

Cities call for a green and just recovery in Europe

July 17, 2020

Dear Chancellor Merkel and President Michel,

Mayors in Europe and around the world have been on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic as it ripped through our cities and communities causing immense suffering and hardship. Yet, even as we face the unique challenge of this moment **we look to the future and our ambition is to swiftly deliver a strong, green and just recovery.**

That is why we have come together as the C40 Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce and launched the [Mayors' Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery](#). Our goal is to build a better, more sustainable, more resilient and fairer society out of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. We Mayors are taking action and transforming cities for the better, but we need others to help deliver this agenda for the benefit of everyone. I am happy to share with you our agenda, including our call to action to national governments, regional governments, central banks and international financial institutions, in attachment to this letter.

The 17-18 July 2020 European Council is a momentous opportunity for the EU to show global leadership and unveil an ambitious blueprint for green growth, equity and climate action. To achieve this, **the European Union must deliver a more ambitious and truly green EU budget where 100% of recovery funds support the low carbon transition, and an increased 2030 GHG emission reduction target** – as required by the Paris Agreement. We call on European leaders to **prioritise investment in resilient cities and in sustainable, climate-resilient industries and infrastructure such as mass transit and clean energy, to ensure all stimulus investment and recovery funds create more just and inclusive societies and communities, whilst also ending all public investments in fossil fuels.**

By taking a sustainable path at this critical juncture, by respecting science, fostering unity and embracing a spirit of innovation and purpose, we will secure the best recovery we can and avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis. We are ready to work with you and look forward to collaborating for a greener, healthier, safer and more equitable Europe.



GIUSEPPE SALA

Mayor of Milan, Italy

On behalf of C40 Cities and C40 Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force

C40 Mayors Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery

C40 mayors, alongside a global coalition of businesses, civil society organisations, climate activists and residents, are already building a green and just recovery. Their agenda calls on national and regional governments, central banks and international financial institutions to join them, by:

1. Agreeing that the only stimulus should be a green stimulus

Governments and multilateral agencies should invest in a green and just recovery by conditioning all stimulus packages, corporate aid and recovery funds to support the low-carbon transition we need and to prioritise investment in sustainable, climate-resilient industries and infrastructure.

2. Committing to an equitable and inclusive recovery

Plans and investments for the recovery need to address the root causes of economic inequalities by: providing direct and equitable access to green jobs and equal employment opportunities in the low-carbon transition; increasing equitable participation in the labour force through training and upskilling, especially for currently marginalised groups; and developing and applying appropriate regularisation mechanisms (ie. formal recognition, documentation, etc.) to provide better employment conditions and social protections for essential informal workers.

3. Protecting and championing mass transit

Invest, subsidize and support affordable zero-emission mass transit. To keep our air clean and prioritise the health of our residents, governments must use stimulus funds to make public transportation more accessible, reliable, frequent, affordable, well-integrated, safe, and more resilient in the face of future potential crises. Governments must also make it easier for cities to procure electric buses whilst reallocating road space to public transit, cycling, and pedestrian infrastructure, and help cities maintain and enhance some of the successful air quality, climate and road safety improvements introduced during lockdowns.

4. Prioritising and investing in clean energy

Invest in renewable energy and building retrofit city programmes to create thousands of jobs, help residents save on energy bills and protect people's health and safety with better and more energy efficient, healthier homes and offices.

5. Investing in resilient cities as the engines of the recovery

Cities have been on the front-line of the pandemic and national governments, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and other relevant financial entities must channel financial support directly to cities and ensure that cities can easily access this finance, recognising the need to combat the existing barriers they encounter.

6. Ending all public fossil fuel investments and subsidies

Accelerate the global and urban energy transition as a cornerstone of the COVID-19 green and just recovery by ending all public fossil fuel investments and subsidies. It has been 11 years since G20 governments pledged in Pittsburgh to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, yet no action has been taken. With a clear need to invest in clean power, public transport, and cities, and fossil fuel prices at historic lows, all national governments must decisively move away from investments in high carbon and fossil fuel intensive industries and increase investments in a low carbon future.