



Foto: Nathalie Nizette



A **global** alliance of **mayors** to lead the fight against climate change ↴





It has been almost a year since 195 states committed to limiting global warming by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at the COP21 in Paris. These nations rely on the climate action efforts of cities across the world to deliver on their commitments. As cities are responsible for over 75% of global GHG emissions and of 70% of global energy consumption according to UN figures, it is in the urban sphere that the future of our planet will be decided.

ON 22 JUNE 2016, the world's two largest urban climate and energy initiatives - the EU's Covenant of Mayors and the UN's Compact of Mayors – announced their merger, creating the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Mayors from over 7,100 cities in 119 countries are now involved in the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy



By David Donnerer,
Covenant of Mayors
Office (Energy Cities)

to spearhead the global fight against climate change.

The Covenant of Mayors was launched by the EU Commission back in 2008, becoming the first bottom-up movement of European cities' contributing to achieving the EU climate and energy goals. The Compact of Mayors, launched in 2014, was the result of a collaboration between the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York and now the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change.

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is to become operational by the 1st of January 2017. For the first time in history, this initiative will provide a common platform for cities' climate and energy actions worldwide. Through the Global Covenant, cities will voluntarily set targets that are equivalent or even more ambitious than those defined by their respective national govern-



ments in the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) of the global climate Paris Agreement. Cities that join the Global Covenant will adopt a comprehensive local action plan to reduce GHG emissions and boost climate resilience, and will regularly track their progress publicly and transparently in the process. They will receive support from a variety of players in this global initiative, from established city networks to provinces, regions and local and regional energy agencies. It is through the work of cities that nation-states will be able to effectively fulfill their INDCs and achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Cities are put at the heart of global climate action, as they are the right spaces for solving climate change by clustering knowledge, innovation and capital. They are the government level closest to people and can innovate faster and accelerate the move towards a sustainable low-carbon economy. Cities, from



Foto: Leonid Andronov

small towns to global megacities, can make a difference through the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Whether it is in Europe, Africa, Asia, America or Oceania, the Global Covenant will mobilise cities in a mutually beneficial alliance. The Global Covenant of Mayors Secretariat will facilitate the exchange of best practices and know-how, and thereby bring together cities from all corners of the globe. Through the Global Covenant, cities will lead the fight against climate change and improve the quality of life for billions of people.

The climate action efforts of every city worldwide will be needed to limit global warming and curb man-made climate change. Cities in the Nordic countries have a crucial role to play in the Global Covenant of Mayors. Their cutting-edge innovations in the field of renewable energy, energy efficiency or climate adaptation can inspire and help other cities across the globe follow suit. Nordic cities

like Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm, Frederikshavn, Växjö or Tampere (among many others) have shown, through their pragmatic, inclusive and tangible climate and energy actions in the EU Covenant of Mayors, how cities can effectively reduce GHG emissions, save costs through energy efficiency or move towards energy independence by going 100% renewable. In the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, Nordic cities can be a role model and inspire Asian, African or Indian municipalities, and can learn about the solutions set up in other cities, often with lower means.

By engaging in the Global Covenant, Nordic cities can not only play a key role in the urban implementation of the Paris Agreement, but also support other cities worldwide in this undertaking. Best practices showcased on the Global Covenant website will provide tools and methods for energy and climate action. Nordic mayors and city representatives will

be able to share their experience with a global audience through Global Covenant capacity-building events such as webinars, workshops or conferences. This will allow municipalities to form new fruitful, mutually beneficial cross-border partnerships across different continents, and reinforce solidarity.

Covenant cities share a vision for making cities decarbonised and resilient, where citizens have access to secure, sustainable and affordable energy. Cities joining the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy now commit to developing Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans for 2030 with a CO₂-reduction objective of 40%.

Starting from the 1st of January 2017, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy will strengthen the position of cities as frontrunners in global climate action. All cities worldwide are warmly invited to join!

More information on the Covenant of Mayors at www.eumayors.eu ■