

THE BEST OF 2021

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Mayor of Bratislava

Matús Vallo



Introduction

Cities are rapidly growing: this fact presents an opportunity to make them more environmentally friendly and sustainable. Not all leaders seem to be aware of this, but one of Europe's brightest examples of committed and ambitious mayors is found in the Slovak capital of Bratislava. Mayor of Bratislava Matús Vallo has led the city through challenging times but remained devoted to improving the city's infrastructure, urban revitalisation and so much more.

During the electoral campaign in 2018, Matús Vallo vowed to improve the communication between the city administration and the citizens, as well as to make processes more transparent and engage more with the residents. And he has been doing an excellent job since then.

Here are some of the highlights by [Mayors of Europe](#) regarding mayor Vallo's accomplishments in 2021.

Health care: tough times breed great leaders

Last two years were largely marked by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The coronavirus outbreak has spread to nearly every country on the planet and completely changed everyone's lives.

At the beginning of 2021, the world obtained the crucial instrument to help avert the COVID-19 pandemic: the vaccine. Vaccine scepticism in many cities, however, prevented them from successfully changing the course of the pandemic.

"That was not the case in Bratislava, which [became the most vaccinated city in Slovakia in August](#).

By getting vaccinated, you decided to protect yourself and your loved ones. But at the same time, you have also contributed to the fact that, as a community, we can make life in our city more bearable even in difficult times, which are undoubtedly waiting for us. I thank each and every one of you for this decision!", mayor Vallo said in August.

Infrastructure investments: from green expansions to culture revitalisation

During 2021, Bratislava was also dedicated to urban revitalisation projects. The aim of this approach is to transform underutilised areas by giving them a new purpose.

At the beginning of this year, Bratislava obtained an [exclusive ownership of the abandoned building in Sad Janka Kráľa](#), one of the oldest central European parks and one of the city's protected monuments.

This is now part of a big revitalisation project in Bratislava.

During this year, the city has also restored public toilets, older trees in the park have been professionally treated and obsolete furniture has been restored to equip the park with everything a modern 21st century park should have.

Following the announcement of the revitalization of Sad Janka Kráľa Park, mayor Vallo announced that [another iconic landmark, Družba Fountain in Freedom Square, will also receive its first major repair in 40 years.](#) The aim of this ambitious reconstruction project is to make the sight more accessible to all residents of the Slovak capital.

“We are bringing back to life another iconic monument in our city. The long-awaited comprehensive revitalization of Freedom Square starts with the repair of the fountain, which is one of the largest in Slovakia. In the first half of next year, work will also begin on the square itself”, stated mayor Vallo.

Besides revitalisation and reconstruction projects, mayor Vallo has also been investing in sports infrastructure in the city.

After last year’s introduction of an innovative application system for the Grant Program for the Development of Sports and Education in Bratislava, the capital published another Call for Applications for a program to support activities carried out in the public interest through the [investment of funds in sports infrastructure.](#)

The funds were intended for the construction, reconstruction and modernization of sports fields and sports facilities of sports infrastructure.

For the year 2021, Bratislava has also announced a call in the grant program [Strategic Support for Cultural Events](#), in which it supports established cultural events. It is a grant program intended for established events held in the capital – festivals, shows, etc., which form an integral part of the city’s cultural offer.

At the same time, these are events that are accessible to the general public and have the potential to become part of the city’s identity.

Fight against climate change

Even before Matús Vallo was elected Mayor of Bratislava in 2018, he began to work on his Bratislava Plan, together with 76 experts on urban planning and development.

The Plan aims to provide high quality public spaces, sustainable forms of transport, with an emphasis on public transport and cycling, as well as the provision of affordable rental housing.

Mayor Vallo's wish is that people feel comfortable in high quality public spaces like in other European cities. In his opinion, even small changes can have a big impact on urban spaces.

The mayor started a number of schemes to encourage people to switch from cars to public transport, including the introduction of a 25% discount for regular users.

In 2021, mayor Matús Vallo has also been working hard [on combating excessive visual smog](#) through gradually cleaning their public spaces of advertising billboards.

Pollution of public space, visual smog, is caused by aggressive and large advertisement which is often placed on concrete locations illegally without any permission.

The advertisements are a threat to the urban environment: they are often placed chaotically and they limit pedestrians and cyclists in their free movement. Also, because of the billboards, the paths get narrowed and the greenery gets jeopardized. Big cleaning of Bratislava advertising is still his priority: a total of 194 advertising devices were removed in 2021. Removing ads from the streets is often a long process due to the decisions of courts and building authorities, however mayor Vallo is not stopping until Bratislava is completely free of the visual smog.

The award of the Mayor of Bratislava: a city where exceptional contributions by its residents get noticed

After a one-year break, mayor Matúš Vallo awarded important personalities of Bratislava [who contributed to form a better city through their actions and ideas.](#)

This way, mayor Vallo is making sure that efforts and hard work done by others to make Bratislava a better place do not go unnoticed. Every resident and inhabitant of Bratislava who made an exceptional contribution to Bratislava can become the winner.

Conclusion

During his third year of serving as mayor, Mr Vallo has once again confirmed that good leadership is needed more than ever when things are not perfect and when things do not go according to plan.

Facing one of the biggest crises in recent history, mayor of Bratislava has demonstrated exceptional skills in leading the city.

The aim of the ceremony is to thank and show the city's appreciation towards people who go beyond their comfort limits to help others.

Mayor Vallo said: "Bratislava is not just a city, it is about the people who live in it and give it a shape, life and soul. In fact, they decide what our city is and will be like. Their behavior, actions and deeds define the atmosphere in the city".

Therefore, it is no surprise that mayor of Bratislava [Matúš Vallo received The World Mayor Future Award](#) for his goals and projects to transform the Slovak capital into a green and compassionate city.

Bratislava keeps changing and growing, and Mayors of Europe is excited to see it reaching new heights in 2022