



ADA COLAU MAYOR OF BARCELONA

Barcelona's first
female mayor

Ada Colau Ballano is the first woman to become mayor in Barcelona's history.

She was born in Barcelona, on 3 March 1974. She is the granddaughter of migrants. Her paternal grandparents were shepherds in Güel (Osca). Her maternal grandparents came from Almazán, a village in Sòria. All four came to Barcelona in search of a better future.

Her childhood and part of her teenage years were spent in the neighbourhood of El Guinardó, where she grew up with her three sisters. However, she has lived in many different neighbourhoods over the course of her life, including El Congrés, El Gòtic, La Ribera, and La Barceloneta. She studied at the Escola Àngels Garriga and the Acadèmia Febrer.

She studied Philosophy at the University of Barcelona (UB). At university, together with many of her classmates she founded the Philosophy Assembly. They carried out sit-ins and strikes

against reforms that tried to dismantle the public university system.

During her time at university, she also spent a year studying in Milan (Italy) on an Erasmus scholarship.

Like many others of her generation, she suffered from a lack of opportunities and job insecurity. She had various jobs, which she combined with social activism and defending human rights and the right to housing. She now continues to defend these values in her position as Mayor.

She participated in the DESC Observatory, a platform of organisations and individuals dedicated to the study and defence of economic, social and cultural rights, first as a cooperation expert and later as the head of the Right to Housing and the City Department.

"She won the municipal elections in 2015. On 15 June 2019 she was re-elected mayor of Barcelona."



In 2009 she helped found the **Platform for People Affected by Mortgages (PAH)**, which quickly spread throughout Spain. Since its creation, it has prevented more than fifty thousand evictions. She was its main spokeswoman until 2014.

As spokesperson for the PAH she appeared before the Economic Commission of the Spanish Congress of Deputies during proceedings for a reform of mortgage legislation.

In 2014, together with people involved in the residents' movement and movements in defence of public health and education plus others from academia, she promoted the Guanyem Barcelona (Let's win Barcelona) project to run in the local election. As the main candidate for the election coalition Barcelona en Comú, she won the 2015 election. She became the first female mayor in the history of the city. On 15 June 2019 she was re-elected mayor of Barcelona.

At Barcelona City Council, she is working to build a global city, and above all to address the climate emergency and current social challenges. This means prioritising public policies that focus on the fight against inequality, housing, sustainability, reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, fomenting a dynamic and redistributive economic model, feminism, the defence of housing rights, and fostering citizen participation.

Among other measures, on taking up her position she created mechanisms for eviction mediation and support, such as the **Anti-Residential Exclusion Unit** (currently known as the **Barcelona Anti- Evictions Unit**) and the **Loss of Housing Intervention Service (SIPHO)**, through which the city council provides real support for city residents.



With the idea of making the city administration more transparent and democratic, she has promoted transparency and anti-corruption measures by setting up the **Office for Transparency and Good Practice (OTBP)** and the **Ethics Mailbox**.

To fight inequality among the city's neighbourhoods, she has launched the Neighbourhoods Plan, which allocates resources to the more underprivileged districts, following in the footsteps of the Neighbourhoods Act that Pasqual Maragall implemented throughout Catalonia in 2004.

Other noteworthy measures include the **Special Tourist Accommodation Plan (PEUAT)** and the launch of **Barcelona Energia**, the first city-owned energy company, which serves all of the city's infrastructure and aims to compete with the leading electricity supply companies.

Feminism, celebrating diversity and solidarity have also been a central part of municipal policies. Some examples include the creation of the **Councillor's Office for Feminism and LGBTI Affairs**, the inauguration of the **LGTBI Centre**, a place for meeting, reflection, and visibility about sexual and gender diversity, and the launch of the

"To establish closer links between the Mayor's Office and the citizens she has promoted the Meetings with the Mayor and the Mayor's Office goes Local."

Barcelona, Refuge City plan. Furthermore, Barcelona is a **Caring City**, recognising the social value of care, and it aims to guarantee the right to care and be cared for under conditions of dignity and quality, with measures such as **Espai Barcelona Cuida**, the **VilaVeïna** venues and the **Carer Card**. All these measures have consolidated Barcelona's position as an international benchmark for social rights and global justice.

Barcelona's position as an international benchmark for social rights and global justice. With the aim of not losing touch with the city residents' real problems, she has launched two community programmes: **Meetings with the Mayor** and the **Mayor's Office in the Districts**.



The policies implemented by her government have received a range of awards and acknowledgements. These include the **EU Health Award** (2022), in the Local Government category, for Barcelona's Suicide Prevention Helpline; the **New European Bauhaus Award** (2021) for the social flats and industrial modular construction promoted by the City Council (APROP); the Health Hotels project, finalist in the **City Nation Place Awards** and winner of the **Responsible Tourism Awards** (2020); the many United Nations recognitions given to Barcelona Activa for its actions to combat the effects of Covid-19 (2020), and the **European Responsible Housing Awards** for housing policies to combat gentrification (2019).

Barcelona has also been recognised as the **European Capital of Inclusion and Diversity** (2022) and the **Cultural and Scientific Capital of the State** (2021), designated host city of the 2024 edition of the **Manifesta** art biennial and distinguished as **the World Capital of Sustainable Food** (2021), the **World Capital of Time Use Policies** (2022-2023), the **European Capital of Sustainable Mobility** (until 2026) and the **World Capital of Architecture** (2026).

"She is currently the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) special envoy for relations between cities and the United Nations."

In a context where we need to rethink globalisation, prioritising people's well-being, the Mayor has taken these demands to various international forums, including **the C40 World Mayors Summit** (Buenos Aires, 2022), the **United Nations Climate Change Conference** (Glasgow, 2021), the high-level meeting on the integration of migrants, organised by the European Commission (Brussels, 2016), the **United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development** (Quito, 2016) and the high-level forum on the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (New York, 2018).

As well as being Mayor and President of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), she is also the **United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) special envoy for relations between cities and the United Nations**.

She lives in the same rented flat she lived in before becoming mayor, on the border between Camp d'en Grassot and Sagrada Família. She lives with her partner Adrià and her two children, Luca and Gael.