



THE NETWORK
OF MAJOR
EUROPEAN
CITIES

EUROCITIES Declaration on Climate Change

EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Founded in 1986, the network brings together the local governments over 130 large cities in some 34 European countries. EUROCITIES represents the interests of its members and engages in dialogue with the European institutions across a wide range of policy areas affecting cities. These include: economic development, the environment, transport and mobility, social affairs, culture, the information and knowledge society, and services of general interest.

EUROCITIES website: www.eurocities.eu

EUROCITIES DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

EUROCITIES, the network of major European cities, asserts that, in the perspective of a sustainable future, the fight against climate change is today a priority.

The EUROCITIES Declaration on Climate Change reiterates that the local level has an essential role to play in the fight against climate change and therefore cities are crucial partners, in coordination with the EU institutions and the Member States.

The declaration reflects the commitment of EUROCITIES to fight against climate change.

We, Mayors and Leaders of EUROCITIES,

declare

- that fighting global warming demands the orchestration and harmonisation of public policies at the local level;
- that the local level, due to our proximity to citizens, is in a key position in the fight against global warming, uniting individual and collective efforts;
- that the articulation between the various levels, from local up to European, is a key factor for the success of our actions;
- that over 70% of the European population lives in an urban context, our role as organizing authorities, in charge of the management of urban services and urban planning, is vital in coordinating the mobilisation of civil society in our territories;
- that the public sector has a key role to play in the integration of this issue;

considering

- that the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC's fourth Assessment Report - AR4 - 2007) has confirmed that climate change is a real problem caused by human activities, and it is a major challenge for the future of humanity;
- that the international scientific community asserts that within industrialised countries, i.e. at European level, the minimum amount of effort to stabilise the climate is to divide by four our greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, compared with the figures of 1990;

- that Sir Nicholas Stern's report and the OECD's Environmental Outlook to 2030 point out the immediate necessity for actions to fight against global warming and insist on the disastrous consequences of inaction such as rising oceans, food and health crises, massive migrations of climate refugees and sudden economic changes;
- that climate change will affect the European continent unevenly. Our actions will have to be rooted in solidarity and exchange of know-how, in order to minimise the potential negative impacts of climate change. We are aware that in the future our territories will face important changes and we need to be prepared to address them. We will have to evaluate the coming changes so that our territories can adapt. The conclusions drawn from this evaluation will have to be taken into account in our public policies as soon as possible;
- that many of the actions required to combat climate change fall within the scope of many ambitious, coherent urban policies for which we are responsible. Our responsibility as organizing authorities for urban issues, public transportation, energy and urban services, and our role as territorial leaders, in cooperation with our citizens and the economic and social stakeholders working on local development, are at the heart of our commitment;
- that the Covenant of Mayors on Energy launched by the European Commission is an important initiative, supported by EUROCITIES, which recognises the decisive impact of the actions of local authorities in the fight against climate change, and will strengthen the partnership between the European and local levels. The EUROCITIES Declaration on Climate Change, as a political statement by the network of major European cities, reflecting the commitment of the network and its members to fight against climate change, supports and complements the aims of the Covenant of Mayors on Energy
- that the response to this challenge cannot be found merely by adopting a new sectoral policy, instead we must refine all of our public policies to consistently address climate change and encourage mobilization of our territories;
- that we will not be able to achieve this objective without incorporating the issues of local government, social cohesion and balance, North/South and East/West exchanges in our urban strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- that actions applied locally will contribute to enhance the general state of our territories and other regions. Climate protection will trigger important benefits for public health, for the protection of biodiversity, for water preservation, for the improvement of air quality;
- that it is essential to organise the sharing of good practices from cities and their dissemination and to act in close cooperation within international and European networks;

believe

- that local policies must be consistent with the European sustainable development strategy adopted in Gothenburg and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities;
- that because we refuse to pay the price of inaction, we are ready to mobilize our resources and make climate change a priority in our budgeting decisions. We emphasise the need for close cooperation between the various levels of action, both in drafting laws and directives and in funding initiatives, given the diversity of the local public policies involved.
- that the reduction of our territories' carbon imprint is a major challenge we must face by limiting direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂, CH₄N₂O, HFC, PFC, SF₆).
- That technical innovation will play a key role to win the fight against climate change.
- that it is our responsibility to act on this global issue.
- and that, as such, the EUROCITIES Declaration on Climate Change is not a binding agenda but a concrete text covering the diversity of public policies, and providing guidelines that can be used to implement policies on our territories to reach the targeted reductions in greenhouse gases, which crucial to climate stabilisation.

we therefore undertake:

to implement a strategy to fight against climate change, by:

- **adapting global objectives, defined by international negotiation and the scientific community, to the level of our territories and through the combination of our efforts;**
- **implementing a climate plan in each of our territories, based on concrete actions, in order to reach a local objective that is consistent with the overall European and international objectives. The creation of this climate plan must begin with a detailed understanding of the territory's emissions and should also include the assessment of its weaknesses so that it can be adapted;**
- **regularly measuring and reporting reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases in order to assess and evaluate the efficiency of the climate plan's actions, using truthful and reliable techniques;**

to involve all the actors on our territory, by:

- **involving local actors with our actions, starting with citizens, in an organized and coherent manner to respond collectively to the challenge of global warming and to promote and support private and public initiatives for climate protection. The mobilisation of business actors is essential and will be actively pursued;**

- **developing innovative partnerships in the fields of research and higher education;**
- **informing and heightening the awareness of the public, in an atmosphere of shared responsibility between individuals and society, in order to promote “carbon-friendly” behaviour. The dissemination of scientific knowledge on global warming is a key element to heighten public awareness,;**
- **focusing our priority on disadvantaged sectors of society, following the principles of sustainable development. With the recognition that natural resources, particularly energy, are limited, we will pay particular attention to the people that are most at risk, both in our territories and elsewhere;**
- **setting an example with public services and reducing their carbon imprints by improving professional practices and exploring technological innovations;**
- **adopting ambitious sustainable public procurement policies, which play a key role in the action against climate change, both as an example for citizens and by creating economic demand and supporting this growing economic sector.**

to design public policies that withstand the challenge of climate change through:

working on urban planning and the quality of our cities by:

- **limiting urban sprawl and developing compact cities, which reduce space and energy needs, where a collective lifestyle is also an attractive factor. Urban sprawl devours agricultural and natural spaces, gives rise to additional transportation requirements, and is thus an important factor behind an increase in greenhouse gases. Its limitation is a major urban policy issue. Compact cities need to be designed with a dual objective of urban quality and quality of life. meaning maintaining sufficient green spaces. The management of pollution and other disruptive impacts will be a priority for our cities to become more attractive and appealing;**
- **creating new “eco-quarters”, where population density, social and cultural integration, and economic diversity represent fundamental values, and where the best environmental innovations in the fields of transportation, housing, public space, vegetation, waste and water management are implemented;**
- **constructing energy-efficient buildings, and promoting eco-building in our territories, satisfying high thermal standards and using eco-materials. Eco-building must become a standard for all construction work, both new and rehabilitation. Active support for the evolution of the professional trades in the construction industry also falls under this commitment;**
- **supporting the adaptation of existing buildings, which represent, due to their large contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. a major challenge in the fight against global warming. This rehabilitation must preserve cultural and social diversity at local level;**

- **ensuring the preservation and development of a true, high-quality urban canopy by planting trees in streets, in public and private gardens, and in new peri-urban forest zones on the outskirts of urban areas, which will play an important role as carbon stocks. New planting schemes will respect landscapes and biodiversity specific to our territories;**

working on transport and urban mobility by:

- **developing public transportation, soft modes (walking and cycling,..) and new forms of mobility, with reduced carbon emissions and less dependence on fossil fuels. To enable this, we must offer high-quality alternative modes of transportation for people and goods, which respect the environment;**
- **linking together territories and interconnecting public transport networks to secure the most favourable conditions for the movement of people and goods; inventing new types of mobility management with the implementation of road traffic regulations in city centres;**
- **encouraging technological innovation for vehicles and the use of new forms of energy in any travel. Experimentation could take place on our territories, and particularly through technological research on our transportation systems. The creation of specialised research centres will also be facilitated;**
- **Supporting and developing the use of Information and Communication Technologies, such as Internet, videoconference, etc., which can help reduce unnecessary travel and as a consequence, emissions.**

working on renewable energy and diversifying energy production by:

- **developing the production of renewable energy and exceeding the current objectives of the European Commission. Supporting the development of technical innovations for the use of renewable energy to improve their energy efficiency and market implementation. The production of heat or electricity should be appropriate with the geography of our territories;**
- **reducing the energy consumption of urban systems: transportation, buildings, energy networks, water networks; and researching and promoting the use of more energy-efficient technologies;**
- **reducing waste at the source, through sorting and recycling, and recovering energy from non-recyclable wastes (heat, biogas);**
- **working together with national and European authorities in order to guarantee the reliability of the energy supply. Energy security will be at the heart of our action plans for sustainable energy.**

strengthen our international action by:

- **reinforcing, in a framework of international cooperation, partnerships with cities and territories of developing nations**, promoting actions that will allow limitation of greenhouse gases through projects targeting transportation, waste and energy management and reforestation, etc.;
- **acting upon de-forestation**, which represents 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions, by shifting our practices of public purchases towards eco-certified wood and to help re-forestation projects;

implementing adaptation measures by:

- **regulating urban climate** via the enhancement of green and wooded zones within urban areas. The urban heat island effect can be lessened by reducing mineralised surfaces and increasing the density of vegetal spaces;
- **building housing that will be adaptable to the climate in the future and in particular increasing temperatures**. We will ensure that new buildings only use low carbon cooling technologies;
- **preventing flooding** by using permeable surfaces which are adaptable to urban uses. It would also help to expand water drainage systems and to integrate flood prone areas in urban planning;
- **protecting costal cities and areas from the increasing ocean levels and storms** by implementing a protection system adapted to local environments;
- **enhancing the strength and resistance of energy networks to extreme climate changes**, in coordination with energy providers;
- **reducing the vulnerability of certain sectors, such as farming and fishing, towards the potential impacts of climate change**, working together with the professionals and associated organisations;
- **alerting our inhabitants to the potential danger of extreme climate change**, and particularly to more vulnerable people such as the elderly;
- **preparing for the health impacts on human and animal populations of climate change** in working with the professionals of that field. Specific campaigns could also be set up to serve this purpose;

And by setting up long term policies:

- **carrying out long-term assessments of public policies related to greenhouse gas emissions** with a view to making adjustments and corrections to the approaches used in our territories. Carbon footprint measurement should allow the measurement of performance with respect to a high standards (high quality of public services);
- **applying the required financial and human resources** to the implementation of our climate plans, through long-term rethinking of our budgets, recognizing the reality of global warming,
- **seeking the most appropriate forms of long-term investments** needed to achieve these actions, in cooperation with financial partners;

Recalling that the quantitative objectives in the fight against the greenhouse effect may differ from one city to another, owing to their historical, geographical, organizational, economic and demographic differences.

Finally, we recommend

that the European Union:

- **continues to fight global warming as a priority at the international level, with a goal of defining a global agreement worthy of this worldwide challenge.** In the framework of the Conferences of the Parties (COP) and the supporting role of local authorities in this domain, the European Commission can count on the support of EUROCITIES and its member cities, who must be associated to this negotiation,
- to incite further our local governments to achieve higher standards through European programmes that reinforce best practices and networking,
- to acknowledge cities' actions against climate change and to directly fund their implementation according to mechanisms commonly agreed;

that the European Union and its Member States:

- **provide local authorities with access to precise energy consumption data for their territories,** and to require energy operators to report this data. This is the only data that will allow verification of the actual effects of the actions composing our climate plans,

- **make it a higher priority to increase the financial resources available to local governments, especially for public transport.** In the absence of these resources, local action cannot be sufficient to combat the issues of global warming. More generally, national and European financing must be allocated in priority to actions that are in the context of a global, quantified strategy to fight global warming,
- **stimulate research on means of adaptation,** in collaboration with non European states, who are highly vulnerable and who will rapidly develop strategies to lessen the impacts of global warming. The exchange of knowledge and good practices will have to be at the centre of transnational research;

That the European Union, the Member States and the European cities:

- **Provide tools for cities and local authorities in order to limit urban sprawl;**

that European cities:

- **network European and international local authorities together and continue to share collective reflection, best practices and their dissemination,**
- **provide the cities that are least advanced in the fight against the greenhouse effect with the methods and tools needed to develop climate plans, in a spirit of subsidiarity and cooperation across all territorial levels.**