

# TRANSLATING THE EU GREEN DEAL INTO LOCAL ACTION

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Conference for local and regional leaders

#MayorsGreenDeal



## TRANSLATING THE EU GREEN DEAL INTO LOCAL ACTION

### Declaration of European local and regional leaders

We, European local and regional leaders, reaffirm our commitment to reach the objectives of the European Green Deal in our territories, facilitating the best possible participation of our citizens, enterprises and local communities.

## Part I: Preamble

We acknowledge the critical global situation and the pressing challenges that Europe is currently facing, where efforts to find solutions to the triple planetary crisis<sup>1</sup> are threatened by unstable geopolitical situations. In this context, the European Green Deal represents a transformative vision for Europe's sustainable future, which needs to be safeguarded and further developed.

As the EU enters a new phase following the 2024 elections turning into the implementation phase of the Green Deal, there should be a much larger focus on formulating policies that enable the roll-out of no-regret measures and that speed up the implementation of on-the-ground solutions for both climate mitigation and adaptation. These will bring tangible added value to our businesses and our communities, while accelerating the transition to climate neutrality.

Local and regional governments play a central role in delivering the European Green Deal. Given our proximity to citizens and businesses, we are the best placed to get local stakeholders and communities on board by creating the necessary conditions and support for local initiatives to flourish, ensuring that the European Green Deal transforms into meaningful, effective and tangible actions for the benefit of all people.

To deliver on our commitment, we need to operate in the right context. While we focus on designing strategies to help citizens, stakeholders and enterprises get on board, our capacity to mobilise and implement should be more strongly embedded in the European Green Deal, while our needs, barriers and opportunities should be taken into account in the development of the European legislative and supportive framework.

We, European local and regional leaders:

- Reaffirm our resolve to act as key allies of the European Union and Member States in implementing ambitious and transformative actions aimed at delivering the European Green Deal on the ground.
- Reiterate our willingness to build stronger capacities and skills to implement Green Deal projects, fostering innovation, cooperation, and citizen engagement within and across our various public policy domains.

- Highlight that to actively engage citizens, stakeholders and enterprises, local and regional governments initiate many tailor-made tangible actions and targets. However, stress the need to plan for better multi-level governance integration and direct access to funding.
- Welcome the growth of EU supporting instruments<sup>3</sup> for local and regional governments in different European Green Deal policy areas. However, warn that this proliferation might not correspond to an equivalent increase in their measurable impact<sup>2</sup>.

## Part II: Recommendations

In this context, we, European local and regional leaders:

1. Call on the co-legislators and on the Member States to re-design effective multi-level governance processes that give full recognition, visibility and support to enable accelerated and scaled action deriving from local and regional actors, while acknowledging our diverse conditions and resources to realize climate neutrality and resilience.
2. Call on the co-legislators and on the Member States to introduce improvements for a harmonised monitoring system within Energy Union governance, to allow for the integration of local and regional governments' efforts and contributions via systems that are coherent with national energy and climate plans and that respect national specificities.
3. Ask the European Commission and the Member States to provide adequate support platforms for skills and capacity building for local and regional governments and their stakeholders, easing the implementation of the Green Deal and its monitoring.
4. Call on the European Commission to provide us with more flexible and inclusive supporting instruments<sup>3</sup> that would allow us to address our unique challenges more profoundly by leveraging on the opportunities offered by our local and regional contexts, and at the same time improve accessibility and inclusivity of the supporting instruments and financing streams (e.g cohesion funds, recovery fund, just transition fund, social

climate fund among others) for a wider group of local and regional authorities.

5. Call for stronger synergies between EU supporting instruments<sup>3</sup> and the initiatives, planning processes and measures of the Member States, in order to improve mutual reinforcement and inclusiveness, and to offer the technical and financial support that local and regional authorities need to deliver the European Green Deal on the ground.
6. Ask that focus be given to synergies among existing EU funding and supporting instruments<sup>3</sup> to achieve greater impacts and overcome counterproductive policy silos, duplication and unnecessary administrative burdens.
7. Call on the co-legislators to earmark additional EU financial support to be channelled directly towards implementing the Green Deal at local and regional levels, to ensure that the political commitments can be followed through the creation of solid implementation pipelines.
8. Urge more alignment and integration between the EU Regional and Cohesion Policy funds and the Green Deal objectives and supporting instruments<sup>3</sup> for local and regional authorities.
9. Recommend the introduction of more performance-linked funding, which involve mechanisms that reward local governments based on the achievement of environmental, social, and clean economic targets, taking into account the national specificities of each EU Member State.

10. Suggest enhanced cooperation via a Green Deal Going Local task force between the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions to serve as a central hub for engaging with local and regional governments, coordinate efforts among EU supporting instruments, and provide guidance on aligning EU Green Deal policies with local and regional capacities and needs.

### **Part III: Conclusion**

To ensure the successful implementation of the European Green Deal, it is imperative to empower local and regional governments as key agents of change.

By enhancing our capacities, providing targeted financial support, breaking policy silos, and establishing structural dialogues, the EU can unleash the potential of local and regional initiatives that drive sustainable transformation, while aligning with local and regional realities. This approach will harness the trust citizens and businesses have placed in their local and regional authorities, thereby ensuring ongoing coordination and alignment and propelling the European Green Deal from a mere aspiration to a reality.

[1] [What is the Triple Planetary Crisis? | UNFCCC](#).

[2] [The impact of EU climate and energy initiatives on cities' climate transition](#), CoR, European Union, 2023.

[3] Including initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, the Green City Accord, the Circular Cities and Regions initiative, the Intelligent Cities Challenge, EU Cities Mission and others.