

EU Climate Long-term Strategy 2050

Contribution from the European Covenant of Mayors Board

Meeting with Vice-President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič and European Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete

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City leaders are forward thinking. Decisions that we are making now will lock our cities and regions into technology pathways and societal choices that will influence our lives in 2050 society and far beyond. Many cities and regions in Europe have prepared and are already delivering their 2050 climate and energy strategies. According to the latest scientific thinking, and specifically the IPCC 1.5 Degree report, we need rapid change and widespread societal transformation. That is what Europe's long-term strategy should aim at.

Our hopes for 2050 get translated into different targets. Some municipalities will opt for a 100% renewables target, some want to go fossil-fuel free, others will aim for net-zero GHG emissions. The diversity of these locally-determined targets tells a particular story and provides a picture of the needed transformation. More importantly, each city is translating their long-term targets into action and changing governance structures to reflect these outcomes. All have very high ambition, taking stock of the challenges at stake.

5 demands based on cities' experience in designing local long-term strategies

1. Embed climate and energy long-term strategies into all EU policies

Every single EU policy should comply with targets in line with the latest climate science and a 1.5 Degree C rise in temperatures above pre-industrial levels. We need to do much more than only earmarking climate objectives.

The future EU budget (MFF) is currently being designed as if climate and energy had no connection to others policies. We are convinced that all sectors should **move to a net-zero economy thanks to EU's financial support**. This implies climate-positive, resilient decision-making and behaviours becoming common practice.

Ambitious local climate action should be supported by incentives to develop sound plans to **divest from fossil fuel and unsustainable practices**. It would free up resources for sustainable investments while creating economic and job opportunities.

2. Use the energy and climate governance regulation as a lynchpin for mobilisation

Local leaders can help make the energy transition a reality with local buy-in. Future measures proposed in local climate and energy plans rely on citizen and stakeholder participation and lifestyle changes. Therefore, the involvement of all citizens and local stakeholders both in the development and implementation is critical in fostering ownership and long-lasting changes. All local players should shoulder the transformation of the society as a common goal.

While the energy transition is possible from a technological point of view, the main barriers are related to current policy and regulations. The key to achieve a low-carbon, resilient economy is a combination of supportive multi-level governance policies, a stable and favourable framework for investments, and opportunities for citizens to take part in the energy market. These success factors should be translated into the development of national policies and measures, including National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) and Long-Term Strategies (LTS).

3. Invest in local climate and energy alliances

2050 visioning and planning exercises have a great impact on subnational governance processes. These alter the ways that administrative bodies interact and cooperate within a city, and lead to establishing new local forums and dialogue platforms. They represent **new forms of collaborative governance at local level**.

Designing long-term roadmaps used to be a dialogue among experts. It is now a real public debate involving all citizens. Pursuing this transformation requires significant additional resources.

Active participation of citizens allows to mobilise private investments, increase acceptance of renewables through more inclusive planning, and a fairer distribution of both the costs and benefits of the energy transition.

4. Make territorial cooperation on resource management the backbone of long-term strategies

To transform their energy systems, cities depend on their surrounding areas. EU policies should support urban-rural cooperation on resource management. Thus, agricultural policies need to work hand in hand with urban and regional policies.

Cities are aware that they need to live within the planet's available resources. Circular economy, energy sufficiency and carbon budgets are becoming common concepts in cities' 2050 roadmaps. The latter are taking inclusive approaches by covering all areas of society. The ongoing dialogue between local governments and the EU institutions should look to bring EU policy to a similar position.

Territorial cohesion and regional cooperation are key to **adjust socioeconomic systems to a low-carbon and resilient economy**. They will also provide an opportunity for a shift towards more sustainable and resource-efficient economic structures.

Supporting cities in working together to develop projects of common interest, tackle climate mitigation and adaptation challenges, exchange knowledge and experience, is crucial. As crucial as improving institutional coordination between government levels, both regarding mitigation and adaptation issues.

5. Adopt an integrated approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation in line with the Sustainable Development Goals

Building capacity at all levels will increase knowledge in regards to the challenges posed by the adaptation to climate change and the need for resilient infrastructures.

Investing in developing a **future-proof, integrated energy system** that will make optimal the connection between existing and new infrastructures across sectors such as transport, heating, energy production, etc., and tapping into the potential of decentralised energy.

The global climate agenda will only be achieved through **making the Sustainable Development Goals local**.

Let's sum it up!

1. Embed climate and energy long-term strategies into all EU policies
2. Use the energy and climate governance regulation as a lynchpin for mobilisation
3. Invest in local climate and energy alliances
4. Make territorial cooperation on resource management the backbone of long-term strategies
5. Adopt an integrated approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation in line with the Sustainable Development Goals

The Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy – Europe

The political board of the European Covenant of Mayors was set-up in 2017. Its current members are:

- Daniel Termont, Mayor of Gent (Belgium)
- Juan Espadas Cejas, Mayor of Sevilla (Spain)
- Eckart Würzner, Mayor of Heidelberg (Germany)
- Marc Castells, President of the Province of Barcelona (Spain)
- Julije Dormac, President of the North-west Croatian Energy agency (Croatia)
- Harriet Tiemens, Deputy Mayor of Nijmegen (the Netherlands)
- Célia Blauel, Deputy-Mayor of Paris (France).

The Covenant of Mayors Community

	Signatories	Action plans	Monitoring reports
7,401 signatories in Europe	7,309 signatories committed to the 2020 Covenant targets	6,096 SEAPs submitted	2,252 monitoring reports submitted
	1,235 signatories committed to the 2030 Covenant targets	55 SECAPs submitted	

22 signatories have adopted a 100% CO₂ reduction target by 2050, out of 207 which have set a post-2030 commitment.

The Covenant of Mayors was launched in 2008 in Europe with the ambition to gather local governments voluntarily committed to achieving and exceeding the EU climate and energy targets. Cities commit to the 2030 EU objective of 40% reduction in GHG. They submit action plans including targets for adaptation to climate change and access to energy. Since 2009, the Covenant of Mayors Office has been coordinated by a consortium of city networks (currently Energy Cities, Climate Alliance, CEMR, EUROCITIES, FEDARENE, ICLEI-Europe).

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Climate Alliance is the world's largest city network dedicated to climate action and the only one to set tangible targets: each member city, town and district has committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 10% every five years.

The **Council of European Municipalities and Regions** (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional governments in Europe. Its members are over 60 national associations of municipalities and regions from 41 European countries. Together these associations represent some 130,000 local and regional governments.

Energy Cities is the European network of local authorities in energy transition, representing over 1,000 cities across Europe.

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Founded in 1986, the network brings together the local governments of 140 large cities in 36 European countries.

FEDARENE, the European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and the Environment is the primary European network of regional organisations which implement, co-ordinate and facilitate energy and environment policies.

ICLEI is the leading global network of more than 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future.

