



THE CASCAIS DECLARATION

Advancing just resilience in our towns, cities and regions

Elaborated in the framework of the 2024 Climate Alliance International Conference in Cascais (PT)

We, as representatives of local and regional governments throughout Europe, hereby recognise the need to boost the resilience of our towns, cities and regions in the face of the climate crisis. In line with Climate Alliance's foundational principles of supporting climate action that is nature-based, resource-saving, local, diverse and fair, we underscore that only strategies with an eye to social justice and equity can truly contribute to increased resilience. Efforts that overlook vulnerable populations or that disproportionately benefit select groups while disadvantaging others will only serve to increase inequities, thus increasing the potential for polarisation and making our societies less resilient to global heating's effects in the end.

A focus on just resilience is thus critical in all of our efforts as they relate to the climate and beyond.

Background

The climate crisis is making extreme events from floods to heatwaves ever more common and ever more intense. Local and regional governments are on the frontlines when it comes to responding to such events, both in terms of mitigating their immediate impacts as well as building resilience to better withstand and recover from them in the future.

Climate impacts disproportionately affect the most vulnerable citizens, groups and communities, which typically have lower capacities to adapt to climate shocks and often lack robust representation. Just resilience strategies acknowledge these disparities and aim to create equitable solutions that protect and empower those most at risk.

Just climate action lies at the core of Climate Alliance's values, with members having long recognised the role of fair climate change adaptation strategies in building resilience. In September 2017, the membership passed a **resolution** on local climate adaptation, through which members committed to scaling up their resilience building efforts, thereby making their territories "more liveable, healthier and safer for their citizens." The importance of this commitment is more salient today than ever before.



What it comes down to

Together, we reiterate and recall the importance of

- **Inclusivity:** Integrating social justice and participative processes that take society's most vulnerable groups on board in our adaptation efforts as an integral part of local policy, planning and action while also understanding that some necessary decisions may result in opposition.
- **Awareness raising:** Drawing the attention of administrative staff, politicians, citizens and other stakeholders to the what, why and how of just resilience in the face of global heating, while crafting environments that make the beneficial choices also the easier ones.
- **Communication:** Addressing disinformation and clearly illustrating how a focus on just resilience will boost prosperity, equity, security and well-being while laying out what we have to lose if we fail to act.
- **Exchange:** Facilitating exchange between local governments, with civil society and business stakeholders as well as with regional governments and relevant associations and institutions.
- **Analysis:** Developing a sound understanding of local climate risks, exposures and vulnerabilities while investing in capacity-building to put this understanding into practice.
- **Principled action:** Implementing concrete measures that are fair, nature-based, local, resource-saving and diverse – involving all sectors of society and flanked by appropriate, binding legislative frameworks at the EU and national levels in support of socially equitable adaptation measures.
- **Funding:** Increasing the financial resources available for local and regional investments in equitable adaptation measures, including infrastructure and nature-based solutions as well as corresponding funding to increase capacity and cover staffing needs with targeted EU and national level backing.
- **Good governance:** Calling for the involvement of towns, cities and regions in national and EU policy on just resilience, for example, via the Strategic Dialogue Group endorsed by von der Leyen, to engage all levels of public governance.
- **Teamwork:** Initiating and reinforcing partnerships with those most affected by climate impacts – from citizens in vulnerable neighbourhoods to indigenous peoples overseas – and where possible, gathering behind a common voice.

Together, we commit to embedding just resilience within our climate planning and action, ensuring that our cities and towns are equipped to face the challenges of the climate crisis while prioritising fairness, inclusivity, and sustainability. This declaration serves as a call to action and a foundation for continued dialogue and collaboration on building resilient, adaptive communities.



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THE CLIMATE ALLIANCE

For over 30 years, Climate Alliance member municipalities have been acting in partnership with indigenous rainforest peoples for the benefit of the global climate. With nearly 2,000 members spread across more than 25 countries, Climate Alliance is Europe's largest city network dedicated to comprehensive and equitable climate action. Recognising the impact our lifestyles can have on the world's most vulnerable people and places, Climate Alliance pairs local action with global responsibility. climatealliance.org