



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 14, 2022, 11:30 a.m.
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS HOLDS READOUT WITH MAYOR JOSÉ
LUIS MARTINEZ-ALMEIDA OF MADRID**

Mayor Eric Adams: We were given a nice little gift to celebrate the Sister City Agreement signed 40 years ago. Inside the writing from Madrid to New York City on their 40th anniversary of the Sister City Agreement, signed by Mayor Koch 40 years ago. We thank you for this gift. Mayor José and his team are here. And what's interesting, that there is some commonality between the cities. He's dealing with an affordable housing crisis. He's dealing with transportation crises, he's dealing with a crime crisis, with gangs. He's dealing with a very friendly press. But it was really an enjoyable opportunity to sit down and talk as we struggled with these challenging times in both our cities.

Madrid is a city of over 3 million people. Millions of people use their streets every day. Trying to navigate the conversation around electric vehicles, making it affordable for the city, dealing with their metro. We see the common issues that we are facing and one of the things we walked away with is how do we join together as mayors to find real solutions to the problems that we're dealing with? And that's something that our commissioner, Commissioner Ed Mermelstein, is going to do in this administration. We're going to reach across the pond, as we like to say, and start building these international relationships. Same problems. We could find similar solutions to them. And so mayor, I'm happy that you're here. And this is your first trip to New York. I hope it's not your last.

(...)

Mayor Adams: I look forward to coming to Madrid and seeing your beautiful city again. It's been about 15 years since I've been there and I look forward to coming again. Please say a few words.

Mayor José Luis Martínez-Almeida, Mayor of Madrid: Thank you my dear friend, mayor, and thanks to your lovely team. We feel really, really, really comfortable here in New York and you put us very easy to stay here until the next Saturday and we will back to Madrid. 40 years ago, Madrid and New York City became sister cities with the signing of an agreement with the Mayors Koch and Tierno Galván. Where we feel extremely proud to have the city by our side, coming along the way to become the understanding city that we are right in many ways, thanks to the example of New York City.

In these 40 years, Madrid has been transformed from a small capital city in southern Europe to one of the most important cities in the world. We are the European city of opportunities. We are the European city of freedom. We are the European city of happiness.

Right now, our histories, and we pay a tribute to New York and to the people in New York, especially to the public services of New York. While history serves a common path not only in our greatness but also in our darkest moments. This city suffered 9/11 21 years ago and we suffered 3/11 18 years ago. The example of New Yorkers, mayor, lead the people of Madrid to overcome the situation, have become stronger than ever.

I would really like to thank Mayor Adams for his kindness and friendship and for his commitment to the friendship between our cities and people have and surely will have in the future. We serve some common goals such as security, immigration, integration, environmental policies, digital transformation, affordable housing. Our local police departments have been working closely and will definitely keep doing so in the future.

I take this opportunity, dear mayor, to extend an invitation to come to Madrid, please. To visit us in Madrid where he will definitely, as you will, feel at home in the capital city of Spain, one of the greatest nations in the world. Thanks a lot, Mayor Adams. Thanks a lot to your team because we feel at home here in New York. But we expect and we hope to see you soon in Madrid. Thanks a lot.

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Thank you so much. I know you have some of your press from Spain, so we could open up to a few on- topics.

Question: Yeah. Mr. Mayor, I would like to ask a question to the mayor of Madrid in Spanish, if you don't mind. (Speaks in Spanish.)

Mayor Martínez-Almeida: If you don't mind, I'm going to speak in Spanish.

Mayor Adams: No, please.

Mayor Martínez-Almeida: Thanks a lot. (Speaks in Spanish.)

Question: I can ask in both English and Spanish, please? How is it... I mean we're talking about 40 years and you highlighted some more important moments in that time. But looking to the future, how would you like to make this relationship between both cities even stronger? Not just in that couple issues that you mentioned that you recently suffer. How do you think you can learn from each other? So, if you don't mind, in English and then in Spanish.

Mayor Adams: I believe we learn from each other in three areas. One is education. We are not limited now by allowing our students to communicate directly with students in Madrid. A classroom and learning, it should not be isolated or limited to just a classroom. We want to utilize Zooms to have students in Madrid speak to students here on every level of education from elementary to middle school to high school so they can see how they have similar desires and outcomes. And how they can work together on real projects to do instructional based learning together.

Second is economics. We want to see how we could exchange businesses here. That's something that I charge with my commissioner of international affairs is to see what business opportunities do we have globally in general? But specifically in those areas where we have sister city agreements and we want to look at how we can bring delegations of businessmen and women here and there.

And last, culture. Culture is one of the best ways you could learn and respect different countries. Our globe is a smaller place and our goal is to show the culture here of New York, as diverse as it is, and exchange the culture of Madrid. And I believe those three areas are clear areas that we can bring our cities closer together.

Mayor Martínez-Almeida: Thank you, Mayor. (Speaks in Spanish.)

Question: Mayor Adams, I wonder if you speak Spanish, if you're learning Spanish, if you plan to use it at the news conference the way (inaudible) did however poorly to reach Spanish language speakers —

Mayor Adams: Hola, mi gente. Mi casa, su casa. Yes, I do. Every day I practice and I love the Spanish language. A lot of my staff who are Spanish speakers, like Gladys who has been with me all these years, they teach me the phrases over and over again. But I don't want to do the de Blasio version that butchers the Spanish language. I want to give it the respect that it deserves and I'm going to pop out one day and give you all of the practice that I had. And this way I can give it the justice it that deserves.

Question: (Speaks in Spanish.) Mayor Adams, is there anything about Madrid and its (inaudible) that inspires you in your approach of governing New York City? And the second question is (inaudible) between your cities?

Mayor Adams: I'm really impressed when the conversation around affordability and living in Spain... A group, a population that we often ignored. He's doing everything possible for low-income earners and those who are high-income earners are able to afford — the high-income earners — are able to afford to live in Madrid. But it is the middle-income earners. We often forget them.

We forget about those who don't receive the same level of subsidies as we see here. Oftentimes they slip through the cracks. They're struggling and he clearly acknowledges that we need to be there for those middle income earners as well and that's something that I would like to continue to focus on.

Mayor Martínez-Almeida: (Speaks in Spanish.)

Question: I have an off-topic. I wanted to know, Mayor Adams, what the latest is —

Mayor Adams: We're doing on-topic with the mayor so you would not embarrass me in front of the mayor. Any other on-topics? Okay. Mayor, thank you.

Mayor Martínez-Almeida: Mayor, thank you.

Mayor Adams: Good to see you.

Mayor Martínez-Almeida: And I offer, to the Mayor Adams, Madrid as the right place to learn Spanish. (Laughter.)

###