Covenant of Mayors
for Climate & Energy

THE COVENANT OF MAYORS FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY

We, the Mayors signing this Covenant, share a vision for a sustainable future - whatever the size of our municipality or its location on the world map. This common vision drives our action to tackle interconnected challenges: climate change mitigation, adaptation and sustainable energy. Together, we stand ready to deliver concrete, long term measures that provide an environmentally, socially and economically stable environment for present and future generations. It is our collective responsibility to build more sustainable, attractive, liveable, resilient and energy efficient territories.

WE, THE MAYORS, ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:

Climate change is already happening and is one of the greatest global challenges of our time, calling for immediate action and cooperation between local, regional and national authorities from all over the world;

Local authorities are key drivers of the energy transition and the fight against climate change at the level of governance closest to citizens. Local authorities share the responsibility for climate action with the regional and national levels and are willing to act irrespective of the commitments of other parties. Local and regional authorities in all socio-economic situations and geographical locations stand at the frontline of reducing the vulnerability of their territory to the various impacts of climate change. Although emissions reduction efforts are already underway, adaptation remains a necessary and indispensable complement to mitigation;

Climate change mitigation and adaptation can bring multiple benefits to the environment, society and the economy. Tackled together, they open up new opportunities to promote sustainable local development. This includes building inclusive, climate-resilient, energy efficient communities; enhancing the quality of life; stimulating investment and innovation; boosting the local economy and creating jobs; reinforcing stakeholder engagement and cooperation;

Local solutions to energy and climate challenges help provide secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy for citizens and therefore contribute to reducing energy dependence and protecting vulnerable consumers.

WE, THE MAYORS, SHARE A COMMON 2050 VISION TOWARDS:

- Decarbonised territories, thus contributing to keeping average global warming well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, in line with the international climate agreement reached at COP 21 in Paris in December 2015;
- More resilient territories, thus preparing for the unavoidable adverse impacts of climate change;
- Universal access to secure, sustainable and affordable energy services for all, thus enhancing quality of life and improving energy security.

TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION WE, THE MAYORS, COMMIT TO:

- Reducing CO_2 (and possibly other greenhouse gas) emissions on the territory of our municipalities by **at least 40% by 2030**, namely through improved energy efficiency and the greater use of renewable energy sources;
- Increasing our resilience by adapting to the impacts of climate change;
- Sharing our vision, results, experience and know-how with fellow local and regional authorities within the EU and beyond through direct cooperation and peer-to-peer exchange, namely in the context of the Global Covenant of Mayors.

In order to translate our local authorities' commitments into action, we undertake to follow the step-by-step roadmap as presented in annex I, including the development of a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan as well as regular monitoring of progress.

WE, THE MAYORS, ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OUR COMMITMENT REQUIRES:

- Strong political leadership;
- The establishment of ambitious long-term objectives going beyond political mandates;
- A coordinated (inter)action between mitigation and adaptation through the mobilisation of all municipal departments involved;
- A cross-sector and holistic territorial approach;
- The allocation of appropriate human, technical and financial resources;
- The engagement of all relevant stakeholders within our territories;
- The empowerment of citizens as key energy consumers, as "prosumers" and as participants in a demand responsive energy system;

- Immediate action, notably via "no-regret", flexible measures;
- The implementation of smart solutions to address the technical and societal challenges of the energy transition;
- Regular adjustments of our actions according to monitoring and evaluation findings;
- A combined horizontal and vertical cooperation between local authorities and with all other levels of government.

WE, THE MAYORS, WELCOME:

- The initiative of the European Commission bringing mitigation and adaptation – both pillars of the fight against climate change – under this single umbrella initiative and further strengthening the synergies with other relevant EU policies and initiatives;
- The European Commission's support for the extension of the Covenant of Mayors model to other parts of the world through the Global Covenant of Mayors;
- The support of the Committee of the Regions, as the institutional voice of EU local and regional authorities, for the Covenant of Mayors and its objectives;
- The assistance provided by Member States, regions, provinces, mentor cities and other institutional structures to local authorities in complying with their mitigation and adaptation commitments under the Covenant of Mayors.

WE, THE MAYORS, INVITE:

– **OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO:**

- Join us in the Covenant of Mayors' community;
- Share knowledge and engage in capacity-building activities under the Covenant of Mayors.

– **REGIONAL / SUB-NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO:**

- Provide us with strategic guidance, policy, technical and financial support in the development, implementation and monitoring of our action plan(s) and related measures;
- Help us foster cooperation and joint approaches for more efficient and integrated action.

– **NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS TO:**

- Shoulder their responsibility in tackling climate change and provide appropriate policy, technical and financial support for the preparation and implementation of our local mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- Involve us in the preparation and implementation of the national mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- Ensure appropriate access to financing mechanisms to support local climate and energy action;
- Recognise the impact of our local efforts, take account of our needs and reflect our views in the European and international climate processes.

– **THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS TO:**

- Consolidate policy frameworks which support the implementation of local climate and energy strategies and city-to-city cooperation;
- Provide us with the appropriate operational, technical and promotional assistance;
- Continue mainstreaming the Covenant of Mayors in relevant policies, support programmes and activities of the European Union, whilst involving us in the preparation and implementation phases;
- Continue making funding opportunities available for the implementation of our commitments as well as proposing dedicated project development assistance facilities that help us to develop, tender and launch investment programmes;
- Acknowledge our role and efforts in climate change mitigation and adaptation and share our achievements with the international community.

– **OTHER STAKEHOLDERS[1] TO:**

- Mobilise and share expertise, know-how, technology and financial resources that complement and strengthen our local efforts, scale up capacity-building, foster innovation and boost investment;
- Become active players in the energy transition and support us by getting involved in community action.

[1] E.g. private sector, financial institutions, civil society, scientific community and academia.

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ANNEX I

THE COVENANT OF MAYORS STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A COMMON ROADMAP FOR A SHARED VISION:

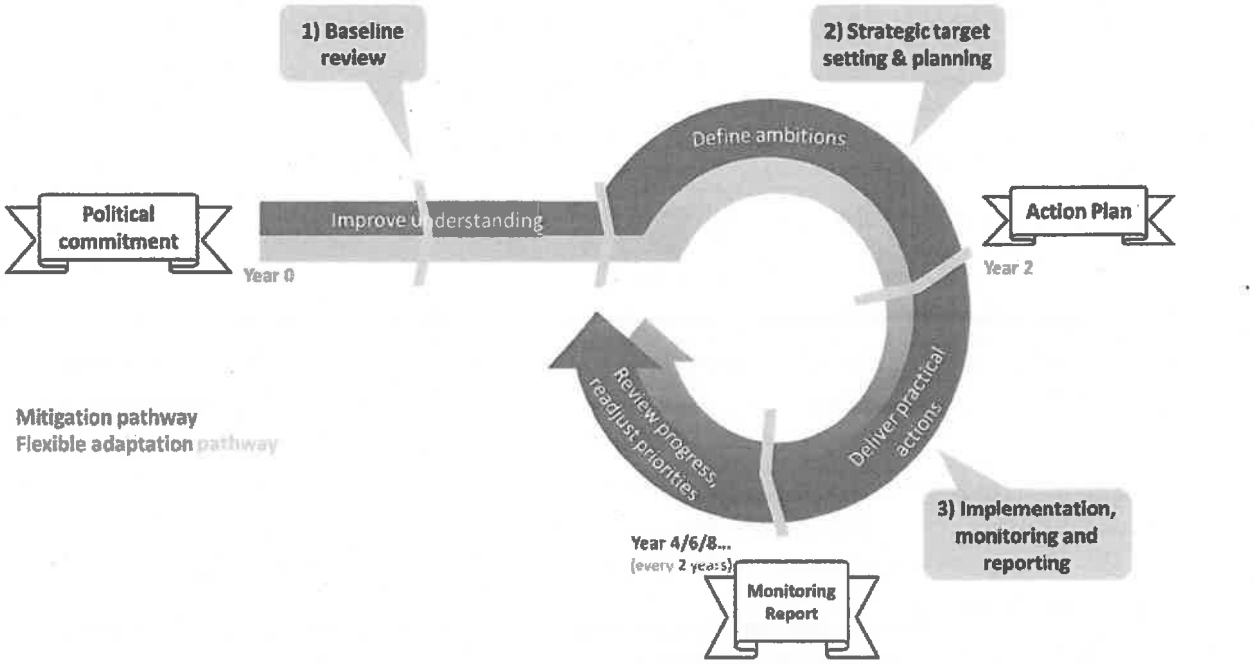
In order to meet their mitigation and adaptation targets, Covenant of Mayors Signatories commit to a series of steps:

STEPS \ PILLARS	MITIGATION	ADAPTATION
1) Initiation and baseline review	Preparing a **Baseline Emission Inventory**	Preparing a **Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment**
2) Strategic target setting & planning	Submitting a **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)** and mainstreaming mitigation and adaptation* considerations into relevant policies, strategies and plans within two years following the municipal council decision	
3) Implementation, monitoring and reporting	**Report progress** every second year following the SECAP submission in the initiative's platform	

** The adaptation strategy should be part of the SECAP and/or developed and mainstreamed in (a) separate document(s). Signatories can opt for the format of their choice – see the "adaptation pathway" paragraph hereafter.*

Years 1-2 shall set the groundwork for the plan, focussing on assessing the situation (main sources of emissions and their respective reduction potentials, main climate risks and vulnerabilities and their associated current/future challenges), identifying the mitigation and adaptation priorities and early wins, strengthening community involvement and mobilising sufficient resources and capacities to undertake the necessary actions. The next years will focus on strengthening and scaling up the actions and projects initiated to accelerate change.

FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS, ADJUSTABLE TO LOCAL REALITIES:



The Covenant of Mayors establishes a framework for action, which helps local authorities to translate their mitigation and adaptation ambitions into reality, while taking into account the diversity on the ground. Flexibility is given to signatory municipalities to choose the best way to implement their local actions. Even if priorities vary, local authorities are invited to take action in an integrated and holistic manner.

- **Mitigation Pathway**

The mitigation 'pathway' accommodates a certain degree of flexibility for signatories – especially for the emissions inventory (e.g. baseline year, key sectors to be addressed, emission factors used for the calculation, emission unit used for the reporting[2], etc.).

- **Adaptation Pathway**

The adaptation 'pathway' is kept flexible enough to integrate new knowledge and findings and reflect changing conditions and capacities of signatories. A climate risk and vulnerability assessment must be conducted within the agreed two-year time frame. The outcomes will lay the groundwork for defining how to make the territory more resilient. The adaptation strategy, which should be integrated into the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan and/or mainstreamed into other relevant planning documents, can be strengthened and readjusted over time. 'No-regret' actions could be considered first and complemented by other actions over the years (e.g. when the situation is reassessed every two years, during the revisions of the action plan) – this will enable adaptation in good time and at a lower cost.

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2 Signatories may choose to report their emissions in CO_2 (carbon dioxide) or CO_2 equivalent. The latter allows them to take into account other greenhouse gas emissions, notably CH_4 (methane) and N_2O (nitrous oxide).

A CREDIBLE, TRANSPARENT MOVEMENT:

- **Political endorsement:** The commitment, the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan and other relevant planning documents shall be ratified by resolution / decision of the municipal council. This allows for secured long-term political support.

- **A robust, consistent, transparent and harmonised data compilation and reporting framework:** Based on the experience of municipalities, regions and city networks, the Covenant of Mayors methodology relies on a sound technical and scientific basis developed together with the European Commission. Common methodological principles and reporting templates have been developed, enabling signatories to track, report, and publicly disclose their progress in a structured and systematic manner. The submitted Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan is made publicly available on the online signatory profile on the Covenant of Mayors website. This ensures the transparency, accountability and comparability of their local climate actions.

- **Recognition and high visibility of the efforts undertaken:** The individual and collective results collected through the reporting templates are made publicly available – namely on the Covenant of Mayors website – to inspire and facilitate exchanges and self-assessment. Reporting data via the Covenant of Mayors allows signatories to demonstrate the wide impact of their actions on the ground. Data compiled through the Covenant of Mayors reporting framework also gives essential feedback on local actions to national, European and international policy-makers.

- **Evaluation of the data reported by signatories:** This quality control contributes to guaranteeing the credibility and reliability of the whole Covenant of Mayors initiative.

- **Suspension in case of non-compliance:** Signatories accept to be suspended from the initiative – subject to prior notice in writing by the Covenant of Mayors Office – in the event of non-submission of the above-mentioned documents (i.e. Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan and Monitoring Reports) within the established deadlines. This procedure ensures transparency, robustness and fairness vis-à-vis other signatories who deliver on their commitments.

ANNEX II
BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The Covenant of Mayors signatories commit to the movement in full awareness of the following considerations:

- The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has re-affirmed in its Fifth Assessment Report that climate change is a reality and that human activities are continuing to affect the Earth's climate;
- According to findings from the IPCC, mitigation and adaptation are complementary approaches for reducing risks of climate change impacts over different time scales;
- National governments agreed within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on a collective goal of keeping global average warming well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels;
- National governments agreed in the context of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); among which the SDG7 requires the international community to *"ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all"*; the SDG11 requires to *"make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and the SDG13 requires to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts";*
- The Sustainable Energy for All initiative, launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2011, focuses on achieving the following three interlinked objectives by 2030: "*ensuring universal access to modern energy services", "doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency"* and *"doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix"*;
- The European Commission (EC) launched the Covenant of Mayors in 2008 and, as a key action of the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (EC, 2013), the Mayors Adapt initiative in 2014 to engage and support local authorities in taking action to respectively mitigate and adapt to climate change;
- Since its inception, the Covenant of Mayors has been recognised as a key EU instrument, which was notably acknowledged in the Energy Union strategy (EC, 2015) and the European Energy Security strategy (EC, 2014), to accelerate the energy transition and improve the security of energy supplies;
- The EU adopted in October 2014 the 2030 climate and energy policy framework setting new climate and energy targets: at least 40% domestic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, at least 27% of the energy consumed in the EU from renewable sources, at least 27% of energy savings;

- The European Commission adopted in 2011 the "2050 Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy" aiming at reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 – initiative also welcomed by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

- The EU Committee of the Regions (CoR) stresses its reinforced commitment to further supporting the Covenant of Mayors, e.g. through a dedicated platform within the CoR and other tools, as outlined in its Opinion on the Future of the Covenant (ENVE-VI-006).

ANNEX III
GLOSSARY

- **Adaptation:** actions undertaken to anticipate the adverse effects of climate change, prevent or minimise the damage they can cause, or take advantage of opportunities that may arise.
- **Climate change:** any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity.
- **Emissions Inventory:** quantification of the amount of greenhouse gases (CO_2 or CO_2 equivalent) emitted due to energy consumption in the territory of a Covenant of Mayors signatory during a specific year – it allows identifying the principal sources of emissions and their respective reduction potentials.
- **Mitigation:** actions undertaken to reduce concentrations of greenhouse gases released in the atmosphere.
- **Monitoring Report:** document that Covenant of Mayors signatories commit to submitting every two years after the submission of their SECAP, which outlines the interim results of its implementation – the aim of this report is to track the achievements of the foreseen objectives.
- **No-regret (adaptation) options:** activities providing immediate economic and environmental benefits. They are worthwhile under all plausible climate scenarios.
- **Prosumers:** Proactive consumers, consumers who in addition to consuming energy also assume the responsibility for producing it.
- **Resilience:** ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic ways of functioning, and a capacity to adapt to stress and (climate) change.
- **Risk and Vulnerability Assessment:** an analysis that determines the nature and extent of risk by analysing potential hazards and assessing vulnerability that could pose a potential threat or harm to people, property, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend – it allows the identification of areas of critical concern and therefore provides information for decision-making. The assessment could address risks related to floods, extreme temperatures and heat waves, droughts and water scarcity, storms and other extreme weather events, increased forest fires, sea level rise and coastal erosion (if applicable).
- **Risk:** probability of harmful consequences or losses in social, economic or environmental terms (e.g. lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services) which could occur to a particular community or a society affected by vulnerable conditions over some specified future time period.

- **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP):** key document in which a Covenant of Mayors signatory outlines how it intends to reach its commitments. It defines mitigation and adaptation actions to achieve the targets, together with time frames and assigned responsibilities.
- **Vulnerability:** degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes (the opposite of resilience).