



Local & Regional
Europe

COP21

**Paris Summit on climate change:
Municipalities and regions as catalysts for
success**

| September 2015

FOREWORD

« As the focus of our campaign is to combat catastrophic climate change, CEMR and its member associations urge the EU to develop a robust position ahead of COP.

Only through collaboration will we achieve our common goals of decarbonising our societies, creating green jobs and providing a sustainable world for future generations. We support our members in aiming to achieve a 40% reduction of emissions by 2030.

On behalf of local governments and regions, we ask the following from the EU institutions and national governments:

- A EU structured dialogue to integrate the subnational dimension into the UNFCCC process
- The Commission to bring local and regional governments to the COP discussion table
- Reinforce capacity of the networks to assist the EU Institutions
- The Commission to mainstream climate action in all EU policies and the National Governments to mainstream climate into all policies and national strategies
- Local green public procurement innovates and contributes to reducing CO2
- EU must ensure a place for climate and COP in international Sustainable Development and UN Habitat III processes
- The use of EU, national and subnational governments' financial resources, political frameworks, and innovation and research tools to combat climate change
- Better EU regulation to help devise and implement efficient and integrated local action
- Facilitate the exchange of good practice at sub-national level, in Europe and globally »

Sian Reid
CEMR spokesperson on climate and energy
Councillor of Cambridge (LGA-UK)



A) OUR DEMANDS

- **A EU structured dialogue to integrate the subnational dimension into the UNFCCC process**

In 2009 the EU institutions recognized in their conclusions ahead of COP15 the role that the subnational level could play in the combat against climate change. The establishment of a regular *modus operandi*, ie, a structured dialogue between local and regional authorities, the EU and national governments, would secure a regular and permanent exchange among the EU institutions and the UNFCCC process.

- **The Commission to bring local and regional governments to the COP discussion table**

It is time to formalise this recognition by allowing the sub-national government and national associations to join the EU delegation during COP negotiations and the wider process, strengthening the interaction and link with the Committee of the Regions, all this as part of a permanent structure. This is the foundation of a good governance model.

- **Reinforce capacity of the networks to assist the EU Institutions**

Networks of stakeholders sharing similar goals for the COP discussions are uniting to present coordinated messages. This approach helps deliver strong and unified positions by different actors, of the goals to be achieved. This in turn facilitates the work of the EU Institutions to build consensus between stakeholders and therefore, we urge that this approach be supported and further strengthened.

- **The Commission to mainstream climate action in all EU policies and the National Governments to mainstream climate into all policies and national strategies**

We call for the inclusion and the recognition of the local and regional level in the preparation and implementation of the EU (climate and energy package) and National Strategies dealing with climate change mitigation and adaptation. All EU institutions and Member States should support and follow this approach. Only inclusive processes can guarantee the full understanding of the actors involved.

- **Local green public procurement innovates and contributes to reducing CO2**

Public authorities in the EU are major consumers. When using their purchasing power to choose environmentally friendly goods, services and works, they are making a major contribution to sustainable consumption and production and reducing emissions of CO2 including energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, land use and transport measures, waste management and a range of other measures. The EU should recognise this voluntary instrument, which has proven to be very efficient and stimulated demand for sustainable goods and services, and therefore for eco-innovation.

- **EU must ensure a place for climate and COP in international Sustainable Development and UN Habitat III processes**

COP21 cannot be a success without its outcomes being linked to the implementation of the recently agreed Sustainable Development Goals (in particular, goal 11, encouraging action by cities on mitigation and adaptation towards 2030) and proposals for Habitat III (3rd UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development). Most of the specific commitments for local governments will come indirectly via new EU climate legislation and directly via implementation of the two other processes. Assessment of the local financial capacity and the question of legal competences in

Europe must take place before implementation of new legislation or measures, to prevent unrealistic expectations or costly regulatory outcomes.

- The use of EU, national and subnational governments' financial resources, political frameworks, and innovation and research tools to combat climate change**

Establishing the appropriate political frameworks, deploying of innovative and simple financing instruments, funding of climate mitigation and adaptation policies and actions, are all key to combatting and adapting to climate change. EU Institutions and Member States should be more proactive together with the sub-national level, in finding new ways of financing and funding actions and projects. In that perspective the European Structural and Investment Funds, are crucial and remain the major European tool to support the implementation of local projects in the field of climate mitigation and adaptation. Access to the international Green Climate Fund or the Global Environmental Facility should be facilitated only in those cases where concrete efforts and actions are already in place and proven efficient. The engagement of the politicians responsible for climate and energy dossiers is a success factor as well as building awareness and giving ownership to the citizens in the territory. But this can only be implemented with sufficient sustainable resources.

- Better EU regulation to help devise and implement efficient and integrated local action**

As part of the Better regulation package and with the aim of improved EU law-making, we request from the EU institutions the early recognition of local authorities in the decision-making process. This means acknowledging local authorities as, *"public institutions with legal personality, component of the State structure, below the level of central government and accountable to citizens, encompassing different tiers of government"*. Local authorities can and do assess the potential costs and the administrative and regulatory dimension of new legislation. They also assist in the production of climate territorial impact assessments, key aspect of evaluating potential outcomes of climate change initiatives on the ground. Initiatives such as the EU Urban Agenda, and the Territorial Agenda 2020 have the potential to introduce such an approach and provide a working method of partnership with regions and municipalities.

- Facilitate the exchange of good practice at sub-national level, in Europe and globally**

The EU should intensify its support to co-operation already established among cities and regions networks and initiatives through joint actions, exchange of practices, projects, tools (like the territorial cooperation programme – former Interreg) or high level events targeting non UN State Actors and specially local governments. More alliances have to be built while respecting the competence and mandate of each one. We support the proposition of the Commission aiming at giving a cooperation dimension to the Covenant of Mayors as well.

B) OUR VALUES

- We the local and regional actors are confident and on the right track**

Local governments represent the closest level to the citizen and offer significant expertise on climate in terms of service delivery, building democratic institutions and effective administrations. They can provide a long-term, country-wide vision on how to build lasting sustainable societies as the actors with the necessary political legitimacy and the capacity to mobilise other stakeholders. Any future climate deal must recognize that the involvement of local governments is essential for moving to a low carbon economy. A bottom-up approach and global multi-actor climate governance is crucial to move forward.

- **We support the EU approach to the objectives of COP21**

The EU Communication of February 2015 on “the Paris Protocol, The Roadmap for the global agreement in Paris” is a good start to mobilise Europe. However, reference to the sub-national level must be included in the main text. The national level cannot act on its own in order to achieve the set objectives. The sub-national level supports the overall objective of COP21. But clear differentiated responsibility for all actors is crucial. We encourage an on-going enhancement of ambition worldwide, before and after COP21.

The **“Climate and Territories” World Summit** in Lyon on 1-2 July 2015 represented a milestone in bringing together non-state actors, including sub-national governments. This represents the results of the commitment of many local governments involved in COP process already since COP1. We need to work towards adopting decarbonisation strategies, plans and actions compatible with the objective of containing global warming below 2°C regarding reference year 1990. To achieve it, all networks engaged in Lyon to work towards the world goal of reaching 1.5 billion tons in carbon emission reductions by 2020. Together with our members and partners of the Covenant of Mayors, CEMR commits to supporting actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gases by at least 40% by 2030. Together with our PLATFORMA partners, CEMR also committed to co-operation between governments to promote low-carbon local development worldwide.

- **Climate action is an opportunity for green job creation and growth**

The sub-national governments do not view climate change as a burden. We see it as an opportunity to move towards sustainable ways of working, thinking and planning. We have shown that investing in efficient building and housing, green technology, innovation and research is producing tangible results in economic growth and creating employment on the ground.

C) OUR ACTIONS

- **An efficient multi-actor governance engaged in tackling climate**

A bottom-up approach and a global multi-actor climate governance with the appropriate local financial means is an equally valuable and important consideration as well as appropriate regulatory instruments at national and international level.

A way forward would be for genuine engagement with national, regional and local authorities and non-state actors, where relevant in each country, in line with the appropriate framework. Regions and local governments have shown their ability to be catalysts for success in Paris next December. But we also need to respect the competence of the sub-national level and be aware of the scope and limitations this has on implementing actions. In many cases a strong collaboration in place has already shown that the results can be achieved in a more effective way.

- **Leading examples set by local governments and regions**

Sub-national governments can play a leading role in Europe in the Local Government Climate Roadmap. Initiatives such as Mayors Adapt or the Covenant of Mayors are leading examples in the world towards a low carbon economy.

This is proven by the success of the Covenant of Mayors with over 6000 municipalities having signed the Covenant or the over 100 in Mayors Adapt. Sharing of local experiences facilitates a transfer of know-how crucial to replicate successes and avoid repeating mistakes. EU programmes such as the European territorial cooperation programme play a major role in this field.

Any future EU measures whose aims are to implement a future UN climate deal, must take account of the existing frameworks at EU and national level. This will avoid overlaps with measures and legislation of those countries and regions that have a leading approach on climate issues. In addition, greater awareness and recognition of local initiatives is necessary in EU and national climate implementation plans.

- **Encourage networks to join forces efficiently**

Collaboration and alliances between all networks working globally on climate mitigation and adaptation have already made a real and substantial difference. The EU institutions are playing a strategic role in their discussion with all networks of local and regional authorities, so as to achieve the best agreement in COP21. Furthermore, some key COPs have already shown that this engagement exists and roadmaps have been implemented to coordinate actions and messages. These collaborations should be encouraged.

- **The Reference Framework on Sustainable Cities to mobilise our members**

Our local governments and regions believe in exchanges, benchmarking and self-assessment on sustainable integrated urban development based on the Leipzig Charter for Sustainable European Cities. In November 2008, European Ministers responsible for urban development endorsed the creation of a common European Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC). The RFSC would become the dedicated tool to implement the objectives formulated in the Leipzig Charter. CEMR is developing and coordinating the dissemination of the latest version, to be launched around COP21. The existing 110 RFSC cities from across Europe and the 90 others RFSC users will be able to use the new tool.

- **Decentralised co-operation across the world**

Serious commitment to international development co-operation must enable genuine implementation of measures. PLATFORMA, whose Secretariat is hosted by CEMR, defends the unique role that European local and regional governments play towards the improvement of daily lives of communities in partner countries in areas such as climate and energy. MS should acknowledge this work and maintain financial incentives and the appropriate framework to continue delivering concrete local actions in non EU countries. International cooperation between local and regional governments will trigger new policies and innovations upon which the success of the sustainable development agenda, including the climate targets, very much depends.

Contact

Eva Baños de Guisasola
Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
Square de Meeûs 1
B-1000 Brussels
Tel. +32 2 21 38 699
eva.banosdeguisasola@ccre-cemr.org

About CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional authorities in Europe. Its members are over 50 national associations of municipalities and regions from 41 European countries. Together these associations represent some 150 000 local and regional authorities.

CEMR's objectives are twofold: to influence European legislation on behalf of local and regional authorities and to provide a platform for exchange between its member associations and their elected officials and experts.

Moreover, CEMR is the European section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the worldwide organisation of local government.

Web: www.cemr.eu
Twitter: [@ccrecemr](https://twitter.com/ccrecemr)