

Declaration of European Mayors for climate - "Towards COP21"

The declaration was adopted on Thursday 26 March 2015 in Paris, at the occasion of the meeting of local government representatives and mayors of capitals and major cities from 28 EU Member States, organised by Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, and Ignazio Marino, Mayor of Rome.

Aware of the challenges of the forthcoming United Nations Climate Conference to be held in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015 (COP 21);

Aware that science has alerted us to the major risks facing our planet if we do not radically transform our production methods and way of living in the coming years;

Aware that Cities, where half the world's population now live and in which two thirds of the inhabitants of our planet will be concentrated by 2050, still contribute massively to the emission of greenhouse gases;

Aware that our urban areas impacted by climate disruption are also essential innovation testing zones, and that they provide sustainable local solutions, especially when implemented across the European Union, which are crucial to meeting the climate challenge in addition to the commitments of States, civil society, and the private sector;

Aware that climate challenges represent not only a constraint, but also an opportunity to generate new forms of wealth and employment, especially for the young people of our Cities.

We, the Mayors of European capitals and major Cities, who represent more than 60 million inhabitants and 2,000 billion euros in gross domestic product, state that:

Combating climate change is a priority for our different Cities and the welfare of our citizens;

More than 6,000 Cities in Europe, structured into networks, have already joined forces through the Covenant of Mayors and have thereby committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020;

The actions undertaken for this purpose, through the "Climate Plans" of our Cities, have significantly reduced greenhouse gas emissions in Europe, have encouraged a policy of adaptation in order to anticipate and manage the impacts of climate change, and have also created thousands of jobs, reduced energy insecurity, addressed the air pollution affecting the health of city residents of all generations, and committed our Cities and their businesses in a drive towards the transition to sustainable energy;

We recognize the significant achievements already made by local authorities and networks of European Cities in driving forward the sustainable procurement and climate agenda;

The need for concerted national and European support for local initiatives and territories of excellence in terms of ecological innovation.

We, the mayors of European Capitals and Major Cities, together with representatives of networks of European Cities and local authorities, undertake to:

Regularly and publicly report on the initiatives undertaken to combat climate change to the Assemblies of local officials in each of our Cities as well as to our citizens.

Further develop our current policies and strive to achieve, with our partners and local communities, a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030, with a significant target for renewable energy and energy savings, in line with EU position.

Further cooperate and share experience and best practices with other Cities around the world which are determined to tackle climate change, by reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to the impact of climate change and promoting universal access to green and renewable energy.

Use municipal public investment to foster Europe-wide low-carbon solutions and industries, either existing or future. Active cooperation on green public procurement across European Cities, whenever feasible, will be achieved within the framework of close, transparent dialogue with the private sector.

We are ready to intervene in this regard, prioritising the sectors primarily responsible for greenhouse gas emissions including transport, old or poorly insulated buildings, energy supply, and waste.

To this end, we call on the Member States to implement as soon as possible the European Union Directive of 2014/24/EU, dated 26 February 2014, encouraging the creation of public procurement groupings between European municipalities.

In the meantime, we are initiating, on a voluntary basis, pilot projects for group purchasing or joint investment in "green" public goods and services for the benefit of our municipalities and communities.

Finally, we call on the Council, the Parliament and the European Commission to strengthen their support for the action of Cities to address climate change, so that more Cities benefit more directly from European funding. We believe that the objectives of Cities and those of the Juncker Plan are the same: to restore confidence, to stimulate activity and investment in order to create jobs through sustainable development and innovation.

We will contribute to the commitments of Non-State Actors, mainly Cities and Local Authorities, which are essential to the success of the COP 21.

We will continue our efforts in this direction and look forward to our meeting at the COP 21 Conference in Paris.