

ICC and European Committee of the Regions Mayors' event

The European Commission's Intelligent Cities Challenge (ICC) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) held their joint Mayors Summit on Local Green Deals, which also saw the launch of [Local Green Deals - Blueprint for Action](#). The Blueprint supports cities and towns in accelerating their sustainable transition by a seven-step and two-phase approach. During the meeting, Mayors and Deputy Mayors from ICC and CoR cities shared their experience with and commitments to the Local Green Deals.

Agenda

Time	Agenda item	Speakers
11:30 – 11:35	Introduction and welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Athanasopoulou, Head of Unit, Proximity, Social Economy and Creative Industries, DG GROW, European Commission, Moderator
11:35 - 11:50	Opening session , including welcoming speeches and introduction of the LGD Blueprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vasco Alves Cordeiro, First Vice-President, Committee of the Regions • Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Member of the European Parliament, Chair of the ITRE Committee • Maive Rute, Deputy Director General, DG GROW, European Commission • Mark Hidson, Deputy Regional Director, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
11:50 – 12:55	Local Green Deals in Action , involving mayors and deputy mayors providing their experience of Local Green Deals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Franc Weerwind, Mayor of Almere, Amsterdam Metropolitan Region • Vincent Chauvet, Mayor of Autun • Hana Zdanowska, Mayor of Lodz, Member of the Green Deal Going Local working group and Covenant of Mayors Ambassador • Kirstine Bille, Second Vice-mayor of Syddjurs • Konstantinos Tzioumis, Mayor of Tripoli • Prof. Dr. Peter Kurz, Mayor of Mannheim • Andries Gryffroy, Member of the Flemish Parliament • Tjisse Stelpstra, Member of the Council of the Province of Drenthe • Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner, Mayor of Heidelberg • Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku • Mohamed Ridouani, Mayor of Leuven • Kata Tüttö, Deputy Mayor of Budapest

12:55 – 13:00	Closing on the expectations for Mayors and ICC cities and the next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacob Bundsgaard, Mayor of Aarhus • Anna Athanasopoulou, Head of Unit, Proximity, Social Economy and Creative Industries, DG GROW, European Commission, Moderator
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Executive summary

Welcome speeches and the ICC's Local Green Deal Blueprint

Anna Athanasopoulou, Head of Unit, Proximity, Social Economy and Creative Industries, DG GROW, European Commission, and Mark Hidson, Deputy Regional Director, ICLEI, presented the Local Green Deal Blueprint and its four founding principles: governance; integrated goals; partnerships; and actions, and described how it supports cities and towns in accelerating their sustainable transition by a seven-step and two-phase approach.

The introductory speakers specifically stressed the interconnection of cities' Local Green Deals and industrial strategies. Maive Rute, Deputy Director General, DG GROW, stated that cities, as hubs of the proximity economy and innovation, they are essential to deliver a green, human-centred, growth with Local Green Deals as an intrinsic part of this process. Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Chair, European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy Committee, mentioned that Local Green Deals should be delivered through the EU's Industrial Strategy in order to deliver the twin transition of climate innovation and digitization at all levels. Vasco Alves Cordeiro, First Vice-President, European Committee of the Regions, called for the involvement of all regions across EU's territory and underlined how cities must invest to tackle climate change through Local Green Deals, a driver for climate neutrality. Several speakers, including Franc Weerwind, Mayor of Almere, representing the Metropolitan Region Amsterdam, Hana Zdanowska, Mayor of Lodz, member of the Green Deal Going Local working group and Covenant of Mayors Ambassador and Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku, provided examples of how cities have been working with the Local Green Deals and offered inspiration and lessons learnt.

Local Green Deals in support of economic growth

Many panelists highlighted that the Local Green Deals, go beyond helping cities in meeting climate targets, and equally important, promote economic growth at local level. Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner, Mayor of Heidelberg, mentioned that the Local Green Deals will showcase a new economic perspective of the transition towards climate-neutrality and demonstrate that economic growth is coupled with the green transition. Prof. Dr Peter Kurz, the mayor of Mannheim also underlined that cities should not only go green just to be green, but should also unleash the economic perspective it holds. Getting this across will be fundamental in presenting the Local Green Deals as a positive and inspiring path for local governments and businesses. Konstantinos Tzioumis, Mayor of Tripolis, among others linked the Greek cities efforts done in Local Green Deals with efforts to boost sustainable economic growth in the tourism sector.

Climate change and the role of cities

The essential role that cities will play in tackling climate change was highlighted by several speakers, including how cities need to transform commitment into action. Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku, stated how important it is that the city takes responsibility and implements these climate policies, but also that the political leadership takes on the responsibilities themselves. Maive Rute, Deputy Director General, DG GROW, also emphasised that cities are key to ensure sustainability and social resilience as they make up the place where policies like Local Green Deals are implemented.

The need for political leadership and stakeholder mobilisation

The need for political leadership and stakeholder mobilisation to make the Local Green Deals work was the main point of many interventions. Vasco Alves Cordeiro, First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions, stated that the Local Green Deals cannot happen without political leadership and action at both local and regional level, as well as co-creation with the local economic actors. His points were reinforced by Prof. Dr. Peter Kurz, Mayor of Mannheim, who recognised that putting in place a functioning governance is challenging but equally key to success for such deals. Kata Tüttö, Deputy Mayor of Budapest, highlighted how the city had mobilised over 10,000 citizens by organising a Climate Assembly so they could weigh in their opinions on how to tackle climate change.

Session opening

Anna Athanasopoulou, Head of Unit, Proximity, Social Economy and Creative Industries, DG GROW, Moderator

Anna Athanasopoulou, moderator of the session, welcomed the Mayors, Deputy Mayors and participants to the Mayors Event organised in the context of the Intelligent Cities Challenge and jointly with the European Committee of Regions. She presented the agenda and highlighted that the recent 3rd ICC City Lab had been a success and celebrated the publication of the new Local Green Deal Blueprint. She highlighted the four founding principles behind the [Local Green Deals - Blueprint for Action](#), respectively governance; integrated goals; partnerships; and actions and invited the keynote speakers and Mayors to share their appreciation and experience.

Welcome speeches

Vasco Alves Cordeiro, First Vice-President, European Committee of the Regions

Vasco Alves Cordeiro addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on European regions with a significant number of lives and jobs lost, and the test it has put on European solidarity. It is key to come out of the pandemic with a plan to tackle climate change and achieve green recovery based on a clear and common approach across all European regions.

He emphasised that the Local Green Deals are a key driver for Europe to reach its climate neutrality goals of 2050, since these deals have the capacity to engage with all sectors, allowing stakeholders more familiar with the ecosystem to decide what climate initiatives are best suited for their municipality, while also allowing for collaboration across many regions in Europe, also respecting their territory and singularities. He concluded his intervention stating his desire for cities to come together to tackle climate change.

Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Member, European Parliament and Chair, European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Cristian Silbiu Busoi talked mainly from the perspective of industry and how action can be seen in different industry areas. He stressed how Local Green Deals are being delivered through the European industrial strategy with increased innovation capacity being built in related sectors.

He discussed how the dual transition of climate innovation and digitalisation needs to be happening at all levels if we are to be successful in climate action and that these double transitions need to be at the core of every Local Green Deal.

Cristian Silbiu Busoi also highlighted the important role that the new European Bauhaus Initiative must play to support R&D and innovation in industry, cities, and communities to help push forward the Local Green deals and climate mitigation. He concluded by stating that the EU in times of crisis will join together across various areas to help fight climate change.

Maive Rute, Deputy Director General, European Commission, DG GROW

Maive Rute overall addressed the important roles that policy and cities must play in the future. She discussed how cities have a major part to play in achieving sustainability and how we can turn the current COVID-19 crisis into one of the biggest opportunities for a climate reset. Maive Rute also discussed how policies, like 15-minute cities, are going to boost the local economies and wellbeing of the citizens.

Maive Rute explained how the ICC was launched in early 2020 with the objective of delivering cutting edge technologies and climate policies for cities through initiatives like upskilling and reskilling and Local Green Deals. She discussed how different policies are going to change the way citizens live in these cities in the near future. She also pointed to the role of the European Bauhaus movement to bring the European green deals closer to the climate commitments.

Support for LGDs: Introducing the ICC's LGD Blueprint

Mark Hidson, Deputy Regional Director, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

Mark Hidson presented the [Local Green Deals - Blueprint for Action](#) at the event. He explained that most cities already have strategies and policies supporting the goals of the EU Green Deal, but they need to better integrate governance and delivery mechanisms to accelerate and scale-up implementation, which is when the Local Green Deals step in. A Local Green Deal supports effective implementation, based on the four founding principles - governance, integrated goals, partnership and action. It also helps to accelerate the transition to more sustainable cities while also providing a horizontal approach.

The ICC Blueprint on Local Green Deals itself contains two phases with seven steps each as an approach to help cities get started on these deals:



The Blueprint also contains over eight best practice examples from cities pioneering the Local Green Deals mechanisms to deliver their sustainability goals and highlights financing opportunities for the implementation of these deals.

LGDs in action: panel with inspirational cases and interactive discussion

Franc Weerwind, Mayor of Almere, Amsterdam Metropolitan Region, ICC Core City

Franc Weerwind provided examples of how they have been implementing the Local Green Deals and what it meant for their stakeholders in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region. The Intelligent Cities Challenge helped them recognise the power of twin transitions of digitalisation and green goals. The City of Almere has implemented a living lab approach that has resulted in several circular and sustainable energy innovation in the city.

He also discussed the three Local Green Deals that have been implemented in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region: making the textile value chain circular, developing the region as an innovative bicycle hotspot and increase the share of new-build houses in timber to 20% of the total new residential building activity. He also invited everyone to visit the [Amsterdam Smart City](#) website to get inspiration for the development of their own initiatives.

Vincent Chauvet, Mayor, Autun

Vincent Chauvet discussed the importance of the Local Green Deal concept and the work to be done to raise awareness among citizens but also politicians of the ambitious climate goals set for

the next years. Vincent Chauvet also provided an example of a Local Green Deal in Autun, where they brought together public and private actors who own forest land in the municipality, in order to implement a multi-level governance set-up to enhance the forestry management.

Hana Zdanowska, Mayor, Lodz, member of the Green Deal Going Local working group and Covenant of Mayors Ambassador, ICC Core City

Hana Zdanowska provided many examples of how Lodz is innovating to become one of the most sustainable cities in the country. This transformation is enabled thanks to the holistic approach they have designed for the implementation of sustainable initiatives, adapting it to the needs of business and business processes in order to ensure the involvement of all actors. Hana Zdanowska briefly introduced a set of initiatives already in place in the city of Lodz: 30% energy efficiency for buildings; network of sensors that test air quality; and increased solar wind farms.

Kirstine Bille, Second Vice-Mayor, Syddjurs

Kristine Bille used her talk to stress the importance of local authorities in the achievement of climate goals. She also presented some of the initiatives that they are undertaken in the city of Syddjurs like educating school children on waste management and working with local businesses in her municipality and the neighbouring ones to achieve the goal of zero waste. Kristine Bille described how they are reskilling farmers in the lowlands of her region and helping them to transition out of farming to help reduce CO2 emissions. This was an example of the link between EU funding opportunities transformed into local action in favour of the climate.

Konstantinos Tzioumis, Mayor of Tripoli, ICC Core City

Konstantinos Tzioumis described how Greek cities are enacting Local Green Deals in spite of budgetary limitations. Greek cities are sensitive to the green transformation and the Greek cities taking part in the ICC programme have incorporated 'Green' in their ambitions, linked among others to initiatives on tourism and mobility. It was mentioned that the Greek cities face budgetary challenges when it comes to the implementation of major development projects. Therefore, being part of the ICC is an opportunity to identify individual projects for green transformation that can act as initiators of real Local Green Deals. This would be done in partnership with the regional and sectoral operational programmes that dispose of the necessary means. He stated that if this succeeds, the participating ICC cities from Greece can lead the way, as pioneers, for other Greek cities.

Prof. Dr. Peter Kurz, Mayor, Mannheim

Peter Kurz during his talk stated that green deals do not only address the environment but also offer an economic opportunity: the Local Green Deals *"are not green for the sake of being green but are green for the sake of the economy"*. He also discussed how to manage the political risks linked with the implementation of green initiatives. Peter Kurz also mentioned how to avoid the political risks of going green by using the Local Green Deals as a positive and inspiring path forward. However, it is also important that they involve all sectors of society and that they are properly communicated to the citizens.

Andries Gryffroy, Member, Flemish Parliament

Andries Gryffroy talked about how inclusivity is the way forward for the Local Green Deals, with a bottom-up approach seen as the best way to be successful and cities the best area for this to happen. He provided a real-life example in Flanders of how they are targeting construction and building companies, who provided 40% of all waste, with an eye to have better waste management systems. He also identified areas that can be further improved, including the needs of local and regional authorities to be better reflected in national plans, funding should be facilitated, and more coordination is needed.

Tjisse Stelpstra, Member, Council of the Province of Drenthe

Tjisse Stelpstra stated how important the role of local and regional authorities is for Local Green Deals, since they have a strong understanding of the locality and contextual situation. Tjisse Stelpstra also described the different climate policies already implemented locally like waste management, education of citizens and implementation of regional energy strategies. Tjisse Stelpstra concluded the intervention by providing four pieces of advice: take small steps; involve citizens; allow for mistakes; and enhance circular economies.

Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner, Mayor, City of Heidelberg, ICC Core City

Eckart Würzner described how Heidelberg has had a long tradition of climate action over the past 20 years, allowing the city to be very advanced with their climate targets and providing them with a great advantage for future action. He also stated the new economic perspectives that climate neutrality and the related economic growth provides to cities and citizens. He finished by stating how Local Green Deals are an excellent opportunity for the future and even if money is scarce, it will become a reality if we all work together.

Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku, ICC Mentor City

Minna Arve stated how there is a great opportunity for the recovery of the pandemic to be sustainable. She described how in Turku they are always trying to find new ways to involve different stakeholders for climate action. She also provided examples of different policies they have enacted like the objective of being carbon neutral by 2029 and the circular economy goals by 2050 which involves 700 different actors. She concluded by reiterating the important role cities and authorities have in being leaders, taking responsibilities and implementing these initiatives.

Mohamed Ridouani, Mayor of Leuven

Mohammed Ridouani described how the city of Leuven has given the powers of climate policies to a separate agency in the context of the Leuven 2030 initiative, with a goal to be a climate neutral city by 2030. He stated how this has already been supportive in bringing down CO2 emissions, also enabled by the system of ownership and by the inclusion it provides.

Kata Tüttö, Deputy Mayor, Budapest, ICC Core City

Kata Tüttö talked about how Budapest declared a climate emergency. Afterwards they introduced a new platform in the shape of a citizen's assembly of 10,000 citizens, who were asked how to tackle climate change. She stated this as a good example of how to involve local stakeholders at the planning and monitoring stages.

Jacob Bundsgaard, Mayor, Aarhus, ICC Mentor City

Jacob Bundsgaard described how in Aarhus they have been using citizen engagement to work towards the climate neutrality objective of 2030 which was set already in 2008. He concluded by stating how the city of Aarhus has new concrete climate action plans for 2030, being ICC intrinsic to achieve these targets through the sharing of experience from all cities.

Wrap up and next steps

Anna Athanasopoulou, Head of Unit, Proximity, Social Economy and Creative Industries, DG

GROW

As a conclusion, Ana Athanasopoulou reiterated the points made by the mayors with the need for engagement and cooperation as well as stated that without co-creation these targets will not happen. She concluded by giving the next steps which are: publishing the Local Green Deals Blueprint; publishing the statements by mayors; and invited all mayors to stay in touch, highlighting the importance of informing them of the results. Anna Athanasopoulou reiterated the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050, in an inclusive manner, not leaving anyone behind.