



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

CLIMATE ACTION



The Director-General

Brussels
CLIMA.E.2/BM

Subject: Local and regional government networks' proposals for measures to support the implementation of the European green deal at the local level

*Dear Mr Coughlan,
Dear Ms Helgesen,
Dear Mr Wolter,
Dear Mr Ridouani,
Dear Mr Sobczak,
Dear Ms Domac,
Dear Mr Horn,
Dear Ms Vancluysen,*

Thank you for your note and your policy suggestions addressed to Ms Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, who asked me to reply on her behalf.

I welcome the renewed commitment of local and regional governments to implementing the European Green Deal and accelerating the transition to climate neutrality at the local level.

We share the same convictions about the important role that local and regional governance must play in transforming the ambitions of the Green Deal into reality on the ground. The dynamism, potential for innovation and convening capacity of local and regional authorities will serve as a strong asset in achieving our common objectives. That is why we are a vocal supporter of local and regional authorities being involved meaningfully in all stages of the policy cycle.

We read with interest your policy proposals that span various policy fields in line with the need for a systemic response to our different challenges. A structured dialogue between different levels of governance and a holistic approach to combatting climate change is crucial for everyone to be able to identify the intervention areas with the greatest impact, rather than wasting resources and time with fragmented efforts. Regions and cities should be more involved in developing national policies and strategies, and their participation within existing frameworks, such as the National Energy and Climate Plans, should be further strengthened.

At the same time, we must strengthen our capacity to implement policy locally, and enable local and regional authorities to plan, finance, and manage the large investments needed to achieve our emission reduction targets and build resilience to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

We have taken good note of the local and regional authorities' requests. We also share the views of the local and regional authorities that funding needs to be channelled in the most efficient way to support locally-led integrated transition programmes that can reap the co-benefits of the transition for citizens and local business ecosystems.

Substantial financial means are available at the EU level to help Member States, regions, and cities to invest in the green transition. Several schemes support innovation, networking, and capacity building on the ground. It is pivotal that regions and cities use these resources to implement good quality projects.

The challenges at local level are varied; therefore, they call for place-based responses. In that regard, cohesion policy programmes address the specific needs of regions and cities by providing support to the implementation of integrated territorial strategies. More than one third of all 2021-2027 cohesion policy funds will be invested in green action, in fields like renewable energy, sustainable transport, and nature conservation. This funding is an important contribution to advancing the Green Deal at the local level across the EU.

Next to funding, skills development in local administrations is a crucial element for the green transition. The Commission recognises this need, which was considered in the recent recommendation on speeding up permit-granting procedures for renewable energy and related infrastructure projects.

The next Commission term will be crucial for achieving our 2030 climate targets and looking towards a new horizon. The Commission assessment and recommendation for a 2040 target for the EU, issued earlier this year, is the first step in this direction, aiming to open a dialogue with all relevant parties. The first-ever European Climate Risk Assessment and the Commission's Communication on managing climate risks further highlight the urgency of enhanced multi-level governance and cooperation. Given their climate change mitigation, adaptation, and investment potential, we see regions and cities as crucial contributors to this dialogue.

The European Commission is committed to staying the course on the implementation of the 2030 package and to supporting all actors in their green transition. Cities, regions, and local authorities are key partners in this endeavour, and we hope to count on your networks' support in achieving our ambitious targets.

Yours faithfully,

Kurt Vandenberghe

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