

Press Release

Tuesday 27th November

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Fact-Finding Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

The World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG, promotes city and local governments diplomacy, fostering dialogue between local governments, even in cases when contact between national governments is very limited or non-existent.

In April 2018, during an Inter-Korean Summit, talks between Kim Jong-un, leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, concluded with the "Panmunjom Declaration for the peace, prosperity and unification of the Korean Peninsula".¹

In the context of the above declaration, the Executive Bureau of United Cities and Local Governments in Strasbourg agreed to support the consolidation of this momentum and facilitate dialogue and collaboration among local governments in both countries. A mission aiming to foster contact between cities in both countries, including exploring possibilities for peer-to-peer exchange has been organised.

This fact-finding mission led by Roland Ries, UCLG Co-President and Mayor of Strasbourg (France) will visit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from 27 November to 1 December. It will further count with the presence of Tri Rismaharini, President of the Asia-Pacific section of UCLG and Mayor of Surabaya (Indonesia).

The programme includes, among others, a meeting with officials of the Korean Cities Federation, exchanges with heads of local executive bodies (including the Mayors of Phyongsong and Wonsan) and visits to new urban development projects.

For Roland Ries, "in a real context of a warming of relations in the region, our main objective is to seek – on the basis of the values of multilateralism advocated by UCLG – ways for a structured dialogue between the World Organization of Local Governments and the local authorities in the DPRK. Local and regional authorities will have an important role to play in supporting the establishment of a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, to which we aspire".

The mission will be able to identify areas and means for possible cooperation, particularly in the area of sustainable urban planning, to ensure adequate housing and basic services; safe and accessible public transport systems; and positive economic, social, environmental and cultural links among urban, peri-urban and rural areas, both by preserving cultural and natural heritage, and ensuring environmental resilience.

¹ Two other meetings followed in May and September 2018, and a fourth inter-Korean Summit is foreseen for the coming weeks.