EUROCITIES STATEMENT ON THE GREEN PAPER ON A 2030 FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICIES

Our cities are key to EU climate action. 75% of Europe's population live in cities, where 80% of our energy is consumed and over two thirds of CO2 emissions are generated. Cities, and in particular big, densely populated cities, also offer significant opportunities for reducing emissions. Compact, well-managed urban areas reduce transport distances for people, goods and energy, and provide potential to increase the energy efficiency of heating and cooling. Cities are also very good test beds for organisational, technological and financial innovation.

Cities' role in achieving EU 20-20-20 targets

City authorities are frontrunners on climate mitigation in Europe. Several developed their climate strategies before the EU, and most have 2020 ambitions to reduce emissions beyond EU targets, either within the framework of the Covenant of Mayors or other initiatives. As city governments we also integrate climate action with other measures wherever possible, so enhancing our citizens' quality of life and stimulating local economic growth.

We remain committed to ambitious and tough local climate action, and invite the EU and member states to further join and support our efforts to:

- refurbish public buildings and support renovation of private buildings for more energy efficiency;
- improve and promote energy-efficient means of transport, such as public transport, car-sharing, cycling and walking, to improve overall urban transport management and promote cleaner fuels;
- promote relevant 'smart city' measures that deploy ICT to improve energy efficiency, notably of transport and buildings;
- further develop and use ICT infrastructure, notably high speed broadband, to develop more energy efficient services;
- invest in more energy efficient heating, cooling and lighting;
- support local energy infrastructure, including smart grids;
- support the development and installation of decentralised
    - renewable energy production, such as from waste, biomass, solar, ground/air/lake/sea source and more,
    - combined heat and power (CHP);
- facilitate the implementation of energy cooperatives, including through relevant EU regulation and the removal of fiscal barriers;
- raise citizens' awareness and understanding of climate change and promote more sustainable behaviour and consumption;
- ensure that greenhouse gas emission reductions create as many benefits as possible, for example job creation, better quality of life and cleaner air.

Measures should be well-coordinated and taken at the most appropriate level of government.

Contribution of EU 20-20-20 targets to local climate action

Local political commitment and climate actions have benefited from EU 2020 climate targets. The EU targets have:

- increased public awareness of climate change;
- helped keep national climate policy on track when governments change;
- supported further development of EU regulations to make vehicles, heating and other household appliances more energy efficient;
- provided political backing for decisions on local climate policy.

Elements for the EU 2030 climate and energy framework

If the EU climate and energy framework for 2030 is to deliver, it must engage all levels of government. The EU should continue establishing direct links with local efforts on climate change, such as through the Covenant of Mayors, EU funding for local climate action and exchange of best practices. City authorities should be closely involved in designing partnership agreements for structural funds to ensure that EU funding meets the needs on the ground.

The EU Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS) is a major pillar of EU climate protection policy and should also provide revenue for climate action beyond ETS sectors. The EU should reform the ETS to guarantee its efficiency, and in future a significant share of ETS revenues should be reserved for local climate action.

EU energy policy should incentivise and support local sustainable energy production and distribution, such as micro generation, combined heat and power, local solar and wind power, and district heating and cooling. Investments in energy grids should promote more decentralised energy production, including smart grids, and the adjustment of district heating to higher and lower temperatures to enable combining geothermal energy with waste heat. The cooperation of surrounding areas and regions will be important as many city territories have insufficient capacity for energy generation to fully meet demand.

Support for energy efficiency and sustainable energy should be further mainstreamed in other policy areas to best exploit synergies, for instance air quality, fuel poverty, energy security, and resilience against volatile fossil fuel prices. Work on innovative financing mechanisms should continue. Public funding should concentrate on addressing cases where the market alone does not incentivise cost-effective energy efficiency measures such as energy-efficient building renovation.

Climate and energy targets for 2030 will help to drive further action beyond 2020. However, they should be formulated as an intermediary target that is ambitious enough to reach the 2050 goal of 80-95% greenhouse gas reduction. The EU, as well as national, regional and local governments, should avoid delaying essential long-term investments. This risks creating a carbon lock-in effect that hampers further emission reductions in the long term.

The Commission should consider proposing 2030 goals both

- in absolute numbers to safeguard the ambition on climate protection, and
- per capita to facilitate analysing progress when population numbers change significantly, for instance through demographic change in some member states or when cities grow or shrink over time.

Member states should look more closely at how to incentivise more sustainable energy production, distribution and use through energy taxation that takes into account the effects of different energy sources on climate and the environment.

Sectoral targets for 2030

Standards for products such as electric and electronic appliances and vehicles[1] can have a significant impact on emission reductions, give industry a clear long-term perspective and boost technological progress and growth. The development of certain standards for clean vehicle equipment would be beneficial: for example, technical specifications for electric vehicle recharging points and storage systems for alternative fuels. However, such standards should only apply to new or replacement infrastructure. Any EU action on technologies should also promote interoperability and try to avoid lock-ins.

Overall sectoral targets can also be useful. When it comes to sectors that are very diverse across Europe, such as the renewable energy sector, EU targets should involve effort sharing instead of applying the same target rigidly across the different member states.

Renewable energy targets should include effective sustainability criteria, including for biofuels, so that their full potential can be exploited while avoiding negative effects on the environment or aggravating climate change. Member states should focus on the renewable energy sources that are most abundant on their territory.

Transport remains a particularly challenging sector, with a clear upward trend in greenhouse gas emissions that could, if not mitigated, cancel out reductions in other sectors. High population density and urban planning, which supports the use of sustainable transport modes, are crucial to reducing transport distances and emissions. New technologies, including cleaner fuels, are necessary to tackle climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, the most energy-efficient solution for cities remains modal shift towards public transport, cycling and walking. It is important to encourage citizens to use more sustainable modes as traffic volume remains a challenge for cities in terms of congestion, liveability and road safety even if using cleaner fuels.

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[1] Also see our EUROCITIES statements on the Clean Power for Transport Package at http://bit.ly/10g1hnl and on the Urban Dimension of EU Transport Policy at http://bit.ly/ZAURfn.