



European Committee
of the Regions

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GLOBAL COVENANT OF MAYORS FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY: CITIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES
FOR CLIMATE ACTION
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Ladies and gentlemen,

As president of the European Committee of the Regions, the body that speaks for 350 local and regional authorities in the European Union, I am delighted to kick off this day devoted to the Global Covenant of Mayors.

The Paris Agreement demonstrated the courage of world and national leaders in the fight against climate change, but it is increasingly clear that we need to work harder - and quickly.

If we do not act, future generations will be at greater risk of hunger, poverty, climate migration and food insecurity.

Across the globe, cities and local governments are making a difference. We are developing resilience to natural disasters, cutting pollution and creating energy-efficient communities, and creating more green jobs for our fellow citizens.

We have gathered here today to discuss how regions and countries around the world are united under the Global Covenant of Mayors to deliver on our Paris commitments.

The EU's Covenant of Mayors, which was set up in 2008, has asked local and regional governments to voluntarily go beyond the EU's target of a 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2020.

Expectations have been exceeded, with emissions reduced by nearly 30%.

This level of ambition led to a new 40% emissions target being set, proving that when national governments set the bar high, cities and regions go even higher.

The diversity of cities and regions represented in the Global Covenant of Mayors is crucial to sharing best practice with a view to adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects.

In Europe we are seeing local ambition transform our world. Buildings are responsible for 40% of energy consumption and 36% of the EU's CO₂ emissions: so the city of Prague is installing solar panels on several historic buildings.



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Local players can contribute by raising public awareness.

An example of this is the project *Step by step commitments for energy savings*, implemented in four European regions, which helps households to reduce their energy consumption. A total of 6 300 households have taken part in this initiative, saving 6 000 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

Cities are pioneers in promoting the use of smart technologies and innovative solutions to tackle climate change, for example by purchasing electric or even fuel-cell buses, as in the city of Gabrovo in Bulgaria.

By 2020, almost 240 million smart meters will have been deployed across Europe to reduce energy consumption and combat energy poverty.

These are measures that will make a difference when it comes to creating a world that offers hope instead of doubt and anxiety.

The Global Covenant of Mayors can tell many such inspiring stories from our regions, cities, towns and villages.

The Covenant enables the world's local authorities to meet, join forces and be inspired and work together to fight climate change.

We are also here today to discuss how to strengthen what we believe is one of the main pillars of global climate action: the transatlantic dimension of the Global Covenant of Mayors.

The Committee of the Regions believes that the transatlantic aspect of the Global Covenant could be its strongest link, the backbone of a global determination to fight climate change. The transatlantic dimension represents a wealth of knowledge and experience built up by the most advanced and most resolute cities, regions and countries.

Cities in the EU and North America are home to the most advanced technologies and governance solutions for faster implementation of climate and energy commitments on the ground.

President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement has not caused his country to forget what is at stake.

We must salute the thousands of people who have shown the willingness and courage to stand up and join the rest of the world on our path towards a greener future.



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We congratulate Michael Bloomberg and Jerry Brown for issuing the *We are still in* declaration and launching the *America's Pledge* initiative.

Such unity between cities, states and businesses across the United States is no surprise given that this is a country with a history of looking beyond its borders and spearheading the global quest for a better life for all.

These developments could strengthen the role of the Global Covenant of Mayors in the overall governance of the Paris Agreement and help European and North American cities to forge stronger links.

The plan under *America's Pledge* of eventually submitting a "Societal Nationally Determined Contribution" to the United Nations that would reflect the efforts of US cities, states, businesses and other subnational actors, sends exactly the same message as our Committee is bringing to Bonn. We are also calling for "locally and regionally determined contributions" which will flank the Nationally Determined Contributions.

We want the efforts of cities and regions to be taken into account when evaluating the delivery of the Paris commitments.

We would therefore like to assure our partners in the United States and Canada that we are ready and willing to support you and intend to strengthen our transatlantic ties in this area.

Let us launch a new transatlantic climate partnership that is more pro-active and more ambitious in the measures it takes.

Let us create a common space in which we can share our stories, our know-how and our objectives with the international community.

And let us take action together within the Global Covenant of Mayors.

Thank you.

(927 words)