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Cities, towns and citizens of Europe, actively committed to the prevention of climate change

Barcelona declaration' by the local councillors of the European greens

Climate change is an indisputable truth recognised by the international scientific community. The UN Conference being held in Nairobi this week constitutes a new opportunity and there is not much more time left to make **governments** adopt **immediate, responsible and ambitious** measures and **commitments** to stop and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing global warming.

Over the last few years, **the EU has played an important role in the Kyoto process**, acting as a driving force to obtain specific commitments from its Member States. However, concrete policies have not yet delivered these commitments. It was a big mistake that the transport sector was excluded from the Kyoto Protocol. Since 1990, the CO2 emissions from the transport sector have increased by almost 25%, with emissions from aviation doubling in that time. Therefore, it is necessary that the transport sector is included going forward. Without serious emissions reductions from the transport sector, the EU will never reach its climate goals. Already today this sector is responsible for 30 per cent of all CO2-emissions in the EU. Now, more than ever, we need global action encompassing the USA (which contributes 30% of total greenhouse gas emissions) and also countries undergoing economic growth, like China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, among others.

In the last three years, the government of ***Spain***, the EU country with the largest relative increase in greenhouse gas emissions in relation to its Kyoto commitments, has joined the international commitments and the active policies for climate change prevention. The founding of the ***Network of Cities for Climate (Red de Ciudades por el Clima)*** in 2005 is a good initiative for local action. In Catalonia, local efforts are channelled, together with the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat), through the ***Network of Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability (Xarxa de Ciutats i Pobles cap a la Sostenibilitat)***, which coordinates actions from over 220 cities and towns in order to establish specific commitments to prevent and fight climate change.

It is also true, however, that we must go further. We now know the causes of climate change, as well as their effects. On the one hand, there is the intensive way in which land is inhabited and occupied in many of our urban, metropolitan and coastal areas (the planning and building fever). On the other hand, there are the economic growth and consumer models (existing in the developed countries) that determine disproportionate consumption of materials, water and energy, unsustainable mobility patterns, huge quantities of contaminating emissions and serious distorsions to the fluvial and marine systems. The results are clear: loss of diversity, greater vulnerability (droughts, floodings...), desertification, migration and more poverty globally. In short, serious environmental, social, economic, industrial and cultural problems, which impact the health and life of millions.

The logic by which development is identified with a growth in consumption and resources is

unsustainable, **lacks solidarity** and is profoundly **irresponsible**. A change in perspective, which is founded on the values of social equity, ethics and ecology, is needed.

For this reason we, the **local councillors of the European greens**, gathered together in Barcelona, agree on the following Declaration:

(1) **To demand that the Governments of industrialised countries** assume more ambitious and strict commitments for reducing emissions: **by 30% in 2020**compared to 1990. (The commitment currently in place the Kyoto Protocol is to reduce them by 5.2% compared to 1990 for the period 2008-2012 and 8% for the EU-15.)

(2) To foster a **movement of European citizens who are active in the fight against climate change** where European cities, companies and social organisations are prominent, through local-level commitments, indicators and reports on sustainability which can be easily assessed. This can be done by:

- Demanding compliance with the **10 commitments** of the **European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns** (Aalborg+10), held in June 2004. "We aim to translate our common vision for sustainable urban futures into tangible sustainability targets and action at local level".
- Promoting a **chart** or **strategic framework (commitments, methodology and indicators) in each city** in order to act in a coordinated and cooperative manner in the **fight against climate change**. Leading to a true **local power** which can influence the priorities of our respective governments and increase the effectiveness of local government networks at the European and global levels.
- Encouraging **local initiatives for compensation and neutralisation of CO_2** (www.ceroco2.org or **Climate movement (*Movimiento Clima*)** at www.movimientoclima.org), which allow active involvement of all citizens and participation in net development projects in other countries. In other words, encouraging co-responsibility over the threats of climate change.

(3) **To urge local authorities reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our cities,** to make specific and measurable commitments, including:

- **Reducing energy consumption and promoting energy efficiency, particularly electricity efficiency,** in accordance with the proposal of the **EU directive on energy efficiency** (all 220 municipalities within the Network of Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability have assumed a yearly reduction of the local authority's energy consumption by 1.5% to 2010). Implementing **Energy Saving and Efficiency Plans**, energy **accounting** systems and relevant **indicators**.
- **Increasing and intensifying the contribution of renewable energies**: solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, small-scale hydro power. The contribution of local authorities to the use of solar thermal energy has been decisive in the last few years (38 municipalities in the Barcelona province have passed solar by-laws which will put 150,000 sq m of solar surface at their disposal by 2010. In 2000 there were only 7,000 sq m). The city of Barcelona has pioneered this process (Energy Efficiency Plan) by generating new employment opportunities, professionalisation and innovation in the development of a new energy culture.
- Promoting **an increased distribution and decentralisation of energy** across the land, which promotes innovation and clean sources, and diametrically opposes the interest of the powerful nuclear energy lobbies, which are trying to mislead the debate in Europe.

(4) To promote the development of **environmentally-friendly consumer models.** Setting an example through **green public purchasing and contracting of goods and services, promotion of fair trade and responsible consumption**. Fostering **Social and Environmental Responsibility** among agents, companies and organisations in our cities and regions. Adapting production systems, home appliances and also daily habits (in our homes) to make them more energy efficient.

(5) To promote the principles and requirements of the **European Strategy on the Urban Environment** whereby urban development can be structured and guided by rational and sustainable criteria. (In its assembly in Girona, the **Network of Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability** demanded a **Catalan Strategy on the Urban Environment**). This strategy considers four fields of action:

- **Sustainable town planning** which guides urban development, recycles urban fabrics, fosters **bioclimatic planning** with efficient energy and water consumption patterns. Encouraging urban complexity and using the opportunities brought to us by the knowledge society.
- Town planning that promotes **sustainable mobility and accessibility**. Regaining the multifunctional public space. Obtaining more prominence for collective and sustainable transport models. Facilitating pedestrian accessibility, bicycle use and public transport.
- Town planning that promotes **sustainable construction**, prioritising rehabilitation and reuse over the construction 'fever' (particularly serious along the Mediterranean coastline). Applying efficiency criteria in using resources and materials, guaranteeing diversity and its management. Promoting quality and ecoefficiency in the whole construction sector.
- **Urban management**, which means first and foremost **to respond to the new realities in the social dimension, economic dimension, family structure, migrations**, managing the new types of conflicts and demands, preserving the land and natural resources. This must include real citizens' involvement to ensure co-responsibility.

(6) To urge **local governments to set up the necessary institutions** to advise all local-level actors of change: citizens, investors, local craftsmen and businesses. Only strong and professional institutions will be able to catalyse the necessary thousands of individual investment decisions. The EU should dedicate more funds for promoting these type of organisations.

(7) We, the **European green local councillors** gathered together on this day in the city of Barcelona note with pleasure the new growth of ICV in Catalonia, through defending the principles of social cohesion and environmental modernisation. This will improve the fight against climate change and the defence of biodiversity in Europe.

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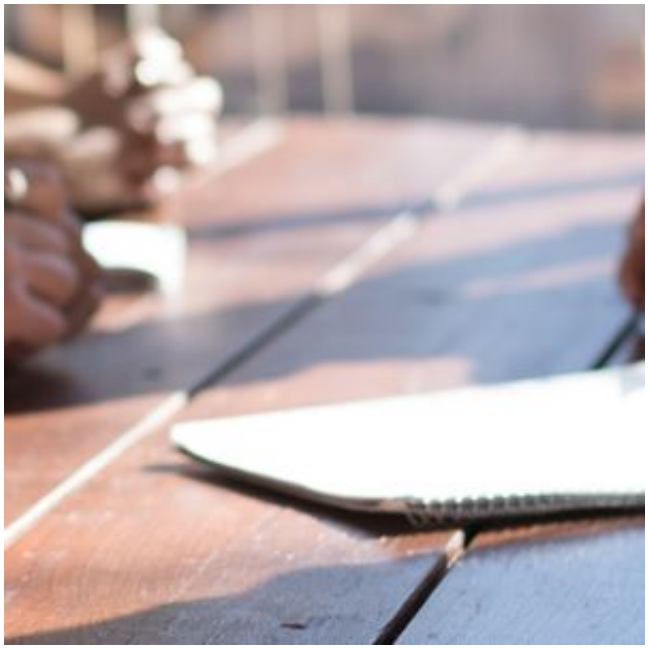
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