Role of EU regions and cities in implementing the COP 21 Paris Agreement on Climate Change

2017/2006(INI) - 27/02/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Regional Development adopted an own-initiative report by Ángela VALLINA (GUE /NGL, ES) on the role of EU regions and cities in implementing the COP 21 Paris Agreement on climate change.

Members welcomed the role played by the EU in the Paris/COP 21 Agreement and its role as world leader in the fight against climate change. They emphasised that cities need to play a decisive role in tackling climate change, in coordinated interdependence with national authorities and their surrounding regions.

Noting 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, Members stressed 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.

Members warned of the societal costs caused by GHG emissions that are currently affecting urban infrastructure, public health and social care systems which are - at certain times and in certain cities and regions - overburdened and which face a precarious economic situation. These systems will thus be placed under additional strain and will be required to meet growing and more complex needs. The Commission are the Member States are urged to embark on providing access to **financial measures** that take account of the specific features and of the long-term value of local energy communities for the energy market, the environment and society, and to promote the role of single prosumers in connection with renewables, with a view to greater self-sufficiency and self-generation.

The report reiterated the need for regions to implement Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings and Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency and called 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.

The EU and cohesion policy: Members emphasised the key role that cohesion policy has to play in tackling the challenges of climate change at regional and local level. They reiterated the need to **increase the post-2020 cohesion policy budget** and stressed that cohesion policy should pay particular attention to urban investment in air quality, the circular economy and climate adaptation.

They also emphasised that, in the future Multiannual Financial Framework, the mainstreaming of climate objectives should be further improved, for instance by linking cohesion policy investment more closely to Member States' overall plans to deliver the 2030 target.

The report stressed the importance of using additional financial instruments and policies, such as the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon 2020, in order to finance projects that will help mitigate or adapt to climate change.

Cities and regions: Members urged cities and regions to cooperate and incorporate the fight against climate change into the institutional agenda as a matter of urgency. They stressed the need for sustainable

and energy efficient housing projects and smart buildings that will save energy as well as the importance of cities taking a leading role in promoting the use of public transport and in promoting the **electrification** of public and private transport.

Cities should tailor their own urban planning by investing in green infrastructure, mobility, public transport and smart grids to meet the targets set out in the Paris Agreement. National authorities should promote decentralisation and give better effect to the subsidiarity principle, thereby enabling local and regional authorities to play a stronger role in tackling climate change.

Members recognised the special responsibility on the part of cities to tackle climate change given that they account for 70 % of global CO2 emissions and reiterated Parliament's commitment to achieving the successful global roll-out of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. They encouraged all EU and non-EU cities to join the Covenant of Mayors.

Members believe that the **transfer of knowledge** and experience should be encouraged at local and regional level, given the wealth of experience acquired by individual regions and cities, as well as by certain regional environmental protection or energy agencies.