



**MAYORS ADAPT**

THE COVENANT OF MAYORS INITIATIVE  
ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Local authorities are working at the forefront of implementing solutions for a changing climate. Adaptation action brings new opportunities to enhance the quality of life, promote sustainable urban development, stimulate investment and innovation, reinforce stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder cooperation. By adopting resilient thinking and investing in climate preparedness, EU Mayors and Political Leaders make their local authorities more attractive, healthier and safer.

## Mayors' Commitment

I, **[Name of the Mayor (or other authorised representative)]**, **[Mayor or Job title]** of **[Name of the local authority]** inform you that the **[Municipal Council (or equivalent decision-making body)]** decided at the meeting on **[date]** to mandate me, **[me / legal representative: Mayor, President,..]**, to sign up to the Mayors Adapt Initiative – the Covenant of Mayors' Initiative on Adaptation to climate change, in full knowledge of all commitments outlined below and specified further in the full 'Commitment Document'.

In particular I commit to contributing to the overall aim of the EU Adaptation Strategy and creating a more climate-resilient Europe. This means enhancing the local authority's preparedness and our capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change by:

- [Developing a comprehensive (independent) local adaptation strategy for our local authority; **and/or**];
- [Integrating adaptation to climate change into our existing relevant plans.<sup>1</sup>]

Regardless of the option selected, I undertake to fulfil the following **step-by-step approach**:

- Assess potential climate change risks and vulnerabilities as a basis to prioritise adaptation actions ;
- Identify, assess and prioritise adaptation actions through the development and submission of a local adaptation strategy (1) or the respective relevant adaptation documents (2), including the results of the vulnerability assessment, identifying clear responsibilities and resources, and outlining adaptation actions, within two years following the formal signing of the Commitment;
- Implement local adaptation actions;
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress;
- Report every second year according to the framework of the initiative;
- Adjust the local adaptation strategy accordingly.

I declare my local authority up to the challenge, and ready to mobilise sufficient resources and capacities to strengthen its climate change resilience.

[Name and complete address of the local authority]

[Name, e-mail and phone number of the Mayor]

[Name, e-mail and phone number of the contact person]

SIGNATURE by Mayor

[Date],

<sup>1</sup> Please choose your desired option(s), remove the non-selected one (if any).

## Full Commitment Document

---

WHEREAS the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed in its [Fifth Assessment Report](#) that Human activities are continuing to affect the Earth's climate;

WHEREAS the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions recalls that the objective of keeping the global mean surface temperature increase below 2°C compared with preindustrial levels requires urgent and ambitious mitigation action by the global community; and underlines that adaptation is a necessary and unavoidable complement to mitigation;

WHEREAS the European Commission (EC) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) state that climate change threatens the different regions of Europe in different ways, although all regions will experience climate change through a mix of gradual changes (such as increasing average temperature or changes to biodiversity) and rapid ones (such as flooding). Both the EC and the EEA consider climate change now as a major part of planning for the future. As well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, there is also a need for society to adapt. Otherwise damage costs will continue to rise;

WHEREAS the European Commission, in the [EU strategy on adaptation to climate change](#) (EC, 2013), sets out a framework and mechanisms for taking the EU's preparedness for current and future climate impacts to a new level; and introduces adaptation in the Covenant of Mayors framework (2013/2014). The Commission, on the basis of the model of the Covenant of Mayors initiative, will support adaptation in cities, notably by launching the Mayors Adapt initiative through which they can make a voluntary commitment to adopt local adaptation strategies and awareness-raising activities (Action 3).

### We, the Mayors, acknowledge that:

Local authorities, in all socio-economic situations and geographical locations, are vulnerable to the various impacts of climate change – such as extreme weather events, like heat waves, storms, floods and droughts, as well as longer term changes, like economic losses and public health problems – although emission reduction efforts are already underway.

Local authorities are key drivers in the implementation of adaptation measures, improving the overall resilience of local territories in policy fields under their competences – such as the environment, spatial planning, public health, civil protection, risk management, energy and water supply; and many initiatives are already in place to do so.

Adaptation action brings new opportunities to enhance the quality of life of our citizens, promote sustainable urban development, stimulate investment and innovation, reinforce stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder cooperation, and should therefore be integrated into urban development and planning practices.

Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting infrastructures and policies to climate impacts are both crucial to building more sustainable local authorities. The Covenant of Mayors initiative therefore offers a promising framework for local authorities to take action and facilitate networking, where both climate mitigation and adaptation efforts at local level could be considered in an integrated way.

## We, the Mayors, commit to:

Contributing to the overall aim of the EU Adaptation Strategy and creating a more climate-resilient Europe. This means enhancing our preparedness and our capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change by:

- Developing a comprehensive local adaptation strategy for our local authority (1); **and/or** <sup>1</sup>.
- Integrating adaptation to climate change into our existing relevant plans (2)

Regardless of the option selected, we undertake to:

Fulfil the following step-by-step approach:	And submit (within predefined time frames):
<b>1. Get started: secure commitment and ensure management,</b>	✓ A <b>local adaptation strategy (1) or the respective relevant adaptation documents (2)</b> , including the results of the risk & vulnerability assessment, identifying clear responsibilities and resources, and outlining the adaptation actions - <u>within two years</u> following the formal signing of the Commitment;
<b>2. Assess risks and vulnerabilities as a basis to prioritise adaptation actions,</b>	
<b>3. Identify adaptation options,</b>	
<b>4. Assess adaptation options,</b>	
<b>5. Implement adaptation options,</b>	✓ An <b>Implementation Progress Report</b> <u>every second year</u> according to the framework of the initiative (see the proposed self-assessment checklist in Appendix).
<b>6. Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, and adjust the local adaptation strategy accordingly.</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Sufficient flexibility is given to the participating municipalities to choose the best way to integrate adaptation into their local policies and activities. Please specify your desired option(s) and remove the non-selected one (if any) in the Mayor's Commitment form (1<sup>st</sup> page).

In case of non submission of the above-mentioned document(s) – we accept to be suspended from the initiative – subject to prior notice in writing by the Mayors Adapt office.

**We, the Mayors, consider that adaptation requires:**

**Strong political leadership**

To ensure the success and durability of the climate agenda, it is essential that sufficient empowerment and support are secured at the highest political level.

**Establishment of long-term goals**

Adaptation to climate change requires setting long-term objectives, and going beyond legislative periods or political mandates.

**Coordination of climate policy**

Adapting to the impacts of climate change requires coordinated action between mitigation and adaptation. Both mitigation and adaptation must go “hand-in-hand” and when possible reinforce each other. This coordinated approach is essential to trigger effective adaptation action at local level.

**Integration of adaptation into plans and policies in a multi-sectoral way**

Given the cross-cutting nature of the topic, adaptation requires a holistic, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach. Local authorities can, for example, define climate-resilient standards for both existing and new buildings as well as transport and energy infrastructures; promote green and blue spaces in local spatial plans; reinforce the flood and/or heat wave risk management plan etc.

Integrating and mainstreaming adaptation across local authority plans and policies will help to address technical concerns and harness political support, while working with all the concerned departments of the local authority – thus facilitating horizontal and vertical policy integration. Coordination among the different policy departments within the local administration and beyond is effective in pooling resources and expertise while creating adaptation advocates.

## **Strong multi-stakeholder collaboration**

Adaptation to climate change is a task that requires action and cooperation of the society as a whole:

- The citizens – to raise awareness (e.g. on the possible damage due to floods, heat waves, etc.), stimulate behaviour change, and ensure the understanding of the risks and uncertainties when coping with climate change;
- The academic sphere and research institutes to develop and improve the knowledge base (e.g. climate change projections data relevant to local decision making);
- The practitioners (e.g. urban planners, housing associations, disaster prevention and health care services) – to develop and capitalise on knowledge that leads to effective concrete actions and increased public awareness;
- The private sector - to explore appropriate technologies, tools and financial mechanisms to meet the local resilience challenge while creating economic growth and jobs.
- Engaging all relevant stakeholders, communicating challenges and opportunities, and facilitating participation are key to successful adaptation.

## **Multi-level governance**

The consistency between the adaptation frameworks at all (European, national and regional) levels is also important to integrate adaptation issues into relevant policies, programmes and strategies (e.g. disaster risk management). National governments can offer and reinforce the overall climate policy framework. Besides, the regions, provinces, networks and associations are recognised as key supporters and multipliers.

## **Immediate action in order to realise the opportunities from adaptation ('no-regrets' approach)**

Adaptation to climate change offers opportunities for developing new jobs, promoting innovation and making the local authorities more attractive. Designing the necessary policy instruments and incorporating climate change adaptation solutions into concrete measures, such as those aiming at improving the quality of our living environment or reducing energy consumption, will lead the way towards a more sustainable and resilient future for the citizens, the economy and the environment.

Soft, low-cost and 'no-regrets' actions could be considered first, and kept flexible enough to integrate new knowledge and be adapted to changing conditions. This will ensure adaptation in time and at a lower cost.



### **Identifying and mobilising financial resources**

Adaptation measures should not be considered as a cost but as an investment for the long-term liveability of local authorities. Investing on resilience now is less costly than taking action later.

Innovative mechanisms within the financial sector that are city-oriented and flexible enough to fund and support integrated adaptation actions are needed to enable long-term investment. Capital could be raised through public-private partnerships and through insurance for dealing with climate risks. Besides, specific EU financial funds and programmes (e.g Cohesion Policy, LIFE etc.) are developed and adapted by the European Commission to support local authorities in fulfilling their commitments and developing actions in the climate field.

### **Regular monitoring of progress**

Monitoring and evaluating results is important for following up on the achievements and for developing future actions. Local authorities should therefore propose clear monitoring mechanisms (e.g. on how to maintain up-to-date data on risks and vulnerabilities, assess the implementation level of the adaptation actions and ensure feedback loops on experience on the ground).

### **We, the Mayors, invite European Institutions and National Governments to:**

Set up coherent co-operation schemes and consolidate policy frameworks which support the development and implementation of our local adaptation strategies.

Negotiate with the financial actors, unlock financial resources and/or ensure direct access to financing mechanisms to help us achieve our formal adaptation commitments.

Enable the delivery of sufficient technical support to reinforce our capacities to address climate adaptation.

Recognise local authorities' actions and achievements by providing public visibility through official communication channels.

Support and further recognise the role of the local authorities in improving the climate change resilience of our territories.

### **We, the Mayors, encourage other Local Authorities to:**

Join the initiative and formalise their contributions.

Take part in knowledge-sharing activities and capacity-building events proposed within the framework of the present initiative.

## APPENDIX

### Mayors Adapt Reporting Framework

Mayors Adapt Signatories are invited to report on their progress through a simple online questionnaire. The questions, directly arising from the below self-assessment checklist, are available under their own city profile factsheet. This list is based on the guiding principles defined in the full commitment document and is proposed as a basis for reporting. The key results are published on the initiative's website.

Guiding Principles	Self-Assessment Checklist
<b>Strong political leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tangible adaptation commitments well integrated into the local policy agenda</li> <li>✓ Enabling political environment set</li> </ul>
<b>Establishment of long-term goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Clear priorities and long-term vision identified</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination of climate policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordinated action set between mitigation and adaptation</li> </ul>
<b>Integration of adaptation into plans and policies in a multi-sectoral way</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Comprehensive mapping of the risks and vulnerabilities of the territory undertaken</li> <li>✓ Specific adaptation actions identified and prioritised accordingly (including clear synergies and potential trade-offs with e.g. mitigation, environment and disaster risk management policies)</li> </ul>
<b>Strong multi-stakeholder collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dialogue, cooperation and partnership set with relevant stakeholders (e.g. regular meetings, information events, communication campaigns, training)</li> </ul>
<b>Multi-level governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Relevant organisation and coordination in place (i.e. clear role and contributions assigned to the different departments)</li> </ul>
<b>Immediate action in order to realise the opportunities from adaptation ('no-regret' approach)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Instruments in place for effective implementation (e.g. mainstreaming adaptation via existing policies and measures, developing new policies) and agreements with stakeholders in charge of implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Identifying and mobilising financial resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tangible financial resources allocated to adaptation actions</li> </ul>
<b>Regular monitoring of progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Monitoring mechanisms in place to assess state of play and identify future actions (e.g. monitoring provisions in line with adaptation action; key indicators on impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation defined; stakeholders involved; frequency proposed)</li> </ul>

## Note

This list is mainly indicative. These elements can be progressively considered by the Mayors Adapt signatories; it is not required to cover all of them in the first progress report.

## More Support for Mayors Adapt signatories

A Technical Meta-Guidance Document (incl. a list of sectors to be addressed, a catalogue of good practices etc.) is available on the initiative's website to support signatories through the development and implementation of their adaptation actions.