

## The Bulletin of the Commission for the Environment, Climate change and Energy (ENVE)

No 4



**Dear ENVE members, dear colleagues,**

The COVID pandemic and socio-economic crisis is striking again in all our local communities. In these demanding circumstances, we can really see what solidarity and cohesion mean in practice. We have the definitive proof that nobody can protect, repair and rebuild alone; that the word "future" implies a collective endeavour, where every one of us has a very important role to play.

It is with this spirit of collegiality that I wish to acknowledge the political commitment and the hard work pursued by our ENVE rapporteurs and members across all our six political groups over the last months. We are bound by the same ambition that of setting Europe's recovery on a trajectory of green transition and concrete local projects.

As we stated very clearly during the three weeks of debate around the European Week of Regions and Cities, local and regional economies need direct access to the Green Recovery Funds, 37% of which are earmarked for climate-neutral investment. Europe must be bold in achieving climate objectives and work together at all levels to speed up recovery from the pandemic. This is the aim of the action plan on accelerating the Green Deal, which we agreed on with Commission vice-president Timmermans at our last plenary session.

With a focus on locally driven actions, the Renovation Wave, sustainable mobility, climate adaptation and urban greening, we want to make a massive contribution to Europe's climate-neutral future. As local and regional leaders, we want to lead our communities to a green future and play a powerful role in the process. We need to act together, sharing our experience and replicating best practice on the ground to show the EU legislators that nothing will happen unless we are involved. Thanks to your enormous commitment, in just a few weeks we have gathered together two hundred low-carbon projects from all over Europe under our Green Deal Going Local platform and this is not over yet. I invite you to further share and promote your local projects to inspire and boost initiatives in other regions and cities.

In her State of the Union speech, Commission president Ursula von der Leyen announced a scaling-up of the EU's climate ambitions and the reduction of gas emissions by 55% by 2030. The European Parliament has called for even higher cuts of 60% and for setting up mid-term 2040 objectives necessary to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. From now on, 37% of the EU recovery funds must be used for green investment, including a massive Renovation Wave, stimulating jobs and fighting poverty. The European Union is taking a clear and strong lead in climate ambitions, showing to the rest of the world that the green revolution, solidarity and joint efforts are the only way to save the planet. We want to use the Climate Pact to build a large coalition of partners at all levels who will strive to make Europe green and healthy for its citizens.

As German chancellor Angela Merkel told us at the European Week of Cities and Regions plenary session: "Your perspectives, your experiences and your commitment are precisely what Europe needs to get through this difficult time in solidarity and to take responsibility on the ground. Without you, we, as heads of state and government, can do little – just as little as without the citizens of Europe". With this in mind, I look forward to our next ENVE meeting on 10 November. Local means working together!

**Juan Espadas Cejas**  
**Mayor of Seville**  
**Chair of the ENVE Commission**



TODAY IN ENVOY – IN ONE CLICK

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**Green Deal Going Local: share your best practice with us!**

Is your city or region a sustainability champion? Are you proud of the projects that you are implementing in your community in connection with Green Deal priorities? Then this call is for you!

**How can you get involved?** Please complete the following [online application form](#) in your own language.

More information about the CoR Green Deal Going Local call is available [here](#).



## GREEN DEAL AND RECOVERY AT THE HEART OF #EURegionsWeek



Over 120 events at this year's edition of the biggest European event devoted to local and regional authorities were held under the "Green Europe" banner. At the heart of debate were the European Green Deal and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 economic crisis. #EURegionsWeek participants rated a "Greener Europe" the key priority for the future.

**The European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions launch cooperation to deliver the Green Deal in Europe's regions and cities, notably in three areas: energy efficiency in buildings, clean transport and greening cities.**

The Commission and the Committee of the Regions have committed themselves to a new phase of cooperation to accelerate the delivery of the Green Deal in Europe's regions and cities. The new cooperation aims to give local and regional governments the support and knowledge they need to apply more effectively for national recovery and EU funds to make the Green Deal a reality in every community, specifically in improving the energy efficiency of



buildings, developing sustainable transport and protecting natural habitats. The two institutions will join forces to empower and mobilise local and regional governments in Europe whilst working with national governments to place the Green Deal at the heart of their national investment plans.



Speaking at the plenary, **Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for the European Green Deal**, said: "Climate action starts in the streets of our towns and neighbourhoods. The European Commission and European Committee of the Regions will work together on the Renovation Wave, clean transport and green cities. The Committee should get a seat on the Covenant of Mayors Political Board and be a key part of our Climate Pact to be launched this year, where its members will become Climate Ambassadors. Let us start the work on climate action in our regions that can inspire the rest of the world."

**The CoR recently launched the Green Deal Going Local** working group to ensure that the EU's sustainable growth strategy and the COVID-19 recovery plans translate into direct funding for cities and regions. CoR president Tzitzikostas handed over to Mr Timmermans a **compilation of 200 best practices** from CoR members that showed how cities and regions are already delivering the transition on the ground through concrete projects related to energy efficiency, low-emission transport, sustainable food management and green infrastructure.

**Ten thousand participants and two thousand speakers gathered from all over Europe to take part in the more than 500 digital working sessions, debates and exhibitions of the #EURegionsWeek 2020.** They rated a "Greener Europe" the key priority for the future.

**On 13 October, Chancellor Angela Merkel presented the priorities of the German EU Presidency, discussed the role of local and regional authorities in the EU's recovery plans and initiated a process of reflection on the future of Europe.** She told local and regional leaders: "Your perspectives, your experiences and your commitment are precisely what Europe needs to get through this difficult time in solidarity and to take responsibility on the ground. Without you, we, as heads of state and government, can do little – just as little as without the citizens of Europe."





## Green Deal Going Local Working Group

Direct funds for cities and regions remain key for the Green Deal to go local.

While countries across Europe are seeing a resurgence in COVID-19 cases, EU cities and regions are engaged in continuous cooperation to keep the Green Deal at the heart of the recovery. Direct access to EU funds in order to deliver the Green Deal and a just transition locally remain the top priority for local and regional authorities across the EU.

The second meeting of the Green Deal Going Local Working Group took place on 21 October, in the framework of the #EURegionsWeek. Opening the debate, chair Juan Espadas said: "The European Green Deal is the pillar on which we must build back better our cities and regions, creating new jobs, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and fighting social inequality. Today, once again, the European Committee of the Regions has demonstrated its ability to be a platform that effectively binds together key stakeholders, including European institutions, local and regional authorities, civil society and businesses in order to build a more sustainable future for us all."



Devoted to the EU's growth strategy and climate neutrality by 2050, the meeting brought together CoR rapporteurs of several Green Deal related topics: industry, transport, agriculture and a strong social Europe. Read more [here](#).

## Multilevel Dialogue on the Renovation Wave



The second Multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue, this time dealing with the Renovation Wave, took place on 22 October. **The meeting, organised by the CoR in cooperation with the German EU presidency, was an occasion for discussion between six CoR members and representatives of twelve Member States, the European Parliament and the European Commission.** Topics discussed included how to build bridges and realise a bottom-up approach to the Renovation Wave, while at the same time ensuring adequate technical support and access to finance for all regions and cities. The CoR considers multilevel cooperation crucial to the success

of energy and climate policies and, more broadly, to the Green Deal, given the central role that local and regional authorities play in its implementation.

## Launch of the Green City Accord

#EURegionsWeek saw the European Commission's launch of the **Green City Accord (GCA)**, a movement of European mayors committed to making cities cleaner and healthier. Organised jointly by the Commission, the CoR, Eurocities and ICLEI and opened by ENVE chair and mayor of Seville Juan Espadas, the event brought together the leaders of Florence, Lille, Porto, Freiburg and other European cities. Cities signing the accord undertake to address five areas of environmental management: air, water, nature and biodiversity, the circular economy and waste, noise. More [here](#).





### THREE QUESTIONS FOR ENVE RAPPORTEURS

**Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)**

**Chair of Espoo City Board and the President of Helsinki Region, Finland**



**Rapporteur on the:**

**Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities: what framework conditions are required for this?**

**Does Europe need a more ambitious EU Adaptation Strategy to tackle current and future challenges? What are some key areas where we need to raise the bar for adaptation?**

Activities related to tackling climate adaptation and mitigation need to be integrated. Not either or, but both. Political leadership should treat climate change as an emergency that needs to be tackled collectively with joint standardised innovative measures and also globally, by breaking down silos and barriers. Europe should be the global leader and forerunner in creating and using innovative measures. This means raising the climate ambition bar much higher than what the EU is discussing today.

**The COVID pandemic has shown the level of vulnerability of our societies to infectious diseases, and some scientists are starting to highlight the potential links between pandemics, nature protection and climate change: do you think that adaptation to climate change can be more closely related to health protection?**

Health in the EU member states has never been better than now, but climate change threatens to cancel the achievements of past decades. The COVID has shown that EU on all governance levels can get much done, when there is a need to act fast and act together. I invite you to have a look at the EEA newly published report on [Urban adaptation](#). Let me take a small example from that: Assuming present vulnerability of people and no additional adaptation measures, annual fatalities from extreme heat could rise from 2 700 deaths/year now to approximately 30 000 or 50 000 by 2050, with 1.5 °C or 2 °C global warming, respectively. This is a real threat and we need to do everything to avoid it.

**Where can Europe's regions and cities most contribute on adaptation to climate change?**

We can show forerunner commitment and leadership. Cities and regions together with the CoR and by the support of the Green Deal can showcase what achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 or at least well before 2050 requires. We should focus on capturing the full potential of collaborative resilience-building and make sure that sub-national level has capacity to react fast. Emergency and rescue services are the most influential when operating fast at the front line – where-ever needed. Therefore, we need more knowledge, improved capabilities and adequate financial resources at local and regional level.

**The whole interview will be available soon on the [CoR website](#)**

**Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA)**  
Member of the Flemish Parliament, Belgium



**Rapporteur on:**

**[The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal](#)**

**What are the main challenges for local and regional authorities (LRAs) in combining the COVID-19 recovery with long-term sustainable development?**

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the vulnerability of our societies and economies and the need to enhance their resilience. Local and regional authorities are at the forefront of the fight against climate change in taking bold action to reduce emissions and thus becoming more resilient to the impact of climate change. At the same time, LRAs' finances are severely threatened by the crisis, which jeopardises their ability to provide public services and limits the fiscal space for investments in innovative and low-carbon technologies. Sub-national governments must therefore be fully involved in the definition and implementation of national recovery plans and be granted easier and direct access to funds. It is also vital that we focus on initiatives that could help to cut emissions at lower cost in the long run, such as improving energy performance in buildings (**Renovation Wave**), sustainable mobility, renewable energy and the circular economy.

**Can you explain your "lighthouse" approach?**

The "lighthouse" approach implies a model where one city takes the lead within a particular domain and then involves other interested cities and municipalities through knowledge sharing and exchange of good practices. At the CoR, we recently launched a [map of best practices](#) that has already gathered together two hundred projects. It is part of our [Green Deal Going Local](#) initiative, which aims to showcase actions on the ground precisely in order to facilitate knowledge exchange and replication across the EU.

**Why is it important to monitor the implementation of the Green Deal? Are existing mechanisms fit for purpose?**

Cities' and regions' plans and contributions must be taken into account in every phase of the process, in a continuous and structured manner. In this respect, we propose the launch of a European Regional Scoreboard as an instrument to provide evidence of progress in the implementation of the Green Deal and recovery plans locally. The scoreboard would also serve as a knowledge tool to help represent the diversity of local and regional needs, identify and replicate best practices, including finance-ready pilot actions at the local and sub-national level.

**Read the whole interview on [the CoR website](#)**

**The CoR has conducted a survey – [Is the Green Deal fit for combating climate change in EU regions and cities](#) – that will feed into this opinion.**

## The Bulletin of the Commission for the Environment, Climate change and Energy (ENVE)

### ENVE AT WORK

#### ENVE COMMISSION MEETING, 10 NOVEMBER

In light of the current COVID-19 related restrictions, the meeting will be held by videoconference only and will take place on 10 November from 11.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. (Brussels time). Voting on the amendments and opinions will take place online from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. within two consecutive days.

The special guests of the meeting will be Dr Eva Kracht, Deputy Director General for European Policy, representative of the German Presidency of the Council of the EU, and Mr Mauro R. Petriccione, Director-General for Climate Action in the European Commission. Members will discuss with the representatives of the German presidency and the Commission how to achieve 2030 climate targets through supporting green transition at local and regional level. An assessment of the Green Deal, adaptation to climate change and the integration of the energy system will also feature in the debate.



More information is available on the [Members portal](#) and [the ENVE website](#).

#### FORTHCOMING ENVE OPINIONS

- ✓ **The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal**  
Referral of the German Presidency of the EU Council  
**Rapporteur: Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA)**  
Adoption in the ENVE commission: 10 November 2020. **Adoption at plenary session: 9-10 December 2020**  
The CoR has conducted a survey to feed into this opinion, more [here](#).
- ✓ **Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities: what framework conditions are required for this?**  
Referral of the German Presidency of the EU Council  
**Rapporteur: Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)**  
Adoption in the ENVE commission: 10 November 2020. **Adoption at plenary session: 9-10 December 2020**
- ✓ **Powering a climate-neutral economy: An EU Strategy for Energy System Integration – exchange of views**  
**Rapporteur: Gunārs Anšņs (LV/RE)**  
Adoption in the ENVE commission: 26 January 2021. **Adoption at plenary session: 17-18 March 2021**
- ✓ **Renovation Wave in the buildings sector and opportunities for green European recovery**  
**Rapporteur: Enrico Rossi (IT/PES)**  
Adoption in the ENVE commission: 26 January 2021. **Adoption at plenary session: 17-18 March 2021**

#### ENVE MEETINGS 2021

26 January  
25 March  
7-8 June (external)  
13 September  
10 November

## MEMBERS IN ACTION – OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

### SEPTEMBER

- ✓ **30/09 – 2/10 The 9th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns** took place in Mannheim. The event was organised by ICLEI with the support of EU institutions, including the CoR. Hosted by the Mayor of Mannheim and CoR member Peter Kurz, local leaders gave support to the [Mannheim Message](#). Five prominent CoR members took part, including president Apostolos Tzitzikostas, ENVE chair Juan Espadas, mayor of Warsaw Rafał Trzaskowski and the CoR rapporteur on biodiversity Roby Biwer. They called for cities and regions to be placed at the heart of the design and implementation of the EU's recovery plans, ensuring every locality and region becomes more sustainable, inclusive and resilient. Read more about the conference [here](#).
- ✓ **30/09** Event on [Integrating science into the EU Green Deal](#) with R.Biwer (LU/PES) was held by the European Parliament's intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development.

### OCTOBER

- ✓ **5-22/10: 18th European Week of Regions and Cities.** ENVE was involved in a series of events ranging from biodiversity, the circular economy and climate change to the Green Deal Going Local initiative and organised three sessions on the topic of Green Europe:
  - 20/10 [Governance models for climate neutrality. The Covenant of Mayors and the Climate Pact](#) featuring R.Trzaskowski, mayor of Warsaw
  - 20/10 [Biodiversity 2030: your say our future](#) featuring J.Espadas, ENVE Chair and R.Biwer, rapporteur on biodiversity;
  - 20/10 [Towards climate-resilient cities and regions](#) featuring ENVE rapporteur on adaptation M.Markkula;
  - 22/10: [Launch event for the Green City Accord](#) featuring ENVE Chair J.Espadas
- ✓ **1/10 B. Honé (DE/PES)** spoke at the event „Hydrogen as a building block for a low carbon economy - the role of the regions“
- ✓ **5/10 B. Honé (DE/PES)** spoke at the event „Lower Saxony: Energy region No 1 – Designing our hydrogen future“
- ✓ **8/10 European Green Capital Awards ceremony 2020** took place with R.Trnka (SK/EPP) as jury member
- ✓ **14/10 Natura 2000 awards** took place with R.Biwer (LU/PES) as jury member
- ✓ **19-22/10 EU Green Week 2020 "A new beginning for people and nature".** The 2020 LIFE Awards Ceremony was part of what is Europe's biggest environmental event. The CoR was represented at:
  - 20/10 [Launch of the European Week for Waste Reduction](#) by T.Stelpstra (NL/ECR)
  - 22/10 [Biodiverse Cities And Regions Post COVID-19](#) by R.Biwer (LU/PES)
- ✓ **19/10 P.Całbecki (PL/EPP), M.Bora (IT/PES), R.Ciambetti (IT/ECR)** spoke at the event [Localising the European Green Deal](#)
- ✓ **26/10 T.Stelpstra (NL/ECR)** spoke at the event [Building the sustainable chemical industry of tomorrow](#)
- ✓ **26-29/11 M.Markkula (FI/EPP)** spoke at [Energy for EU islands online forum](#)

### NOVEMBER

- ✓ **3/11 T.Stelpstra (NL/ECR)** spoke at the [Annual Conference of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#)
- ✓ **4-5/11 M.Markkula (FI/EPP)** spoke at the German presidency conference: [Climate change and the European water dimension – Enhancing resilience](#)
- ✓ **16/11 T.Stelpstra (NL/ECR)** will speak at the event [Towards a circular society and industry: How can the EU further close the loop?](#) organised by the EP Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable development
- ✓ **20/11 P.Całbecki (PL/EPP)** will speak at the event [The role of water in the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change](#), organised by the EP Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable development
- ✓ **21-29/11 European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) will focus on "invisible waste".** The CoR supports the EWWR and is a member of its steering committee

### DECEMBER

- ✓ **10/12 T.Stelpstra (NL/ECR)** will speak at the event [The energy dimension of Circular Economy](#)



## The Bulletin of the Commission for the Environment, Climate change and Energy (ENVE)

### NEXT YEAR

- ✓ **January** [IUCN World Congress in Marseille, France](#) In view of the sanitary situation, France and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have decided to postpone the Congress. New dates for the event will be announced in due course.
- ✓ **17-30 May** [UN CBD COP15 in Kunming, China](#)
- ✓ **31 May-4 June** [EU Green Week 2021](#) will be dedicated to the "zero pollution ambition". It will also look at other relevant European Green Deal initiatives, such the climate initiatives and the upcoming Chemicals Strategy, as well as initiatives in the field of energy, industry, mobility, agriculture, fisheries, health and biodiversity.
- ✓ **1-12 November** [UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow](#). The climate talks will be the biggest international summit the UK has ever hosted; bringing together over 30,000 delegates including heads of state, climate experts and campaigners to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change. The CoR delegation will attend; the CoR opinion and related political activities are on the agenda.

### WHAT IS THE EU DOING? INTERINSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

**The European Parliament voted on 7 October in favour of a 60% emissions reduction by 2030 (compared with the current target of 40%) while adopting its report on the European Climate Law.** This position is more ambitious than the 55% target [recently proposed](#) by the European Commission. MEPs call for an interim target for 2040 and for a phase out all fossil fuel subsidies by 2025. They also propose setting up an EU Climate Change Council (ECCC) as an independent scientific body to monitor progress.

**The environment ministers decided on 23 October to make the EU's 2050 net-zero emissions objective legally binding.** They left the decision on the emissions reduction target for 2030 to heads of state, who will meet at the EU Summit in December. The updated target should be delivered collectively by the EU's Member States, taking into account their national circumstances. The EU will submit its updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC before the end of the year.

First [Green Deal Call for proposals](#) was **launched back in September** in the last call under Horizon 2020. The call has been designed as the first R&I concrete action of support for the European Green Deal and the Recovery Plan. It is a EUR 1 billion call for research and innovation projects that respond to the climate crisis and help protect Europe's unique ecosystems and biodiversity. The deadline for submissions is 26 January 2021, with selected projects expected to start in autumn 2021.

**The Renovation Wave Strategy was published** on 14 October to improve the energy performance of buildings. The Commission aims to at least double renovation rates in the next ten years and to make sure renovations lead to higher energy and resource efficiency. By 2030, 35 million buildings could be renovated and up to 160,000 additional green jobs created in the construction sector.

**The 8th Environment Action Programme was published** on 14 October. The proposal calls for the active engagement of all stakeholders at all levels of governance to ensure that EU climate and environment laws are implemented effectively. It forms the EU's basis for achieving the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

**The Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. Towards a toxic free environment was published** by the Commission on 14 October, with the aim of strengthening the preventive framework to reduce people's exposure to hazardous chemicals, while at the same time boosting innovation and competitiveness.

**The European Commission Work Programme 2021 was published on 19 October.** One of the key proposals under the European Green Deal priority is the Fit for 55 package aimed at reducing emissions by at least 55% by 2030. This will cover wide-ranging policy areas including renewables, energy efficiency, energy performance of buildings, land use, energy taxation, effort sharing and emissions trading. In addition, the Commission will propose measures to implement Europe's circular economy action plan, the EU biodiversity strategy and the farm to fork strategy. The CoR will adopt the resolution on the programme at its December plenary session.



The European Commission published its [Proposal amending the Aarhus Regulation to improve public scrutiny of EU acts related to the environment](#) on 14 October. The new proposal improves the possibilities for NGOs to act as a watchdog and challenge the Commission, if they find that there are grounds to challenge a decision for undermining EU environmental laws.

[The New State of Nature report](#) was published by the Commission on 19 October. It provides a comprehensive overview of the situation of Europe's most vulnerable species and habitats protected under EU nature laws.

The launch of the [European Climate Pact](#) is expected on 18 November as part of the European Green Deal to give everyone a voice and space to design new climate actions, share information, launch grassroots activities and showcase solutions that others can follow.

The European Commission will soon open its public consultation on the [EU Action Plan Towards a Zero Pollution Ambition for air, water and soil](#). The European Green Deal announced that to protect Europe's citizens and ecosystems the EU needs to move towards a zero pollution ambition, and better prevent and remedy pollution from air, water, soil and consumer products. To address these interlinked challenges, the Commission will adopt a Zero Pollution Action Plan in 2021.

Other consultations can be found at [this page](#) of the European Commission.

The [European Environment Agency \(EEA\)](#) recently published three interesting reports:

- [Tackling pollution and climate change in Europe will improve health and well-being, especially for the most vulnerable](#)
- [Moving towards zero pollution in Europe](#)
- [Countries and cities in Europe urgently need to step up adaptation to climate change impacts](#)

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