

# An Open Letter to Future European Parliamentary Candidates: Championing Climate Action in Cities

Dear Candidates,

As we approach the 2024 European Parliament elections, we, a coalition of European mayors, unite to express a shared imperative. Our plea is direct: prioritize substantial and direct financial support for climate action within cities across the European continent.

Our proposal is clear: we urge the EU institutions to strategically increase and provide direct funding allocated to cities and local governments. This would support better quality of life for our residents through enhanced climate adaptation, expedite the phasing out of fossil fuels by 2030, foster sustainable mobility, and enable widespread electrification within the European Union's cities, while addressing a just transition which supports the most vulnerable citizens.

Why focus on cities? Urban centers are not only hubs of innovation and governance but also epicenters of climate action. We, as city leaders, possess an intimate understanding of our unique challenges and are positioned to implement solutions rapidly and effectively, in close collaboration with our citizens. Locally, we manage essential infrastructure and develop contingency plans. We also play a crucial role in educating the public and heightening climate consciousness rooted in urban realities.

Consider the global perspective: cities account for approximately 70% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Despite this, cities are also leading the way in climate mitigation efforts. For example, within the ambitious C40 network, a significant majority of cities have surpassed their national counterparts in reducing carbon emissions. The EU itself has committed to the target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% percent by 2030 and adopted the 'Fit for 55' legislation. Cities are indispensable to achieving this target. Without the

active involvement of Europe's major cities, such goals risk remaining elusive.

We propose a shift in financial flows within the EU multiannual financial framework, supporting more direct resources towards city governments. This would empower us to launch and expand green, innovative projects that promote climate resilience and mitigation and benefit all citizens. Cities are ready to act immediately and effectively; adequate funding is our main barrier.

Cities contribute significantly to combating climate change, not solely through emission reductions but also by developing localized solutions that enhance sustainability globally and promoting sustainable lifestyles. As cities in the Global North, we bear a profound responsibility to pioneer, support, and share and disseminate solutions to the challenges of the climate crisis.

The climate crisis demands decisive leadership and action. Through strategic, long-term decisions, we must champion a transition to a greener and more climate-friendly future. The forthcoming EU elections present a critical opportunity to demonstrate this leadership with the new European institutions becoming a global example of climate leadership.

In solidarity, we, the undersigned cities, commit to rallying together and mobilizing other major European cities. Our goal is to encourage our national candidates and governments to prioritize urban climate action and ensure the necessary funding for all the ambitious cities eager to combat the climate crisis.

Yours sincerely,

**Lord Mayor of Copenhagen, Denmark**

Sophie Hæstorp Andersen

**Mayor of City of Aarhus, Denmark**

Jacob Bundsgaard

**Mayor of City of Amsterdam, Netherlands**

Femke Halsema

**Mayor of Athens, Greece**

Prof. Haris Doukas

**Mayor of Barcelona, Spain**

Jaume Collboni

**Mayor of Budapest, Hungary**

Gergely Karácsony

**Mayor of City of Heidelberg, Germany**

Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner

**Mayor of Gothenburg, Sweden**

Jonas Attenius

**Mayor of Helsinki, Finland**

Juhana Vartiainen

**Mayor of Ljubljana, Slovenia**

Zoran Janković

**Mayor of City of Liège, Belgium**

Willy Demeyer

**Mayor of Paris, France**

Anne Hidalgo

**Mayor of City of Lisbon, Portugal**

Carlos Manuel Félix Moedas

**Mayor of Malmö, Sweden**

Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh

**Mayor of Milan, Italy**

Giuseppe Sala

**Mayor of Nicosia, Cyprus**

Constantinos Yiorkadjis

**Mayor of Riga, Latvia**

Vilnis Ķirsis

**Mayor of Rotterdam, Netherlands**

Ahmed Aboutaleb

**Mayor of Stockholm, Sweden**

Karin Wanngård

**Mayor of Tallinn, Estonia**

Jevgeni Ossinovski

**Mayor of Zagreb, Croatia**

Tomislav Tomašević