



24.11.2017

OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Regional Development

on the role of EU regions and cities in implementing the COP 21 Paris Agreement on climate change
(2017/2006(INI))

Rapporteur: Gilles Pargneaux

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that regions and cities have already demonstrated their commitment to combating climate change in their capacity as major contributors to the Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA) and Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) initiatives; welcomes initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, including the Initiative on Climate Change Adaptation ('Mayors Adapt initiative'), the Under 2 Degrees Memorandum of Understanding, and the RegionsAdapt initiative; encourages more EU cities to join these initiatives and to commit to ambitious climate action; believes that the contribution of such initiatives should be acknowledged and encouraged by subnational and national governments and intergovernmental organisations;
2. Notes that local authorities are responsible for implementing the majority of the mitigation and adaptation measures for climate change and most of the EU legislation on the subject; stresses the need to act on urban planning, mobility, public transport and infrastructure, the energy performance of buildings, education campaigns, smart cities, smart grids and regional subsidies in order to implement the Paris Agreement;
3. Notes that nowadays, most Europeans live in cities; notes also that the urban infrastructure choices made by those responsible for cities will have an impact on cities' capacity to withstand climate change, since more frequent rainfall, flooding and heat waves are likely to be among the challenges that Europe's cities will face as a result of climate change;
4. Highlights the fact that cities, companies and other non-state actors have mitigation potential in the range of 2.5-4 billion tonnes of CO₂ by 2020¹, more than India emits in a year, and that this is similar in magnitude to the 4-6 billion tonnes of CO₂ that the UN projects that the intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) adopted in Paris will cut by 2030, a decade later;
5. Stresses that regions and cities play a key role in tackling climate change, that alone they are capable of reducing global emissions by 5 % to meet the Paris Agreement, and that in concert with other tiers of government and the private sector, they have the potential to reduce global emissions by 46 %²;
6. Recalls that the transport sector is responsible for emissions of both greenhouse gases (GHGs) and air pollutants that are hazardous to health, whose concentration in urban air is regulated by Directive (EU) 2016/2284 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants³;

¹ Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) report, December 2015.

² Arup study entitled 'Deadline 2020. How cities will get the job done'.
<http://www.c40.org/researches/deadline-2020>

³ Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing

7. Recalls that Article 7(2) of the Paris Agreement recognises that ‘adaptation is a global challenge faced by all with local, subnational, national, regional and international dimensions’;
8. Recognises that action by local authorities is key to enabling governments to implement their commitments within the framework of global climate action;
9. Emphasises that non-state actors are becoming a core element of the post-Paris climate regime and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process; stresses that they could make valuable contributions to the facilitative dialogue and the global stocktake, and could contribute to a more effective review process under the Paris Agreement;
10. Calls for the enhancement of both individual and coordinated action at EU, regional and local level to adapt to the impact of climate change;
11. Stresses that cities are driving urban policy-making, with the ability to link initiatives with national action plans and focus on initiatives with the greatest impact; calls for the deeper involvement of local government in the EU's decision-making process;
12. Notes that city mayors are directly accountable to their constituents for their decisions, and can act more effectively and quickly and often with immediate and impactful results;
13. Calls for new governance that could secure funds for climate action and for a better integration of regions and cities and their representative bodies, such as the Committee of the Regions at EU level, within the UNFCCC process, so as to establish a permanent direct dialogue between the different levels, starting at local and regional level; notes that the announcement of the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement led many US states and cities to reiterate their commitment to respecting the US nationally determined contribution (NDC) to reduce US emissions by 26 to 28 % by 2025 compared with their 2005 level, and that given the particular context, local and subnational authorities should be an integral part of the UNFCCC process, in order for their positions to be represented within that process and to facilitate the dissemination of local best practices with regard to climate change mitigation and adaptation;
14. Stresses the need for a clear reference to the role of local and regional governments in the Paris Agreement in order to ensure a long-term response to climate change; underlines that the EU has to work on the ground with cities and regions to make EU regions and cities better connected and more sustainable, create energy-efficient municipalities and develop smarter urban transport networks;
15. Points out that by 2030, almost 60 % of the world’s population will live in urban areas; notes that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 (‘Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’) aims to substantially increase, by 2020, the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change and resilience to disasters, and to develop and implement, in line with

Directive 2001/81/EC (OJ L 344, 17.12.2016, p. 1).

the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels; notes that, according to the 2014 UN World Urbanisation Prospects, 54 % of the world's population lived in urban areas in 2014, up from 30 % in 1950; notes that this figure is expected to reach 66 % in 2050;

16. Calls for the new global structure to formally involve local and regional authorities in the preparation and implementation of a clear climate action plan for the Paris Agreement; stresses that this structure must monitor binding targets, monitor progress through evaluation mechanisms and provide tailored financial instruments to transform commitments into tangible results;
17. Calls for coordination among all public authorities to be promoted and guaranteed, and for the involvement of the public, and of social and economic stakeholders, to be fostered;
18. Calls for an adaptation roadmap monitoring regional and local climate action and incorporating the latest data on adaptation action in the EU, including for reporting on the EU NDC;
19. Is concerned that the increase in extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, heavy storms, floods and droughts, are a direct consequence of human-induced climate change, will continue to have a negative impact on many parts of Europe and will do so with greater frequency, making people, nature and the ecosystems which they inhabit more vulnerable unless concrete measures are taken and the water cycle is restored; stresses the need to step up investments in green infrastructure that can help cities to keep cool and provide protection and relief during extreme weather events; notes that cities and regions are interlinked and depend on other cities and regions to provide them with essential services such as food, water and energy, and the infrastructure to deliver them; underlines that effective adaptation planning and development calls for solid information about the future climate risks facing a city and about how this translates into physical and economic vulnerabilities; recalls that there are still some cities without city-specific climate risk information to inform planning and development decision-making processes at local level, and that this calls for a joint and comprehensive approach combining dialogue and partnerships which crosses sectors and governmental levels; calls for integrated EU support to improve solidarity and the exchange of best practices among Member States and to ensure that the regions most affected by climate change are capable of taking the necessary measures to adapt;
20. Urges regions, cities and towns to establish specific adaptation plans to ensure that their vulnerability to climate change is reduced;
21. Stresses the need to step up investments in green infrastructure that can help cities to reduce temperatures and provide protection and relief during extreme weather events;
22. Notes that, in particular, increasing woody vegetation cover in cities, involving careful selection of the appropriate species for a given area, decreases sensible heat flux and air temperature, effectively improving the microclimate of cities and human thermal comfort; believes that this consideration should form the basis for the land-use planning and urban projects of EU cities;

23. Stresses the need for regions to implement and regularly update regional programmes containing measures to facilitate adequate adaptation in order to fight climate change effects, and that all regions must cooperate in formulating plans for adaption to the impact of climate change and in developing integrated plans for coastal zone management and water resources;
24. Recalls that the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (COM(2013)0216) identifies three main objectives and associated actions: 1) promoting action by Member States; 2) encouraging Member States to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies; and 3) providing LIFE funding to support capacity building and step up adaptation action in Europe (2013-2020);
25. Recalls that in order to meet the obligations resulting from the Paris Agreement, not only must emissions be reduced, but the CO₂ absorption capacity of soil must be increased, so that a net removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere can be achieved in the second half of the century;
26. Calls for increased protection for existing and newly established urban forests in the EU regions, given their bearing on the leisure time of local populations and in some areas on the provision and conservation of drinking water sources; believes that the municipalities should provide all the support necessary to maintain these ecosystems and their services and prevent any activities that would lead to their deterioration;
27. Maintains that increasing the resilience of society and the areas in which people live in order to address the inevitable effects of climate change calls for a number of measures, including more efficient and rational water use (adaptation measures relating to water should be given priority, in the same way as the mitigation measures that are already being taken with regard to carbon) and action in coastal areas; developing strategies based on green urban planning, with a particular focus on flood defences; mobilising know-how and resources for the adaptation of crops and forest management to address the problems of drought and fires; and increasing connectivity among ecosystems to encourage species to migrate;
28. Recognises the need for adaptation measures to achieve coordination and coherence at all levels of planning and management, and that it is important to ensure joint approaches and full coherence between national adaptation strategies and local risk management plans;
29. Points out that the vulnerability of individuals to the effects of climate change, and especially to so-called extreme phenomena, is to a large extent determined by their ability to access basic resources such as energy and water; calls on public authorities, with that in mind, to guarantee access to those two basic resources;
30. Notes that only fifteen Member States have adopted an action plan and an adaptation strategy, with few concrete measures on the ground; stresses the need to monitor and evaluate all adaptation strategies and action plans on risk prevention, and flood and water management;
31. Recognises that efficient resource management is fundamental for mitigation and adaptation purposes, in order to identify joint priorities; calls for integrated local

strategies to ensure the more efficient use of resources, and to build resiliency and adapt to the impact of climate change in the areas most affected;

32. Is of the opinion that local and regional authorities should take integrated and long-term action on climate change mitigation and adaptation at local level;
33. Considers that local and subnational authorities should be able to clearly define their mitigation and adaptation commitments, as nations have done through the NDCs, so as to provide solid and transparent contributions, starting from robust monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) processes, through initiatives such as the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy; calls for the creation of a system of locally determined contributions, to be implemented in direct connection and complementarity with the NDCs; considers that these contributions, whether national, subnational, regional or local, should adhere to common modalities, procedures and guidelines as appropriate, to ensure the transparency of action and support;
34. Recalls that at least 20 % of the EU budget for 2014-2020 (approximately EUR 212 billion) should be spent on climate-related action; notes that in special report No 31/2016, the European Court of Auditors considers that there is a serious risk of falling short of meeting the 20 % target if no additional efforts to tackle climate change are made, while recognising that the adoption of the target has led to more and better focused climate action funding under some of the European Structural and Investment Funds namely the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, but that in other areas, such as the European Social Fund, agriculture, rural development and fisheries, it is largely business as usual (which is to say that there has been no significant shift towards climate action);
35. Welcomes the inclusion of thematic objectives TO4, TO5 and TO6 among the criteria for allocating cohesion funding; recalls that, according to the European Court of Auditors, the commitment to ensuring that at least 20 % of the Multiannual Financial Framework is spent on climate measures in the period 2014-2020 may not be achieved if no additional measures are taken;
36. Emphasises the lack of a reporting system on the proportion of the Structural and Cohesion Funds allocated to mitigation and adaptation measures by local authorities;
37. Calls on the Commission to place an obligation on Member States to indicate the percentage of EU funds spent at local level on reducing GHG emissions and ensuring spatial adaptation to climate change;
38. Calls on the Commission, the EIB and the Member States to strengthen the administrative capacity of regions and cities in order to enable them to take full advantage of the public and private financing opportunities available at EU level; stresses the need for improved financial assistance to help local and regional authorities implement coherent climate measures; believes that financial facilities such as the global climate funds should be directly accessible to local authorities;
39. Is aware of the problems facing municipalities and regions hitherto totally dependent in economic terms on the extraction of conventional energy sources such as coal and calls for EU funding programmes to support their structural transformation;

40. Calls on local and regional authorities to do whatever they can to set up public funds which can be used, for example, to promote the development of renewables, decentralise networks and encourage the use of consumer-generated electricity;
41. Urges public authorities to record the activities that increase vulnerability and GHG emissions and to provide tax incentives for activities that promote adaptation to climate change and the reduction of emissions;
42. Stresses the need to stimulate the energy transition and local investment in climate mitigation and adaptation measures, by streamlining regulations, reducing bureaucracy, enabling innovative solutions and encouraging partnerships with local communities and civil society, with a view to promoting climate action; calls for national initiatives to raise public awareness of the effect of climate change;
43. Stresses the significance of education in climate protection and calls for sufficient measures for municipalities and schools in order to ensure the requisite expertise;
44. Welcomes city initiatives, such as smart cities and smart grids, that seek to reduce GHG emissions and increase resource efficiency by addressing climate change, achieving green growth and promoting areas linked by public transport systems; stresses that regions have to improve green city arrangements with a view to national, urban green growth, given that cities are major contributors to GHG emissions, and that solutions such as smart grids offer the potential to deliver energy more efficiently to homes and buildings, thereby improving energy efficiency and consumption;
45. Calls on the competent authorities to steer agricultural and forestry production towards activities that serve to reduce direct and indirect GHG emissions, and to draw up plans to bring about a gradual increase in the absorption capacity of the soil;
46. Welcomes the potential economic windfalls for cities that take the lead on low-carbon infrastructure, including reduced power costs, decreased maintenance costs and reduced spending on public health, which is improved by reductions in pollutants;
47. Recalls that small-scale renewable energy projects, such as renewable energy communities and renewable self-consumer projects, can contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Paris Agreement;
48. Stresses the importance of cities taking a lead role in the fight against climate change by promoting the use of public transport, including rail transport; notes that traffic congestion is a leading source of carbon emissions; stresses that the EU has to work on the ground with cities and regions to make EU regions and cities more energy-efficient and better connected, in order to develop smarter urban transport networks for a more climate-resilient world;
49. Recalls that transport produces not only emissions with a significant impact on health, but also GHG emissions; takes the view that regions and cities have enormous potential to reduce the GHG emissions from transport by taking them into account to a greater extent in transport planning; highlights the need for funding for initiatives to facilitate local and regional low-carbon mobility;

50. Encourages local authorities to implement plans in the areas of transport and logistics in order to promote electrified public and private transport, including by setting aside certain areas for use only by bicycles and electric vehicles and by providing sufficient numbers of easily accessible recharging points;
51. Calls, in appreciation of the particular importance of the transport sector, for a number of model regions to be designated for the purpose of research into an intelligent, interconnected transport system between urban and rural areas;
52. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the Horizon 2020 Programme devotes increased attention and funding to innovation and research projects in the area of the circular economy and sustainable cities;
53. Reiterates the need for regions to implement Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings¹ and Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency²;
54. Calls on local authorities to conduct information campaigns, including in cooperation with representatives of catering establishments, to raise awareness about the carbon footprint of food, in order to educate people about healthy eating and encourage them to eat food that has a low impact on the climate;
55. Underlines that locally produced seasonal food can reduce the GHG emissions from transport and thus reduce the overall carbon footprint of the food; calls on the Commission to increase local and regional sustainable food production;
56. Calls for the strengthening of partnerships between the EU and local and regional governments to reinforce procedures to accelerate local climate action within the framework of the circular economy, in order to reduce waste, control climate change and use resources more efficiently;
57. Stresses that the circular economy is a tool with enormous potential for improving sustainability in cities and calls on the Commission to include cities in the circular economy strategy;
58. Calls on the competent authorities to tackle the problem of waste with a view to bringing the circular economy to fruition and promoting modes of disposal other than incineration for waste that is not reusable or recyclable;
59. Asks the Commission to seek ways to enhance international cooperation between regions and local level actors in order to exchange good practices and lessons learned so as to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement;
60. Calls for national governments to help cities and regions to fulfil international commitments to supporting climate and energy initiatives at local and regional level;

¹ Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings (OJ L 153, 18.6.2010, p. 13).

² Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency, amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC (OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 1).

61. Calls on cities and regions to take the lead on the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy production in order to reduce GHG emissions and air pollution; notes that regions and cities can play an essential role in the decarbonisation of society and that their involvement in the creation of an energy system based on renewables should be a priority for the EU and the individual Member States;
62. Welcomes the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's decision to draft a special report on cities and climate in 2023, a commitment which will drive increased research into the importance of cities in combating climate change; calls on the Commission to take an active part in its drawing-up and to champion a multi-level territorial vision of climate action; believes that cities should provide input into the 2018 Global Climate Report; believes that cities and regions can influence policy making following the Paris Agreement, implementing a strategic approach to tackle global warming and support mitigation and adaptation measures in urban areas, where more than half the world's population live;
63. Recognises the special responsibility of cities to tackle climate change, since they account for 70 % of global CO2 emissions; believes that the commitments made in the Paris City Hall Declaration in 2015 will only be met through engagement with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and the widespread adoption of action plans by cities across the EU; calls on the Commission to help to ensure, wherever necessary, the successful integration of the Compact of Mayors and the Covenant of Mayors, which began on 22 June 2016.
64. Notes that during COP 22 in Marrakesh, local and regional authorities developed the Marrakesh Roadmap for Action, which highlights the need for the more direct involvement of local authorities, which should be formally recognised as part of the official discussion on climate change, rather than considered as being at the same level as other non-state actors, such as NGOs and the private sector;
65. Emphasises that the public authorities should set an example as energy consumers and calls for the Structural Funds to be focused or boosted in order to promote energy efficiency in public buildings and self-sufficiency in municipalities through regenerative energy;
66. Urges the Commission and the Member States to promote pilot schemes and models for energy self-management at local level – models that are based on distribution systems, the economic returns from which are used to finance new facilities that reduce the impact on the environment;
67. Calls on the Commission to promote the coordination and exchange of information and best practices between Member States, regions, local communities and cities;
68. Is dismayed at the European Court of Auditors' 2016 assessment that the EU's target of spending 20 % of its budget in the current programming period on climate action will not be met; acknowledges the wide range of difficulties in measuring and evaluating EU projects that seek to alleviate climate change and its impact; calls for the Commission to keep Parliament updated on progress in this important area;
69. Underlines the significance of decentralised, cooperative Citizens' Energy Projects, and

calls for them to be supported under the Structural Funds and through a reduction of the administrative burden at national and regional level;

70. Recognises the importance of bottom-up approaches in securing stakeholder buy-in for alleviating climate change; acknowledges the potential of the tools established under the Common Provision Regulation¹, such as integrated territorial investments (ITIs) and community-led local developments (CLLDs), in helping to achieve EU objectives in this area; calls on the Commission to work with stakeholders at national and local level to ensure that they make proper use of the full range of tools at their disposal;
71. Reiterates its commitment to achieving the successful global rollout of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy; notes the importance of the establishment of goals that are fully measurable; notes, in addition, that a number of the action plans submitted contain commitments through to 2020 and that the cities concerned thus have additional work to do up to 2030;
72. Welcomes voluntary measures (traffic light labelling) to ensure the visibility of the climate impact and carbon footprint of food and other products, and calls for EU-wide common indicators to enable voluntary but comparative labelling, particularly in the area of regional trade.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	21.11.2017
Result of final vote	+: 59 -: 0 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Catherine Bearder, Ivo Belet, Simona Bonafè, Lynn Boylan, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Nessa Childers, Alberto Cirio, Birgit Collin-Langen, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Angélique Delahaye, Mark Demesmaeker, Bas Eickhout, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Arne Gericke, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jean-François Jalkh, Benedek Jávor, Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Kateřina Konečná, Urszula Krupa, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Valentinas Mazuronis, Joëlle Mélin, Susanne Melior, Rory Palmer, Gilles Pargneaux, Piernicola Pedicini, Bolesław G. Piecha, Pavel Poc, Frédérique Ries, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Davor Škrlec, Renate Sommer, Ivica Tolić, Nils Torvalds, Adina-Ioana Vălean, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes present for the final vote	Jørn Dohrmann, Herbert Dorfmann, Eleonora Evi, Martin Häusling, Rupert Matthews, Stanislav Polčák, Christel Schaldemose, Bart Staes, Dubravka Šuica, Carlos Zorrinho
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Maria Noichl

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

59	+
ALDE	Catherine Bearder, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Valentinas Mazuronis, Frédérique Ries, Nils Torvalds
ECR	Mark Demesmaeker, Jørn Dohrmann, Arne Gericke, Julie Girling, Urszula Krupa, Rupert Matthews, Boleslaw G. Piecha
EFDD	Eleonora Evi, Piernicola Pedicini
GUE/NGL	Lynn Boylan, Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Kateřina Konečná
NI	Zoltán Balczó
PPE	Pilar Ayuso, Ivo Belet, Alberto Cirio, Birgit Collin-Langen, Angélique Delahaye, Herbert Dorfmann, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Jens Gieseke, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Stanislav Polčák, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Renate Sommer, Dubravka Šuica, Ivica Tolić, Adina-Ioana Vălean
S&D	Simona Bonafè, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Nessa Childers, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Susanne Melior, Maria Noichl, Rory Palmer, Gilles Pargneaux, Pavel Poc, Christel Schaldemose, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Damiano Zoffoli, Carlos Zorrinho
VERTS/ALE	Margrete Auken, Bas Eickhout, Martin Häusling, Benedek Jávor, Davor Škrlec, Bart Staes

0	-

2	0
ENF	Jean-François Jalkh, Joëlle Mélin

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention