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Local and regional actors push for recognition of their contribution to fighting climate change

Five European networks of local and regional authorities (EUROCITIES, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions - CEMR, Climate Alliance, Energie-Cités and ICLEI Europe) call on National Governments to formally recognise the role and contribution of local and regional governments in climate mitigation and adaptation policies in the texts to be adopted at the COP15 in December.

This is the message delivered on the 27 of May, by these networks, to all 27 Member States ahead of the next European Council meeting on the 18-19 June.

Simultaneously, the networks' members - cities, local and regional authorities across Europe - are delivering the same message directly to their Heads of State and Government. This joint action is deliberately coinciding with the UNFCCC COP15 preparatory meeting in Bonn on 1-12 June and following the Local Government Climate Change Leadership Summit in Copenhagen on 2-4 June.

At the Copenhagen Summit, Ronan Dantec, Vice President of Nantes Metropole, in France, stated on behalf of the signatories:

“Local and regional governments have shown their capacity to mobilise together on climate change issues. A real mitigation process cannot be achieved without the involvement of these two levels of governments”.

This message has also been transmitted to the negotiators preparing the COP15 through a series of messages sent by local and regional authorities.

In the run-up to Copenhagen, the June European Council will be an important opportunity for Member States to demonstrate their support and give a clear signal to local and regional decision-makers that their role and commitment are taken seriously. An increasing number of local authorities are already committing to reduce their GHG emissions beyond the targets set out in the EU energy and climate change package. This is especially important since the UNFCCC's negotiating text makes no reference to local and regional governments in relation to mitigation.

Member States must build on local expertise and engage, empower and resource their cities and towns to undertake the local actions necessary to meet the global climate change targets.

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