

# 1<sup>st</sup> EUROPEAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT POSITIONING SUMMARY ON CLIMATE AND ENERGY

- June 2009

This paper contains a summary of the first local government (LG) positions identified during the Local Government Climate Change Leadership Summit<sup>1</sup>, held in Copenhagen, Denmark between 2 and 4 June 2009.

## 0. Aim

The Local Government Climate Change Leadership Summit, organised by Local Government Denmark (LGDK)<sup>2</sup>, in close cooperation with many global and regional LG associations and international organisations, was a milestone in the Local Government Climate Roadmap<sup>3</sup>. It mobilised more than 800 representatives from municipalities and regions from over 60 countries to agree on a call to the Parties (national governments) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)<sup>4</sup>. The recommendations have been delivered to Ms. Connie Hedegaard, Danish Minister of Climate and Energy, who is host of the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 15). The call was also presented to the Parties at the following UNFCCC event, namely the Bonn Climate Change Talks.

## 1. Synopsis

Some of the common messages from the summit to the COP15 were:

- Climate change is a global phenomenon but consequences differ from region to region. Therefore, solutions should be worked out and implemented locally.
- Climate change is not just an environmental issue for cities. Local Governments cannot tackle issues by sector, the full governance of cities is at stake and collaboration with other levels of governments is imperative.
- There is a need to support the local authorities in order to combat climate changes
- The national level is needed to support the action plans for climate change with economic and political tools.
- Transfer of knowledge between local governments is essential. Financial support should be given to facilitate this.
- Global crises hit hardest in developing countries. Local governments in developing countries need funding, technology transfer and capacity-building to cope with the challenges of climate change.

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<sup>1</sup> Summit website - [www.kl.dk/localclimatesummit](http://www.kl.dk/localclimatesummit)

<sup>2</sup> LGDK - [www.kl.dk/English/Local-Government-Denmark](http://www.kl.dk/English/Local-Government-Denmark)

<sup>3</sup> Local Government Climate Roadmap - [www.iclei.org/climate-roadmap](http://www.iclei.org/climate-roadmap)

<sup>4</sup> UNFCCC - <http://unfccc.int>

The complete report / call from the summit is available on the following website:

<http://www.kl.dk/localclimatesummit/Artikler/57332/2009/06/Final-Report-from-the-Summit/>

Many themes are directly relevant to energy, with two issues extracted and included below. Session A1 summarises the main call focus, while session A4 addresses renewable energy (which replaced the European LG session originally planned).

## **Session A1: A New International Climate Agreement – Recognising and Building on Local Mitigation is Key**

### **Key positions**

The new post-2012 international agreement to limit global warming must ensure a strong recognition of local experiences, must allow empowerment and partnership with local governments, as well as provide the necessary enabling structures and resources to ensure that local climate action is a consistent part of national climate strategies. Any future multilateral agreement, decisions or agreed efforts on limiting global warming and combating climate change must therefore highlight the need for a partnership between national and local governments so as to ensure consistent planning and implementation at appropriate authority level.

### **Key recommendation to the COP15**

“In terms of commitment to mitigation, cities throughout the world, large, medium size or small, are all committed to ambitious CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets. In the case of Hamburg respectively 40% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 and Arendal is committed to climate neutrality. This is the kind of commitments that have to be made known to the national governments when they now negotiate reduction targets in a new international climate agreement.

We would like to raise the question as to why there is no spotlight put on cities since 1/3 of the parties has less population than for example Hamburg, Paris, Tokyo, Sao Paolo. We, therefore think there is a need for a new governance mechanism at the international community level to interact with cities as they are heavily contributing to mitigation efforts globally.

In terms of implementation of mitigation measures, cities have been implementing their commitments very much on a voluntary basis with own financial investments and resources, but there is a limit to such voluntary action. What is needed is a massive role out of mitigation efforts. These efforts must be undertaken not only by good practice cities, but by all cities. For this, they need supporting structures which can be other levels of governments, for example province level, regional level or sub-national and national level. This will facilitate exchange, training, use of tools, and capacity building.

Cities will be affected by the decisions made by the Parties, and they should not be left alone when it comes to the implementation of mitigation activities. They need that nations accept to engage in systematic dialogue mechanisms for implementation. We need that nations recognize this at international level.

Finally, it will be crucial that international agencies are being attracted into this work, in particular to facilitate aid assistance for implementation, specifically in developing countries, but also to assist cities with reporting of their actions.“

## **Session A4: Renewable Energy**

### **Key positions**

Local governments need to have a clear mission – in this case quick, effective mitigation and adaptation to climate change – and a way to get there, with an Action Plan spelling out the

way. This should combine energy savings, energy efficiency and RES to move forward in becoming 100% sustainable energy and carbon neutral communities.

Local governments, as the level of governance closest to citizens, have the highest potential for such a transition - by raising awareness, informing and mobilising people to act. Citizen involvement is the key to achieving success. All stakeholders need to be included, and encouraged by the possibility to gain mutual benefits.

There is very high RE (renewable energy) potential globally, as yet largely untapped when considering the different RES – from solar energy (potentially unlimited), to wind (already extensively explored), to small hydro power, bio-energy, wave and tidal power, and geothermal energy. Local communities should conduct an assessment of local RES potential and decide how to exploit this in an optimal manner.

The motivation for RE action includes multiple benefits to society as a whole, and to communities that implement RE solutions: environmental (CO2 reduction), social (peace, access to energy), economic (green jobs sustainable urban development), security (independence from imported fuels, reducing community vulnerability to external influences) – in all these cases the use of local resources makes sense and this is a logical next step for those that have not yet started action in this field.

There are many examples of success, in particular where there is stability and security – required to draw potential investors. This includes creating effective feed-in laws, setting binding long-term targets, and providing other national / federal incentives such as tax breaks for sustainable energy solutions.

### Key recommendation to the COP15

“There has to be a major faster transition to switch to RES, with a focus on tapping the vast RE potential together for mitigation and (where applicable) adaptation actions in all countries.

The local level plays a key role in this, and local governments are critical to help deliver and achieve national and international targets. This is also the level where climate change mitigation and adaptation has to be addressed, where the impact of climate change is felt.

Cooperation between different levels of local government is needed to reach the RE and climate targets, each with their particular role and strengths.

The national / federal level should improve framework conditions (e.g. feed-in laws, tax breaks) that will stimulate action, make available financing options (with less red tape) that can help to increase the tempo of RE roll-out, and centralising relevant information (R&D results, best solutions for particular conditions, etc.). “

### Contact:

E-mail: [lg-action@iclei.org](mailto:lg-action@iclei.org)

Website: [www.lg-action.eu](http://www.lg-action.eu)

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