



To:

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

CC'ed:

Peter Van Kemseke, Cabinet member of the President of the European Commission

Ruth Reichstein, Cabinet member of the President of the European Commission

10.09.2024

We are writing this letter to you as the European networks of local and regional governments to congratulate you in your re-election as the President of the Commission. Hereby, we wish to share our gratitude for your expressed continued commitment to stay on track to implement the European Green Deal goals in your Political Guidelines 2024- 2029. As European local and regional government networks, representing cities and regions ranging from the smallest rural towns to the largest metropolitan capitals across all EU Member States, we wholeheartedly welcome your strong messages on the importance of regions and cities in addressing today's challenges from housing to mobility, from creating local jobs to developing infrastructures to support the competitiveness of our economy.

We would like to reiterate our networks' support and readiness to comply with recently adopted EU environmental and climate legislation, implement and scale up the transition to climate neutrality and do our share to improve the livelihoods of all citizens, while guaranteeing that all Europeans have a "right to stay" as mentioned in your speech to the European Parliament. **We are aware that staying on course to achieve our European social, economic and environmental objectives while preparing for future climate, environmental and geopolitical risks, will require an unprecedented collaboration between all levels of governments and the College of Commissioners.** To this end, we welcome your ambitions to work with Local Councillors in order to engage with citizens and we are ready to actively support this process.

**We believe it is important that relevant Members of the College of Commissioners - who hold key portfolios for creating enabling conditions for cities and regions- are tasked to engage with European cities and regions through structured permanent dialogues between the EU, national, regional and local level decision makers.** This will be necessary to create positive feedback loops and accelerate the implementation of the European Green Deal on the ground. Through this, the dialogues will be an effective tool for our members and all levels of government to ensure a more efficient and appropriate coordination among policy areas that have a local dimension and recognise the key role of cities in the implementation of the Green Deal.

In order to leapfrog our social, economic and environmental infrastructure towards climate neutrality and resilience in a fair and democratic way, European cities and regions need more joined up financial support from the EU, national and regional funds. At the very least, we need funding programmes and actors, which are more responsive to locally developed integrated and holistic action and investment plans. This is a prerequisite for creating local jobs and markets for the European green industry, while ensuring a stronger cohesion in our regions. **We believe it is of utmost importance that Commissioners who will be leading the EU's economic and financial affairs, budget, single market and competitiveness agendas are also requested to work closely with European cities and regions, in addition to the key role of the Commissioner for cohesion and reforms, to recognise realities at the local level.**



Cities and regions need support to develop and maintain adequate in-house skills and a workforce to successfully do their part of the climate neutrality transition and by doing so, to create demand for European businesses and industries. According to the [study conducted by the Local Staff for Climate campaign in 2022](#), around 214,000 new local employment positions, which cost around €16 billion per year at the EU level, are needed to implement the EU's 2030 targets at the local level. **Therefore, Commissioners who will be leading the topics of skills and jobs, social rights and policies, as well as just transition should be encouraged to work with local and regional governments.**

**In light of the above, we do believe an Executive Vice- President of your College of Commissioners should oversee the establishment and implementation of such structured dialogues with the local and regional level**, across all the above mentioned topics and beyond, to ensure that these dialogues improve the implementation of the Green Deal on the ground and provide input in the upcoming legislative proposals. Such an approach will be critical to achieving the necessary transformation and societal resilience in a democratic way and at scale across Europe.

We, once again, consider the EU's 2024- 2029 Strategic Agenda a key opportunity to create an unprecedented potential for positive synergies and feedback loops from the local to the national and EU level in which the actions of each level of government effectively reinforces and complements another so as to implement the European Green Deal swiftly and fairly.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and/or your teams to discuss our proposal further and are available to provide any additional information or support you may require.

Respectfully yours,

**Hugh Coughlan**, Vice- President, ACR+

**Thomas Brose**, Director General, Climate Alliance

**Fabrizio Rossi**, Secretary General, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

**Claire Roumet**, Director, Energy Cities

**André Sobczak**, Secretary General, Eurocities

**Filip Dumitriu**, Director, FEDARENE

**Wolfgang Teubner**, Regional Director, ICLEI Europe

**Karen Vancluysen**, Secretary General, POLIS