

“Cities in the EU, engines of an ambitious European long-term strategy”
An open letter to Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič & Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete

Mr. Vice-President of the European Commission,
Mr. Commissioner for Climate and Energy,

We, the mayors of ambitious European cities, unite our voices in support of the European Commission’s mission to develop a European strategy for long-term greenhouse gas reduction in accordance with the Paris Agreement. We urge the European Commission to set the 1.5°C and net-zero emissions goals of the Paris Agreement as objectives of this strategy to be achieved by 2050.

We believe this is a fantastic opportunity for the European Union, a historical climate pioneer, to showcase its global leadership on climate action, and encourage the European Union to lead by example in the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

This year and next are critical for our planet: to keep global temperature rise below 1.5°C, greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2020 and decrease until reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. To achieve this, all countries have to prepare more ambitious NDCs, and put in place appropriate long-term strategies towards emissions neutrality. The IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C to be released in October 2018 will provide the latest available science to support the development of these long-term strategies.

With its decision to develop a long-term strategy, the EU is sending the right political message, but it needs to adopt the 1.5°C and net-zero emission objectives of the Paris Agreement and couple the strategy with consistent and Paris-compatible economic and energy policies, a coherent post-2020 EU budget for climate action (including measures to phase out fossil fuel) as well as an enhanced 2030 emissions reduction target.

In this endeavor, we encourage you to take in consideration the ambitious climate commitments that so many European cities have taken, as well as the solutions they can contribute.

As Mayors, it is our duty to deliver our fair share of the Paris Agreement. Cities in Europe are big GHG emitters, and our residents are already affected by the impacts of climate change, including floods in Paris, London or Copenhagen, extreme weather events in Oslo and Stockholm and heat waves in Milan and Barcelona.

Along with over 9,000 cities, we have joined the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, and within this framework, are undertaking transparent and measurable climate action, helping to meet and exceed the Paris agreement’s objectives. As signatories of the EU Covenant

of Mayors, we are committed to reduce our GHG emissions by 40% by 2030, and to design equally ambitious adaptation strategies to address the impacts of climate change.

But considering the worrying increase of EU emissions in 2017, we recently decided to step up our ambition, and have pledged to become emissions neutral by 2050. Conscious that this means increasing our ambition also in the mid-term, we are working on defining new sectoral targets for 2030, towards zero-emission transport, net-zero buildings, 100% renewable energy, and zero waste, that will bring big benefits to our residents, including clean air, green jobs, more efficient housing and many more!

Achieving this vision will only be possible if cities, regions and national governments work together and follow a shared roadmap and mutually supportive policies to accelerate action on the short and long terms. We know the EU can be the political driving force that sets us in this direction, and cities stand ready to contribute to the effort.

We hope this will inspire you to maintain your ambition and give you confidence that emissions-neutrality by mid-century is achievable, not only necessary and desirable. We encourage you to take this responsibility, and we, the Mayors, will share the invaluable task of implementing it, for the benefit of European citizens and the world.

Anne Hidalgo

Mayor of Paris

Karin Wanngård

Mayor of Stockholm

Giuseppe Sala

Mayor of Milan

Ada Colau

Mayor of Barcelona

Eckart Würzner

Lord Mayor of Heidelberg

Frank Jensen

Lord Mayor of Copenhagen

Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London

Ashok Sridharan

Mayor of Bonn

Minna Arve

Mayor of Turku

Robert Cornells Nordi

Mayor of Arendal