife strategy, based in particular on the appointment of a *Night Czar*²⁶⁰, in charge of both the enhancement of London’s nightlife and related security issues.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The executive’s discourse is based on a central argument: “no city can compete with London”, as Sadiq Khan writes in his 2016 programme²⁶¹. Culture is one of the reasons for London’s international attractiveness: “our arts and culture are a big draw to people from all around the world - both tourists and those looking to the city to work and set up businesses”²⁶².

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Culture is not a real controversial issue in the London Assembly. It does not appear as a priority for the opposition, which seems to be struggling to present alternative proposals on this issue²⁶³.

252/ <https://www.nme.com/news/music/sadiq-khan-says-londons-culture-and-nightlife-will-be-front-and-centre-if-hes-re-elected-2933154>

253/ <https://www.ft.com/content/10465454-fa0b-4656-8987-18eb3efeaeaa>

254/ <https://www.nme.com/news/music/sadiq-khan-says-londons-culture-and-nightlife-will-be-front-and-centre-if-hes-re-elected-2933154>

255/ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018_culture_strategy_final_2021_0.pdf

256/ See footnote 244.

257/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/lets-do-london/lets-do-london-events-programme-evaluation-report#acc-i-66681>

258/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/london-open>

259/ https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/themes/569cb9526a21db3279000001/attachments/original/1457451016/x160668_Sadiq_Khan_Manifesto.pdf?1457451016

260/ Position created in 2016.

261/ See footnote 244.

262/ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03058034.2022.2008728>

263/ For example, in the context of London is Open, the opposition questioned the GLA on the results of the policy and its consequences, without however challenging the policy.

● CRISIS - COVID-19

FACTS

The pandemic is affecting the daily lives of Londoners as much as it is affecting the city’s touristic appeal. According to the *Visit Britain* tourism agency, international tourism revenues fell by £7.4 billion in 2020, while domestic tourists spent £3.5 billion less²⁶⁴. In addition, the pandemic led to the desertion of Central London and a need emerged to “bring the life back to the city”²⁶⁵.

The GLA is therefore launching a flagship project to guide its cultural policy within the framework of recovery and at the same time plant the seeds of future cultural policy: *Let’s do London*.

Let’s do London is a campaign launched in May 2021²⁶⁶, with a £6 million budget aimed in particular at drawing on the city’s cultural and creative potential to “kickstart the recovery”. The programme rests on several pillars:

- Organising outdoor events to bring colour to London’s cultural landscape while respecting health requirements, such as *Back to the Big Screen*, an open-air screening in Trafalgar Square which attracted over 9,000 spectators;
- The funding of a public art programme;
- A new financial support for cultural workers (see above).

These initiatives all aim to one goal: the regeneration of Central London, deserted by Londoners in the context of the pandemic.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The executive discourse has undergone an important and unpredicted evolution: if the objective of international attractiveness remains, a new priority has emerged, the revival of domestic tourism, which now features prominently in every speech by the majority leaders. For instance, in his speech to launch the *Pop Up Festival*, an

outdoor festival, the Mayor announced: “as London is already recovering from this awful pandemic, *Pop Up London* will give creatives a platform to perform and give Londoners and visitors yet another reason to make the most of our capital this October”²⁶⁷.

Let’s do London is presented as the “biggest ever domestic tourism campaign”²⁶⁸. According to the Mayor, “it’s the message to Londoners and people across the country that our capital city stands ready to entertain, inspire, and enthrall”²⁶⁹.

Indeed, according to the City Council, the creative industries not only contribute to the city’s influence, but are also part of the reason why Londoners have chosen the capital as their home, as Laia Gash, Senior Advisor Culture and Creative Industries, explains in an interview with *The London Journal*: “culture and the creative industries not only provide one in six jobs, but that they are also the main reason people choose to live, work and visit London (...) We’re doing that by delivering the biggest domestic tourist campaign ever, called *Let’s Do London*”²⁷⁰.

A second motivation used in the context of *Let’s Do London* is the critical role of culture in the recovery, and thus in the regeneration of Central London: “the good news is that so far we haven’t seen any big [City of London] jobs leaving our city [post-Brexit], the reason I’m so keen to have a good recovery in central London is because I know when I talk to the City that one of the reasons they chose London over Frankfurt, Madrid, Brussels is because of our ecosystem - culture, theatre, museums, libraries. That’s why I’m really keen to make sure we have a quick recovery in central London”²⁷¹.

²⁶⁸/ https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/lets-do-london/lets-do-london-events-programme-evaluation-report&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1659001800811518&usg=AOvVaw3a_i81L3K5yFFMjORyGwK8

²⁶⁹/ See footnote 254.

²⁷⁰/ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03058034.2022.2008728>

²⁷¹/ <https://www.cityam.com/strong-west-end-recovery-vital-for-city-of-londons-future-says-khan/>

²⁶⁴/ <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/let-s-do-london-6m-tourism-campaign-launched-1.1220106>

²⁶⁵/ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mol_back_to_life_evaluation_report_fa_rev1.pdf

²⁶⁶/ Announced by Sadiq Khan during his re-election speech.

²⁶⁷/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/london-to-stage-mayors-free-pop-up-festival>

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

No significant speeches, with the opposition instead asking about progress²⁷² and relevancy of *Let’s Do London* and coordination with other municipal programmes²⁷³, through questions to the executive at City Councils.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Some cultural players publicly show their support for the executive policy, like Neil Constable, CEO of Shakespeare’s Globe: “the *Let’s Do London* campaign will continue throughout the year urging non-Londoners to consider the capital for mini-breaks where they might have once automatically booked the countryside or headed for the coast”²⁷⁴.

● POST CRISIS AND CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

The *Let’s Do London* campaign began in May 2021 and ran until March 2022. It has attracted 330,000 visitors and injected £81 million into the economy through 500 events²⁷⁵.

This success led Sadiq Khan to announce two further phases of the campaign:

- In May 2022, he launched the second part during a visit to New York, with an extra £7 million to target international visitors²⁷⁶;
- In July 2022, he announced the third part, worth £2 million, targeting all Britons through TV, radio and social media advertising²⁷⁷.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

While the GLA expressed its appreciation to *Let’s Do London* outcomes, which has made it possible to “bring fresh colour, light and energy to our city”²⁷⁸, it is clearly reorienting the discourse towards two new targets, foreign visitors and non-

²⁷²/ Question to the Mayor by MP Hina Bokhari (Liberal Democrats) on the impact of Let’s do London: <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2022/0300>

²⁷³/ XXX

²⁷⁴/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/sadiq-signed-in-for-second-term-as-london-mayor>

²⁷⁵/ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mol_back_to_life_evaluation_report_fa_rev1.pdf

²⁷⁶/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-launches-new-international-tourism-campaign>

Londonese national visitors... who were put on the back burner during the crisis, due to the travel difficulties linked to the pandemic: “I’m proud that my *Let’s Do London* campaign has already helped to bring back hundreds of thousands of tourists to London, but I am determined to show even more people across the country and the rest of the world that our capital is ready to welcome them”²⁷⁹.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The *Evening Standard* echoes this advertising campaign, aimed at British tourists, not Londoners, and quotes Laura Citron, chief executive of *Visit London*: “Brits don’t have to go abroad to experience the thrills of a diverse, global city – London is a train ride away”. Highlighting the importance of cultural and tourist activity for the city’s economy (“prior to the pandemic, London was the third most visited city in the world, with a thriving tourism sector accounting for as many as one in five jobs in London and contributing almost 12 per cent of the city’s gross domestic product”), the conservative daily newspaper seems to salute the proactivity of a municipality of which it is not an official supporter²⁸⁰.

²⁷⁷/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayors-tourism-campaign-encourages-visitors-back>

²⁷⁸/ <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/mayor/sadiq-khans-lets-do-london-economy-covid-boost-b960271.html>

²⁷⁹/ See footnote 267.

²⁸⁰/ <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lets-do-london-new-tourism-campaign-uk-travellers-covid-sadiq-khan-b1009992.html>

02/
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND
CULTURE-BASED ECONOMY

BEFORE CRISIS

With the encouragement of Sadiq Khan, the City of London promotes *Good Growth*, of which culture is an essential component. This *Good Growth* is based on financial support for the places that build up London’s soft power. In this respect, the City has distinguished itself by setting up the first *Cultural Infrastructures Plan*, as part of the *London Plan*²⁸¹. It is described as the “most culture-London Plan”, insofar as particular attention is paid to the protection and renovation of cultural venues²⁸². The Mayor has also set up a cultural mapping to highlight all cultural venues and a funding plan for his “family of museums”.

It also involves strong support to the creative industries workers, with a specific focus on supporting all creative communities. Recognising the high cost of living in the capital and the difficulties this creates for artists, the City Council has initiated three flagship programmes to enable creative people to live and work in London:

- The *Creative Enterprises Zones* as for specific areas of the city where artists and businesses can find affordable workspace and public support to develop their professional and creative activities;
- The *Creative Land Trust*, which relies on funding for 239 artists’ studios through a public-private partnership;

• The *Culture At Risk Office*, which provides emergency support to independent venues, including LGBTQI+ venues.

The City is addressing the issue of under-representation of BAME right from the formulation stage of its cultural strategy. An Arts Council study published early 2020 showed “the lack of diversity” in the cultural sector: “just 11% of workers in England’s national portfolio organisations, which include galleries, theatres, orchestras, dance companies and museums, are from black and other minority ethnic backgrounds. That compares with 16% of the working-age population. When it comes to disability, only 6% of people in the arts workforce identify as disabled, compared with 21% of the wider working population”²⁸³.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

Its first argument is based on European and international influence: showing strong support for the creative industries is necessary, insofar as it clearly appears it is a prerequisite for London influence, which, as explained above, sparkles with its culture²⁸⁴. Both inclusiveness and the recognition of diversity are central to the discourse of the GLA: “the Mayor does not want growth that leaves Londoners feeling left out, that obliterates local character in the name of regeneration, or that undermines community cohesion”²⁸⁵. This inclusiveness is, however, put at the service of attractiveness: “London’s creative sector can remain a world leader by having a workforce that reflects its population”²⁸⁶.

The goal, which is notably mentioned in the three flagship programmes, is also to train Londoners, and particularly BAMEs, in the creative professions, insofar as these careers contribute greatly to the city’s economy. The City Council frequently points out that one in six jobs is in the creative industries sector²⁸⁷ and that it generates £52 billion a year²⁸⁸.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Concerned about the genuine and costly impact of the programmes launched, the opposition questioned the Mayor in the Municipal Assembly: “How many organisations and individuals has your *Culture at Risk Office* helped since the start of the COVID-19 crisis?”²⁸⁹.

CRISIS - COVID-19

Oxford Economics published a report in June 2020 which predicted that by the end of the year, London could lose 16% of its creative jobs and the sector could suffer a 25% drop in revenue (£14.8 billion).

Government launches a first funding plan in March 2020, announcing a £160 million fund²⁹⁰.

On April 24th 2020, the City launched a £2.3 million funding package to support venues excluded from the Government’s plan, including grassroots music venues (£450,000); LGBTQ+ venues (£225,000) and affordable creative workspaces (£1.5 million). In addition, it announced the continuation of the *Creative Enterprises Zones* programme, with a refocus on support for cultural jobs and BAME.

The crisis has resulted in the emergence of an issue that had previously been neglected by public policy, that of the freelancers precariousness. A study published by the *Centre for London think tank* (connected to the GLA) shows that 200,000 freelance Londoners are ignored by the Government’s support policies²⁹¹. In response, the municipality launched the *Creative Freelancers: Shaping London’s Recovery programme*, which aims to provide financial support to freelancers and to draw up the outlines of a structured public policy for them: 50 freelancers are thus associated with 50 directors of institutions and elected officials in order to propose a scheme to improve their working conditions and a charter. This programme has been allocated £250,000.

281/ Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London from 2021 to 2036.
282/ http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com/case_studies/culture-in-the-london-plan
283/ <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/feb/18/arts-bodies-threatened-with-funding-cuts-over-lack-of-diversity>
284/ <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1191478768789053442>
285,286/ See footnote 244.

287/ <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1286005221148233729>
288/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/multi-billion-impact-of-creative-industries>
289/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2020/2355>

290/ <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Policy-Review-Cultural-Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19-in-the-UK.pdf>
291/ <https://www.centreforlondon.org/blog/coronavirus-creative-industries/>

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

It is based on three main arguments:

- The need to support a sector heavily affected by the pandemic, and a reorientation of this discourse towards workers (as opposed to cultural institutions);
- The contribution of the creative industries to “jumpstart the recovery”²⁹²;
- The mobilisation of the City of London to provide concrete answers to those who experienced the lack of support from the Government.

While financial aid is still largely directed towards the venues, the discourse is reoriented towards the workers. Justine Simons puts it this way: “bricks and mortar are really important, but the whole thing falls apart without people and ideas. They are the most fragile”.

The same arguments are mobilised in the context of the extension of *Creative Enterprises Zones*, which are refocused around the issue of workers, and particularly BAME workers: “the existing Zones are delivering new skills programmes, which will improve career prospects for more than 650 Londoners, with a focus on creative opportunities for people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community groups and women”²⁹³. Moreover, the appearance of the term “freelancers” in the communications of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Culture from March 2020 illustrates the strength of this new priority. This stated support for the creative industries sector and those who run it should help improve economic and social recovery: in announcing the extension of the *Creative Enterprise Zones*, the Mayor thus states: “the creative industries have the power to drive our social and economic recovery through innovation and job creation

but have been hit hard by the pandemic; much-needed catalyst for economic regeneration and growth”. On his Twitter account too: “the creative economy can help the UK accelerate the recession. They’re vital for our economy and will play a key role in helping us recover”²⁹⁵

Finally, this support is part of a broader political context: the City justifies its policy of supporting cultural workers and activities as a way of making up for the inadequacies of the government’s funding plans. The GLA uses two types of motivations in this respect:

- The weakness of the Government’s funding plans and the lack of a strategic vision for culture: Justine Simons, explains in an interview with the *Financial Times*²⁹⁶ that “instead of a ‘whack-a-mole strategy’, the government should set out an investment and growth plan for the creative economy across the UK (...) I mean that it is not only about the big national institutions, there is a whole ecosystem here in the capital — the freelancers, the supply chain, the grass roots venues, the artist studios. In other words, funding should support the whole cast, not just the headline acts”²⁹⁷;

The need to support London, which “pulls up” the whole UK economy: according to Sadiq Khan, “when London thrives, the whole country thrives”²⁹⁸, adding that “if you want a national recovery, you must have a London recovery”²⁹⁹.

^{298/} <https://twitter.com/MayorofLondon/status/1356329397939281922>

^{299/} <https://www.cityam.com/strong-west-end-recovery-vital-for-city-of-londons-future-says-khan/>

^{300/} <https://twitter.com/NadineDorries/status/1493519024885489667>

^{301/} <https://twitter.com/NadineDorries/status/1496566801504874502>

MEDIA COVERAGE

The narrative of the GLA is echoed by some media: *Arts Professional* explains that the Mayor’s investment plan “is falling through the gaps in Government coronavirus support schemes”³⁰⁴. In addition, several *Conservative* and *Labour* MPs are mobilising to denounce the inadequacy of government aid, “what is needed” is “not just a bailout” but a “long-term plan”, said *Conservative* MP Julian Knight³⁰⁵. On social networks, individual citizens and civil society respond with mixed messages, with many Londoners indicating that they do not understand the Mayor’s priorities, which they believe should be safety and health.

During the crisis, the voices of BAME and people with disabilities are more prominent. These populations are the most affected by the economic consequences of the crisis, as revealed by a Centre for London study published in July 2020³⁰⁶. Furthermore, the effects of the *Black Lives Matter* movement are felt within the cultural community, which is speaking up to denounce institutional racism. For example, the black cultural community mobilised by publishing *Barbican Stories*, a book denouncing institutional racism. BAME and disabled artists are calling for a change in the way Arts Council funding is allocated.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

The local opposition is very regularly backed or replaced by the national representatives of the sectors concerned, as they mostly follow the ideas and projects expressed by the government. Nadine Dorries, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, spoke on several occasions about the need to rebalance between the capital city and the rest of the country. She underlined the need to support the cultural sector beyond London’s borders and declared: “the days of London-centric decision making belong in the past”³⁰⁰. This was confirmed and amplified by the Secretary of State, who recently highlighted London’s “over-funding”, with the capital receiving five times more funding than the East Midlands. She announced that she wanted to review the funding rules applied by the Arts Council³⁰¹. The Government is launching a new £1.57 billion funding package in July 2020, focused on supporting institutions, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying: “from iconic theatre and musicals, mesmerising exhibitions at our world-class galleries to gigs performed in local basement venues, the UK’s cultural industry is the beating heart of this country”³⁰². Shaun Bailey took the opportunity to criticise the Mayor’s policy, pointing out that the choice to support cultural venues had been made at the expense of the safety of Londoners and particularly *Transport for London workers*³⁰³.

^{302/} <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions>

^{303/} <https://twitter.com/peckham65Grant/status/1255831149462663171/photo/1>

^{304/} <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/london-mayor-steps-support-risk-culture-and-creative-businesses>

^{305/} <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-53502696>

^{292/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-to-invest-nearly-3m-in-creative-enterprise>

^{293/} See footnote 282.

^{294/} See footnote 277

^{295/} <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1255796085903233024>

^{296/} Liberal-leaning economic newspaper.

^{297/} <https://www.ft.com/content/10465454-fa0b-4656-8987-18eb3efeaeaa?segmentid=acee4131-99c2-09d3-a635-873e61754ec6>

● POST CRISIS AND CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

The City is extending its support plans beyond the peak of the pandemic, redirecting some of the funds under *Culture at Risk*: £750,000 is being allocated to support community spaces, the majority of which is dedicated to BAME³⁰⁷. The City is also launching a £70,000 fund for disabled artists and the institutions that support them, as well as a platform for expression as part of the Lewisham *Borough of Culture* initiative³⁰⁸. In a second phase, with the recovery underway, the candidate-mayor announced, as part of his campaign, the creation of a large Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries³⁰⁹. Finally, the issue of freelancers is embedded in City policy: in July 2022, the City announced a partnership with *Creative UK* (an independent advocacy network for the creative industries) to consider the situation of freelancers and what public support could be offered to them.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

After the crisis, the narrative is once again focused on the two rhetoric priorities mobilised previously: soft power and inclusiveness. As this exceptional period is coming to an end, it is an opportunity for the executive to amplify its actions in favour of an attractive cultural and creative industries sector that reflects the components of the whole of London society.

Speaking about the Centre for Creative Industries, Sadiq Khan says “I will also promote London’s international competitiveness by backing an International Centre for Creative Industries in London, and partner with the creative industries sector to strengthen and diversify the pipeline of young people going into this area of work”³¹⁰.

The GLA narrative largely focuses on the access to employment opportunities in the creative sector to BAME, both in continuity with the former narrative mobilised before the crisis but also taking into account the protests and requests that arose within the context of the *Black Lives Matter* movement.

Sadiq Khan thus asserts “there’s always more we can do to make London more inclusive”³¹¹. Laia Gasch says this is the challenge ahead: “as you said, the creative industries and the creative economy, and culture in general, still have a long way to go to be representative of London. London is forty percent Black, Asian and ethnic minority, for lack of a better term. Our industry should totally match that statistic and represent London, and we’re far from that. So, we’re looking at what levers we’ve got to fast track this actually, because we can’t be waiting. It’s a little bit like with the gender pay gap, we can’t wait 100 years for this to happen. It needs to happen quick, it needs to happen now. Definitely there’s challenges, we’ve not completely fixed it”³¹².

Finally, the Mayor keeps fighting with the Government: “despite consistent lobbying, the Government has simply not done enough for many businesses in London’s cultural sectors struggling to stay afloat”³¹³.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

The Government continues to advocate the reallocation of funds to other territories in the UK: “over the last few decades, an overwhelming amount of money has gone to organisations based in London, while other parts of the country haven’t received their fair share”³¹⁴.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The *Evening Standard*³¹⁵ reports on the final festival in Lewisham in support of disabled artists highlighting an outstanding concentration of free events: “it’s going to be an absolutely jam-packed weekend of shows, and, happily, it’s been designed to be accessible, inclusive and it’s all completely free”.

ACCESS TO CULTURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

The Mayor’s policy to promote access to cultural practices and activities is implemented through the *Love London* objective. One of the programmes initiated is the *Borough of Culture*: each year, a London borough is highlighted and receives special and extensive support to highlight the practices of the communities that live there. Future generations are also a priority for the municipality, launching the *Young Londoners Fund*, a £45 million fund to help young people run projects in their communities. This priority is also exemplified by additional financial support for school-based initiatives, such as the *London Music Fund* and the *London curriculum*. Finally, the effective integration of people with disabilities appears to be another priority of the municipality, as illustrated by the signing of the *Charter for best practice in Event accessibility*.

307/ <https://www.citymatters.london/almost-700-applications-to-emergency-culture-at-risk-team-during-pandemic/>
308/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-launches-fund-for-d-deaf-disabled-artists>
309/ Currently undergoing a feasibility study
310/ <https://www.nme.com/news/music/sadiq-khan-says-londons-culture-and-nightlife-will-be-front-and-centre-if-hes-re-elected-2933154>
311/ <https://twitter.com/MayorofLondon/status/1370706364130021378>

312/ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03058034.2022.2008728>
313/ See footnote 276.
314/ <https://twitter.com/NadineDorries/status/1496566803648155667>
315/ <https://www.msn.com/en-us/entertainment/entertainment-celebrity/lewisham-e2-80-99s-liberty-festival-the-lowdown-on-the-celebration-of-ddeaf-disabled-and-neurodiverse-artists/ar-AAZN1Lk>

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The primary focus is to improve access to artworks and practices, but also to enable everyone to experiment cultural activities, and thus promoting diversity, which is an objective explicitly claimed as such by the municipality.

Two main goals for the municipal policy quickly emerge: access to culture as a lever for citizenship and social inclusion, and access to culture as a tool for empowerment.

The highest priority seems to be given to access to culture for all Londoners, as it responds to citizenship issues: “to steer Londoners away from troubles”; “to open up new paths forward for our young people offering an alternative to getting sucked into a life of crime, gangs and violence”. The Mayor announced in his *London Strategy*: “I want all Londoners - regardless of age, faith, ethnicity, gender, background, sexuality or postcode - to have the opportunity to engage and interact with our amazing culture”.

Promoting access to culture is also presented as an instrument for the collective empowerment of Londoners. In the context of the presentation of the London Borough of Culture, Sadiq Khan underlines on Twitter that “these [cultural] projects can lift local aspirations, build community identity and address social issues. Far too many young Londoners do not have access to our city’s exceptional cultural institutions. @WFCulture19 can be a gamechanger – putting culture at the heart of our local communities and ensuring young Londoners can access the transformative power of art and music”³¹⁶.

This inclusion policy rests on two pillars, as mentioned in the London Strategy:

- Valuing all cultures from all communities: by presenting the *London Borough of Culture*, the City Council aims to show how the diversity of Londoners is an asset to the creative city that is the British capital (“to shine a spotlight on the hidden gems and unique character of boroughs”) and reminds the right for each citizen to take part to the city cultural scene (“it will put local people at centre stage”);
- Promoting access to cultural activities for minorities: “engaging with culture builds communities and raises aspirations so barriers to participation should be removed. Under the *London Music Fund*, the projects supported are mainly aimed at “hundreds of young Londoners from mostly low-income and BAME backgrounds to learn musical instruments”.

This commitment is a condition for London’s cultural influence: “if London is to continue as a cultural powerhouse, its inequalities must be addressed”. This key point is coupled with a health motivation: “our culture and creative industries are vital to our city’s success and Londoners’ wellbeing”³¹⁷. Culture is also presented as a tool for social cohesion: “culture is the DNA of our city - it’s the glue that binds us together. It gives opportunities to young people, creates jobs in London and is, above all, fun”³¹⁸.

● CRISIS - COVID-19

FACTS

During the peak of the pandemic (March to August 2020) cultural venues are closed, so the GLA is rolling out various initiatives to maintain access to cultural activities:

- For example, the *London Borough of Culture* in Brent in 2020 is being held digitally³¹⁹;
- As part of *Let’s Do London*, several outdoor events are produced, such as *Borealis* and *City Lights*.

Despite the pandemic, the issue of accessibility keeps being a priority for the municipality, as illustrated with the proceeding of *Fourth Plinth*, a public art programme, with particular attention paid to the representativity of all Londoners. A remarkable innovation in this respect is the creation during the crisis of the *Commission for Diversity in Public Space*, responsible for carrying out an inventory of the city’s heritage in order to enhance all communities.³²⁰ Finally, the City is launching a crowdfunding scheme to invite Londoners to show their support for cultural activities, *Pay it Forward*, which has been very popular, raising over £15 million³²¹.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

At a time when Londoners are distanced from each other, the importance of culture as a means of social connection is reinforced. For example, in the presentation of the *Brent 2020* programme³²², the executive underlines the need to maintain cultural activities during the pandemic: “the *Brent 2020* programme was adapted to unite communities at a time when they were unable to come together, culture is playing a vital role in helping Londoners stay connected, motivated and well while we’re physically apart”³²³. It reminds us of the unique role played by cultural venues for the well-being of Londoners: the Mayor said community and cultural spaces have been “invaluable beacons of hope, support and comfort” during the pandemic³²⁴.

On social media, the executive launched the hashtag #OurCityTogether so that everyone can follow the City’s remote offer. The hashtag has been used extensively by Londoners. This lexical choice testifies to the storytelling displayed by the executive, showing the strength of acting as a gathered community to face the crisis. Faced with the isolation caused by the pandemic and the regulatory measures adopted in emergency, culture is deliberately used in the executive’s narrative as a powerful tool to remain united, to come together and thus to continue to make society thanks to the emotions provoked by the arts.

Justine Simons is more careful than ever to remind us of the importance of culture at a time when venues are closing (“I often think it’s only when you lose something you realise its true value”, thus explains Justine Simons)³²⁵ and the GLA is calling on Londoners to help fund and support the venues they care about. The Mayor is urging Londoners to return to cultural venues after the pandemic³²⁶.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Some cultural venues, such as the Tate Britain, want to remind us of the importance of access to culture as a “universal human right”. The institution insists on the positive impact of culture in our lives, especially in terms of mental health. This is an essential daily need that leads Tate Britain to propose a rich and free digital cultural offer: “we believe that access to art is a universal human right. Now more than ever, art can lift our spirits, brighten our days and improve our mental health. So whilst our galleries are shut, we’ll be sharing some ideas for how you can still enjoy the best of Tate online. We don’t know yet when galleries will reopen, but we look forward to seeing you when they do. Until then, stay safe and take care”³²⁷. Although Londoners quickly came back to cultural venues (see below), some expressed their misunderstanding regarding this subject being a top priority by the Mayor. They complain for a lack of logic, between this priority and some local decisions described as contradictory to this new injunction. They called on the municipality to reinvest in policies that they see as much more important, such as transport and security³²⁸.

³¹⁶/ <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1095679659663077377>

³¹⁷/ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018_culture_strategy_final_2021_0.pdf

³¹⁸/ <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1218887397448081408>

³¹⁹/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/current-culture-projects/london-borough-culture/london-borough-culture-2020-brent>

³²⁰/ <https://twitter.com/lbcnews/status/1270228933670207488>

³²¹/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/over-15m-raised-through-pay-it-forward-london>

³²²/ Brent is appointed London Borough of culture for the year 2020.

³²³/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/current-culture-projects/london-borough-culture/london-borough-culture-2020-brent>

³²⁴/ <https://www.citymatters.london/almost-700-applications-to-emergency-culture-at-risk-team-during-pandemic/>

³²⁵/ <https://londonist.com/london/features/what-next-cultural-life-london>

³²⁶/ <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1334911458606452736>

³²⁷/ <https://www.countryandtownhouse.com/culture/the-coronavirus-effect-london-venues-closed/>

³²⁸/ See footnote 316.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The GLA repeats at every opportunity its rhetoric of inviting Londoners to take advantage of cultural activities, conducting a veritable campaign of promotion along the way: “there is so much to love in our capital, and I want everyone to have a chance to enjoy what’s on their doorstep”³³¹.

● POST CRISIS AND CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

A study shows that Londoners did not reduce their cultural consumption much during the lockdown: according to a survey conducted by *The Audience Agency*, 2% of Londoners had not attended any arts/heritage since March 2020, attendance by Londoners dropped less than overall, compared to pre-March 2020 level, especially for films at the cinema or other venues. For performing arts and outdoor arts, 44% of Londoners had watched a performance/event online since March 2020; 15% had taken part in an online activity. These were above the overall UK averages of 33% and 9%. 69% are currently interested in any art/heritage activity, 6% higher than the overall average³²⁹. The Council is continuing the existing programmes after the crisis: in this respect, the *London Borough of Culture* programme is taking place in Lewisham in 2022 and Croydon in 2023.

Finally, an initiative is widely supported by the municipality: the launch of the first *Dementia Friendly Venues Charter* in May 2021, signed in particular with cultural venues in order to improve access to cultural venues for people with dementia³³⁰.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The local press (*The Londonist*³³⁴, *Time Out London*) praised the plurality and quality of the arrangements developed within the framework of the *Borough of Culture*. Speaking to the residents of Lewisham, *The Londonist* states that “the fun will begin in January 2022”, which attests to the festive nature of the event. The paper concludes by highlighting the hopefulness of the shows and creations, “after a pretty bleak couple of years (...) plenty to make you feel hopeful for London’s future”.

On Twitter, in response to some of the criticism of the Council in the past period, some citizens defend and support the Mayor’s cultural policy: “thank you for considering our young BAME youths who are so often the victims of knife crime”³³⁵.

^{329/} <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/evidence/covid-19-insights/nations/england/london>

^{330/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/worlds-first-dementia-friendly-venues-charter>

^{331/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-encourages-londoners-to-make-most-of-capital>

^{332/} Full quote: “So, for example, with the Borough of Culture. Brent, who were the award holder for 2019–20, pivoted their programme very quickly online, and they ramped up the support for young people and freelancers. Our agenda about having

culture on your doorstep; that narrative of how we value our local library, our local pub, our local theatre, became more important than ever. So, the Borough of Culture was still able to support over 1000 artists. Then they gave about half a million pounds of grants to local organisations, and the majority of schools in the borough became involved in the programme. Across the two winners of the London Borough of Culture award, we had about 1500 volunteers. In Waltham Forest, those volunteers became COVID volunteers, which worked because they were already trained and engaged. For me, the civic role of culture came to its own, it’s a really beautiful story”.

B/

ENVIRONMENT: LONDON AT THE FOREFRONT OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES, WITH LONDONER’S HEALTH AS A PRIORITY

01/

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

Sadiq Khan has made tackling air pollution his priority since his election in 2016, addressing a historic problem for the city of London³³⁶. In doing so, he is facing a central concern for citizens: according to the *2019 Air quality polling*, 83% of Londoners believe that tackling air pollution should be a priority³³⁷.

He also tackles a problem whose urgency is more than frequently stressed, whether by the scientific community, which regularly sounds the alarm³³⁸, or by citizens who feel they are in a worrying situation³³⁹.

In order to meet the targets for reducing toxic particles in the air, the City executive has developed an *Air Quality Strategy* and put in place a set of measures and a plan, the £22 million *Air*

Quality Fund. The first measure is the issuing of alerts to inform the public when levels of toxic particles in the air are too high³⁴⁰. On April 8th 2019, the City launched a flagship project, the *Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)*, which aims to reduce air pollution by 45% by 2020³⁴¹. The *ULEZ* requires a £12.50 charge for the most polluting vehicles to enter central London. Alongside the launch of the *ULEZ*, Sadiq Khan introduced a scrappage scheme offering grants to households and businesses to ensure the green transition of their mobility by supporting the acquisition of clean vehicles.

These measures are presented just before the launch of the 2020 municipal election campaign, which results in crystallising the opposition’s discourse in response. The issue of air quality is becoming a central issue in this campaign.

^{333/} <https://www.nme.com/news/music/sadiq-khan-says-londons-culture-and-nightlife-will-be-front-and-centre-if-hes-re-elected-2933154>

^{334/} <https://londonist.com/london/theatre-and-arts/all-the-highlights-from-lewisham-s-london-borough-of-culture-2022-programme>

^{335/} https://twitter.com/toog_dan/status/1370876455199072263

^{336/} An example of this historical problem is the Great Smog of 1952 which, according to studies, caused more than 4000 premature deaths in 4 days and led to the first Clean Air Act in 1956.

^{337/} <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/environment/air-quality-london/air-quality-public-polling/2019-air-quality-polling>

^{338/} The King’s college Environmental Research Group frequently publishes barometers that demonstrate the poor quality of the air

^{339/} Since 2009, the environmental organisation Client Earth has been taking legal actions over illegal levels of toxic particles in London’s

^{340/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-issues-very-high-air-pollution-alert>

^{341/} <https://www.edie.net/air-pollution-reduced-by-a-third-in-londons-ulez/>

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

In its narrative approach, the executive focuses on three main motivations:

- The city ambition to be a global frontrunner in all environmental policies;
- The health of the inhabitants, and particularly that of children;
- The battle against social inequalities.

The *London environment strategy*, published in 2018, sets out a clear ambition: “London will have the best air quality of any major world city by 2050”. Sadiq Khan describes the *ULEZ* as “the boldest and most ambitious plans of any major city in the world to tackle air pollution”³⁴². This lexical field of excellence and the cutting edge nature of the policy implemented in London are omnipresent through all the Mayor’s speeches. The strategy to tackle air pollution is guided by a strong political will, which will endure and even be strengthened by the crises: that of preserving the health of the inhabitants and particularly of children, a top priority claimed by the GLA. This motivation is supported by the sharing of figures attesting to the development of illnesses and premature deaths due to air pollution. According to the *London Air Quality Network*, air pollution is responsible for an additional 9,400 deaths each year³⁴³. On the occasion of the “very high air quality” first alert³⁴⁴, issued on 23 January 2017, Sadiq Khan announced thus: “safeguarding the health of Londoners from pollution is my number one priority”³⁴⁵. The policy is about fighting toxic and dangerous air, a “silent killer” for “Londoners - who currently have no choice but to breathe our killer air”³⁴⁶.

This strategy also aims to harness the involvement of the medical community, as Shirley Rodrigues explained in an interview for the *C40*³⁴⁷.

One should note that the Mayor launched the *ULEZ* during a visit to a children’s hospital: “as Mayor, I will not stand by as children grow up with under-developed lungs in our city”³⁴⁸.

The symbolic meaning of this gesture is strong, as the health of future generations is presented as an absolute priority. On several occasions, measures

relating to air pollution will be announced using the same staging, with the Mayor surrounded by or alongside young children (as for example, in 2022, the extension of the *ULEZ* for August 2023, announced at *Forest Hill School*). During the pre-election campaign, the same motivation is put forward, particularly to challenge the opposition: “they simply do not care about the Londoners that die or suffer from terrible illnesses as a result”³⁴⁹. Finally, this strategy also aims at reducing social inequalities, the Mayor frequently underlining the most precarious populations being those most exposed to poor air quality: “some of the poorest Londoners who have the most to gain from the bold measures, such as the *ULEZ*, we are taking to tackle London’s filthy air”³⁵⁰. In announcing the establishment of the *ULEZ*, Sadiq Khan said: “the shocking state of our air is an issue of social justice”. Rapidly obtaining first convincing results, the executive uses a lexical field based on enthusiasm and the momentum for success that had been set in motion, welcoming the positive impact of the implementation of the *ULEZ*: “roadside nitrogen dioxide pollution has reduced by one third in the #ULEZ zone since we launched it six months ago - a huge improvement as we work to clean up toxic air and protect our children’s lungs”³⁵¹. And again: “almost 100 per cent reduction in illegal peaks in pollution since Sadiq became Mayor”³⁵².

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

While the opposition does not reject the very purpose of cleaner air, it builds its counter-discourse around an economic and social motivation: the policies implemented by the municipal executive would create inequalities between Londoners, depending on their social and economic class. Susan Hall first tweeted: “we all accept that cleaner air is required but we must balance up conflicting requirements from Londoners and bring the best policies forward”³⁵³. Candidate Shaun Bailey said: “air quality is a top issue and I can assure Londoners I will take strong action to tackle it, in a way that treats all Londoners fairly”. The opponent focuses its discourse on one issue, the fight for taxi drivers, a strategy previously used to reject temporary cycle tracks: “Khan’s policies will drive vast swathes of both black cab industry & the private hire industry out of business. We can improve London’s air quality without destroying people’s livelihoods, but the current Mayor’s focus is on squeezing as much money out of both industries as he can”³⁵⁴. The Conservative Party then tweeted: “Mayor Khan rushed #ULEZ, giving working people, small businesses and charities less time to prepare, putting people’s livelihoods at risk”³⁵⁵. A final argument relates to mobility, criticising the municipality’s inaction to implement a clean public bus fleet. Susan Hall, about the Mayor: “he should focus on replacing London’s heavily polluting diesel buses with hybrids asap”³⁵⁶. Shaun Bailey focuses his speech on “green transport”: “I will green buses & taxis, get tube upgrades back on track & expand bus service in Outer London to get us there. What I won’t do is tax families & cut boroughs in half by expanding the central *ULEZ*”³⁵⁷.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Ahead of 2019, several civil society movements are protesting to raise the alarm about illegally high levels of toxic particles in the air. *ClientEarth* has filed a number of legal actions against the UK Government. *The British Heart Foundation* has published figures which show that breathing the air in London is equivalent to smoking 150 cigarettes a year³⁵⁸.

The introduction of the *ULEZ* is supported by some scientists, deliberately mobilised by the executive: “The introduction of London’s *Ultra Low Emissions Zone* on 8 April is extremely welcome”, according to Professor Jonathan Grigg of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health³⁵⁹.

Part of civil society also expresses its support for the initiative: “The *ULEZ* is a fantastic step towards tackling London’s filthy air, and one that we hope will encourage a change in many people’s behaviour. We’re pleased that the Mayor Sadiq Khan is showing leadership in this public health crisis and we believe that all Londoners will soon feel the benefits of being able to breathe easier”. (Jemima Hartshorn, founder of parent campaign group *Mums for Lungs*). These comments were very favourable to the City’s action and were relayed by the town hall through its own communication channels.

These voices are counterbalanced by some media reactions that repeat the motivations of the opposition: the implementation of the *ULEZ* will burden the poorest workers. Locally, several petitions were signed, gathering up to 200,000 signatures to stop the extension of the *ULEZ*³⁶⁰.

^{342/} <https://labourlist.org/2019/04/the-worlds-first-ultra-low-emission-zone-is-coming-to-london/>
^{343/} <https://www.londonair.org.uk/LondonAir/General/research.aspx>
^{344/} This is the first ‘very high’ air quality alert since Sadiq Khan became Mayor – the next step up from the ‘high’ alerts which have been issued over recent weeks. Before Sadiq Khan became Mayor, social media and text alerts have been used on a small number of occasions to make Londoners aware of air pollution episodes. Sadiq Khan believes it is important that Londoners are fully informed about toxic air quality and since being elected has

delivered a comprehensive alert system using bus countdown signs, roadside signs and electronic updates at underground stations, plus social media and text alerts.
^{345/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-issues-very-high-air-pollution-alert>
^{346/} <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1112978512913317888>
^{347/} https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/In-Practice-Shirley-Rodrigues-on-London-s-ULEZ?language=en_US
^{348/} <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1115540005995388929>

^{349/} <https://twitter.com/LondonLabour/status/1115185344494936064>
^{350/} <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1083345851563589632>
^{351/} See footnote 340.
^{352/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/data-shows-mayors-action-cleaning-up-londons-air>
^{353/} <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1104753819697721345>
^{354/} <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1105499973456748547>
^{355/} <https://twitter.com/GLAConservative/status/1115176738429001728>

^{356/} <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1115568723115560961>
^{357/} <https://twitter.com/ShawnBaileyUK/status/1133277223996284928>
^{358/} <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/london-air-pollution-smoking-cigarettes-heart-lung-disease-health-a9233676.html>
^{359/} <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/ultra-low-emission-zone-protecting-children-london>
^{360/} <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/ultra-low-emissions-zone-air-pollution-london-sadiq-khan-a8860456.html>

● CRISIS - COVID-19, ELECTION PERIOD AND LOCAL NEWS STORY

FACTS

The Covid-19 pandemy is leading to a decrease in air pollution levels during containment, due to the reduction of traffic. It also leads to a consideration of contextual adjustments. Indeed, the Mayor decides to temporarily suspend the *ULEZ* between March and October 2020. Air pollution in London falls during lockdowns due to reduced traffic. The *ULEZ* is suspended from March to October 2020 so as not to penalise essential workers and prevent the supply of supermarkets, an action also called for by opposition candidate Shaun Bailey, who wrote an op-ed in *The Telegraph* on March 20th³⁶¹. The suspension of this flagship policy, with its claimed effects on the health of the inhabitants, illustrates the emergency and thus the political prompt decision to adapt its political project to unexpected reality. “This is not an invitation to take to your cars. To save lives we need the roads clear for ambulances, doctors, nurses and other critical workers. This is an unprecedented time and I know Londoners are doing everything they can to look after each other”, explains Sadiq Khan.

A second crisis has accelerated the need to tackle air pollution: the death of a 9-year-old child in 2013, Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, certified as directly linked to air pollution by several doctors and by the British justice system in December 2020 (described in the international press as the first air pollution-related death). In their conclusions, the coroners designate the Government, urging it to align itself with the World Health Organisation’s air pollution reduction targets. This did not prevent the City Council from reacting: it refocused its municipal policy and announced the implementation of a specific plan in schools, based in particular on the installation of pollution sensors in schools and the launch of the *London Schools Pollution Helpdesk*.

The Covid-19 pandemic results in a postponement of the elections. The election campaign takes place at the end of 2020 year: the debate on air and the fight against air pollution remain a priority of the political agenda. On Clean Air Day (October 8th 2020), 78% of Londoners believe it is a priority³⁶².

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The executive discourse remains focused on health, with a new twist: the link between air pollution and the effects of COVID-19. The municipal executive explains in a press release in response to a request from the Government: “there is also emerging evidence linking air pollution with an increased vulnerability to the most severe impacts of COVID-19”³⁶³. Several members of the local Assembly publicly agree on the need to move forward and to amplify the efforts fighting air pollution, following the publication of a study by Harvard researchers on the link between COVID-19 mortality and air pollution³⁶⁴. Building on this strong new motivation, the aim now is to increase the ambition: “I’m delighted with our progress, but there’s still a long way to go. That’s why I’m expanding *ULEZ* in 2021”, said Sadiq Khan, October 8th 2020³⁶⁵. After the judicial findings on the death of Ella Addoo-Kissi-Debrah, the discourse around the

need to protect children is also strengthened, focusing on better life expectancy or, on the contrary, premature deaths: “toxic air pollution is a public health crisis, especially for our children, and the inquest underlined yet again the importance of pushing ahead with bold policies such as expanding the *Ultra Low Emission Zone* to inner London. Ministers and the previous Mayor have acted too slowly in the past, but they must now learn the lessons from the Coroner’s ruling and do much more to tackle the deadly scourge of air pollution in London and across the country”. At the same time, the municipal communication points out the effects of the policy on children’s health: “a new Imperial study shows that the Mayor’s air quality policies will help increase the average life expectancy of a child born in London by six months”³⁶⁶. The executive relies on a staging that leaves little room for dissent, featuring Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, a civil society figure, who becomes the emblem of the fight against air pollution.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

According to members of the opposition, the crisis is not the right time to put new economic pressure on citizens. Their discourse is no longer focused on challenging the *ULEZ* (which they now attribute to Boris Johnson)³⁶⁷, but is now directed against its extension, maintaining the same argument: the extension of the *ULEZ* will penalise the most disadvantaged citizens and certain economic actors who contribute to the city’s dynamism. Shaun Bailey’s programme also provides for several derogation schemes to make the *ULEZ* more flexible³⁶⁸. Shaun Bailey repeats his green bus rhetoric, calling for “bring in a zero-emission fleet of buses. So we have cleaner air AND a lower cost of living”³⁶⁹. The issue of electric buses is central to Shaun Bailey’s campaign programme. Paradoxically, he intends to finance this green bus fleet with *ULEZ* revenues: “My City Hall will set aside revenue from *ULEZ* specifically to convert our fleet to zero-emission buses” (in his 2020 program).

MEDIA COVERAGE

Several press articles highlight the reduction in air pollution during the lockdowns: the *Guardian* reports a study by the British Lung Foundation showing a reduction in symptoms among asthma sufferers³⁷⁰. Another *Guardian* article points out that air pollution has “plunged since Sadiq Khan became Mayor”³⁷¹. However, civil society and the scientific community are raising their voices as air pollution levels are still too high: activists from the *Choked Up* movement are launching a street campaign in London called “Breathing kills” and 100 doctors from the *National Health Service* are signing an opinion piece urging decision-makers to take action to tackle air pollution³⁷².

³⁶¹/ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cars/comment/lift-congestion-charge-ulez-help-london-fight-coronavirus/>
³⁶²/ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/environment/air-quality-london/air-quality-public-polling>
³⁶³/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/dramatic-improvements-in-air-quality>
³⁶⁴/ MP Geraint Davies, chair of the all-party parliamentary group on air pollution explains that measures to reduce pollution go hand in hand with social distancing measures: “All will deliver cleaner air over subsequent years to help to ensure better public health

and greater resilience against future pandemics.”: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/29/cut-air-pollution-avoid-second-coronavirus-peak-mps-urge>
³⁶⁵/ <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1314211381890097152>

³⁶⁶/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/new-imperial-study-on-mayors-aq-policies>
³⁶⁷/ <https://conservativehome.com/2019/05/28/shaun-bailey-we-need-to-find-practical-ways-to-clean-up-londons-air/>
³⁶⁸/ https://assets.website-files.com/5fff6bb4224375e8cef55f44/607c573419ee4bca4a936bc6_Shaun%20BaileyManifesto.pdf
³⁶⁹/ <https://twitter.com/ShawnBaileyUK/status/1348619246356623361>

³⁷⁰/ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/04/cleaner-air-during-uk-lockdown-relieves-asthma-for-millions-lung-conditions-coronavirus>
³⁷¹/ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/03/dramatic-plunge-in-london-air-pollution-since-2016-report-finds>
³⁷²/ <https://www.edf.org/media/young-activists-and-nhs-doctors-warn-breathing-kills-london-air-pollution-hits-deprived-areas>

● POST CRISIS AND
CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

Following an accelerated election campaign between January and April 2021, Sadiq Khan was re-elected on May 6th 2021. As he repeated during his campaign, the fight against air pollution will be one of his three priorities³⁷³ during his mandate, and he intends to amplify the efforts already made. The *ULEZ* is extended in October 2021, to cover an area 18 times larger, reaching over 4 million more Londoners. On March 4th 2022, at Forest Hill School, repeating a now established pattern, Sadiq Khan, surrounded by young people, announced a further extension of the *ULEZ* to cover the whole of the Greater London Area from August 2023. Londoners are invited to share their views on the proposed extension with *Transport for London*.

Beyond the extension of his flagship measure, Sadiq Khan remains convinced that real change will only be possible with the support and commitment of fully educated and informed citizens. He therefore intends to use the path he went through after the crisis, to the former guiding principle of his air pollution plan: informing citizens, especially those living in disadvantaged areas. On October 12th 2021, a major extension of the *Breathe London* initiative was announced, building on a partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies to develop a network of pollution sensors across the city, and make them available to communities that request them to help them mobilise and take action.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

While the GLA welcomes the positive developments, its discourse is changing, with particular emphasis on the emergency of the context, requiring increased efforts: “even though pollution has been divided by half, there is still a long way to go”, says Sadiq Khan³⁷⁴. Thus, while health remains an important focus of the lexical field (echoing the 68% of Londoners who say they are concerned about the poor quality of the air breathed by future generations), it is part of a wider narrative on the fight against global warming, as we understand from a notable speech by the Mayor at the Barbican Centre on the environmental challenges facing London³⁷⁵. This new orientation seems to be connected with citizens raising their voices, during the crisis, for more powerful investments, and thus, policies to tackle issues due to environmental crisis and climate change.

Furthermore, in view of the increasing emergency, Sadiq Khan is now calling on the Government to actively participate in the fight against air pollution by creating a *National Clean Air Fund*. His speech thus seems to target the national executive more frontally, regretting “deeply disappointing and unambitious air quality targets” that condemn “another generation of children” to “a host of health issues”³⁷⁶. As a reply to this government failure, Sadiq Khan describes himself as the “the greenest Mayor London’s ever had with a mandate from Londoners to put the environment and climate policies at the heart of my second term in office”³⁷⁷. Finally, through the extension of the *Breathe London* scheme and his speeches at COP26, we can note an inflection in Sadik Khan’s discourse, as he insists on the individual actions of citizens, a real lever for change: in this respect, he relays ten initiatives that can be taken at the individual level³⁷⁸. Once again, the correlation link with the previous requests expressed by Londoners seems quite logical.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Even after the campaign and the peak of the pandemic, the opposition continued to criticise the expansion of the *ULEZ*, using the same motivations as before the crisis: the unequal implementation of the *ULEZ*³⁷⁹; the need to set-up green buses³⁸⁰. A continuity of discourse that contrasts with the developments observed in the executive, but which could be seen as a strategy of seduction aimed at the 33% of Londoners who ostensibly reject *ULEZ* (only 51% of Londoners are in favour)³⁸¹.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The city’s efforts to reduce air pollution are widely reported and praised. Also, a profile of Sadiq Khan in *Time Magazine*³⁸² published in August 2021 highlights: “Khan has channelled much of his energy into cleaning up London’s highly polluted air”³⁸³. Mark Watts, Director of the *C40*, explains: “The *ULEZ* is, no question, one of the strongest climate policies in the world for transport in any city in the world”³⁸⁴. However, the *ULEZ* project did succeed in convincing everyone as with new petitions being signed in the areas affected by the extension³⁸⁵. In addition, the scientific community has raised its voice against a suggested extension of the Silvertown Tunnel, stating that the extension is contradictory to the Mayor’s air pollution control objectives³⁸⁶.

373/ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/sadiq-khan-eyes-re-election-as-london-s-mayor/2227652>

374/ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMdQESl88KM>

375/ See footnote 364.

376/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-criticises-government-air-quality-delay>

377/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/ulez-to-be-expanded>

378/ <https://twitter.com/MayorofLondon/status/1453968020921982977>

379/ <https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/cars/1638802/ulez-expansion-air-pollution-sadiq-khan-poll-results-spt>

380/ <https://twitter.com/ShawnBaileyUK/status/1452535613295632388>

381/ <https://www.clientearth.org/latest/press-office/press/majority-of-londoners-support-expansion-of-the-ultra-low-emission-zone/>

382/ A newspaper that reflects centre-left opinions.

383/ <https://time.com/6084138/sadiq-khan-plan-for-greener-london/>

384/ See footnote 373.

385/ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11049413/Motorists-blast-Sadiq-Khan-plans-expand-ULEZ-slap-drivers-12-charge-OUTSIDE-London.html>

386/ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/feb/24/doctors-urge-sadiq-khan-cancel-london-silvertown-tunnel-pollution>

02/

TRANSPORT MOBILITY

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

When adopting its *Transport Strategy* in 2018, the municipality announced its intention to actively contribute to the ecological transition of the transport sector. In view of its major carbon footprint, the transformation of mobility practices and means of mobility is considered to be decisive for achieving a global ecological transition. To this end, the priority for the municipality is to reduce dependence on the car in order to encourage other types of mobility:

- By supporting active mobility;
- By developing a more reliable and safer public transport network;
- By supporting the transition of professionals in the sector to electric vehicles.

Initially, the City's efforts will focus on supporting individuals and businesses to switch to electric vehicles. In 2018, an *Electric Vehicles Task Force* was created, which will initiate a programme to provide charging stations for individuals and businesses³⁸⁷, and manage a fund to support London taxis in acquiring clean vehicles³⁸⁸.

In addition, as part of the *ULEZ* and in order to ensure continued access to the zones for all, the municipality is committed to the greening of its bus network, so that all buses meet the emission criteria set for the zone.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The executive discourse invokes two main motivations to justify its plan to support the electrification of the motorised fleet: the climate emergency, and health ("to tackle the twin dangers of London's toxic air crisis and the climate change emergency")³⁸⁹.

Health is the priority argument put forward, both to justify the promotion of active-human mobility ("Most of the main causes of early death in London are linked to inactivity")³⁹⁰ and the support for electric vehicles to replace older engines "London must move away from petrol and diesel cars, with their catastrophic impact on the environment, and towards zero-emission vehicles" (interview with Shirley Rodrigues)³⁹¹. Mobility is considered in this respect through the prism of a "healthy streets approach"³⁹². This concept reflects the executive's desire to communicate first and foremost to citizens: it is a question of showing the attention paid to the quality of the daily experience of city dwellers as users of public space, rather than being satisfied with a list of technical or sectoral measures.

This communication, designed to reach and convince citizens directly, is also seen as a mobilisation lever. In this sense, the municipality reiterates that the efforts undertaken to facilitate the use of electric vehicles will enable Londoners to participate fully in the ecological transition: "Investing in electric vehicle infrastructure is necessary to ensure that the city's residents and businesses can more easily adopt cleaner and greener modes of transit"³⁹³. As Sadiq Khan is saying: "We need to help people move away from petrol and diesel cars, so we can clean up our air and tackle climate change. The overwhelming

success of London's *Ultra Low Emission Zone* shows both Londoners and businesses alike are ready to play their part"³⁹⁴. Sadiq Khan does not hesitate to back up his words with a number of striking slogans, going so far as to promise Londoners an "electric vehicle revolution". This spectacular strategy is part of the municipality's stated ambition to place London at the forefront of the ecological transition. "We can ensure that London continues leading from the front, blazing the trail", Sadiq Khan announces at the launch of the '*Electric vehicles task force*'. The municipality also congratulates itself on having "the largest all-electric bus fleet in Europe"³⁹⁵.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

The opposition's narrative quickly focused on two points: the lack of green buses and the insufficient number of charging stations³⁹⁶. It is based on a clear proposal, which will be taken up throughout the campaign: to create a "green bus fleet", with Shaun Bailey announcing that he wants to "make every red bus electric by the end of his first term"³⁹⁷. Although this transition has already been undertaken by the municipality, Shaun Bailey criticises the slowness of its implementation and announces, as part of his campaign, an unexpected commitment: to ensure the replacement of the entire fleet by 2025, instead of 2037³⁹⁸.

● CRISIS - COVID-19

FACTS

The COVID-19 pandemic is leading to a change in Londoners' practices: the use of public transport is decreasing due to the need for social distancing. A study conducted by *Transport for London* shows the changing needs in this respect: during the pandemic, the modal share of journeys made by bicycle increased, with the latter now accounting for 3.4% of journeys, i.e. a doubling of the proportion of journeys made by bicycle in the modal split compared to 2019³⁹⁹. The proportion of journeys made on foot rose from 21 to 30%. However, a report by the think tank Centre for London shows that a third of the population is considering increased use of the car, due to the difficulty of using public transport for hygiene safety and anxiety⁴⁰⁰.

This has led to a two-pronged response from the City Council in the context of the *London Street Space*, a plan to support active mobility through:

- the urgent building of 100 kilometres of cycle lanes to increase the modal share of journeys made by bike;
- the widening of pavements to allow Londoners (22,500 metres) to use active pedestrian mobility.

^{387/} <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/number-of-electric-car-charging-points-in-london-to-double-a3602891.html>

^{388/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/taskforce-will-work-on-shared-delivery-plan>

^{389/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-sets-out-londons-electric-vehicle-future>

^{390/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayors-transport-strategy-2018.pdf>

^{391/} See footnote 379.

^{392/} See footnote 380.

^{393/} See footnote 379.

^{394/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/4-million-boost-for-more-than-1000-new-ev-points>

^{395/} <https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1169572931581677569>

^{396/} <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1095945588842131457>

^{397/} <https://www.cityam.com/shaun-bailey-pledges-to-make-every-red-bus-electric-if-he-becomes-london-mayor/>

^{398/} See footnote 387.

^{399/} <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2021/december/new-tfl-data-shows-huge-increase-in-the-proportion-of-journeys-made-on-foot-and-by-cycle-during-the-pandemic>

^{400/} <https://cyclingindustry.news/poll-finds-majority-of-londoners-support-temporary-cycle-provisions-becoming-permanent/>

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The GLA's main fear is that Londoners will massively switch to the private car in the face of new social distancing imperatives that hamper the use of public transport. To ward off this fear, the executive does not hesitate to publicly share its concern, to warn residents: “with London’s public transport capacity potentially running at a fifth of pre-crisis levels, millions of journeys a day will need to be made by other means. If people switch only a fraction of these journeys to cars, London risks grinding to a halt, air quality will worsen, and road danger will increase”⁴⁰¹. The aim is therefore to encourage Londoners to make the right choices, but also to adapt the infrastructure in order to make pedestrian active mobility attractive and not to lag behind in terms of use: “many Londoners have rediscovered the joys of walking and cycling during lockdown and, by quickly and cheaply widening pavements, creating temporary cycle lanes and closing roads to through traffic we will enable millions more people to change the way they get around our city”.

To justify the widening of pavements, the City Council relies on and shares a study conducted by the University College of London, published in April 2020, which concludes that two thirds of London’s pavements are not wide enough to allow social distancing⁴⁰².

The executive is putting back on the agenda a priority already present in the *London Transport Strategy*, which had not yet been implemented and had even completely disappeared from the executive’s discourse until the appearance of the pandemic. Opportunely, the crisis has put support for active mobility back at the top of the agenda, which had been somewhat neglected at the beginning of the mandate in favour of support for the electrification of the motorised fleet.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

The opposition’s criticisms are primarily aimed at the temporary cycle paths, with its spokespersons accusing Sadiq Khan of “wrecking London”⁴⁰³ and creating new congestion⁴⁰⁴. The opposition also questions the GLA’s management of the emergency, opposing the environmental emergency with an economic emergency: “our once busy City is dying and measures like this won’t help in the slightest. Businesses are dying but hey it’s “greener’ so that’s ok - devastating”⁴⁰⁵.

As with its opposition to the *ULEZ*, the opposition chose to put forward a popular cause to make itself heard: that of the black cabs, to whom Shaun Bailey promised a zero-interest loan for the switch to electric vehicles⁴⁰⁶. Finally, the opposition put the issue of green buses back on the table⁴⁰⁷.

The *Green Party*, through Caroline Russell, welcomes these creations and encourages the executive to accelerate London’s Streetspace programme⁴⁰⁸.

MEDIA COVERAGE

According to a survey conducted by the *Centre for London and London Environment Directors’ Network*, 57% of Londoners support the continuation of cycle paths created during the crisis⁴⁰⁹. In addition, 70% of Londoners support the widening of pavements to make it easier to respect sanitary distances.

However, some cycle lanes are controversial because of low frequentation, with the Conservative newspaper *The Telegraph* going so far as to call the Harrow cycle lane “Ghost City Lane”⁴¹⁰.

⁴⁰¹/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayors-bold-plan-will-overhaul-capitals-streets>

⁴⁰²/ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/may/most-london-pavements-are-not-wide-enough-social-distancing>

⁴⁰³/ <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1286901940975218689>

⁴⁰⁴/ <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1296534856097312768>

⁴⁰⁵/ <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1303927606799151109>

⁴⁰⁶/ <https://twitter.com/ShawnBaileyUK/status/1362009622907863041>

⁴⁰⁷/ <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1327682401993154561>

⁴⁰⁸/ <https://twitter.com/CarolineRussell/status/1296454195067916288>

⁴⁰⁹/ See footnote 390.

⁴¹⁰/ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/11/22/welcome-ghost-cycle-lane-used-just-six-bikes-six-hours/>

● POST CRISIS AND CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

The pandemic marked a lasting change in Londoners’ cycling practices. 44% of Londoners are more likely to use a bicycle after the pandemic, according to a study conducted by the electric bicycle company *Volt*⁴¹¹. The majority of the study is based on initial results (100 kilometres of cycle paths built since the start of the pandemic⁴¹², 180 pavements extended, representing 22,500 metres of additional space, 12 new *Low Emission Bus Zones*).

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

In his programme, Sadiq Khan said he wanted to continue “the revolution in walking and cycling”. Moreover, the end of the pandemic is an opportunity for the executive to take the initiative on the issue of electric buses and vehicles. Together with *Transport for London*, the municipality is organising the *Zero-Emission Bus Summit* for the first time, during which Sadiq Khan announced that all the buses ordered by the London operator will be electric⁴¹³.

The executive is also taking up the challenge of charging stations, which is now mentioned at every speech by the Mayor, in order to highlight its results and announce that the objectives for the delivery of charging stations have been met⁴¹⁴.

With regard to the cycle network, the GLA mobilised two major arguments to justify the perpetuation of the lanes created at the heart of the crisis:

⁴¹¹/ <https://cyclingindustry.news/44-londoners-e-bike-volt-research-survey/>

⁴¹²/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-and-tfl-announce-work-on-four-new-routes>

⁴¹³/ <https://electrek.co/2021/09/20/london-mayor-commits-to-all-electric-buses-moving-forward-100-zero-emissions-by-2034/>

⁴¹⁴/ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/london-hits-electric-vehicle-charging-points-miles>

• The need to learn from the pandemic to build “an even better London” by taking into account the new habits developed by citizens during the pandemic, Sadiq Khan announcing: “I’m absolutely determined to build an even better London after the pandemic – a greener and healthier city in which it’s easier and safer to walk and cycle”. “The huge number of Londoners who have taken up or rediscovered cycling over the past year - myself included – has been one of the few silver linings from the pandemic. By making it safer and more convenient for people to get to where they want to be, we will not only keep up this momentum but also enable a cleaner and greener recovery for our city”⁴¹⁵. This is reflected in a target figure: “I will work to ensure 80% of all journeys by 2041 are walked, cycled or by public transport”⁴¹⁶.

• Improving the physical and mental health of Londoners: “reducing car dependence and enabling more people to walk, cycle and use public transport is absolutely vital to improving road safety and our physical and mental health”. Public health issues are omnipresent throughout the speeches in favour of soft and active mobility. For the executive, environmental and transport policy is therefore first and foremost a fully-fledged component of health policy.

In the end, the executive is careful to show how the crisis has validated its previous political intuitions, particularly in terms of support for active mobility. It relies on the experience of the pandemic and its consequences, both in the reality of Londoners’ uses and in the structuring of the public debate, to revise its ambitions upwards and announce quantified objectives for accelerating the transition in the mobility sector.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

At the end of the campaign, the opposition proposed a new alternative: the development of river transport in building several barges on the Thames⁴¹⁷, with Shaun Bailey promising “instead of hiking taxes, to open up London’s ‘green highway’ - aka, the River Thames”⁴¹⁸. This unexpected innovation comes at a time when his usual criticisms of the lack of charging stations and the slow pace of change in the bus fleet could become less hearable, as the executive tries to highlight its achievements in this area.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Some newspapers, notably the *Daily Mail*, echoed the Tories’ arguments that the cycle lanes had contributed to increased congestion in the city⁴¹⁹. Others, notably the *Evening Standard*, point to a 25% increase in cycling trips⁴²⁰.

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

Following his election in 2016, the executive is rolling out a major tree planting scheme encouraging citizen participation and making seeds available to Londoners so that they too can plant trees⁴²¹.

This echoes the concerns of Londoners: nine out of ten Londoners think it is important to have more trees in London according to a survey conducted by *Yougov*.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The GLA claims a strong ambition, mobilising the lexical field of the city’s attractiveness: “to make the city of London a national park city”⁴²². A reference that he will use on many occasions to enable Londoners to become aware of their natural environment. Sadiq Khan states when formulating this objective: “I’m doing everything in my power to make London one of the greenest, most sustainable, zero-carbon cities in the world”. The aim of improving the quality of life for all Londoners is also emphasised: “Everybody can benefit and contribute everyday by starting to think of the place they live as part of the National Park City and doing simple things like making a balcony or garden better for nature, walking more or going kayaking on the Thames”⁴²³.

03/

NATURE IN THE CITY

Citizen participation is a central motivation, as evidenced by Shirley Rodrigues’ speech: “We’re urging thousands of Londoners to roll up their sleeves and get involved in a local planting event to not only make their communities a more beautiful place, but improve health and wellbeing for all”⁴²⁴.

The elected representative will use this aesthetic and health diptych on many similar occasions in the upcoming weeks and months.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

The opposition denounces the executive’s broken promises, remembering the trees that should have been planted but were not. Susan Hall tweets: “Mayor Khan promised to plant 2 million trees in his first term, this has now been dropped. So much for his ‘green’ credentials”⁴²⁵.

In a cautious and respectful opposition, Shaun Bailey is attempting to launch a viral campaign through the hashtag *PleasePlantOurTrees*⁴²⁶, which will have a modest following.

^{415/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-and-tfl-announce-work-on-four-new-route>

^{416/} <https://sadiq.london/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Sadiq-for-London-Manifesto-.pdf>

^{417/} <https://twitter.com/ShawnBaileyUK/status/1382726595748712448>

^{418/} <https://twitter.com/ShawnBaileyUK/status/1382726595748712448?s=20&t=mc22dSQMICElsLrX9nuF8g>

^{419/} <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10282171/Cycle-lanes-installed-start-Covid-pandemic-help-make-London-congested-city-world.html>

^{420/} <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-cycling-covid-transport-for-london-b1012998.html>

^{421/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-announces-plans-for-first-national-park-city>

^{422/} See footnote 411.

^{423/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/national-park-city>

^{424/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-urges-londoners-to-plant-100000-trees>

^{425/} <https://twitter.com/Councillorsuzie/status/1156078785843879936>

^{426/} <https://twitter.com/ShawnBaileyUK/status/1199691346572972037>

● CRISIS - COVID-19

FACTS

The crisis also reveals the desperate need for green spaces, with nine out of ten Londoners believing that green spaces are good for health and well-being according to a survey conducted by *Natural England* in May 2020⁴²⁷.

It also highlights the inequalities in access to these green spaces, with ethnic minorities and poorer Londoners being the most deprived. Indeed, the City Council reports that BAME (Black, Asians and Minority Ethnic) people have four times less access to outdoor space⁴²⁸. As a result, the City is creating a grant for community tree planting, *Grow back greener*.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

There is a shift in the discourse from quality of life to health, and particularly mental health:: “more than ever, London’s green spaces are not only vital to people’s mental and physical well-being, but also to reducing inequality across the city”⁴³⁰.

Furthermore, the executive’s discourse is reoriented around access to nature, and particularly around the issue of access to nature for all communities: “Black and minority ethnic Londoners, for example, are four times less likely to have access to an outdoor space in general”⁴³¹. In the context of *Grow Back Greener*, “one third of projects will be led by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners”.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Echoing the national narrative, the opposition focuses on protecting biodiversity. Shaun Bailey reacts to a tweet from Boris Johnson by saying: “our green spaces in London are crucial, not just for Londoners, but also for our wildlife”⁴³². By investing in this axis, the opposition decided not to enter into a frontal opposition on the theme, but to denounce the gaps in the discourse of the executive, ignoring the issue of animal biodiversity.

● POST CRISIS AND CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

In December 2021, the municipality is launching the *Rewild London Fund*, a funding scheme for biodiversity protection based on a call for projects. The *Keeping it wild* programme is also being launched, a training scheme for BAMEs, disadvantaged citizens and disabled citizens to develop “vital green skills”⁴³³.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

In December 2021, Sadiq Khan is taking up the issue of biodiversity, which is a key part of his programme. The argument for more green space is to enable better protection of biodiversity⁴³⁴. The aim is, according to Ben Goldsmith of the *Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*, “to weave wild nature back through the very fabric of our city”⁴³⁵. A flagship project illustrates this new priority: the renaturation of Hyde Park, the city’s plant emblem, including the reintroduction of beavers⁴³⁶. In addition, as part of his election campaign programme, Sadiq Khan translates his position on nature in the city into a target figure: “All Londoners should live no more than a 10 minute walk from green space”⁴³⁷.

It should also be noted that the motivations mobilised previously remain, with regard to health and the reduction of inequalities.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

On the side of the opposition, the emphasis is once again on meeting the announced tree planting targets, as Shaun Bailey states that “unlike the Mayor, I will ensure that my target to plant trees is achieved”⁴³⁸. During the campaign, the *Conservative* block does not want to seem to be on the defensive regarding this topic, multiplying proposals such as the creation of wildlife corridors or the creation of 300 new pocket parks.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Guardian calls the plan to re-naturalise and reintroduce biodiversity “ambitious” and underlines the goal guiding the city’s action: a green space within a 10-minute walk⁴³⁹. For *Time Out*, the municipality’s initiative for Hyde Park is leading to a real “rewilding makeover”, specifying that there will also be 45 “lucky” beneficiary projects in the city. The media also underlines the educational action of the municipality, specifying that “the Mayor is also investing in traineeships for young Londoners from under-represented groups to learn more about biodiversity and help develop future green projects”⁴⁴⁰.

^{427/} <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/howhaslockdownchangedourrelationshipwithnature/2021-04-26>

^{428/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/two-new-woodland-areas-set-for-london>

^{429/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-of-london-awards-green-grants>

^{430.431/} See footnote 418.

^{432/} <https://twitter.com/ShawnBaileyUK/status/1268872832202747905>

^{433/} <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-announces-ambitious-plans-to-rewild-london>

^{434/} <https://sadiq.london/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Sadiq-for-London-Manifesto-.pdf>

^{435/} https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/dec/14/sadiq-khan-rewild-hyde-park-green-species-london?utm_term=.61bb2dc64e07f759033b3147ee41ce59&utm_campaign=GreenLight&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight_email&fbclid=IwAR2eU2caCnXOgaEAt5Bosfu19B_vXSiYWdipm1sf3MV0JVH-ezDQgNcMuPg

^{436/} <https://greencitizen.com/news/london-mayor-unveils-plans-to-rewild-london/>

^{437/} See footnote 423.

^{438/} https://assets.website-files.com/5fff6bb4224375e8cef55f44/607c573419ee4bca4a936bc6_Shaun%20BaileyManifesto.pdf

^{439/} See footnote 425.

^{440/} <https://www.timeout.com/london/news/hyde-park-is-getting-a-rewilding-makeover-121521>

LIBSON LI

CHAPTER 03

LIBSON LISBON

LIBSON LISBON

1/ INTRODUCTION

Lisbon has undergone a shift in the executive right after the pandemic. The city was ruled by **Fernando Medina**, from the *Socialist Party (PS)*, since 2015. He has been defeated in the last municipal elections, especially because of growing discontent regarding housing prices. Despite this electoral failure, most of his achievements as Mayor of Lisbon was assessed as a success for the leftist party. As a reward and attesting the later position was a major springboard for national duties, he is now serving as Secretary of Finances in the government of **Antonio Costa**.

The new mayor is **Carlos Moedas** (former European commissioner for Research), who won with a coalition composed of *PSD/CDS-PP/ Aliança/MPT/PPM* (conservative and centrist party) and was elected on October 18th 2021. Without having faced any political consequences, it is important to note that he is currently ruling with a minority at the Camara Municipal. The next elections are in 2027.

The country is led by Prime Minister **Antonio Costa** (*Socialist Party*), former mayor of Lisbon (between 2004 and 2007, often described as the actor of “the Lisbon Renaissance”). He was elected in 2015 and reelected in 2019.

Lisbon has a general competence clause, meaning that the Câmara Municipal can take action on every public policy at local level. The city is divided in 24 freguesias, governed by a Junta de Freguesia, in charge of proximity policies. The municipal policies are voted by the Assembleia municipal and implemented by the Câmara municipal. Regarding the cultural policy, the City works with an agency, the Empresa de Gestao de Equipamentos e Animação Cultural (EGEAC).

CARTOGRAPHY OF *KEY PLAYERS*

MEMBERS OF THE CAMARA MUNICIPAL AND OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATION (2019-2021)

- JOSÉ SÀ FERNANDES**
Deputy Mayor for Environment, Climate and Energy, Green Structure and Urban Services.
- MIGUEL GASPAR**
Deputy Mayor for Economy, Innovation, Safety and Mobility.
- CATARINA VAZ PINTO**
Deputy Mayor for Culture and international relations.
- PEDRO MACHADO**
Advisor to the Mayor in charge of mobilities.
- RUTE MENDES**
Advisor to the City Councillor for Culture.
- FRANCESCA RAMALHOSA**
Director of mobilities for the City of Lisbon.

MEMBERS OF THE CAMARA MUNICIPAL AND OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATION (2021-...)

- DIOGO MOURA**
Deputy Mayor for Culture, Innovation, Public Space, Economics, and for Relationships with Freguesias.
- ANGELO PEREIRA**
Deputy Mayor for Mobilities, Public Hygiene, Safety, Green Structure and Green Planning, Sports, Noise, Animal Protection.
- RUTE MENDES**
Advisor to the City Councillor for Culture.
- AMISH LAXMIDAS**
Advisor to the Mayor of Lisbon, specialised in Climate Action.
- JOÃO OLIVEIRA E SILVA**
Advisor to the Deputy Mayor for Economy and Culture of Lisbon.

OTHER KEY PLAYERS

- JOANA GOMES CARDOSO**
Head of the *EGEAC*.
- HUGO BARROS**
Member of one of the main cultural union *CENA-STE*.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE COVID-19 CRÍSlS IN LISBON

● FIRST LOCKDOWN

MARCH 12TH 2020 - MAY 2ND 2020

MARCH 12TH 2020

The Alert state is activated.

MARCH 16TH 2020

The schools are being closed.

MARCH 19TH 2020

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, the President of the Republic declares a State of Emergency.

● PARTIAL LOCKDOWN

NOVEMBER 4TH 2020 - DECEMBER 25TH 2020

● SECOND LOCKDOWN

JANUARY 15TH 2021 - MARCH 15TH 2021

● PARTIAL END OF THE LOCKDOWN

MARCH 15TH 2021 - MAY 3RD 2021

MARCH 15TH 2021

Reopening of libraries and bookshops.

MARCH 29TH 2021

Reopening of museums.

THE COVID-19
CRÍSlS

Portugal entered a lockdown as soon as March 12th 2020. Restrictive measures lasted until August 2021 and cultural locations reopened in April 2021. The country's economy has been impacted by a sharp fall in tourism.

PRAÇA DE ESPANHA'S
REHABILITATION

During the Covid-19 crisis, the Camara Municipal underwent a small crisis, led by the ecological opposition, denouncing the felling of trees in the rehabilitation project of Praça de Espanha, a key project of Lisbon's term as *European Green Capital*.

● PARTIAL LOCKDOWN IN LISBOA

JUNE 2021

● CURFEW

JULY 2ND 2021 - AUGUST 1ST 2021

● ELECTION OF CARLOS MOEDAS

OCTOBER 18TH 2021

2/ MAJOR STORYTELLING SHIFT

A/ MAJOR SHIFTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STORYTELLING

Two significant findings stand out regarding the City’s narratives on environmental issues:

01

Each in their own way, Fernando Medina and Carlos Moedas’s executives have used the pandemic to legitimise, strengthen and amplify an environmental ambition that existed prior to the crisis.

02

Despite the political changeover, there is consistency and continuity of a storytelling introducing Lisbon as a pioneer city in environmental matters on an international scale, despite a refocusing on local issues during the crisis.

Since 2010, Lisbon has engaged in a race for environmental action, multiplying initiatives to initiate the ecological transition of the Portuguese capital. Through the discourse of local elected officials, we can perceive the will to offer inhabitants a more sustainable and welcoming living environment, but above all to make this environmental ambition a major lever for attractiveness and influence.

Biodiversity, nature in the city, active mobilities, all the action fields of a modern and complete environmental policy are mobilised. This consistent commitment is rewarded by a series of European distinctions, which will become the points of pride in the narratives of elected officials.

Lisbon even appears to be in the vanguard of the world's major capitals by raising the issue of urban heat islands as soon as 2015, an emerging challenge that had only been addressed by established specialists at that time. The goal is clearly stated by Fernando Medina, Mayor of the city until 2021: to make Lisbon a "greener, more sustainable, more environmentally friendly city".

Although the pandemic relegates the environmental issue to a secondary position, the executive confirms its ambition in this matter despite the challenges of the COVID-19 systemic crisis. When announcing the suspension of a few environmental measures, the municipality underlines that this interruption is only temporary and limited to what is strictly necessary.

Indeed, once the peak of the pandemic had passed, the executive of Fernando Medina, like that of Carlos Moedas a few months later, was

quick to give substance to this commitment: in their words, the crisis is presented as an incentive to accelerate and amplify the policies already initiated to tackle the environmental challenges faced by the city.

Seemingly echoing the voice of his predecessor Fernando Medina, who states that "the pandemic associated with COVID-19 has highlighted the need to move in this direction, demonstrating the urgency of making the air in cities cleaner, investing in more sustainable modes of travel and returning public space to the people", Carlos Moedas claims that with the pandemic, "it has become even clearer that we need to have a faster and more effective green agenda".

This is the case for example with *MOVE Lisboa*, a comprehensive programme aiming to achieve a proportion of two thirds of travel using sustainable mobility solutions by 2030. Announced before the crisis with very ambitious objectives, it has been widely pursued, deployed and enriched since then, regardless of the majority in office.

Rising above a controversy that emerged during the crisis over the felling of some 60 trees as part of an urban development project, Fernando Medina is also launching the first public planting competition as part of its plan to renaturalise the city, aiming to plant 120,000 trees.

After having developed policies primarily aimed at improving the living environment (especially by refreshing the city), and willing to demonstrate its own environmental commitment, the new regime chose to take up the subject by acting directly on the daily expenses of Lisbon inhabitants: in terms of mobility, for example, the new Mayor Carlos Moedas has decided to make public transport free for people under 23 and over 65.

01

Rewarding with the title of European Green Capital for 2020, Lisbon has seen its constant efforts regularly recognised and praised by the international community. An achievement per se, extensively promoted by Fernando Medina's team, which used these awards as validations of the policies implemented locally, even before mentioning its actual outcomes experienced by Lisbon inhabitants.

However, the crisis resulted in a short-lived suspension of this soft power driven narrative, with the municipality prioritising their commitment to stand by the citizens in their ordeal. The deputy transport minister thus declared, without ambiguity: "we want to return the city to the citizens". The Mayor immediately tempered this turnaround: Fernando Medina recalled the urgency of the situation, stating "we need to reduce our emissions and make all types of transport more sustainable. Every day counts and every action is important".

For the new regime, the city's international reputation is just as central: the free public transport measure announced by Carlos Moedas should also enable Lisbon to gain recognition on the European stage. For the new mayor, "this project is extremely important for the European Union" in a nod to his previous role as European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science between 2014 and 2019. In the same vein, the city is applying to be selected by the European Commission as part of its new programme *100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030*, and will succeed in it, as Carlos Moedas himself announces it: "we have been chosen by the European Commission as one of the 100 cities in Europe for this mission".

This environmental ambition, which goes far beyond the country's borders, is therefore well supported by the two successive majorities. It seems to erase political rivalries, with the parties calling for genuine "cooperation" to achieve a model ecological transition that contributes to the city's influence.

02

A/ MAJOR SHIFTS IN CULTURAL POLICY STORYTELLING

Two significant findings stand out regarding the majority's narratives on cultural policies:

01

The Covid crisis led the ruling majority to recognise culture as essential and central, justifying increased public intervention at a time when the sector was being challenged by a sharp fall in tourism-related revenues.

02

However, this recognition of culture as a local major challenge did not change the views of local politician leaders on the expected impact and benefits of their cultural policy: culture is first and foremost regarded as a lever of international influence and a way to attract tourists to the benefit of the city's economic development, rather than being a lever of empowerment and inclusion for Lisbon society.

For many years, the Portuguese cultural sector had been campaigning unsuccessfully for the creation of a specific social status for artists and professionals and for the development of a tangible and consistent cultural policy at government level. In December 2019, more than 300 artists demonstrated, demanding through their unions that 1% of the state budget be allocated to culture. A demand that went unheeded. This episode bears witness to the weakness of public support for culture in Portugal, which is limited and mainly devoted to the major cultural institutions, widely neglecting the Portuguese independent artistic scene.

If the Portuguese capital, simply by virtue of the concentration of cultural organisations on its territory, seemed to show a certain sensitivity to the cultural issue, it was before the crisis neither a discursive and symbolic priority for local political leaders, nor a budgetary and public policy priority for the municipality. The executive promoted the city's cultural institutions and heritage as the driving force for tourism, but its cultural policy seemed to be in its infancy.

The pandemic marked a decisive turning point in this regard: Fernando Medina's executive was quick to emphasise the importance for Lisbon to safeguard its cultural sector. This new major goal was stated in hurry under the pressure of the crisis. It found immediate practical applications through the proliferation of support schemes, targeted or generalist, to benefit the cultural sector.

Thus the emergency support programme for the local economy, *Lisboa protege*, had earmarked 10% of its budget for the cultural sector, a total amount of €2 million. This financial support was disbursed, with the municipality ensuring that cultural players could effectively benefit from these funds by regularly extending the deadlines and accompanying them through the application process. In the end, almost 300 local cultural organisations benefited from this scheme.

This betrays a serious commitment on the part of the executive, but the Deputy for Culture cautioned against undue optimism: "this crisis can certainly be an opportunity, but more than that, it will be a great challenge for culture", adding "another important question that will arise is about the sustainability of the cultural sector in its economic perspective".

As pointed out by Joana Cardoso, head of the EGEAC (*Empresa de Gestão de Equipamentos e Animação Cultural*), this concern and the resulting unprecedented public intervention is the consequence of the collapse in tourist numbers caused by the pandemic: "in terms of public policies, the key realisation was probably that it became necessary to inject funds to make up for the lack of tourism revenues. Not just was it necessary to provide emergency relief, there was also a need to inject public funds to be able to keep the city's theatres and museums open (note: more than 50% of EGEAC's revenues in recent years came from tourism investment, in particular the visitation tickets to city monuments)".

In the same vein, as soon as the crisis began in March 2020, the Mayor decided to create a dedicated budget line within the City's *Social Emergency Fund* to support the most precarious professionals. He declared: "these artists, creators, professionals who often work independently, autonomously, can have support in case of need in a specific line of the emergency fund, intended for these situations of creators who do not have regular support from the Lisbon municipality". A fully claimed public intervention, which resulted in other measures to support the economic actors of culture, in particular bookshops.

Fernando Medina's conservative successor, Carlos Moedas, concurs and continues this support. At the beginning of each term of office, each new executive adopts a multi-annual provisional budget, revealing its political priorities. Whereas in November 2020, the 2021-2025 plan did not include culture as a priority field of action, the new plan adopted by the new executive in February 2022, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, includes culture among the six pillars of the 2022-2026 budget, on a par with solidarity and education policies.

The city's cultural policy seems to explicitly serve a tourism goal, recognising culture's contribution to the city's tourist economy. And it works: in 2018, the city was awarded the *Best Emerging Culture City Award* by the organisation Leading Culture Destination; one of its neighbourhoods was also voted as one of the "coolest" neighbourhoods in the world by *Time Out* magazine.

With almost 20% of its GDP based on culture in 2019, culture is a major economic asset for Portugal and for its capital in particular.

The municipality claims it: culture must be an instrument of the city outreach policy. Lisbon is an "open, cosmopolitan, creative and intercultural city with an international vocation" and aims for "world city status".

As an example, Lisbon hosted the *World Cities Culture Forum* in 2019 and, through the voice of its mayor, declared a "welcome all the cultures of the world that contribute to the richness of our territories".

As mentioned above, the municipality provided unprecedented support to the cultural sector during the pandemic. However, this determined commitment seems to be aimed above all at safeguarding the cultural economic fabric in order to allow the tourist industry to restart as soon as possible after the crisis. The emphasis is on safeguarding the cultural infrastructure that enables the city to shine and attract tourists from all over the world, rather than maintaining a local offer for the inhabitants of Lisbon.

However, the cultural offering proposed to Lisboets during the crisis has also benefited from the support provided both by the government and the municipality, even resulting in significant developments in the inhabitants' cultural practices. Thus, as Joana Cardoso notes, "cultural activities in open air spaces also became very popular, which gave us an opportunity to reconnect the public with monuments that locals were no longer visiting". However, this diversification of the cultural offer as well as the development of an innovative and more consistent digital offer seem to be only indirect and not always anticipated consequences of these public support programmes. As Fernando Medina himself reminds us in April 2020, their core purpose is focused on the very "subsistence of independent workers and cultural and creative entities".

As an example, at the peak of the pandemic, the municipality announced specific aid for the casas de fado, a touristic chief symbol, stating: "Lisbon grew up with Fado and its tradition is part of the city's history and memory". As Fernando Medina himself points out, the municipality is initiating this programme in cooperation with the Lisbon Tourism Association. This is an explicit statement of its vision of culture as the main driving force behind the tourist and economic dynamism of the Portuguese capital.

This public support for culture survives the political changeover and the win of the conservative party. Since the cultural sector contributes to the country's influence, the capital's attractiveness as a tourist destination and it generates considerable revenue, it must be supported. However, in the aftermath of the crisis and once the tourists have returned, we can see that political leaders are seeking to reduce the resources they devote to the sector, calling on cultural establishments to multiply partnerships with private sector companies in order to diversify their funding, even though, as Joana Cardoso points out, "In effect we are still struggling to return to pre-covid levels" in terms of tourist revenue.

02

POLITICAL LEADERS ARE SEEKING TO REDUCE THE RESOURCES THEY DEVOTE TO THE SECTOR, CALLING ON CULTURAL ESTABLISHMENTS TO MULTIPLY PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES IN ORDER TO DIVERSIFY THEIR FUNDING.

3/ FOCUS ON...

MOVE LISBOA, A NEW VISION FOR MOBILITIES IN LISBON THAT GOES BEYOND POLITICAL MAJORITIES.

CORPUS STUDIED

1. In 2019, the strategy *MOVE Lisboa* was debated and approved by City Council. The Deputy Mayor for transports, Miguel Gaspar, presented the Camara Municipal's vision on this occasion.

2. One year after, at the end of the first lockdown, Fernando Medina and Miguel Gaspar officially launched the programme, whose intentions have been slightly reoriented after the pandemic.

3. Once elected, Carlos Moedas initiated new priorities for *MOVE Lisboa*, beginning with a free access to public transportation for inhabitants under 23 and over 65, as announced in a press conference in April 2022.

ANALYSIS

As mobilities were one of the priorities of Fernando Medina since he got elected, his Câmara Municipal (embodied by the Deputy Mayor for Transport, Miguel Gaspar) built the plan *MOVE Lisboa* in 2019, as a guiding scheme for public transport, walking and cycling, and greening Lisbon people's means of travel. Approved by the City Council in 2019 and launched in 2020, *MOVE Lisboa* encompasses various measures. After its election, Carlos Moedas has taken up *MOVE Lisboa* with his own priorities centred around accessibility and Lisbon's European influence.

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In October 2019, Miguel Gaspar took *MOVE Lisboa*, a strategic vision for mobilities to the City Council. This strategy seeks to reduce the use of the car, in order to encourage other forms of mobility such as public transport and active mobility.

As outlined by Miguel Gaspar, the mobility strategy primarily responds to the city's ambition to expand its outreach. He conveys the *European Mobility Week Award* to substantiate its affirmation during its intervention in front of the Councillors: "on the strategic vision for mobility 2030, I think it is particularly opportune today because this is the first meeting of the city council after the *European Mobility Week* which ended last Sunday". The place of the city's distinguishing features seems all the more important when he continues: "we have done what it takes to make Lisbon an internationally recognised city". This vision of mobility serves a very clear purpose, namely to make Lisbon the "European capital of reference in the field of mobility" by 2030. In this perspective, the daily life of Lisbon people is a secondary argument compared to the aim to increase Lisbon's international influence.

Miguel Gaspar aims to reach consensus among the City Council: "The strategic vision that I bring here to the House is a document that focuses on the guiding principles so that there can be a broad political consensus on a project and a vision that we want to extend until 2030". The use of the pronoun "we" reflects the Deputy Mayor's desire to rally political forces around his project. This transparent dynamic is also illustrated by the idea that the vision of mobility outlined is not a short-term one for the next four years - the duration of a municipal mandate in Portugal - but rather a vision that is intended to be long-term. He said: "this is a four-year mandate, we are talking about cycles that go further, and we have managed to get the

PS, the PSD and the Left Bloc to agree on a vision of what is an image of the future of the city, and to try to agree on the principles so that there is a certain stability in the policies". Miguel Gaspar's ambition seems to be the perpetuation of his project when he uses the term "stability".

Beyond the policy of attractiveness and the intended consensus, the vision of mobility developed by Miguel Gaspar places transport as the nerve centre of this public policy: "only public transport, mass transport, can in fact have the adequate dimension to be able to solve the major problems of mobility, which, in the end, will allow people to take public transport, to cycle, to walk, to use the car, whatever the individual freedom of each person, on a scale and with management methods that the city supports". The measures put forward by Miguel Gaspar focus in particular on improving the public transport offer from a fair and quality point of view: "as part of the mobility strategy for Lisbon, we intend to increase the attractiveness of public transport, by simplifying and reducing fares". Again the use of the pronoun "we" is noteworthy.

One year after the vote of *MOVE Lisboa*, the strategy was fully published in October 2020, the day after the first lockdown. Fernando Medina and Miguel Gaspar share their conception of mobility in Lisbon in the aftermath of the first lockdown.

Although *MOVE Lisboa* was voted on by the City Council before the crisis, its implementation was slowed down by the crisis. Moreover, the pandemic has reoriented the discourse and revealed the relevance of the municipality's orientations on mobility.

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the mobility strategy and is the occasion to change directions, as Miguel Gaspar stated: “at the time of publication of this text, the world is experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which has profoundly changed our way of life as a society. It is a phenomenon that will mark a generation, for the drama that it is today, but from which we cannot fail to learn lessons for the future”. He goes on to link the environmental emergency to which *MOVE Lisboa* intends to respond with the COVID-19 pandemic: “this pandemic reinforces the ambition to improve Lisbon’s environmental conditions, the urgency of improving air quality and the opportunities resulting from quieter neighbourhoods being clear”.

First of all, the reasoning according to which the mobility strategy participates in the outreach of the city is still relevant in the executive narrative. Fernando Medina begins its contribution by mentioning the elements that have made the city of Lisbon a benchmark city in terms of the environment, again feeding into the city’s attractiveness policy: “*European Green Capital 2020*, Lisbon has already surpassed the objectives set in the *Covenant of Mayors for 2020* and will also achieve the objectives to which it has committed itself with the signing of the new *Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy*”.

However, the Mayor goes beyond these elements and reorients the narrative to raise the importance of the local level of proximity with the citizens. This makes sense in the context where the pandemic has placed the municipality at the level closest to the citizens: “this is not only a question of global sustainability, but also at the local level, because the actions implemented within this framework also contribute to guaranteeing a healthier population and a better quality of life, a more democratic and equitable society, a more attractive Lisbon for residents, businesses and visitors, a more resilient city in the face of global phenomena, whether climatic, pandemic or otherwise”. Fernando Medina puts more emphasis on the notion of “quality of life”. Miguel Gaspar also emphasises the place of the citizen in his vision of mobility: “the citizen has been placed at the centre of the urban design, giving priority to pedestrian space and the creation of conditions that favour the use of bicycles, with public transport being the backbone of the city’s mobility strategy, which makes it possible to reconcile the quality of accessible public space, especially in a city

where commuting is as important as Lisbon”. This is in line with the overall conception of Lisbon’s environmental policy, which, according to the Deputy Environment Minister José Sà Fernandes, is based on five pillars: information, participation of companies, universities and citizens, as well as valorisation and debate, and compliance with the objectives of the *Agenda 2030*.

Moreover, Fernando Medina’s speech on *MOVE Lisboa* promotes soft mobility and the reduction of car use, with the exception of shared vehicles, all through the prism of the COVID-19 crisis: “on foot, by bicycle, by public transport or in shared vehicles, the City of Lisbon intends to offer responses adapted to each and every moment, within a global framework of sustainable development and solidarity, insofar as the car is no longer a necessity, even in times of pandemic, to become an option”. The expression “responses adapted to each person” seeks to prove that this programme does not only wish to respond to the needs of all inhabitants but also to adapt to each one of them so that each one can make it his own. Miguel Gaspar goes on to explain the objectives of *MOVE Lisboa* by mentioning the reduction of car use and the reorientation towards public transport; “the objective is therefore to reduce the use of the private car to no more than 34% of journeys in the city of Lisbon, thus balancing the space allocated to other users and modes of transport, especially the most vulnerable”.

Lastly, Miguel Gaspar uses a new lexical field attesting the urgency of the situation and a desire to reach out not only to elected officials, but also to all Lisbon’s inhabitants: he relates *MOVE Lisboa*’s mobility objective to be reached in 2030 to the age that one of his children will be at that time: “today, as a father of two children - the eldest of whom will reach adulthood in 2030 - the issues are clear to me”.

In this editorial, Fernando Medina agrees with Miguel Gaspar’s vision developed during the presentation of the project to the City Council:

that *MOVE Lisboa* should be a transparent project, which could survive a change of executive. This idea is illustrated by his words: “the implementation of *MOVE Lisboa* should therefore be everyone’s objective for the next decade”.

In October 2021, after the municipal elections, a new mayor, Carlos Moedas takes office. The future of *MOVE Lisboa* is at stake. The theme of mobility remains a priority for the new municipality despite a different conception. In May 2022, Carlos Moedas presented his flagship measure: free transport for Lisbon’s inhabitants under 23 and over 65. This measure, announced during his election campaign, is part of a desire to make public transport more accessible in the wake of the pandemic.

The measure of free public transport is thus part of a post-crisis chronology. It represents direct financial support for certain categories of the population, in the context of the country’s economic recovery. Carlos Moedas said: “this measure, taken at this precise moment, also has the complementary objective of creating additional support for an economic recovery”.

The main objective of this announcement seems to be the recognition that Lisbon will have by positioning itself as a pioneer in free transport in Europe. The idea of recognition on a European or even international scale can be appreciated when Carlos Moedas says: “this project is extremely important for the European Union”. This echoes his position as European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science between 2014 and 2019. He also recalled the commitment made by the City when it applied to become one of the *100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities* by 2030. The City’s candidacy had been accepted, in particular, because of its commitment to invest in public transport. Carlos Moedas made the link between this European distinction for the measures taken by the city in terms of the environment and the actual

measure of free transport: “we were chosen by the European Commission as one of the hundred cities in Europe for this mission. This choice, my friends, has a lot to do with this measure. I am sure that this measure was central to the evaluation made by the European Commission and we will be the first European capital of this size”. Carlos Moedas’ ambition and will is to make Lisbon an exemplary city, influencing its European neighbours.

Carlos Moedas also emphasises the prior target of this measure: Lisbon’s people. He also refers to the population as a whole, as a group: “the people are the main element”. Still referring to the daily life of the people of Lisbon, Carlos Moedas put the environmental issue as a priority of his current mandate: “it is one of the most important measures of our mandate because it is a measure for environmental sustainability and the improvement of people’s mobility in the city of Lisbon”..

The crisis has also allowed a re-evaluation of the needs of the population in order to reorient public policies and their discourse to meet their expectations: “this measure also has the impact that people need in this post-pandemic recovery”. Carlos Moedas reveals again his ambition to improve the environment and the quality of life of the inhabitants of his city: “I do not give up fighting every day of this function of Mayor for the improvement of the living conditions for the quality of life of the Lisboans”. The warlike lexical field used (“fight”) shows the Mayor’s strong will to respond to this challenge.

Like Miguel Gaspar and Fernando Medina before him, Carlos Moedas called for a transpartisan dynamic regarding transport: “we will succeed, we will maintain the spirit of collaboration, the spirit of cooperation”.

In a sense, like Miguel Gaspar and Fernando Medina during the presentation of *MOVE Lisboa*, Carlos Moedas uses the pandemic to justify his choice of public policy, combining his particular attention to respond to the needs of his citizens and to work for more sustainable mobilities, in a transparent dynamic: “today we are starting a paradigm shift, which is very important to clarify a path that will happen, whether we like it or not, and that has nothing to do with political parties: the progressive path of public transport for a public good, for a public good to which everyone has access”.

4/ LISBON LOGBOOK

A/ CULTURE: A POWERFUL TOOL TO LEVERAGE LISBON’S INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE UNDER THE PRESSURE TO REINVENT ITS ECONOMIC MODEL AFTER THE PANDEMIC

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

The executive promotes culture as a driving force for the city’s attractiveness, which has been acknowledged by several distinctions. In 2018, the city received the award of the “Best Emerging Culture City Award” by the organisation *Leading Culture Destination*⁴⁴¹. One of its neighbourhoods was also voted one the “coolest neighbourhoods of the world” by *Time Out Magazine*⁴⁴². As 19,8% of Portugal’s GDP is based on tourism, culture is a key asset for the country and its capital⁴⁴³.

The municipality’s support mostly relies on the funding of major cultural organisations, from museums to artistic residencies through its body *Empresa de Gestão de Equipamentos e Animação Cultural (EGEAC)*⁴⁴⁴. A sizable effort is led to liven the culture in every Lisbon’s neighbourhood, as a decisive factor in the promotion of the city’s identity and therefore, attractiveness.

Culture is a shared field of competence between the City and the Government. The latter, despite a raise of 40% in the culture’s budget⁴⁴⁵ has undergone before the crisis several rounds of protests. In December 2019, more than 300 artists organised through their union a protest, demanding that 1% of the state budget would be allocated to culture⁴⁴⁶, following UNESCO’s recommendations⁴⁴⁷. However, these protests seemed to have had no major effect on the Government’s policies, nor on the municipality funding scheme.

^{441/} *Lisbonne reçoit un prix pour sa culture (lisbonne-idee.com)*
^{442/} <https://www.publico.pt/2019/09/17/fugas/noticia/arroios-bairro-cool-mundo-top-internacional-time-out-1886917>
^{443/} <https://knoema.com/atlas/Portugal/topics/Tourism/Travel-and-Tourism-Total-Contribution-to-GDP/Contribution-of-travel-and-tourism-to-GDP-percent-of-GDP>
^{444/} https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/cityprofile_lisbon_2.pdf
^{445/} <https://www.radiofrance.fr/francemusique/podcasts/la-chronique-d-antoine-pecqueur/la-politique-culturelle-du-portugal-1651312>
^{446/} <https://www.sabado.pt/ultima-hora/detalhe/mais-de-300-artistas-exigem-1-do-oe-para-a-cultura>
^{447/} UNESCO recommends the allocation of 1% of the state budget to the cultural field.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The executive narrative is based on one central argument: culture is explicitly serving the purpose of making the city more attractive and increasing its international outreach. It is stated in the *Estratégias para a cultura Lisboa*, the strategic planning document published by the Câmara Municipal in 2017: the city is being described as “a city that promotes the conditions for cultural expression and the development of creativity and that modernises and adapts the functioning of its institutions to take its place in the global world of contemporaneity”⁴⁴⁸. The *Estratégias para a cultura da Lisboa* 2017 directly links cultural policy with the well-being of Lisbon people and enhances the externalities of the cultural activities in the city.

The strategy explicitly targets the ambition of becoming a world-known city: “It will be of interest to the city of Lisbon (just like to cities such as London, Tokyo, New York or Paris) not only to invest in what is different and differentiating, but also to be able to polarise, attract and stimulate top activities, in the various art worlds and artistic fields (e.g. exhibitions, concerts, shows, etc.), which are part of the main global circuits and worth for their own quality, independently of their “differentiation (and which may be something as “authentic” as the above, naturally...)”⁴⁴⁹.

In Lisbon’s contribution to *Agenda 21*⁴⁵⁰, stated in a report of the *United Cities and Local Governments*, the municipality’s ambition is described in these terms: “Lisbon is an open, cosmopolitan, creative and intercultural city, with international ambition, viewing culture as a sustainable development factor, and who thinks, creates and shared culture with and for everyone, throughout its entire territory”. Lisbon has been nominated as an ambassador for promoting the *Agenda 21* for culture showing how it aims to take its place in the global debate on culture. The hosting of the *2019 World Culture Cities Forum*, an annual summit reuniting more than 40 mayors fits into this framework. On this occasion, Fernando Median substantiated the previous affirmation: “Lisbon is the home to world culture this week, bringing together artists and experts from various countries”⁴⁵¹.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The municipality’s take on culture as a leverage for Lisbon’s attractivity is stressed by the local press, which shares the announcement of the city’s distinctions⁴⁵², or echoes “spectacular architectural initiatives”⁴⁵³.

The union’s protest received small echo from the press, which shares the will of the union to make its voice heard: Hugo Barros, director of the union *CENA-STE*⁴⁵⁴ explained in an article published in the newspaper *O Jornal Económico*, a weekly economic magazine: “We want to be heard by the Government and we want a cultural policy for Portugal”⁴⁵⁵.

● CRISIS - COVID-19

FACTS

The pandemic acted as a spotlight on the precariousness of artists and cultural workers. In a survey conducted by *CENA-STE* and published in April 2020, it has been shown that 98% of cultural workers saw their shows being cancelled and 85% are being left without any security⁴⁵⁶. Furthermore, the tourism industry, which highly contributes to the cultural sector revenues is deeply impacted by the pandemic. According to a study from the *World Travel and Tourism Council*⁴⁵⁷, the Portuguese economy lost €21bn during the pandemic because of the drop in tourist attendance.

The Câmara Municipal has been very prompt in safeguarding culture, with a launch of a support plan as soon as April 20th 2020. In the first emergency plan, three measures are directly related to help the cultural sector: the whole payment to cultural actors of already signed contracts and the support to online programming; the acceleration of the support to cultural institutions through their operating subsidies; the extension of the support scheme to the workers and places not covered by municipal subsidies through the *Municipal Emergency Fund*. In addition a €250,000 funding was unlocked to support independent workers.

^{448,449/} https://www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/cidade_temas/cultural/documentos/ESTRATEGIA_CULTURA_LISBOA_2017.pdf
^{450/} https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/7_keys_lisboa_report_fr.pdf
^{451/} <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1187485962336686082?s=20&t=vIQvXQ1VhMaaghq1ZWZcQg>
^{452/} <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/2021-10-07/lisbon-battling-it-out-for-best-in-the-world/62823>

^{453/} <https://www.publico.pt/2020/01/24/culturaipsilon/fotogaleria/edp-revela-projecto-alejandro-aravena-lisboa-399794>
^{454/} *CENA-STE* (*Sindicato dos Trabalhadores de Espectáculos, do Audiovisual e dos Músicos*) is the most prominent cultural union in Portugal.
^{455/} <https://jornaleconomico.pt/noticias/mais-de-300-artistas-exigem-1-imediato-do-orcamento-do-estado-para-a-cultura-523942>

^{446/} <https://expresso.pt/coronavirus/2020-04-03-Covid-19.-Inquerito-revela-que-a-perda-de-trabalho-afeta-98-das-pessoas-na-area-da-Cultura>
^{447/} <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/2021-04-11/travel-tourism-sectors-contribution-to-portugals-gdp-dropped-by-21-billion-in-2020/59277>

However, despite this prompt local reaction, artists claimed more support from the government throughout the voice of their union. In April 2020, protests burst all around the city and the country, demanding proper support from the government and the recognition of a special status for cultural workers⁴⁵⁸.

One month later, the municipality launched a major support scheme, *Lisboa Protege*⁴⁵⁹ to help businesses, restaurants and cultural activities. Endowed with €20 million, the plan devoted €2 million to the cultural sector. The plan has been extended in December 2020, March 2021 and June 2021 in order to provide the most complete coverage. 264 cultural locations have benefited from the support scheme⁴⁶⁰.

In addition to *Lisboa Protege*, the municipality implemented various support scheme to the cultural sector, asserting new priorities and reasserting its ambition⁴⁶¹:

- An increased funding to the *EGEAC* to support Lisbon’s cultural institutions (€5,9 million);
- An emphasis on the cultural industries which are the most relevant to Lisbon’s attractiveness, such as fado, which benefited from a special support scheme in cooperation with the *Lisbon Tourism Association*⁴⁶²;
- The support to independent cultural players such as public libraries (acquisition of 289,000 books) and independent live music venues (€600,000).

In parallel, in order to keep the connection with Lisbon’s people, the municipality developed an online offer: virtual shows of local artists⁴⁶³, a virtual visit of the City Hall Palace...⁴⁶⁴

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The narrative around the recovery is centred around the emergency of enabling the cultural locations to reopen, to allow the tourism industry to restart as soon as possible after the crisis. The example of the support programme to the Fado is indeed revealing. On this occasion, Fernando Medina explained: “Lisbon grew up with Fado and its tradition is part of the city’s history and memory”⁴⁶⁵. The fact that the programme is led in cooperation with *Lisbon Tourism Association* corroborates this affirmation, culture being the driving force behind the tourist and economic dynamism of the Portuguese capital.

Nonetheless, a slight shift in the public discourse can be assessed: the targets of the support schemes are not only the places but the workers. In launching the first support scheme, Fernando Medina therefore stated: “Support for cultural agents and independent artists. One of *CML*’s 15 measures to support families, businesses and employment. #COVID2019”⁴⁶⁶. When the Mayor decided to create a dedicated budget line within the City’s *Social Emergency Fund*, he declared: “these artists, creators, professionals who often work independently, autonomously, can have support in case of need in a specific line of the emergency fund, intended for these situations of creators who do not have regular support from the Lisbon municipality” showing that cultural workers are the targets of the support scheme, in response to the protests. This enabled the municipality to enlarge its scope of action.

After the protests, the Câmara Municipal underlined its contribution to the safeguarding of the cultural sector. Fernando Medina indeed tweeted: “Counting on other support programs, the *CML* has already guaranteed more than €5 million in non-repayable funds to the city’s cultural agents. And it kept funding for programming suspended in the meantime due to the pandemic, totaling another €6 million”⁴⁶⁷.

The crisis sheds light on the blatant issue of the cultural sectors revenues. In an interview given to the platform *Terra Esplendida* in July 2020⁴⁶⁸, Deputy Mayor Catarina Vaz Pinto explained the impact of the crisis on the public perception and funding of culture: “another important question that will arise is about the sustainability of the cultural sector in its economic perspective”. According to the Deputy Mayor, “this crisis can certainly be an opportunity, but more than that, it will be a great challenge for culture”. Joana Cardoso, head of the *EGEAC* explains that the unprecedented public intervention is directly linked to the sharp fall in tourism revenues: “in terms of public policies, the key realisation was probably that it became necessary to inject funds to make up for the lack of tourism revenues. It wasn’t just necessary to provide emergency relief, there was also a need to inject public funds to be able to keep the city’s theatres and museums open (as more than 50% of *EGEAC* revenues in recent years came from tourism investment, in particular the visitatio tickets to city monuments)”.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The union *CENA-STE* took the problem of cultural workers’ precariousness seriously from the beginning of the crisis. They launched a survey directed towards cultural workers in March 2020 and, in an interview for the 24-hour news channel *RTP Noticias*, Hugo Barros explained:“there has to be a set of measures that are transversal to all independent workers and some specific to entertainment workers”. During the lockdowns, protests were organised online to ask for more support from the public authorities and until the extension of *Lisboa Protege*, the protests continued⁴⁶⁹. A last strike was organised by *CENA-STE* in November 2020, directly towards the Government.

Furthermore, the municipality’s actions received positive echo from the local and national press, underlining the forces of the unprecedented funding scheme and promoting the shift to the online offer. The newspapers *Publico*⁴⁷⁰ and *JN*⁴⁷¹ indeed highlighted the “extraordinary support” of the municipality. For instance, *Publico* advertised the online programmation led by the *EGEAC* in April 2020⁴⁷².

⁴⁵⁸/ <https://www.jn.pt/artes/trabalhadores-da-cultura-protestam-no-dia-9-em-frente-ao-parlamento-em-lisboa-12993799.html>

⁴⁵⁹/ <https://www.lisboa.pt/lisboaprotege/sobre-o-programa>

⁴⁶⁰/ <https://www.tsf.pt/portugal/cultura/lisboa-apoiou-a-fundo-perdido-264-entidades-da-cultura-no-valor-de-15-milhoes-de-euros-13561950.html>

⁴⁶¹/ See footnote 455.

⁴⁶²/ <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1251109776370683910?s=20&t=Xxokx1YFCa0v-bNnJ4Ak9w>

⁴⁶³/ <https://www.publico.pt/2020/04/15/culturaipsilon/noticia/25-abril-lisboa-celebra-mes-liberdade-animacao-cultural-partir-casa-1912446>

⁴⁶⁴/ https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1253812723902754818?s=20&t=9-hZudxPLuk__GoZKOYnjw

⁴⁶⁵/ <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1251109776370683910?s=20&t=Xxokx1YFCa0v-bNnJ4Ak9w>

⁴⁶⁶/ <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1251109776370683910?s=20&t=Xxokx1YFCa0v-bNnJ4Ak9w>

⁴⁶⁷/ https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1381931426719924227?s=20&t=UilHwloiA25FQy3U2_Cinw

⁴⁶⁸/ <https://www.terraesplendida.com/en/catarina-vaz-pinto-sat/>

⁴⁶⁹/ <https://www.esquerda.net/artigo/protesto-online-pela-cultura-e-este-sabado/72529>

⁴⁷⁰/ <https://www.publico.pt/2020/04/16/culturaipsilon/noticia/camara-lisboa-anuncia-125-milhoes-euros-apoio-cultura-1912626>

⁴⁷¹/ <https://www.jn.pt/local/noticias/lisboa/lisboa/lisboa-aprova-250-mil-euros-para-trabalhadores-independentes-e-entidades-culturais-12075869.html>

⁴⁷²/ <https://www.publico.pt/2020/04/15/culturaipsilon/noticia/25-abril-lisboa-celebra-mes-liberdade-animacao-cultural-partir-casa-1912446>

● POST CRISIS AND
CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

The pandemic has reasserted the importance of culture for the city’s attractiveness and therefore the city’s economy, which is illustrated with the 2022-2026 budget, established by the new executive. Whereas in November 2020 the 2021-2025 budget did not include culture as a priority of action, the budget adopted by the new executive in February 2022 in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis includes culture among the six pillars of the 2022-2026 budget, with education and solidarity policies.

It has to be noted that the national policy underwent a shift, answering the professionals’ concerns by creating a status for cultural workers in October 2021 and a special social security for cultural artists endowed with €2 million in 2022. Furthermore, the defeated Mayor Fernando Medina has joined the Portuguese government as Minister of Finances.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The executive emphasises the need to diversify the resources. Indeed, the crisis has revealed the fragility of the cultural economic model and led to the need to rethink the way culture is being funded, and, as the economy is restarting, the revenues have not reached pre-covid levels yet. Joana Cardoso, head of the EGEAC, therefore stated: “In effect we are still struggling to return to pre-covid levels. Tourism is back on but it will take more time to re-establish pre-pandemic revenues”.

She underlined the development of a digital offer even though physical activities remain the priority for the public and for the cultural institutions business model: “At EGEAC, the municipal branch of culture of Lisbon, we always saw remote/virtual possibilities as an important complement of activities but never as an actual replacement of plays, exhibitions, concerts, etc, except in the most drastic moments of public health conditioning and as a way to allow revenues to take place”.

The new executive slightly shifted the discourse towards the notion of proximity. The new executive narrative relies on the concept of the encounter, a culture for Lisbon people and for those who visit the city. It states on the municipality’s website: “The city’s ambition should be to promote small cultural centres all over the city so that everyone can cultivate habits of thought, creation and artistic enjoyment”⁴⁷³. During the campaign, Carolos Moedas emphasised a key proposition: a cultural institution in each freguesia so that everybody can access cultural activities⁴⁷⁴.

Notwithstanding, the ambition of affirming the status of Lisbon in the international cultural debate remains relevant. For instance, Carlos Moedas co-signed an opinion piece in the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* calling for a *European New Deal on Culture*⁴⁷⁵ and reminded that “culture will be at the centre of its project for Lisbon”⁴⁷⁶. In the new budget plan, it is stated that the Câmara Municipal aims for:

MEDIA COVERAGE

As the new executive has been recently elected, the media coverage is reserved for now. The local press lately underlined the municipality’s support to ARCO, an international contemporary art fair held in Lisbon and Madrid⁴⁸⁰ and the administrative changes in municipal bodies.

“a prosperous city is one that takes risks, that dares and that yearns for change. A city that is not afraid to embrace science and culture as drivers of disruption. City disruption, urban growth, and economic development. That’s what a city with culture, with economy and innovation achieves”, corroborating the City’s ambition to use culture as a driving force for its influence⁴⁷⁷. A recent example is the strong mobilisation of the Mayor to expand ARCOLisboa, a contemporary art fair, in order to make Lisbon “a contemporary art capital”⁴⁷⁸.

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Despite the shared understanding that a diversification of the cultural sector’s revenues is necessary, the socialist opposition has expressed some concerns regarding the development of patronage in the cultural sector and fears the return to a “culture to the English to see”, according to Inês Drummond, *Socialist City* Councillor at Lisbon City Hall⁴⁷⁹.

473/ <https://www.lisboa.pt/cidade/cultura/estrategia>
474/ <https://www.facebook.com/cmoeas/posts/4485460024807574/>
475/ <https://t.co/vesM0MjDFG>
476/ <https://twitter.com/Moedas/status/1372677982230351874?s=20&t=24wCXS7rWdFjeAprY407aQ>

477/ https://www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/download_center/orcamento/2022/gop/GOP_2022_2026.pdf
478/ https://ionline.sapo.pt/artigo/771092/perola-da-arcolisboa-e-uma-prioridade-politica-afirma-moedas?seccao=Mais_i
479/ <https://expresso.pt/opiniaio/2022-07-27-EGEAC---Lisboa-cidade-de-cultura-um-regresso-ao-passado--c59bdf1f>
480/ <https://www.publico.pt/2022/05/12/culturaipsilon/noticia/arcolisboa-prioridade-carlos-moedas-2006006>

4/
LISBON
LOGBOOK

B/
ENVIRONMENT: LISBON’S
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AS THE
HEADLINE OF THE MUNICIPALITY’S
INFLUENCE STRATEGY IN EUROPE

01/
NATURE IN THE CITY

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

In the 2010’s, Lisbon has particularly developed nature in the city with a focussed goal in mind: to make the capital a green and pleasant city to live in⁴⁸¹. In addition to improving the quality of life of the people dwelling in Lisbon, this is a matter of outreach for the municipality: most of the initiatives regarding nature in the city have been part of the reinforcement of Lisbon’s candidacy for the *European Green Capital* award⁴⁸². These efforts and the projects launched quickly brought the first results, tangible in the daily life of all the inhabitants. At the time of the announcement of the result and the awarding of the prize, on June 21st 2018, 76% of Lisbon’s population lived less than 300 metres from a green space, as former environmental councillor José Sa Fernandès pointed out in an interview with the weekly newspaper *Visão*⁴⁸³.

As a symbolic highlight of this ambition, Lisbon’s term as *European Green Capital* opens on January 12th 2020 with the planting of 20,000 trees with the inhabitants in one day. Lisbon’s urban nature policy is indeed largely based on the planting of trees, which, since the creation of a 1,000 hectares urban forest, has been one of the city’s hallmarks⁴⁸⁴.

Another priority of the municipality is the preservation of biodiversity. In 2015, a global scheme for biodiversity was approved by the City Council, based on numerical targets (a 20% increase in biodiversity all around the city) and on sharing knowledge and information with the people of Lisbon through various awareness-raising mechanisms⁴⁸⁵.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

In its narrative approach, the Câmara Municipal mobilised several arguments to justify the place given to the development of nature in the city in its public policies: the outreach of the city, the quality of life of its inhabitants and the environmental health issues that arise from it.

For Fernando Medina, the large-scale planting of 20,000 trees was an opportunity to involve citizens, volunteers, in the process of receiving the European distinction. He underlines an “initiative open to the city, which brought together around 5,000 people”⁴⁸⁶. He took this opportunity to publicly announce a spectacular objective: to plant 100,000 more trees in Lisbon before 2021. While the politician emphasised the improvement in the living environment for the inhabitants that these plantings would bring, he insisted above

481/ <https://www.lisboa.pt/capital-verde-2020>

482/ Award given each year to a city by the European Commission to recognises and rewards local efforts to improve the environment, and thereby the economy and the quality of life in cities.

483/ <https://visao.sapo.pt/atualidade/politica/2019-12-07-tenho-tido-varios-apetites-para-meter-aco-es-populares/>

484/ https://www.lemonde.fr/series-d-ete/article/2022/07/23/a-lisbonne-1-000-hectares-de-paradis-vert-au-c-ur-de-la-ville_6135880_3451060.html

485/ https://www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/cidade_temas/ambiente/biodiversidade/documentos/Plano_Acao_Biodiversidade_Lisboa_2020.pdf

486/ <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1216407635114721282?s=20&t=KQ0hUTP7UASuS3Aowkj18A>

all on their environmental impact, evoking a “greener, more sustainable, more environmentally friendly city”⁴⁸⁷. The recognition as *European Green Capital* underlines the recent efforts of the Câmara Municipal as Deputy Mayor for Environment José SA Fernandes explains in an interview with the newspaper *Visão*: “We started to realise that the work achieved was doing a unique thing: unite the city ecologically while spending little money. We managed to bring people into the gardens : the idea of the kiosks, which was mine, was aimed at bringing people into the gardens and making the city be appropriated by people. Also, we did water consumption reduction, use of renewable energy with the photovoltaic panels, we introduced bicycles, we had things to show. We applied once in 2015 and lost to Oslo in the final. But we learned how to do it. We submitted an application based on our evolution, which was huge, and that’s how we won”⁴⁸⁸.

Beyond the stakes of quality of life and environmental protection, this event also has health implications. For instance, it can be found on the *European Green Capital* Twitter account that the initiative will “help the capital breathe better”⁴⁸⁹. A characteristic of this initiative that the Mayor echoes is the reduction in temperature of 3 to 5 degrees in hot weather situations made possible by this addition of nature to the heart of the city: “the green spots created by these trees will lower the temperature by 3 to 5 degrees in the surrounding areas”⁴⁹⁰. The gardens are being described as a source of social cohesion, the City’s environmental policy then nurturing other municipal policies: “a fundamental point, we have more social cohesion, because the city is connected, and parks and gardens are everyone’s areas: there is no place with more freedom.”⁴⁹¹

Finally, the information of Lisbon people is central to the Câmara Municipal’s discourse. The Deputy Mayor for Environment explains that the City’s environmental action will be based on 5 pillars: information, participation of companies, universities and citizens, valorisation and debate, and respect for the objectives of the *Agenda 2030*⁴⁹².

THE POLITICAL OPPONENT NARRATIVE

Both the planting project and the international distinction do not seem to be the cause of political struggle and contestation on the part of the municipal opposition. Indeed, this concern seems to have become transpartisan. One of the leaders of the municipal opposition, Assunção Cristas, former Secretary of State for the Environment, was herself the initiator of the *Vamos Plantar Portugal* campaign in 2011, with a discourse that had similar characteristics (highlighting the fight against global warming and the need for citizen involvement and participation) but also a slight difference, as it emphasised the economic contribution that these trees would make to the country, with the objective of one tree planted per inhabitant⁴⁹³.

MEDIA COVERAGE

This participatory planting seems to have been well received by the people of Lisbon. On Twitter, many residents have expressed their support for the initiative. One citizen commented on the event, calling it an “excellent initiative”, while questioning the “trustworthiness” of the Mayor’s comments about the temperature drop that the tree planting would bring⁴⁹⁴. The national daily *Publico* ran the headline “A day of tree planting in Lisbon to show that it is urgent to act”⁴⁹⁵.

● CRISIS - COVID-19

FACTS

During the peak of the pandemic, nature in the city comes second, because of the health priorities and the emergency public support for economic actors required with the crisis. This is reflected in the fact that the municipal agenda for the *European Green Capital* project was put on hold⁴⁹⁶.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of the pandemic, the executive launched the project to renovate the Praça de Espanha, an emblematic project of Fernando Medina’s term, who cited it as one of his priorities in the framework of *European Green Capital*⁴⁹⁷. While the core of the project is the creation of a large urban park, it involves the felling of 60 trees.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

Despite the pause in the implementation of the *European Green Capital* agenda, the municipality stresses that its efforts have been continued: “*Lisboa Green Capital* never stopped, but in view of the current circumstances, it’s being relaunched today”⁴⁹⁸. So, while the crisis interrupts and slows down its environmental action, there is no question of stopping or giving up the executive’s ambitions in this area.

The Câmara Municipal seizes the opportunity of the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day on April 22nd 2020 to mention the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis: “At a time when COVID-19 has led to reduced pollution, re-emerging wildlife and plunging oil prices, it’s also shown the size of the task facing humanity”⁴⁹⁹. Apart from this mention, the discourse on biodiversity is absent.

THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION NARRATIVE

The ecologist group *Os Verdes* (who sits in the opposition) has been really active in contesting the rehabilitation project of Praça de Espanha. The group is using this rehabilitation project to criticise

the municipality’s environmental policy, recalling the ambitions formulated in the framework of *European Green Capital*: “after the setbacks that the Green Capital has suffered, it will be necessary to recover and move forward with determination and responsibly so that this distinction is not just another award and can make a difference in the city”⁵⁰⁰. The group regrets the choice made by the municipality to cut down trees and underlines its contradictions: “On the other hand, the city has unfortunately been confronted with the intention to cut down trees, and its implementation as in Alvalade and Praça de Espanha, and other means should always be tried to maintain and recover the specimens”⁵⁰¹.

MEDIA COVERAGE AND CITIZEN’S REACTIONS

The rehabilitation project of Praça de Espanha is being strongly criticised and some actors, such as the not-for-profit *Plataforma em Defesa das Árvores*, are even advocating for its end, as reported in the national daily *Jornal de Notícias* April 2020: “It is perverse to cut down trees in order to create green spaces”, and “even more so in the middle of a nesting season”. “The Town Hall says it is building a green space, but you don’t build a garden by destroying what already exists. This is deeply reprehensible,” criticises Rosa Casimiro, representative of the *Plataforma em Defesa das Árvores*⁵⁰².

The association mobilises a sanitary argument: it mentions the correlation between pollution levels and the spread of COVID-19, to justify its request: “In the midst of a public health crisis - and while scientific studies already show a probable correlation between the spread of COVID-19 and air pollution, which favours its dissemination and increases the virulence of the infection, as well as the mortality rate, which is higher in polluted areas - the preservation of adult trees is essential, when we know that they are the main ones responsible for filtering pollution and CO2 (young trees will take about two decades to do so in their fullness)”⁵⁰³. The citizens also questioned the project, prompting reactions from the municipality, which reminded that the tree felling was always part of the project⁵⁰⁴.

487/ <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1213139125601284097?s=20&t=EKPSPp7sfaRTQ3rKRGL7sQ>

488/ <https://visao.sapo.pt/atualidade/politica/2019-12-07-tenho-tido-varios-apetites-para-meter-acoes-populares/>

489/ <https://twitter.com/greenlisboa2020/status/1216401936242618368?s=20&t=yQ3mH1JKOKuxZVaMjF2n4A>

490/ <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1216413388559015936?s=20&t=yQ3mH1JKOKuxZVaMjF2n4A>

491/ <https://visao.sapo.pt/atualidade/politica/2019-12-07-tenho-tido-varios-apetites-para-meter-acoes-populares/>

492/ <https://visao.sapo.pt/atualidade/politica/2019-12-07-tenho-tido-varios-apetites-para-meter-acoes-populares/>

493/ https://www-cmjournal-pt.translate.goog/politica/amp/assuncao-cristas-anuncia-vamos-plantar-portugal?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=fr&_x_tr_hl=fr&_x_tr_pto=op

494/ <https://twitter.com/chartersazevedo/status/1216414439144075264?s=20&t=yQ3mH1JKOKuxZVaMjF2n4A>

495/ <https://www.publico.pt/2020/01/12/local/noticia/dia-plantar-arvores-lisboa-mostrar-urgente-agir-1900088>

496/ <https://www.maison-au-portugal.com/nouvelles/lisbonne-capitale-verte-europeenne-2020/>

497/ https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1216138156782780417?s=20&t=IKCatYoXcjLjCIIIBjz_bA

498/ https://twitter.com/greenlisboa2020/status/1250386976764805120?s=20&t=7pCYanAKFeTXyevfag_HvA

499/ <https://twitter.com/greenlisboa2020/status/1252904836913344513?s=20&t=6YTBWV9kEFc-YtRylruCYQ>

500/ <http://arquivo.osverdes.pt/pages/posts/covid-19-lisboa-capital-verde-europeia-2020-10891.php>

501/ See footnote 482.

502/ <https://www.jn.pt/local/noticias/lisboa/lisboa/arvores-sinalizadas-para-abate-geram-polemica-em-lisboa-12105181.html>

503/ See footnote 485.

504/ https://twitter.com/luismaibento/status/1254477550073634817?s=20&t=LvG_QAG6Q7cO3QEhOqkliQ

● POST CRISIS AND
CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

At the end of the crisis, the City announced the extension of its plan to renaturalise the city by planting trees by launching a public competition for the acquisition of 120,000 trees and 116,000 shrubs⁵⁰⁵. This announcement comes symbolically after the wave of criticism targeting the felling of 60 trees in the context of the Praça de Espanha rehabilitation project.

With the crisis behind, the City re-engage with a distinction strategy, by hosting the *European Green Week 2020* (during Fernando Medina’s term of office) and the *United Nations Conference on the Oceans* (during Carlos Moedas’ term).

In October 2020, Lisbon hosted the opening conference of the *European Green Week 2020* as part of its *European Green Capital* term. Lisbon is thus demonstrating its desire to pursue its strategy of influence at the European level on environmental issues. The theme chosen for this *European Green Week* is nature and biodiversity, and more particularly their essential role in a post-crisis context. The challenge is to find out to what extent nature in the city can promote growth and be a source of employment in cities, as well as to understand how the crisis has accelerated its inclusion on the agenda. The opening conference was organised around two axes (“Global diversity, agenda 2030” and “solutions for a biodiverse and equitable world”) to take stock of the situation of biodiversity and then consider the objectives to be reached⁵⁰⁶.

Then, after Carlos Moedas’ election, from June 27th to July 1st 2022, Lisbon hosted the second edition of the *Oceans Conference*, organised by the United Nations. Co-organised with Kenya, this conference is taking place in the wake of the crisis. Its ambition is to provide answers to structural environmental problems, the resurgence of which has been made possible by COVID-19, in terms of the fight against overfishing and the creation of marine protected areas⁵⁰⁷.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

After the crisis, the planting of trees is once again becoming a priority for the municipality, both in actions and in words. It is the spearhead of its environmental policy. The biodiversity policy is becoming a tool to promote the municipality’s environmental action: in an interview given to *Ambiente Magazine*⁵⁰⁸, José Sa Fernandes explained that “Lisbon wants to be an example of inspiration in biodiversity matters”⁵⁰⁹. Moreover, during the Summit, he highlighted the progress made by the city in terms of greening. The pandemic, which made it difficult for the municipality to achieve its objectives, nevertheless gave a new accuracy to the need to act more quickly in the fight against global warming and the greening of spaces: “It has changed our lives entirely “considering that the pandemic has forced us to know how to “listen, learn, resist, reinvent and reprogram”. And it was precisely in “finding solutions” that policies were defined to respond to the challenge. So much so that Lisbon is currently “expanding the urban gardens” and “inaugurating new green spaces”⁵¹⁰.

On the occasion of the opening conference of the *European Green Week* on October 19th 2020, Fernando Medina, then Mayor of Lisbon, communicated on the event by highlighting “the urgency of restoring balance with nature and biodiversity”⁵¹¹. This opening conference was also an opportunity for the Mayor of Lisbon to recall the need to make Lisbon greener in the aftermath of the crisis; “it became even clearer that we have to have a faster and more effective green agenda”, according to a tweet from the municipality published the same day⁵¹².

The *UN Ocean Conference* took place after the change of executive and the victory of Carlos Moedas. This marks an inflection in the discourse, valuing not the actions carried out in the field of nature in the city but the key measures present in the elected official’s programme: “Lisbon *Capital of the Oceans* showing commitment to concrete measures. Like the introduction of free transport for young and old. Or the future *Hub do Mar*, an accelerator that will link scientific research to concrete solutions.”⁵¹³ Hosting this conference is therefore an opportunity for the new Câmara Municipal to promote its future actions and to revive a pre-crisis tradition of using environmental policy to contribute to the city’s influence, positioning itself “as the great European capital in defence of the Oceans and an environmentally sustainable future”⁵¹⁴.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The UN conference benefited from great international press attention, mentioning the “*Lisbon Declaration*” and thus positioning the city at the centre of international attention.⁵¹⁵

505/ <https://observador.pt/2021/04/02/camara-de-lisboa-vai-plantar-120-mil-arvores-e-116-mil-arbustos-entre-2022-e-2023/>
506/ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/greenweek2020/en/session/official-opening-event-in-lisbon-portugal.html>
507/ <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2022>

508/ Portuguese magazine specialised on environmental issues.
509/ <https://www.ambientemagazine.com/lisboa-quer-ser-um-exemplo-de-inspiracao-em-materias-de-biodiversidade/>
510/ See footnote 492.
511/ https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1318224664548790272?s=20&t=9-hZudxPLuk_GoZKOYnjw
512/ <https://twitter.com/CamaraLisboa/status/1318142016157528064?s=20&t=edjaMpdgQPN-WbS8xGmBEQ>

513/ <https://twitter.com/Moedas/status/1541525456591126530?s=20&t=E-54HYZQGctVxRI2-DVS3w>
514/ <https://twitter.com/Moedas/status/1544078600097263616?s=20&t=E-54HYZQGctVxRI2-DVS3w>
515/ <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/environnement/20220701-la-conference-sur-les-océans-clôturée-avec-la-déclaration-de-lisbonne-adoptée-par-consensus>

02/

MOBILITIES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

● BEFORE CRISIS

FACTS

Mobilities are one of the priorities of Lisbon’s environmental policy, and has been since Fernando Medina was elected in 2017. He then explained that transport is one of the two pillars of his future municipal action⁵¹⁶. Fernando Medina’s mobility policy is based on two goals:

- The improvement of public transport services;
- The deployment of measures to encourage Lisbon people to prioritise active mobilities, such as walking and cycling.

As the municipality recorded a 300% increase in the use of bicycles between 2016 and 2018⁵¹⁷, it is carrying out a number of projects for the development of bicycle lanes⁵¹⁸.

In 2018, the city also received the *European Mobility Week Award*, a prize awarded by the European Commission to local authorities working to raise awareness and plan sustainable urban mobility.

The *European Green Capital 2020* award has also promoted progress in the field of public transport. Among the many commitments made by Lisbon is the city’s commitment to have 400 non-polluting buses by 2023. Also, on March 11th

2020, the Mayor announced the introduction of new 100% electric buses by the company Carris, in order to achieve the goal of reducing carbon emissions by 2030⁵¹⁹.

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

In the executive narrative, the changes in mobilities and public transports are due to serve two goals:

- The quality of life: following the announcement of a project to acquire 30 new tramways, the Mayor announced that “the quality of life of the present generations and above all a clear, urgent and consistent commitment to future generations”⁵²⁰;
- The city’s environmental ambition: in an interview given during *European Mobility Week*, Miguel Gaspar Deputy Mayor for Transports explained that “Lisbon’s ambition is to see its mobility system evolve rapidly towards sustainability, efficiency, accessibility and security”⁵²¹.

The City of Lisbon is putting the emphasis on the participation of its inhabitants: on the occasion of this *European Mobility Week*, the municipality sought to encourage the people of Lisbon to take part through this message on a billboard: “Move for cleaner air”⁵²².

THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION NARRATIVE

On June 3rd 2019, *Os Verdes* issued a statement in which they called for “more transport to promote mobility and combat climate change”.⁵²³ To this end, they put forward a proposal in which the Municipal Assembly would ask the government to promote the use of public transport in the daily commute between home and work.

The *European Mobility Week* award seems to be a consensus between the municipality and the opposition group *Os Verdes*. On this occasion, and for the car-free day scheduled during this week, the group organised a bike rally to encourage the use of bicycles among Lisboners.

In a statement published on September 20th 2019, the *Os Verdes* group explained this ambition: “in order to draw attention to sustainable and active mobility and the need to develop the construction of a wide network of bicycle lanes that offer safety and attractiveness to the use of the bicycle”⁵²⁴.

● CRISIS - COVID-19

FACTS

During the crisis, the municipality is pursuing its policy on mobility. Within the framework of the economic recovery plan launched on March 25th 2020 with a budget of €620 million, €35 million are earmarked for the mobility sector⁵²⁵.

In addition, as part of the pandemic, the municipality is making self-service bicycle hire (*GIRA*) free for two months⁵²⁶.

In the wake of the pandemic, the municipality confirmed the launch of the *MOVE Lisboa*

programme, voted by the City Council in 2019⁵²⁷. It is a strategic vision until 2030 to promote soft mobility throughout the city. It is based in particular on increasing the offer of public transport, reducing public transport fares, increasing the number of cycle lanes, and improving roads for pedestrians⁵²⁸. With this in mind, the municipality has conducted several surveys on the practices of cyclists and on the use of soft mobility by Lisbon people⁵²⁹, showing in particular that bicycle use has increased by 25% between 2019 and 2020 at the counting points⁵³⁰.

^{516/} “Term 2017-2021: Invent the new to win the future”, Octobre 26th 2017, Lisboa, Quadriénio 2017/2021: Inventar o novo para vencer no futuro - MUNICÍPIO de LISBOA

^{517/} <https://www.amt-autoridade.pt/media/2081/7-mfg.pdf>

^{518/} <https://shiny.desv.io/ciclovias/>

^{519/} <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1216138230531227650?s=20&t=WQgDDXIh3Bz6Yk52KQVWHg>

^{520/} <https://www.lisboa.pt/atualidade/noticias/detalhe/quadrienio-2017-2021-inventar-o-novo-para-vencer-no-futuro>

^{521/} <https://mobilityweek.eu/news/?c=search&uid=6mF0ftZn>

^{522/} <https://twitter.com/CamaraLisboa/status/1174774633956089856>

^{523/} <http://arquivo.osverdes.pt/pages/posts/os-verdes-exigem-mais-transportes-para-promover-a-mobilidade-e-combater-as-alteracoes-climaticas-10202.php>

^{524/} <http://arquivo.osverdes.pt/pages/posts/22-de-setembro---dia-europeu-sem-carros---os-verdes-promovem-bicicletada-em-coimbra-10327.php>

^{525.526/} <https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1242865849385566210?s=20&t=0PZaSwvHeMcgAigsFaIVJQ>

^{527/} https://www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/cidade_temas/mobilidade/documentos/BrochuraMOVE_2030.pdf

^{528/} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htm1gOq3G0>

^{529/} https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.lisboa.pt/cidade/mobilidade/estrategia%23c13569&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1659627926868314&usg=AOvVaw33hbt9ZLjTEkCNqZO8y_Ft

^{530/} https://www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/cidade_temas/mobilidade/estudos/Relatorio_analise_dados_contagens_bicicletas_dezembro_2020.pdf

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

Despite the pandemic, the Câmara Municipal keeps addressing mobilities, with a shift in the approach: the public discourse is directed towards the citizens. In an interview published by the magazine *Cities Today*, he stated: “We want to return the city to the citizens”⁵³¹.

Even though the vision of *MOVE Lisboa* came before the crisis, the pandemic has shed light on the need to implement this strategic vision for mobility. In October 2020, at the time of the launch of the scheme, the municipality underlined the impact of COVID-19 on its strategy: “The pandemic associated with COVID-19 highlighted the need to move in this direction, demonstrating the urgency of making the air in cities cleaner, investing in more sustainable modes of travel and giving back public space to people”⁵³². After the pandemic, Lisbon people are at the centre of the municipality’s plan. “The Lisbon we want is a city with a people-centred mobility ecosystem that is accessible, useful, reliable and safe, based on an integrated network of public transport complemented by innovative solutions that enable conscious and sustainable choices”. In the same document, Fernando Medina emphasises the link between mobility and the economy and sees mobility as a means of promoting job creation and increasing the income of Lisbon families: “Furthermore, promoting sustainable mobility is an economic opportunity, it allows for increases in energy efficiency, minimises externalities of the transport system, creates jobs and increases the disposable income of families”⁵³³.

THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION NARRATIVE

The *Green Party* supports the initiatives deployed by the Câmara Municipal and invites the executive to go further. In a recommendation published on January 25th 2021, entitled *Municipal Plan for Sustainable Urban Mobility*, the group begins by acknowledging the importance of *MOVE Lisboa* but stresses the need to reinforce this initiative: “The municipal bodies approved *MOVE Lisboa - Strategic Vision for Mobility 2030*, which defined a clear project for the desired future and indicated the guidelines for the use of operational instruments that will take us to a new level in terms of mobility and urban accessibility. However, the city of Lisbon is the only capital city in the southern European countries that does not have a *Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan*, which is an operational instrument that establishes the overall intervention strategy regarding the organisation of accessibilities, the transport network and the management of urban mobility, defining a set of actions and measures that contribute to the implementation and promotion of a more integrated and sustainable mobility model”⁵³⁴.

MEDIA COVERAGE AND CITIZEN'S REACTIONS

MOVE Lisboa received a positive echo in the press. For instance, an article published in the website of *Velo city* (cf supra) states: “Lisboa already has a great story to tell, but with Move Lisboa, the City Council renews its urban mobility strategy and shares its vision on what mobility should look like a decade from now: To create a people-centred mobility ecosystem that is accessible, useful, reliable and safe, built on an integrated network of public transport, complemented by innovative solutions that enable conscious and sustainable choices, positioning Lisbon as the European capital of reference in the area of mobility by 2030”⁵³⁵. An article published in the French newspaper *Les Echos* underlines the “decarbonated strategy of the socialist mayor”⁵³⁶.

● POST CRISIS AND CURRENT SITUATION

FACTS

After the pandemic, the executive pursues the implementation of *MOVE Lisboa*. It also, taking into account the evolution of mobility practices, promoted the use of bicycles. Indeed in July 2021, the municipality published the guide *Como Pedala*⁵³⁷, in order to encourage the use of bike lanes and the acquisition of an electric bike. Furthermore, the City hosted *VeloCity* in 2021, a cycle of talks and events around cycling. Within this context, Miguel Gaspar shared the City’s ambition to achieve the following goal: two thirds of travels around the city should be made walking or cycling⁵³⁸.

When the new Mayor Carlos Moedas is elected, the question of the future of *MOVE Lisboa* is raised. The new Mayor uses the strategy to promote two new measures, voted during an extraordinary City Council session:

- The reduction of the maximal speed limit in Lisbon in order to reduce pollutant emissions;
- Free public transport for Lisbon people under 23 and over 65.

In October 2022, Lisbon will host *Transport Research Arena*, a European conference on mobilities.

531/ <https://cities-today.com/how-lisbon-is-reshaping-its-mobility-landscape/>

532/ <https://www.lisboa.pt/atualidade/noticias/detalhe/move-lisboa-define-a-visao-para-a-mobilidade>

533/ See footnote 520.

534/ <https://www.am-lisboa.pt/documentos/1611596604G6x-HR1zI5Wn50UB8.pdf>

535/ <https://www.velo-city2021.com/pt/blog/move-lisboa-o-que-esta-no-horizonte-para-andar-de-bicicleta-em-lisboa/#>

536/ <https://www.lesechos.fr/thema/articles/lisbonne-federe-son-ecosysteme-de-mobilite-urbaine-autour-de-la-donnee-1360580>

537/ https://www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/cidade_temas/mobilidade/documentos/Como_Pedala_Lisboa.pdf

538/ <https://www.publico.pt/2021/07/06/estudiop/noticia/velocity-2021-lisboa-recebe-maior-evento-mobilidade-bicicleta-mundo-1968853>

THE EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

MOVE Lisboa and the policy promoting the use of bicycles is part of Fernando Medina’s campaign, who asserts the progress made in this matter: “the bicycle is part of the mobility options in Lisbon. We implemented several measures to promote active mobility, and created the safety conditions for more people to choose this transport #MaisLisboa”⁵³⁹. He highlights the growing use of bicycles after the crisis: “the use of bicycles as a means of active mobility is increasingly common, in Lisbon as in other European cities. In a year marked by the pandemic, and with the use of transport and individual cars falling, bicycle use grew by more than 25% or even 140%”⁵⁴⁰.

For the new Mayor, accessibility is at the centre of its transport policy. In an interview granted to the magazine *Colunistas*, he described the date of the extraordinary City Council session as an “important milestone”. In a tweet, he shares its vision: “Having free public transport in Lisbon reveals what moves us: improving people’s quality of life”⁵⁴².

To be noted that the new Mayor is, as the previous Câmara Municipal, using the transport policy as a key factor to Lisbon’s international influence. As described before, during the opening of the *UN Ocean Conference* held in Lisbon in 2022, he shared with the whole world its measure to make public transportation free, as an environmental and social breakthrough⁵⁴³. He underlined later on that “Lisbon is the first major capital in Europe to take this measure”. This “will also be a way of influencing other cities and other countries” to realise that “this is the way”⁵⁴⁴. He also stated: “positioning Lisbon in this Champions League of cities against climate change is essential”⁵⁴⁵.

THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION NARRATIVE

Miguel Gaspar, who is now sitting in the opposition, has raised some concerns about the new orientations of *MOVE Lisboa*, especially regarding the speed limit reduction measure: “the need to reduce speeds has often been stated. For all. For reasons of communication strategy, Carlos Moedas dramatised and focused on an extreme scenario”⁵⁴⁶.

The measure of making public transport free of charge for people under 23 and over 65 has been approved unanimously at City Council.

MEDIA COVERAGE AND CITIZEN’S REACTIONS

Carlos Moedas’s measure of making public transport free of charge has been praised by local, national, and international press⁵⁴⁷.

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<https://twitter.com/fmedinapessoal/status/1438877888565108743?s=20&t=sn1ecWp3m5ZxMnXPw7yxSA>

541/

<https://www.cmjornal.pt/opinioao/colunistas/carlos-moedas/detalhe/uma-data-marcante-para-a-cidade-de-lisboa>

542/

https://twitter.com/Moedas/status/1516879152506417154?s=20&t=nOKyasaQn4_VdeKOa18ww

543/

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1k/k1kkrclgw>

544/

<https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/2022-07-25/free-lisbon-transport-starts-today/68938>

545/

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-04-21/lisbon-to-offer-free-public-transport-for-young-and-elderly>

546/

<https://twitter.com/mifgaspar/status/1526673000921276416?s=20&t=ruks6kV0VBZxdhCnMUqKJA>

547/

<https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/2022-04-22/lisbon-approves-free-transport-for-young-and-old/66539>



AND POLITICS:
FROM FACTUAL
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TO CREATIVE
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