
BARCELONA DECLARATION ON TIME POLICIES

Recognizing that time is a political issue and that it can be conceptualized as a right of all citizens; that it is regulated by both public and private organizations; and that the importance and potential benefits of urban and regional time policies were already recognized by the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe](#) at its meeting in October 2010;

Proving that the right to time is currently unequally distributed among citizens and that time poverty, in its various forms, exists in all countries and regions, as acknowledged by the [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\)](#);

Recognizing the need to work towards a new balance of time use and a new distribution of care tasks to reduce global **time poverty — a phenomenon that disproportionately affects women**, reflecting the unequal burden of unpaid domestic and paid work they bear. According to a 2018 International Labour Organization (ILO) report, women perform 76.2% of all unpaid work hours globally, compared to 23.8% performed by men. This imbalance significantly limits the time available for women to participate in educational, work, and leisure activities. The United Nations (UN), in its 2020 report on gender equality, highlighted that the lack of access to childcare services and gender bias in domestic responsibilities are key factors perpetuating this inequality. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in its 2019 report, also pointed out that time poverty is closely linked to economic poverty, as the overload of domestic and caring tasks prevents women from accessing quality jobs and participating fully in economic and social life;

Accepting that the use of time and the social time organization directly affect people's health through the disruption of their circadian rhythms, to which several health problems have been linked, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, overweight, and mental health problems, among others, and recognised by [Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2017](#);

Noting that the time organization can positively affect sustainability and decrease our collective carbon footprint by promoting sustainable mobility through the [design of proximity services](#), such as the idea of 15-minute cities promoted by different networks of cities such as Eurocities, C40, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Metropolis, among others, or its territorial equivalent in the “45-minute regions”; reducing energy consumption by rearranging working hours and aligning our lives with sunlight; and designing policies that take into account natural and social uses of time to minimize disruption to natural environments;

Noting that recent research in chronobiology, neuropsychology, and other related fields links healthier schedules to increased productivity and learning capacity, as well as the

reevaluation of sleep and rest in public health as a guarantee of physical and mental health of the population;

Affirming that time policies can be a key tool for recovering from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and for dealing with future [work scenarios described by ILO](#), which include Industry 4.0, automation, digitization, ICT-based mobile work, and other similar trends, as well as the definition of decent working time;

Recognising that time policies offer opportunities to improve the health and well-being of all citizens, increase equality and improve productivity at different levels and that these opportunities are closely related to the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda, the European Green Deal and the European Pillars of Social Rights¹;

Considering that public institutions, social agents and civil society play a decisive role when defining and implementing effective time policies, providing experience and innovation by campaigning and incorporating the critical need for a socially inclusive approach based on the right to time;

Recognising that local, metropolitan and regional bodies that are part of the [Local and Regional Governments Time Network](#), created in Barcelona in 2008, are the main public institutions that promote and implement time policies since the last century, but they need more support from other international, European and regional bodies;

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

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

Considering that the Time Use Surveys, in its new harmonized wave in Europe and other regional waves, as in Latin America, offer a first-rate opportunity to analyse the time policies implemented until now and develop new ones, allowing visualization of how society organizes the time of everyday life and, especially, its derivatives in terms of paid, unpaid work or care, rest and leisure;

Considering that the Memorandum [“The Right to Time: an urgent issue on the European Agenda”](#) (signed in July 2020) specified the need for time policies, particularly at the local and regional levels, and agreed on the need to establish a European Academy of Time Policies, a space for reflection and theoretical exchanges and practicals on time policies; the continuity of these debates has been included in the development of several

¹The main social actors have already submitted key priorities, such as [BusinessEurope](#), the European Trade Union Confederation (CES) or the [European Centre for Companies and Entrepreneurs](#).

European projects, such as the Time4All project, and in the various editions of Time Use Week;

Remembering that, in September 2018, [the European Commission](#) presented a proposal to end summer-winter time change across the EU, leaving Member States free to decide their standard time, and this decision has not yet been established. [The European Parliament](#) supported the European Commission's proposal in 2019, and the proposal is currently awaiting a resolution by the European Council;

Recognizing that, according to scientific evidence, the [International Alliance for Natural Time \(IANT\)](#) advocates for a permanent and worldwide observation of natural time, facilitated by geographically appropriate time zones according to sunlight. For the debate to progress in Europe, IANT proposed, in 2022, a specific [transition plan to implement natural timetables in the European Union](#);

Recognising that the above-mentioned stakeholders are committed to promoting sustainable, equitable and healthy uses of time in their areas of competence, and advancing the truly interdisciplinary and inter-institutional approach to place time and citizens' right to time at the centre of international and European policies related to health, well-being, equality and productivity.

Considering that the Barcelona Declaration on Time Policies was signed in Barcelona in October 2021 by more than 80 signatory organizations representing the public administration, the research world, and social and economic stakeholders, including the main organizations that have been promoting time policies;

Meeting in Barcelona, on the occasion of Time Use Week 2024, we reaffirm the current commitments to the Barcelona Declaration and commit to working on the action plan defined for the period 2024-2026 :

SIGNING THE BARCELONA DECLARATION ON TIME POLICIES,

WE COMMIT, WITHIN OUR AREA OF COMPETENCE AND POSSIBILITIES:

1. We will work to raise awareness, develop and implement time policies that advance towards a healthier, more equal, more productive, and sustainable society, which guarantees the right to time as a fundamental right of all citizens and distributes it equitably.

2. We will promote dialogue and work with all relevant sectors within each area (including public authorities, economic and social organizations, civil society and academia) in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of all policies, programmes and initiatives; and seek consistency between them.

3. We will encourage interdepartmental and intersectoral coordination at international, European, national, regional, municipal, and community levels, working to integrate time policy considerations into social, gender, economic, and environmental policies, programmes and initiatives, including those related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the European Green Deal, the European Social Pillar and the "Future of Europe" process.

- 4. We will participate in the development of the work plan established for the corresponding scope of work in the period 2024-2026, to generate political consensus and make recommendations for a global time policy agenda and develop an urban time agenda.*
- 5. Based on this consensus, we will review and modify existing policies, plans, and regulations to implement time policy recommendations in all responsible institutions and organizations.*
- 6. We will promote and support Time Use Week as an annual, international, interdisciplinary, and inter-institutional event to promote time policies and share progress in time policies and research.*
- 7. We will continue to collaborate to consolidate the Local and Regional Governments Time Network as a dynamic network to share good practices on local and urban time policies, to share recommendations and important demands, and to improve the visibility of local and regional time policies and policy networks.*
- 8. We will promote, conduct, and share relevant time-use research from all fields to contribute to existing knowledge. For this reason, we will continue to cooperate with IATUR (the World Time Uses Research Association) and to find greater integration between research and time policies.*
- 9. We will promote the debate between the scientific community and the responsible political personalities involved in the end of seasonal clock changes, establishing health and well-being as the primary criterion to guarantee individual freedom.*
- 10. We encourage other interested parties to join this Declaration.*

ANNEX 1 – WORK PLAN OF THE BARCELONA DECLARATION ON time POLICIES (2024-2026): Commitments and benefits of being a member of the Barcelona Declaration on time Policies²

The Barcelona Declaration Work Plan on Time Policies generates and provides recommendations to different interest groups that can help shape time policies. After fully implementing the actions foreseen in the 2022-2023 Action Plan (see Annexe 2 for more details), the new action plan seeks to expand the work in four areas of action to reflect the interest and the diversity of organizations involved in the promotion of time policies and the right to time.

Work plan governance:

The [Time Use Initiative](#) will act as the technical secretariat of the Declaration to facilitate and monitor compliance with the commitments, as well as the agreed 2024-2026 work plan.

The signatory organizations will meet at least once a year to share progress and new developments in the Work Plan.

As a result of the experience of the previous work plan and to be able to work efficiently and usefully, four areas of action are established according to the type of organization: local and regional bodies; supranational organizations; the world of research; and social and productive fabric. The member organizations of each area of action will receive benefits for participating and, at the same time, will undertake to develop certain actions. During the work plan, new work groups or subgroups can be created, as appropriate. Signatory organizations can sign up for more than one work area if they wish.

Scope of work 1: Local and regional bodies

Intending to have an integrated and coordinated approach to face the urban dimension of policies and legislation on time, coordination between local, metropolitan, or supralocal public administrations is necessary. To define specific priorities regarding recommendations in the use of time and to improve the quality of life, individual and collective health, the productivity of the productive fabric, and the sustainability of the planet, the mentioned institutions commit to working together in the framework of the Network of Local and Regional Governments for Time Policies (Local and Regional Governments TIME Network), henceforth the Network.

*As members of the Network and signatories of the Declaration, institutions promoting time policies **will commit to:***

- *Be part of the Network of Local and Regional Governments and participate, when appropriate, in the various exchanges of good practices and generation of knowledge to define the right to time in their respective areas of action.*
- *Implement time policies in their field of action, whether through innovation in public policies or the reproducibility of other experiences.*

² This action framework provides continuity to the 2022-2023 Framework and establishes guiding principles that may evolve according to joint discussion by deliberation spaces of signatory organizations.

- *Develop or consolidate the figure of Time Chief Officer that allows time organization to be mainstreamed in the actions of the administration.*
- *Participate in the Declaration working group meetings, at least once a year. To the extent possible, coincidence will be sought with the annual General Assembly of the Network.*

*As members of the Network and signatories of the Declaration, institutions promoters of time policies will **be able to opt for** the following:*

- *Present your candidacy as [World Capital of Time Politics](#). This award makes one's time policies visible and grants the possibility of being a point of reference for the Network for one year.*
- *Participate in the definition of the Network's work plan and themes of the exchange of good practises (the Local and Regional Time Agendas) and the annual General Assembly of the Network.*
- *Receive online training for your teams on time policies, impacts, and trends in your area of operation and the role of Time Chief Officer.*
- *Receive trend analyses resulting from new data from the Time Use Surveys.*
- *Participate in international forums where the Network has representation.*

Area of work 2: Research

For time policies to respond to the specific demands of various human societies, they must be based on scientific evidence. Therefore, it is necessary to have a theoretical and empirical framework to base and evaluate the deployment of specific programmes. Therefore, the field of research in time use is fundamental.

*As signatories to the Declaration, research organizations that have time policies as a research axis **will commit to** at least one of the following actions:*

- *Appoint a person responsible for time policies in your organization who coordinates and liaises with the Secretariat of the Declaration.*
- *Develop scientific evidence for time policies, either through already created indicators, such as Time Use Surveys or from new indicators that can be created.*
- *Analyse the impact of time policies to determine applicable trends for the rest of the Declaration's working groups. To do so, the Secretariat will provide them with contact information on the members of the Declaration and the Local and Regional Governments Time Network, when requested.*
- *Participate in the Declaration working group meetings, at least once a year.*

*As signatories of the Declaration, organizations dedicated to research that have time policies as a research axis **will be able to opt for the following:***

- *Disseminate your research and results related to time use and time policies among the signatory organizations of the Declaration.*
- *Establish direct contact with the signatory organizations of the Declaration to define new methodologies and evaluate public policies they apply.*

- *Work together to get institutions to establish lines of research and funding for time-use research, analysis of data obtained from time-use surveys, and the results of public policies.*
- *Participate in projects to define time-use impact methodologies or time-use indicators.*
- *Participate and receive trend analyses resulting from the new data from the Time Use Surveys.*
- *Share and participate in calls of interest for research and funding of research projects using time and time policies.*
- *Participate as a speaker in a Time Use Week event or other time policy events organized by the Time Use Initiative or the Local and Regional Government TIME Network.*

Area of work 3: Social and economic stakeholders

Time organization affects, in particular, the private sphere and a large part of people's work lives. Therefore, it is essential for social and economic stakeholders to become involved in a more egalitarian, balanced and healthy organization of the uses of time in their areas of action and to work with the networks of companies and organizations representative of the economic stakeholders, administrations and research organizations committed to a new time organization.

*As signatories to the Declaration, the organizations from the social and productive fabric that work on time policies undertake to **carry out at least one of the following actions**:*

- *Introduce the debate on the right to time, and especially the time organization, in its areas of action and sectoral derivatives (working time, waiting time, co-responsibility...).*
- *Disseminate or develop awareness campaigns on the right to time for their areas of action.*
- *Analyse the impact of time policies, considering especially the impact of gender, to determine trends that guide future actions of other groups.*
- *Coordinate campaigns and joint pilot tests, especially during Time Use Week.*
- *Participate in the Declaration working group meetings, at least once a year.*

*As signatories to the Declaration, organizations from the social and economic sectors that work on time policies **may opt to***

- *Receive training on how to promote the right to time in their areas of action.*
- *Participate in the development and receive awareness materials for companies and workers about the benefits of the right to time and a more equal and balanced organization of working time.*
- *Participate as a speaker in Time Use Week or other time policy events organized by the Time Use Initiative or the Local and Regional Government TIME Network.*
- *To provide references for consultation on future legislation on the time organization.*

Work area 4: Supranational organizations

Social time organization is a problem with global consequences, and time poverty exists in various forms around the world. In Europe, approximately 20% of the population suffers from this condition; in Latin America, this percentage reaches more than 50, depending on the country; in Asia, the phenomenon known as "karoshi", or death from overwork, is an extreme result of long working hours. Therefore, it is necessary to involve supranational organizations of international scope in the promotion of time policies and the right to time.

As signatories to the Declaration, supranational organizations or their departments involved in the promotion of time policies undertake to develop at least one of the following actions:

- *Appoint a person responsible for time policies in your organization who coordinates with and is in contact with the Secretariat of the Declaration.*
- *Promote programmes or recommendations that have the right to time as their backbone.*
- *Promote public awareness campaigns on the benefits of the right to time and time policies.*
- *If applicable, establish a Memorandum of Understanding ("Memorandum of Understanding") between the involved part of the organization and the Secretariat of the Declaration.*

As signatories to the Declaration, supranational organizations or their departments involved in the promotion of time policies may choose to receive the following from the Secretariat:

- *Participate in the preparation of materials and receive public awareness of the benefits of the right to time and time policies.*
- *Receive online training for your teams on time policies, impacts, and trends in your area of operation and the role of Time Chief Officer.*
- *Participate as a speaker in the Time Use Week or other events on time policies organized by the Time Use Initiative or the Local and Regional Government TIME Network.*
- *Receive trend analyses resulting from new data from the Time Use Surveys.*

ANNEX 2 – EVALUATION OF THE WORK PLAN 2022-2023

The Work Plan of the Barcelona Declaration for 2022 and 2023 committed to developing time policies and the right to time in two areas: urban and European. As presented below, the proposed actions have been satisfactorily carried out.

On the one hand, much of the attention has been focused on the urban world, understanding it as the creation of a space for dialogue with local bodies based on the Network of European Cities over time. From 2021, the Network was relaunched under the name of the Global Network of Local and Regional Governments for time Policies, incorporating not only cities, but also metropolitan, supra-municipal, and regional bodies to guarantee the diversity of the institutions, public bodies most involved in the promotion of time policies, and also open to members from all over the world.

On the other hand, the European sphere has been the main framework for action, either to promote and experiment with new time policies or to consolidate shared projects of the institutions that signed the Declaration. Since 2022, this framework of action has been expanded to include other non-European geographic areas, such as Latin America.

These areas have made it possible to develop the four main work areas set out in the 2022-2024 action framework:

1. **Develop an Urban Time Agenda.** In this regard, progress has been made in the following directions:
 - a. **The creation of [Local and Regional Time Agendas](#)** has established a "white paper on time policies" at the local and regional levels, which will serve as a guide for future actions. Four chapters have been developed that explore different dimensions of time policies: 1) [life balance](#); 2) [mobility, sustainability, and resilience](#); 3) [participation and democracy](#); and 4) [nighttime governance](#).
 - b. **The expansion of the member institutions of the Network.** It has gone from the initial 16 local bodies to the current 30.
 - c. **Development of a project to exchange knowledge and experiences.** To establish a sustained framework for the exchange and creation of knowledge, the project [Time4All](#) has been developed, which has co-financing from the European Union.
 - d. **The constitution of the World Capital of Time Policies.** To increase public awareness about time organization, to promote the visibility and sustainability of the Network, and to promote time policies as an innovation in the institution that hosts it, the Capital was created in 2021. Since then, there have been three [capitals](#) World Time Trials: Barcelona (2022-2023), Bolzano (2023-2024) and Strasbourg (2024-2025).
2. **Explore time organization in Labour.** The field of labour and the productive fabric were identified as an area of interest to work on in October 2021. Since then, proposals have been developed around decent working time. Specifically, a policy paper was drafted [for a balanced organization of decent working time also at the international level](#), presented at Time Use Week 2023 and prepared by

international experts. To prepare this document, they relied on the Foundation [study for a Time Use Law](#) in Spain (Ministry of Labour and Time Use Initiative, 2023) and the Guide to establishing a balanced arrangement of working time (ILO, 2019).

3. **Consolidate a proposal for the abolition of seasonal changes based on scientific evidence.** The signatory organizations of the initial Declaration saw it as important to work on the abolition of the seasonal time change (Daylight Saving Time, in English) in Europe and to respect, as much as possible, natural time zones. For this type of decision, political and in the hands of the European Council, to be effective, [a specific proposal on how to implement it and why](#) was elaborated in 2022. In 2023, the organizations that worked on the proposal were putting pressure to get the proposal to reach the Swedish and Spanish presidencies of the Council of the EU, managing to establish a dialogue favourable with MEPs involved in [this topic](#).
4. **Develop recognition of the right to time in its various areas.** The right to time, as a new citizenship right for the 21st century, affects four main areas of daily life: health, equality, productivity, and sustainability. The Declaration sought the consolidation of this right and, to make it a reality, Time Use Week 2023 focused on its development. Because of the debates held, a policy paper [on the right to time](#) was published.

In addition, progress has been made in the recognition of the right to time in the field of equality, especially by defining the problem of time poverty and the implications that having more of one's own time can benefit citizens, introducing the debate directly into the United Nations system (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP; International Labour Organization, ILO; United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat; the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the 'Women's Empowerment, UN-Women...), as well as in other regional organizations (Ibero-American Centre for Strategic Development, CIDEU; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC; Eurofound...).