



Green Mayors: Strong Partnerships and Direct EU Funding are Vital for a Just, Healthy, and Sustainable Transition

Joint Declaration of Green Mayors and Vice-Mayors, 1 October 2025

As the EU negotiates its next seven-year budget, Europe faces rising inequalities, industrial transformation, geopolitical instability, and the accelerating triple planetary crisis.

We, the undersigned Green Mayors and Vice-Mayors, believe this is a pivotal moment to put citizens, local democracy, and the green and just transition at the heart of Europe's budget. Cities and regions must be fully empowered to deliver socio-ecological solutions that ensure no one is left behind and that cities and rural areas alike can benefit.

Why direct funding and strong partnerships matter

- **Delivering a green and just transition locally**

Cities and regions implement over 70% of EU climate policies and 90% of adaptation efforts. From heatwaves to flooding, the frontline of climate breakdown is local and needs investment in resilience. Nature-based solutions such as urban tree planting for shade and stormwater soak-aways to limit flooding are essential to protect vulnerable residents. From clean air and water to affordable energy, public realm improvements to housing and public transport, local authorities remain closest to citizens' needs. Direct inalienable EU funding is essential to ensure that climate action goes hand in hand with fairness, social inclusion, and new opportunities for all communities.

- **Democratic, multilevel governance**

Strong partnerships with local authorities are crucial to deliver policy priorities based on evidence-based local needs. Centralised EU funding risks sidelining local governments and reducing democratic accountability. Strong partnerships between different levels of governance and direct access ensure transparency, equal opportunities, and true multilevel governance, allowing local areas to act adaptively, responsively, and fairly.

- **Efficiency, investment, and impact**

Cities and regions already deliver nearly half of Europe's public investment. Direct EU funding ensures that resources reach citizens quickly and projects with strong ecological and social impact are implemented effectively. EU funds should also be leveraged to attract additional public and private investment, including through the European Investment Bank (EIB), to expand transformative local projects.

Our call to the EU institutions

We urge the European Parliament, European Commission, and Council of the EU to ensure that the next seven-year Multiannual Financial Framework:

1. Expands direct EU funding for cities and regions, supporting a just transition for workers and communities affected by climate and industrial change.
2. Guarantees multilevel governance by requiring partnerships with cities and regions as a condition for fund disbursement.
3. Improves accessibility of EU funds for local governments by reducing unnecessary administrative barriers, providing capacity support, and ensuring transparent and fair procedures, while safeguarding ecological and social standards.
4. Encourages cities and regions to mobilize additional public and private investments, including through the EIB, to enhance climate, housing, social, and infrastructure projects.
5. Urges the European Commission to drastically improve the evaluation mechanisms of EU funds, including ex ante, ongoing, and ex post evaluations, to ensure effectiveness, transparency, and measurable impact.

Our commitment

We, the undersigned Mayors and Vice-Mayors, commit to working together as a Green and progressive bloc to push for these demands. The EU budget must become a powerful tool for a true Green and Social transformation, rooted in the principles of a just transition, with cities and regions as strong and equal partners in delivering sustainable benefits for both urban and rural areas.