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

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The European Parliament adopted by 513 votes to 70 with 96 abstentions a resolution 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.

General context: 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, Parliament 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.

Parliament recognised t**he vital role of regions, cities and towns in promoting energy transition** and in pushing for climate and energy-related targets from below. It stressed the need to **stimulate the energy transition and local investment** in climate mitigation and adaptation measures. Cities and regions were called upon to take the lead in the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy production in order to reduce GHG emissions and air pollution.

The Commission and Member States were 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.

Parliament 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 boosted** in order to promote energy efficiency in public buildings and self-sufficiency in municipalities through regenerative energy.

The EU and cohesion policy: Members reiterated the need to **increase the post-2020 cohesion policy budget**, stressing that cohesion policy should pay particular attention to urban investment in air quality, the circular economy, climate adaptation, green infrastructure development solutions, as well as the energy and digital transition. In addition, the future planning of ESI Funds should be better integrated with the national energy and climate plans for 2030 and the mainstreaming of climate objectives should be further improved in the in the future Multiannual Financial Framework.

The resolution 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. Recognising the role of Integrated Territorial Investment and Community-Led Local Developments (CLLDs), Parliament called for integrated local bottom-up approaches and strategies to ensure more efficient use of resources.

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 recommended that urban authorities implement smart long-term **urban planning strategies** and emphasised the need for **energy-efficient and sustainable housing** projects as well as smart buildings.

They also stressed 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. Regions have to improve green city arrangements by promoting energy and digital transformation. 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.

Lastly, the resolution stressed the need to encourage the **transfer of knowledge and experience** 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.