

ENERGYCITIES

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To the European Commission President-elect  
Ms. von der Leyen  
European Commission

Heidelberg, 12<sup>th</sup> of August, 2019

Dear Ms. President-elect,

First of all, congratulations on your election as President of the European Commission. It will be a pleasure to support you in achieving the vision of Europe you outlined at the European Parliament on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July.

As Mayor of Heidelberg and President of Energy Cities, a network of over 1,000 local governments driving the energy transition in 30 countries, I welcome your commitment to climate neutrality in 2050. I would like to share with you our proposals for a transition towards climate neutrality that leaves no one behind.

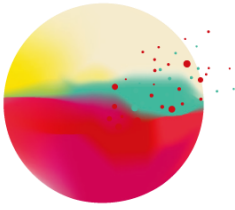
Our citizens are demanding ambitious action and ask me on a daily basis to report on the progress of Heidelberg's strategic climate and energy action plan. We believe that the energy transition is about more than renewable energy or great technologies: it is about the wise use of resources, while strengthening local participation and well-being in a democratic Europe.

The only path to reach the 2050 targets means revising the 2030 target and, crucially, aligning all policies with climate neutrality.

We see at local level that it is impossible to stay on a Paris-compatible reduction pathway if we do not involve all sectors, all policies and all departments. We also see that the most ambitious cities, who share their experiences through the Covenant of Mayors, have developed a climate budget. But putting the right price on carbon will not be enough. We must mainstream climate into our budgets to achieve a transition aligned with the Paris Agreement.

Therefore, we are calling for the forthcoming EU Climate law to include a chapter on climate budgeting.

The EU should mirror its fiscal budget with a climate budget transposing each budget line into its cost in GHG emissions. Ideally, it should also include a resource consumption scoreboard. The climate law should include the same exercise in the European Semester. You have proposed to strengthen the European economic



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semester by including an evaluation of the SDGs. Climate budgeting should be the instrument to assess, on an annual basis, if all Member States are on track or not to reach climate neutrality. Most importantly, it must ensure the mobilisation of all policies and actors.

This is the main reason why we are advocating for climate budgeting at all levels, it is a very strong instrument to mobilise climate and energy departments, Ministries, Directorate Generals and the only way to align our economies and societies with the 2050 objective. The 9000 cities committed to the Global Covenant of Mayors should also develop climate budgets.

Climate budgeting would place Europe at the forefront of the fight against climate change, be a blueprint for other continents and the backbone of climate diplomacy and international development policies. The Energy and Climate governance regulation is the right instrument to integrate such a powerful tool; however, it should not wait for the 2023 revision of the regulation to move forward.

We welcome the proposed new lending criteria of the EIB, published last week, as a first step to decarbonise European investments. We will support your objective to transform the EIB into Europe's Climate Bank, and the experience of municipalities with URBIS, the European Investment Advisory Hub, shows the need for more technical assistance dedicated to the financing of the local transition.

I am also a Member of the Board of the Global Covenant and many of my colleagues at the Board have declared, with their city councils, a climate emergency. I am struck by the determination of local leaders to act and to embrace their responsibilities towards future generations. They also see how the transition is an opportunity to build stronger, more prosperous and inclusive communities. For me, this should be the only objective of the Just Transition Fund which you have proposed and which is very much needed: to support communities in designing their future; in negotiating at local level, with all relevant stakeholders their transition pathway and to fairly share the benefits and burden of the transition.

I look forward to meeting with you to explain in more detail our proposals.

Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner  
Mayor of Heidelberg  
President of Energy Cities  
Member of the EU Covenant of Mayors Board  
Member of the Global Covenant of Mayors Board

Included:  
Just Energy Transition Fund position paper  
Energy Cities Manifesto 2019/2024  
Manifesto's briefings