



Bologna, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019

To the kind attention of  
Ms Ursula von der Leyen  
President-elect of the European Commission

Dear Ms President-elect of the European Commission,

as President of Bologna Metropolitan Area, I'm joining the other Presidents of Italy's metropolitan cities to call on you to consider allocating a portfolio on urban matters to a high level member of your new college, namely a Vice President.

Around 70% of EU policies have to be implemented at the local level, meaning the EU's ability to meet its long-term strategic objectives largely depends on the performance of its cities.

We work at the level of government closest to the people. We know our cities and the demands of our citizens, and we know that the active and continued engagement of citizens at the local level is the opportunity to bridge the ongoing gap between EU decision makers and people.

Urban and European challenges are strongly connected. Cities' capacity to tackle climate change is critical for turning the goals and commitments of the Paris agreement into reality. Cities' efforts to promote equal and fair societies, with access to quality jobs for all, is the fundamental basis for a Europe in which no one is left behind. And cities' ability to manage the digital transformation and optimise the use of new technologies is vital for a more inclusive, efficient and dynamic Europe.

Together with our European colleagues, we can help you deliver on many of the ambitions you have expressed in your programme, such as a Green deal or a new push for European democracy.

Your Commission can seize this opportunity and match this partnership by fully recognising the role of cities in the EU. We urge action, namely via a Commission Vice president, as a step towards more effective policies for people. Such a member of your team would ensure a stronger leadership and more transparent coordination of EU policies and financial tools that have an impact on the ability of cities to implement policy and be sustainable and livable places in Europe.

A new college, with new mandates, can help set a course ahead that works for all Europeans. Ensuring a good representation of urban matters in your Commission would be a key step in this direction.

We hope you will be able to follow on our call and we would be most pleased to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Virginio Merola

Mayor of Bologna

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Virginio Merola". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'V' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'a'.