

Gathering in Brussels at the ICLEI European Convention 2011, political leaders of European cities and towns discussed their position on European and global sustainability strategies;

Reiterating that European cities and towns are fundamental to progressive governance at regional, national and European level with 85% of the EU's GDP being generated in cities; that European local and regional governments have a long track record in developing and implementing sustainable, innovative local policies; and that their close relationship with citizens and enterprises make them key players in determining appropriate sustainable strategies and measures on their territories;

Recognising that public authorities in Europe are responsible for over 2 trillion EUR in expenditure each year, or 19% of the EU's GDP, which represents both an opportunity and a necessity for the public sector to make optimal use of its purchasing power;

Realising that Europe is confronted with severe economic, social and environmental crises, which need to be adequately addressed in partnership with all governmental levels;

Welcoming that after the release of the Dunkerque 2010 Local Sustainability Declaration, the EU adopted its "[Europe 2020 Strategy on Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth](#)" in June 2010, replacing the Lisbon Action Plan, and setting five ambitious objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020;

Considering the initial implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, in particular the results of the [European Semester for Economic Policy Coordination](#), and recalling the EU Sustainable Development Strategy;

Taking note of the [National Reform Programmes](#) showing that Member States are not meeting their commitments to reach the agreed headline targets by 2020, particularly employment, research and development, tertiary education, poverty and energy efficiency;

Regretting that local governments have had little involvement in the development of the National Reform Programmes, nor have they been allocated sufficient funding for implementation, despite the fact that many of the commitments will need to be achieved at the local level;

Recognising that the EU Cohesion Policy is an important instrument in reaching the goals and priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and supporting the European Commission's (EC) proposals that the future EU's 'Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020' must ensure that cohesion and solidarity go hand-in-hand with accomplishing the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy;

Welcoming the EC's initiative to address the shortcomings in energy efficiency through the Energy Efficiency Plan 2011 and directives, such as the Energy Performance in Buildings Directive (EPBD), as well as to take a long-term view on creating a low carbon energy Europe by the Roadmap 2050;

Supporting the EC in developing the Smart Cities Initiative, expanding the Covenant of Mayors initiative, and specific agendas on (urban) transport, Europe's waters, adaptation, biodiversity, air quality alongside the flagship initiative "Resource efficient Europe" of the Europe 2020 Strategy; welcoming the opportunity to contribute to these agendas in various consultative processes;

Welcoming the more inclusive approach taken by Member States at the Climate Conference of the Parties in Cancun (COP16), acknowledging that local governments are now formal key government stakeholders in global climate change efforts;

Awaiting the [Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities](#), which will be adopted at the informal ministerial meeting in November 2011 in Poznan, aiming to assist cities, towns and municipalities to prepare, implement and monitor an integrated urban development approach.

Acknowledging the progress made by the Local Agenda 21 commitments following the Rio 1992 conference, and that there is now the momentum to take this further by forging new coalitions offering pathways to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Now is the time to act!

Therefore, we urgently call upon:



All local and regional governments in Europe to:

1. Continue their leading role in the transition to an economically smart, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable Europe by contributing to the green economy, resource efficient urban and regional development and sound ecosystem management, more specifically by taking an integrated approach regarding:
 - a. Optimising energy efficiency through climate adapted and energy efficient planning, in particular in buildings, producing and using clean sustainable energy sources, exploring regional renewable energy inter-linkages, using residual heating and cooling from industry or nature (geothermal, rivers), sharing experience and expertise through the Covenant of Mayors initiative, the Aalborg Commitments and other similar initiatives.
 - b. Increasing adaptation actions to reduce the chance of flooding and damage caused due to rising sea levels and extreme weather occurrences.
 - c. Using spatial planning to contain urban sprawl, improve biodiversity and reduce the city's ecological footprint and pressure on its green belts.
 - d. Advancing urban transport and mobility to become more carbon responsible, environmentally friendly and socially accessible using innovative and integrated mobility modes.
 - e. Investing in sustainable urban infrastructures, such as district heating and cooling networks, urban renewable energy projects, charging points for electric mobility and adaptive urban structures such as green roofs and water squares.
 - f. Using purchasing power wisely, thereby influencing the market towards the delivery of sustainable goods, services and works and considering the impact procurement has on the environment, society and the economy.
 - g. Promoting the incorporation of sustainable development into the curricula of professional and higher education institutes, as well as involving students in primary and secondary education and families and society as a whole in efforts to address local sustainability issues.
 - h. Involving citizens in the implementation of the above goals through structured participatory processes.

All Member States and the European Institutions to:

2. Reach a European-wide consensus on a new definition of "quality of life" beyond economic growth based on the planet's capacities and social justice as quickly as possible.
3. Implement the Europe 2020 processes in partnership between the European institutions, national governments and local and regional governments, and allow these governmental actors to take on the local delivery of the Europe 2020 Strategy, by using one or more of the following instruments: a) local implementation plans for the National Reform Programmes, b) binding "Territorial Pacts", c) a specific and effective support framework that provides appropriate regulatory and financial incentives for action at local and regional level to deliver the Europe 2020 Strategy.
4. Assist cities and urban areas in speeding up the transition to sustainable development and to take the lead in CO₂ reduction, improving energy efficiency, using locally generated sustainable forms of energy and transport, reducing noise levels, improving air quality and encouraging the development of innovative and sustainable products and services.
5. Improve the EU regulatory framework in the field of environmental quality (air, soil, water, biodiversity) in particular by taking effective measures at the source. Where such measures prove insufficient, as is the case with air pollution, financial support in tackling Europe's problem areas is urgently needed.
6. Include a key priority for large scale urban demonstration projects in the field of energy efficiency, renewable energies, clean urban mobility and adaptation measures, for example as currently piloted by the smart cities initiative in the proposal of 'Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation'.

7. Include explicitly the urban dimension and urban demonstration projects in the Resource Efficient Europe Agenda and the EU2020 Digital Agenda.
8. Recognise that in the present economic situation sustainable development is not just an environmental necessity but also a fast growing economic sector, generating green jobs and high levels of innovation and knowledge; and the role public authorities have in stimulating the market to develop innovative solutions.
9. Recognise and use public procurement to achieve sustainable, inclusive and smart growth and ensure the current revision of Public Procurement Policy allows public authorities to include social criteria in public procurement aside from the environmental criteria.
10. Facilitate mainstreaming of local climate resilience by offering adequate framework conditions, such as a solid transnational knowledge base, standards, training and peer exchange.
11. Provide up-to-date information to support the selection of appropriate technologies, financing instruments, stable EU standards for private investments and public-private initiatives.
12. Align existing local, regional, national and EU monitoring systems on sustainable development in order to allow for integrated target setting, benchmarking and reporting.
13. Ensure that the EU's 'Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020' contains an appropriate budget to tackle long-term EU challenges and to invest in the potential of urban areas in the years to come, as European, as well as national financial instruments will be crucial for supporting the local work on sustainable development.

All Member States and the European Institutions acting at the global level to:

14. Build upon the results of COP16 and ensure that local and regional governments can act as the key governmental stakeholders during COP17 climate negotiations in Durban (29 Nov – 9 Dec 2011) and in the framework of the sustainable development agenda of the Rio+20 conference (4-6 June 2012).
15. Offer local instruments for a global green economic roadmap and secure renewed global political commitment for sustainable development by establishing fiscal and regulatory framework conditions that support sustainable practice in all sectors and including all governmental levels.
16. Make the UN Rio+20 conference 2012 the starting point for a renewed and increased commitment to support local governments in delivering sustainable local development, and to establish enduring local partnerships between government, business, science and research and civil society.

Feel free to use and circulate widely. For any further information, please write to:

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