



European Committee  
of the Regions



COP28  
UAE

# News round-up

Brussels, 12 December 2023

## EU Cities and Regions at COP28: Flash report 8-11 December

*Welcome to the fourth and final edition of the COP Chronicles, bringing you the latest news on COP28 from Dubai.*

**The CoR delegation was present in full force in Dubai on the final days of COP28. Throughout the Youth, Nature, Water, and Agriculture days, delegates engaged in discussions focused on the links between climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable development. Conversations also emphasised the crucial role of youth involvement in shaping and implementing climate policies, as well as the need to restructure the global trade system to align with the principles of a just transition.**

**Briefing with Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra and Spanish Minister for the Environment Teresa Ribera.** Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla (ES/EPP), Alison Gilliland (IE/PES), Vincent Chauvet (FR/Renew EU), Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR), Niina Ratilainen (FI/The Greens), Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA) and Kata Tüttö (HU/PES) attended the EU **interinstitutional briefing**, a regular feature at each COP. Commissioner Hoekstra and Minister Ribera provided updates to the CoR, European Parliament, and EESC delegations on the status of the negotiations. Participants collectively acknowledged the expectations among EU citizens for positive and meaningful outcomes, including the phase out of fossil fuels. CoR delegates reiterated their call for Parties to involve subnational governments in upcoming Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

**CoR event Tackling the twin crises of climate and biodiversity loss: ambition and action from subnational governments to build resilience.** The CoR organised a side event at the EU Pavilion that included high-level speakers like David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and Grethel Aguilar, Director-General of the IUCN. **Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla** and **Niina Ratilainen** showcased initiatives that actively address both biodiversity loss and the climate crisis in their respective territories, Andalusia and Turku. Participants reflected on the COP15 **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** and discussed how COP28 should encompass biodiversity and nature conservation in its decisions. Watch the recording [here!](#)

**Beyond Growth: Sufficiency for a sustainable and equitable future.** **Niina Ratilainen** participated in a side event organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to discuss how overconsumption should be addressed for the preservation of people and the planet. Panellists, including Sandrine Dixson-Declève, Co-President of the Club of Rome; Oliver Röpke, EESC President; and representatives from DG ENV; CAN International; YOUNGO; and ITUC, explored the implications in governance, social justice, and culture to foster sustainable and equitable policies for human well-being. Watch the recording [here!](#)

**Bridging Science, Policy, and Society: Tackling Climate and SDGs in Synergy.** **1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP)** shared insights on addressing climate change and achieving Sustainable Development Goals in synergy, drawing from his experience in Central Macedonia, Greece. He noted that the CoR actively advocates for a more integrated approach to climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development,

exemplified by initiatives like the **Green Deal Going Local**. The CoR is currently working on an opinion titled *Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and SDGs* to further explore these synergies.

**Meeting with Omnia El Omrani, COP27 Youth Envoy and COP28 Health Envoy.** The **CoR delegation** met with Omnia to better understand the work and priorities of **YOUNGO** – the Youth Constituency in the UNFCCC. Omnia presented two key YOUNGO documents released in 2023: the **Global Youth Statement**, which integrates inputs from children and youth from 150 countries and policy statements from Local and Regional Conferences of Youth, and the **Youth Stocktake Report**, which seeks to review the historical development of youth inclusion in UNFCCC processes.

**Meeting with IPCC Chair and Vice-Chair.** **Alison Gilliland** accompanied Pourya Salehi, Head of Urban Research, Innovation, and Development Team at ICLEI, to an informal meeting with IPCC Chair Mr Jim Shea and IPCC Vice Chair Prof. Dr. Diana Urge-Vorsatz. They acknowledged the call for experts to draft the outline of the Special Report on Climate Change and Cities and discussed the inclusion of local city representatives in the process, while agreeing with the essential science-based underpinning of this work.

**Comparing the EU and the USA approach to climate neutrality.** **Andries Gryffroy** joined representatives from the UK Parliament, the Egyptian Senate, and the Grace Richardson Fund in a discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of current climate policies in the United States and the European Union. The dialogue delved into an in-depth analysis of these policies, exploring their impacts on global climate initiatives and their effectiveness in addressing the urgent needs of the climate crisis.

**Nature Ambition Loop Dialogue with High Level Champions.** **Alison Gilliland** took part in a dialogue co-hosted by the High-Level Champions, Razan al-Mubarak and Mahmoud Mohieldin. The discussion focused on the role of UN High-Level Champions in the UNFCCC process and aimed to strengthen connections with non-state actors. Alison emphasized the critical role of subnational governments in collaborating with their local communities to build resilience, raise awareness, implement mitigation and adaptation measures, and address the aftermath of extreme climate events.

**Free Market Climate Policy: Innovation & Investment Acceleration via Reduced Tax & Trade Barriers.** **Oldřich Vlasák** participated in a discussion focused on new UNFCCC submissions addressing climate mitigation, adaptation, finance (non-market instruments), and Article 6.8. Oldřich emphasized the pivotal role of cities and regions in decarbonizing the economy, underscoring the need for increased support in terms of both technical assistance and financial mechanisms.

**Multilevel governance for Climate, Food, and Biodiversity action.** Co-led by the Local2030 Coalition, FAO, UN-Habitat, UNDP, UCLG, and the Global Task Force for Local and Regional Governments, this side event highlighted the need for integrated, collaborative approaches to address the complex challenges posed by climate change, food security, and biodiversity loss at the local level. **Kata Tüttö** opened the side event and explained that data analysis contributes to informed decision-making and effective policy implementation, emphasising that a local data-driven approach benefits multilevel governance initiatives in these fields.

**Engagements with EU Member States.** The **CoR delegation** engaged in meetings with various EU Member States, including Mircea Fechet, the Romanian Minister for the Environment; representatives from the Maltese Ministry for Environment, Energy, and Enterprise; and Kristi Klaas, Estonian Deputy Minister for Green Transition. The primary focus of these discussions was the progress of the COP28 negotiations, including their endorsement of **CHAMP**. **Niina Ratilainen** had the opportunity to discuss climate finance at the local and regional levels and the inclusion of subnational governments in national and international climate policies with the Finnish Minister for the Environment, Kai Mykkänen, during a briefing. **Vincent Chauvet** also engaged in discussions with French Environment Minister Christophe Béchu and Minister of Agriculture Marc Fesneau.

**Renewable energy & Empowering youth for the energy transition.** **Niina Ratilainen** took part in this side event organised by the **European Youth Energy Network (EYEN)** and **Young Leaders in Energy and Sustainability (YES-Europe)**. She showcased Turku's initiatives aimed at addressing shortages in green skills while simultaneously enhancing the capacity of the youth workforce in the energy transition.

**How do we ensure public support for climate action and the green transition of our energy?** Organised by Andel at the Danish Pavilion, **Andries Gryffroy** participated in a roundtable discussion with representatives from the private sector, youth groups, and NGOs, focusing on the engagement of businesses, local communities, and younger generations in the green energy transition.

**The fight against plastic waste in the Marine Environment, Acting from Global to Local.** Aimed at addressing the pressing issue of plastic waste in marine environments collaboratively, the event brought together representatives from multilateral bodies, public institutions, industry, and national and local

authorities, including Christophe Béchu, French Minister for Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion. **Vincent Chauvet** provided examples of local actions contributing to mitigating the impact of plastic waste on marine life and promoting sustainable practices across industries and communities.

**Advancing Urban Net Zero and Green Transition with Smart Solutions.** **Niina Ratilainen** participated in a discussion organised by ICLEI, where she presented Turku's efforts to become **Circular and Climate Positive** by no later than 2029. During the discussion, Niina outlined Turku's substantial progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 56% from 1990 levels, and highlighted the city's ambitious climate investments.

**The Climate Catalysts: Youth and Local Leaders Spearheading Action in the Climate Emergency.** **Alison Gilliland** participated in a discussion organised by ICLEI and the Marrakech Partnership. Drawing on crucial insights from the Local Stocktakes, the event explored the contributions of subnational governments and youth in accelerating the achievement of climate goals. Alison highlighted youth and local involvement in Dublin, underscoring their essential role in ensuring the legitimacy and effectiveness of climate actions.

**Synergizing Youth, Local, and Global Stocktake: Aligning global policy and local implementation.** **Niina Ratilainen** participated in discussions on the need for inclusive and multilevel action alongside representatives from YOUNGO, Care About Climate, UNFCCC Friends of Multilevel Action, COP28, and COP30 Presidencies. Niina presented best practices and success stories from Turku, particularly highlighting gender and youth perspectives in climate action, aiming to strengthen the implementation of NDCs. Watch the recording [here!](#)

**What comes next after the IRA, Refuel EU and CORSIA: How global public policy approaches can drive transitions in hard-to-abate sectors.** **Andries Gryffroy** brought an EU perspective to the panel by explaining the difference in the EU's approach to decarbonization compared to other global approaches, including in the US. Additionally, he provided insights on the collaboration between the European Commission and Member States to enhance the adoption of hydrogen, particularly the use of renewable hydrogen in hard-to-abate sectors.

**Bilateral meeting with Young European Leadership (YEL).** **Vincent Chauvet** engaged in discussions with representatives from **YEL** to learn about the demands of young Europeans in areas such as climate finance, energy, food systems, and youth engagement in climate policy.

**Meeting with Regions4.** **Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla** and **Andries Gryffroy** met with Jordan Harris, Acting Secretary General, and Heloise Chicou, Climate Action and Resilience Program Manager, to explore potential cooperation between their respective regions – Andalusia and Flanders – and Regions4, and to reinforce synergies between Regions4 and the CoR in the coming year.

**Bilateral meeting with Renewable Energy Policy Network (REN21).** **Andries Gryffroy** met with REN21 Executive Director, Rana Adib, to initiate preparations for his upcoming opinion on the European Wind Power Action Plan, which aims to present tangible recommendations from local and regional authorities to facilitate the deployment of wind farms.

**Design, digitalization and sustainable development: The role of creative arts and industries in the sustainable industrial transformation.** **Alison Gilliland**, as one of the speakers in the event, delved into the topic of overproduction in the fashion industry and briefly illustrated Dublin's actions in promoting textile circularity in the city. This session also served as a platform for speakers to exchange views on possible ways to decrease the gap or difference in perspectives, priorities, and approaches between policymakers and the creative industry.

**Digitalization and Human Needs: How Science Can Foster Transformation at the Local Scale.** **Alison Gilliland** joined this session organized by ICLEI and the Urban Climate Change and Research Network (UCCRN). The session focused on the linkages and synergies between digitalization and sustainable development and how science can foster transformation at the local scale. During the session, two important reports were launched: ICLEI's digitalization policy brief, and selected elements of **UCCRN ARC3.3**. Watch the recording [here!](#)

**Take a visual journey with our [COP28 photo gallery](#) and check out our [live blog](#) for real-time coverage!**

#### **Background information:**

- [COP28 web portal](#)
- [CoR delegation to COP28 and political messages](#)
- [LGMA position paper for COP28](#)
- [Updated Map of Best Practices](#)
- [Green Deal Going Local](#)
- [Liveblog](#)

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