



Climate Alliance

Five key recommendations

for the second generation
of the Covenant of Mayors



FOREWORD

Recognised as a leading example of successful EU multi-level governance, the Covenant of Mayors is an unprecedented bottom-up initiative supported by all EU institutions. With more than 6,300 signatories, 4,600 Sustainable Energy Action Plans and a firm commitment to greenhouse gas emissions reductions of close to 30% of by 2020, Covenant of Mayors is a one of a kind European success story. This success has been reinforced by the Mayors Adapt initiative, which extends the scope of the Covenant of Mayors to tackle resilience.

The new European policy context, which will see the 2030 climate and energy framework put in place and the planning of the Energy Union, provides an opportunity for the further development and reinforcement of the Covenant of Mayors initiative.

Climate Alliance has recently set up a dedicated task force of local-level professionals and decision makers to make proposals on the future of the Covenant of Mayors initiative. These five recommendations are an outcome of the task force, enhanced by results of a larger debate that took place at Climate Alliance Conference in Dresden on 25 April 2015.

Pirita Lindholm

Director, Climate Alliance Brussels Office

RECOMMENDATION 1

Introduce a long-term greenhouse gas emissions reduction commitment with an intermediate milestone for 2030

The EU Covenant of Mayors has been intrinsically linked to the EU's 2020 energy and climate package. As such, we welcome the adoption of the new EU target of 40% lower CO₂ emissions by 2030 as a milestone within a longer-term framework. The long-term target must be in line with the global goal of keeping global average warming below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels, as agreed at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The goal must also be aligned with the EU Roadmap towards a competitive and low-carbon economy, characterised by emissions

levels that are 80 to 95% lower in 2050 than they were in 1990.

We therefore propose that the Covenant of Mayors target be expanded to include ambitious targets for both 2030 and 2050, helping maintain EU drive and political momentum.

To increase the chances of success, any long-term target will require intermediary targets to facilitate the monitoring of achievements. Climate Alliance members have committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 10% every 5 years and to halving per capita emissions by 2030 from 1990 levels, and are thereby showing exemplary leadership. Such an approach allows the combining of a continuous emission reduction target alongside a longer-term goal towards full decarbonisation.

“INTERMEDIATE TARGETS SHOULD MARK THE WAY TOWARDS THE LONG-TERM TARGET AND SHOULD BE IN LINE WITH THE TARGETS SET OUT BY EUROPEAN LEADERS, PROVIDED THAT THESE ARE AMBITIOUS ENOUGH.”

Tine Heyse, City of Ghent, Belgium



RECOMMENDATION 2

Bring adaptation and mitigation closer together to ensure integrated climate action

Mitigation and adaptation are often addressed separately, yet they are complementary and may enable win-win solutions. A coordinated climate policy can thus harness political support, maximise potential synergies as well as foster both cooperation and cross-sectoral interaction between relevant policy makers and practitioners. These effects can greatly contribute to the success of the climate agenda as a whole. In this light, the Covenant of Mayors and Mayors Adapt initiatives should be further connected.

We therefore encourage the European Commission to strengthen the synergies between these two sister initiatives under one single umbrella,

while still acknowledging their individual natures.



MAYORS ADAPT

THE COVENANT OF MAYORS INITIATIVE
ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Given the variety of cities engaged, each at different stages of climate policy implementation and varying human and financial resources, the adaptation commitment should be proposed as an opt-in/opt-out option. Special attention should be given to: i) the flexibility required to adjust to the different climatic, socio-economic and political contexts and ii) the necessity to avoid time consuming parallel reporting processes.

“THE SECOND GENERATION OF THE COVENANT OF MAYORS SHALL MINGLE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION, SINCE LOCAL AUTHORITIES’ ACTIONS HAVE INFLUENCE ON BOTH ARENAS.”

Julie Laernoës, Nantes Métropole, France





RECOMMENDATION 3

Export the Covenant of Mayors worldwide

Since 2008, the Covenant of Mayors has proven to be a clear framework for action. From political commitment to the preparation and implementation of action plans, it provides an integrated and holistic approach to tackling climate change. Based on its unprecedented success, we consider the Covenant to be a model initiative and propose to expand it globally.

The overall concept, the principles of multi-level governance and the involvement of the public upheld by the Covenant of Mayors could be exported. The current model would need to be adapted to better suit the wide range of contexts of other regions of the globe. This would allow for a greater scope of action in line with local priorities while maintaining

the level of ambition of the Covenant of Mayors in Europe as well as the initiative's close link to EU climate and energy policy objectives.

Expanding the Covenant model globally holds the potential to unite local authorities, who wish to fight climate change alongside improving local conditions by ensuring access to energy services and improving quality of life. At the same time, we support a global Covenant of Mayors initiative that maintains a clear focus on moving towards a common and long-term greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal, reconciling energy and climate ambitions with the day-to-day concerns of the public. Such an initiative should emphasise the implementation of concrete actions and the financing of projects that are part of the long term plans developed within the Covenant framework.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Foster decentralised cooperation towards the implementation of a Global Covenant of Mayors

Climate Alliance acts in solidarity with the Global South and has a long tradition of fostering North-South cooperation. Climate Alliance has invested significant effort in facilitating the exchange of experiences between local authorities internationally: cities of the North can do much to help increase capacities in the South and can also stand to learn from these partners. We therefore believe that the second generation of the Covenant of Mayors initiative should include decentralised cooperation as a core element.

The objective should be to foster city-to-city cooperation between

European cities and cities in other parts of the world, enabling a knowledge transfer on energy and climate policy, particularly in the areas of urban planning, mobility, energy supply, energy demand management, and the management of water and waste. This exchange can promote leapfrogging, for example, by increasing energy efficiency and introducing decentralised energy systems based on renewable energy. The Covenant of Mayors principles have already helped create capacities in local administrations via the Covenant East, having also strengthened local self-governance and the capacity to work on integrated climate action.

“IT IS IMPORTANT TO CAREFULLY LOOK AT THE ISSUES THAT MATTER FOR THE TWIN CITY IN ORDER TO BENEFIT FROM THE PARTNERSHIP.”

Joachim Helbig, City of Bonn, Germany



RECOMMENDATION 5

Enable fast-track access to European and international funds for cities with integrated energy and climate action plans

Today, local authorities engaged in the Covenant of Mayors represent a mitigation potential of over 400 MtCO₂-eq. by 2020. The initiative has been referenced by The Economist as being among the policies with highest impact on climate change mitigation.

The 4,600 Sustainable Energy Action Plans currently under implementation provide a unique opportunity to boost local economies. The positive impacts of the Covenant of Mayors in terms of local job creation should be further studied and demonstrated.

We invite other levels of government,

international, European and national, to follow our lead and adopt ambitious and coherent targets while supporting local authorities in their efforts. Sub-national governments must be recognised and taken into account in national policy frameworks as well as the pledges resulting from international negotiations.

European funds and financial programmes as well as international funding schemes such as the Green Climate Fund should have a strong focus on financing local action. The preparation of comprehensive local energy and climate action plans demonstrates the ambitious and well documented actions of cities, which should be acknowledged with fast-track access to financing.

“THE COVENANT OF MAYORS SHOULD CLOSELY TRACK INDICATORS SUCH AS LOCAL JOB CREATION TO SHOW THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF THE INITIATIVE BEYOND EMISSION REDUCTION.”

Camille Gira, Secretary of State, Luxembourg



About Climate Alliance

Climate Alliance is the largest European local government network dedicated to local climate policies. The association represents some 1,700 European local authorities in 20 countries committed to the ambitious target of reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by 10 percent every 5 years. Climate Alliance supports its members via various activities. It develops instruments and tools to help members in setting up local climate strategies, organises exchanges of experiences, coordinates European projects with and for its member cities, and represents its members' interests at national, European and international levels.

Find out more on climatealliance.org

European municipalities and Amazonian indigenous peoples – united for local climate action and rainforest protection

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