

The 6th Conference of European Sustainable Cities and Towns

From 19-21 May 2010, more than 1.800 representatives of local and regional governments originating from 53 countries met in Dunkerque. Their discussions concluded with the adoption of a “Dunkerque Declaration on Sustainable Development in Europe”, with a view to re-confirm their strong commitment to creating sustainable cities and towns and to seek recognition of their roles.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE :

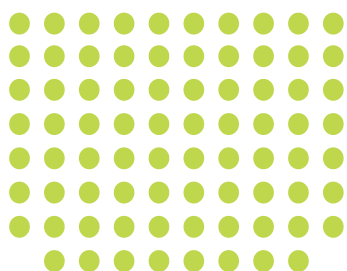


Dunkerque
2010

6th
EUROPEAN
CONFERENCE
ON SUSTAINABLE
CITIES & TOWNS

THE DUNKERQUE
DECLARATION

www.dunkerque2010.org



- The Declaration highlights that the various programmes of the European Union have too often been oriented solely towards economic growth and competition, and that now there is an urgent need to seek a more equal balance between the three pillars of sustainable development, in particular in the EU Strategy 2020;
- The Declaration also confirms that local and regional governments have an essential role in overcoming the current challenges resulting from the financial and economic crisis, hereby complementing Member States and the European Union. Moreover, greening our economy is recognised as a necessary way to further transform our cities, in order to ensure high quality of life, economic development and social protection;
- As a consequence, local and regional governments -essential actors with competencies in the field of sustainability and operating at a level closest to the citizens- commit themselves to respond to the challenges of urban sustainability. They do so by limiting urban sprawl and creating low carbon cities, implementing democratic urban governance, ensuring high quality public services, and by adapting to and limiting climate change;
- Finally, at the global level, strong cooperation is required with countries with emerging economies as well as developing countries. Decentralised cooperation between local and regional governments must be recognised as a key instrument of international solidarity cooperation.

Please find the Dunkerque Declaration attached.
Feel free to use and circulate widely.
For any further information, please

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THE Dunkerque 2010 LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY DECLARATION

Gathering at the 6th European Sustainable Cities and Towns Conference organised by the Communauté Urbaine of Dunkerque, and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and co-organised by all the partners of the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign;

Welcoming the deepening of the European integration with the entry into force in 2010 of the Lisbon Treaty which recognises local autonomy and introduces the objective of territorial cohesion;

Considering that the Lisbon Strategy and the EU Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy are overarching policy documents directing the EU on the path towards sustainable development; that, however, neither clarify how the relationship between sustainability and economic growth will be managed;

Considering that 2010 should see the adoption of the Europe 2020 Strategy to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy to become more resource efficient and greener as well as to foster high levels of employment and to deliver economic, social and territorial cohesion;

Emphasising that the goal of creating a low carbon, resource efficient and green economy in Europe can only be reached if local and regional governments are a fully integrated partner in a broad bottom-up Europe 2020 Strategy with increased access to funding;

Convinced that in order for the European institutions to move closer to the citizens, a multi-level governance system is required that integrates local and regional government more actively and coherently in the European Union's policies and budgetary resources;

Emphasising that European cities and towns, of all sizes, are the tissue of progressive governance at regional, national and European level and that 85% of the EU's GDP is generated in cities; that European local and regional governments have a long track record in developing and implementing sustainable, innovative local policies and that their close relationship with citizens and enterprises make them key-players in determining appropriate sustainable strategies and measures on their territories;

Considering that 2010 -and beyond- are crucial years for local and regional governments in the recovery from the global financial crisis and its social impacts and, at the same time, are critical to shift towards a sustainable development paradigm;

Acknowledging that Rio+20 Summit will provide opportunities for the revision of Local Agenda 21 achievements in Europe and worldwide, and will set new goals towards a greener society;

Considering the Leipzig Charter as a useful step towards an integrated approach on sustainability, including horizontal and vertical cooperation and hoping that Member States will decide to continue their support of the Reference Framework of for European Sustainable Cities on 22 June in Toledo;

Emphasising that since 1994, throughout Europe, local and regional governments have committed themselves to the path of local sustainable development through signing and implementing voluntary local commitment schemes such as the Aalborg Charter, the Aalborg Commitments, or the Covenant of Mayors and that this declaration builds further on these local sustainability schemes;



We, 1800+ leaders of European local and regional governments, meeting at the largest local sustainability event, the 6th European Sustainable Cities and Towns Conference, Dunkerque 2010, agree on the following:

Creating innovative, sustainable and inclusive communities

1. We are united in our ambition to turning the challenges ahead of us caused by the current financial and economic crisis and their social impacts into opportunities to create innovative, sustainable and inclusive communities in Europe;
2. As the level closest to the citizens, we will actively integrate social inclusion and eradicate poverty into our economic development policies and will ensure that all our citizens can fully take part in a low carbon life style;
3. We recognise more than ever that the transition to a sustainable, green and inclusive economy is the only way to combine quality of life, economic development and social welfare because we see that production models with a predominance of highly resource and energy intensive sectors are seriously impacted by the current crisis;
4. When remedying the effects of the crisis through recovery investments, we will prioritise such investments, strategies and actions that aim towards becoming more resource efficient and greener, to be more inclusive through supporting strategies on social know-how that enhance quality of life, employment, knowledge and innovation at the same time for all;
5. We will use all our governmental competences and decision-making, our governance, management and procurement systems to transform our local communities to become low carbon, climate resilient, sustainable and socially inclusive;
6. We strive to humanise the current global challenges at local level, in particular in the field of climate mitigation and adaptation, so that citizens and business can better understand the issues at stake, take a shared role in responsibility and act more effectively;
7. We will foster sustainability by broadening understanding, knowledge, and innovation and, with this objective, and in doing so we will enhance our governance and cooperation with the public, our local research institutions, local businesses as well as with our educational and cultural actors in our communities;
8. We will pay increased attention to the social and environmental corporate responsibility of other local operating actors in our communities in order to promote the implementation of sustainable innovative projects;
9. We will continue to act as providers of quality public services and will integrate new value added services that increase the quality of life of our citizens in a sustainable way, in particular in housing, mobility, energy, food supply, waste, water supply and sanitation, flood prevention, communication and social infrastructures; we are committed to substantially multiply the concept of a European e-city and informed city;
10. We are committed to prevent urban sprawl and to promote multimodal mobility and less traffic, as well as more sustainable and healthier mobility choices in and out our communities, especially for less favoured people, since these constitute local competitive advantages;
11. We are committed to substantially reduce our local greenhouse gas emissions, our energy intensity and to promote and increase the use of local renewable energy sources as a local, alternative means to non-renewable energy sources according to or above EU targets; in parallel, we will increase the biological diversity in our urban areas;
12. We are committed to increase waste prevention, waste recycling as well as resource efficiency and seek from EU sectorial policies an upstream vision of the waste issue, the promotion of waste targets and support for implementation, with waste prevention as a first priority;
13. We are committed to foster city-to-city cooperation between European cities and cities in other parts of the world to broaden and transfer knowledge and innovation with a view to enhance sustainable development and overcome imbalances in a globalised world;
14. We reaffirm our commitment to share knowledge and experiences in the field of local sustainability among each other, both at European and international level, and to act jointly in order to minimise the damaging effects of the global crisis at the local level; to this end, we will continue to work under the guidance of the Aalborg Charter (2500+ signatories) and the Aalborg Commitments (650+signatories).



Integrating local autonomy and achieving territorial cohesion in Europe

In accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, we ask the national and European level to:

15. Recognise local and regional governments as “system-relevant” organisations and not any longer as mere executors of national and European policies or those to correct deficits and failures of other actors;
16. Pay greater attention to the effect their decisions, policies and strategies have on the administrative and financial capacities of local and regional governments as well as respect the principle of local and regional self government;
17. Include and sufficiently support local and regional governments in the Europe 2020 strategy, in particular in the design and implementation of the proposed flagship initiatives;
18. Specify urgently the place of territorial cohesion in the preparation of the new structural funds regulations for the programming period 2014-2020 and strengthen the role of local and regional governments therein; as well as sufficiently support local and regional sustainability programmes and projects, in particular in financially weak cities and regions, through national programmes as well as through the EU Structural Funds, in particular the operational programmes;
19. Include the local and regional level in all EU relevant sectorial policies;
20. Support and recognise our actions, in particular those undertaken in the framework of the Aalborg Commitments and the Covenant of Mayors as substantial measures contributing to the implementation of EU related sectorial policies and territorial cohesion in the EU.

Adopted in Dunkerque, France, on 21 May 2010

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