



**European Committee
of the Regions**

ENVE-VI/030

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OUTLOOK OPINION

Climate governance after 2020: a European and global perspective – a contribution to the UNFCCC COP24

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Recalls that the Paris Agreement recognises the important role played by multilevel governance in climate policies and the need to engage with regions, cities and non-Party stakeholders.
- Considers that the stepping-up of politically-relevant, democratically elected non-Party stakeholders such as local and regional authorities (LRAs) in the global climate governance regime is a non-negligible trend, and that it is therefore essential that the UNFCCC regulatory framework acknowledges this form of bottom-up governance by formally recognising its role in the decision-making process.
- Calls for NDCs to include an aggregation of regionally and locally determined contributions to recognise the role of subnational authorities in the achievement of the international climate commitments and considers that, provisions should be enshrined in the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union, notably as regards the participation of LRAs in the preparation of the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans.
- Calls for the transparency framework to include in the national inventory reports a dedicated section on mitigation actions undertaken at the subnational levels of governments as a way to help track the progress towards achieving the NDC (and R/LDCs).
- Calls on the UNFCCC Parties and on the European Commission to insert in the future rules on the global stocktake, an obligation for the Parties to consult and involve local and regional authorities during the formulation phase of their submissions.
- Calls on the COP Presidencies, UN Climate Change Secretariat and UNFCCC Parties to clarify how the results of the Talanoa Dialogue will be processed and integrated into the negotiating texts to be adopted at COP24.
- Proposes that the Talanoa Dialogue should not be limited to a storytelling approach, and should continue beyond COP24 turning into a mid-term exercise during the global stocktake cycles. During that process, a fourth question - "by when?" – could be added to the Dialogue framework.

Rapporteur:

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Reference document

Outlook opinion

**Outlook opinion of the European Committee of the Regions –
Climate governance after 2020: a European and global perspective - a contribution to the
UNFCCC COP24**

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

European governance for the achievement of the 2030 climate change and energy targets

1. Highlights the important role of local and regional authorities in strategic governance at the level closest to citizens, in the management of decentralised energy production through self-consumption, distributed generation and smart networks, promotion of the right investment climate and in coupling energy and climate policies with measures taken in relation to housing, energy poverty, transport, and sustainable mobility economic development, and town and country planning or land use. Local and Regional Authorities also have a strong community leadership role and can act as advocates for climate action in their local communities, to businesses and to wider civil society increasing the involvement of individual consumers and ensuring that they "buy in" to the energy policies.
2. Stresses that the objectives of a resilient Energy Union with an ambitious climate change policy can be best achieved through coordinated action, at Union, national and regional and local level and through the promotion of research, awareness-raising activities local energy efficient solutions and supply systems that this is necessary to set the EU as well as its Member States and their local and regional authorities on the path to fulfilling the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. Notes that the new 32% targets for renewables in the EU energy mix, the energy efficiency target of 32.5% and the Governance Regulation of the Energy Union are a step forward towards Europe's sustainable energy transition and greater participation of local and regional authorities.
4. Reiterates that Member States should take into account explicitly the commitments entered into at local and regional level and the outcomes achieved under initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors. Member States should also develop procedures for taking on board the contributions of all relevant government and administrative tiers within their integrated national energy and climate plans. They should also involve local and regional authorities in planning and monitoring under their respective plans, in accordance with the constitutional and political provisions of each Member State¹.
5. Renews its call on the Member States and the European Commission to progress rapidly towards the establishment of a permanent Multi-level Energy Dialogue Platform to support

¹ CoR opinion on "Energy Union governance and clean energy" (CDR 830/2017); Rapporteur: Bruno HRANIĆ (HR/EPP).

active engagement of local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, the business community, and other relevant stakeholders in managing the energy transition².

6. In light of the European Commission proposal to set 25% of EU expenditure for climate action across all EU programmes for the period 2021-2027, which represents a good starting point requires the post-2020 multiannual financial framework to be designed with a view to better achieve the EU energy and climate targets and objectives, with particular regard to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, clean mobility, renewable energy generation and through carbon sinks. Calls for appropriate, easy-to-access EU financing to be made available for programmes and projects pursuing these goals in accordance with the integrated national energy and climate plans of Member States in the light of the long-term objectives of the Paris Agreement.
7. Holds that, within the context of the EU regulatory policy for renewable energy and the electricity market design, legal and administrative obstacles should be eliminated and simplified procedures for electricity storage, trading and self-consumption need to be set for local and regional market players such as energy communities to gain full access to the market; stresses that Member States, when designing support schemes for renewable energy, shall coordinate with local and regional authorities taken into account the specificities of local and regional renewable energy communities, so as to enable them to operate in the energy system and ease their market integration.

Relevance of local and regional action for the implementation of the Paris Agreement

8. Recalls that the Paris Agreement recognises the important role played by multilevel governance in climate policies and the need to engage with regions, cities and non-Party stakeholders.
9. Recognises that local and regional authorities (LRAs) are the closest level of public administration to citizens and underlines that many decisions on policy areas that fall under the scope of the [Paris Agreement](#) are mainly taken by these authorities.
10. Points out that their impact on curbing greenhouse gas emissions largely depends on their capacity and willingness to implement relevant policies. Therefore, believes that local and regional authorities must be associated and closely coordinated with translating political commitments into public policy, investment and the implementation action.
11. Observes that the United States' announcement that it intends to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, while regrettable, has created new incentives for subnational governments in the EU, the US and elsewhere to act in pursuit of global climate change challenges and thus show the commitment of citizens and the level of governance closest to them. Stands ready to enhance its partnership with the US Conference of Mayors and to cooperate globally with associations of cities and regions on climate action.

² *Ibidem.*

12. Strongly believes that locally and regionally elected representatives and their authorities and networks, working alongside industry stakeholders and civil society, can play a key role in assisting national governments in their efforts to formulate and implement climate-relevant policies when the latter lack ambition. In this context, stresses the supporting role of initiatives such as the [Covenant of Mayors](#) in promoting the development and dissemination of tools and methodologies for the implementation of capacity-building activities.
13. Considers that the stepping-up of politically-relevant, democratically elected non-Party stakeholders state actors such as LRAs in the global climate governance regime is a non-negligible trend, and that it is therefore essential that the UNFCCC regulatory framework acknowledges this form of bottom-up governance by formally recognising its role in the decision-making process.
14. Notes that during the inter-sessional COP in May 2017 and May 2018, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) enabled progress in stakeholder engagement in the UNFCCC process and acknowledged the need to further enhance the effective engagement of non-Party stakeholders in the global climate governance system.
15. Welcomes the European Parliament's report on the role of EU regions and cities in implementing the COP 21 Paris Agreement on climate change³ and in particular notes its statement that local authorities are responsible for implementing the majority of the mitigation and adaptation measures for climate change and most of the EU legislation on the subject.

Formal involvement of subnational governments in the global climate governance regime

16. Commends the fact that the [Talanoa Dialogue](#) is not limited to discussions among national governments, but allows a range of non-Party stakeholders, including regions and cities and their elected representatives, to bring key climate action issues to the attention of national and global policy makers; announces its support and engagement to the Cities and Regions Talanoa Dialogues as the immediate global and proactive response to this process and encourages to increase the number of Dialogues to be held in Europe.
17. Stresses that the Dialogue should not be limited to or dominated by a storytelling approach only. In the spirit of dialogue, feedback on the responses by non-Party stakeholders to the three key questions "Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?" is essential to engender confidence and engagement with the process. Therefore, calls on the COP Presidencies, UN Climate Change Secretariat and UNFCCC Parties to clarify how the results of the Dialogue will be processed and integrated into the negotiating texts to be adopted at COP24.
18. Proposes that the Talanoa Dialogue continue beyond COP24 and be turned into a mid-term exercise during the global stocktake cycles to be held every 2.5 years. During that process, to strengthen the global understanding of progress towards achieving the goals of the Paris

³ European Parliament Committee on Regional Development, Report on the role of EU regions and cities in implementing the COP 21 Paris Agreement on climate change (2017/2006(INI)).

Agreement and to embed a sense of urgency, proposes that a fourth question - "by when?" - be added to the Talanoa Dialogue framework.

19. Asks the UNFCCC Presidency to undertake an evaluation of the Dialogue's results in 2019 and to put forward proposals for a more structured, negotiations-relevant process in the future.
20. Calls on the European Commission and Member States to make use of the Talanoa Dialogue process to engage with LRAs and other stakeholders in preparing the EU's negotiating positions and inputs for COP24.
21. Recommends that cities and regions prepare submissions to the Talanoa Dialogue portal and use the opportunity available to make their ambition, positions and intentions heard within the global climate negotiations process.
22. Welcomes the [NAZCA platform](#) as a useful tool to include non-Party stakeholders in the UNFCCC decision-making process. Calls on the UNFCCC to bring forward proposals on how the role of regions and cities in the international governance system could be better defined alongside that of civil society and the private sector.
23. Recalls the [Bonn-Fiji Commitment](#) adopted by Local and Regional Leaders at COP23 and its call for enhanced active engagement of the LGMA Constituency in official global climate bodies and Parties pursuant to the fact that Bonn-Fiji Commitment was also welcomed by EU Foreign Affairs Council in March 2018. Proposes that the Committee of the Regions develop structured cooperation with the UN Climate Change Secretariat, the COP Presidencies and their High Level Champions, as well as the relevant UNFCCC negotiation bodies and the proposed revamped "Friends of Cities" at the UNFCCC.

Nationally, Regionally and Locally Determined Contributions (NDCs, R/LDCs)

24. Insists on the need for systematic decentralised consultations with sub-national levels of governance during the process of defining and revising the NDCs involving stakeholders from key sectors of activity, thus building a participatory method.
25. Calls for NDCs to include an aggregation of regionally and locally determined contributions to recognise the role of subnational authorities in the achievement of the international climate commitments.
26. Considers that, in order for this process to be effective at EU level, provisions should be enshrined in the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union, notably as regards the participation of LRAs in the preparation of the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans.
27. Believes these provisions would provide a stronger political and methodological basis for the CoR's proposals for the establishment of Regionally and Locally Determined Contributions

(R/LDCs)⁴, whose underlying idea is to allow sub-national authorities to define their mitigation and adaptation commitments, as the Parties have done through their NDCs, to provide solid, transparent contributions, starting from robust monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) processes.

28. Invites the European Commission to table, in consultation with the CoR, a non-legislative proposal for a monitoring and evaluation methodology to track cities' progress against their respective visions towards 2050 and strategies towards 2030, which could be built upon the existing Covenant of Mayors monitoring and evaluation framework.
29. Calls on the European Commission to simplify the Covenant of Mayors' reporting process and the monitoring system in consultation with local/regional authorities, and to shorten the time required for evaluating SEAPs to bring forward the number of recognised commitments, ensure compatibility of monitoring and evaluation frameworks and minimise reporting burdens on cities and regions.
30. In light of the CoR opinion on climate finance⁵, calls on the European Commission to propose a clear and binding definition of "climate finance" and related categories of investments, in line with the existing UNFCCC definition; suggests that Member States draft climate related investment plans which would provide for (i) the identification of the level and type of support needed to address existing funding gaps, (ii) the assessment of the potential for further domestic fiscal support for each climate-related action, (iii) the coordination of climate actions, capacity-building, and additional stakeholder engagement with a view to updating their respective NDCs, (iv) indications of national means to assess and manage climate risk for investors.

Paris Agreement's implementation guidelines

31. Stresses the potential positive contribution of R/LDCs to the achievement of the Paris Agreement's goals and calls on the UNFCCC Parties to define the guidelines for the NDCs, bearing in mind their possible interaction with a flexible R/LDCs system.
32. Calls for the transparency framework to include, in the national inventory reports to be submitted as part of this exercise, a dedicated section on mitigation actions undertaken at the subnational levels of governments as a way to help track the progress towards achieving the NDC (and R/LDCs).

Global stocktake

33. Calls on the UNFCCC Parties and on the European Commission to insert in the future rules on the global stocktake, an obligation for the Parties to consult and involve local and regional authorities during the formulation phase of their submissions.

⁴ CoR opinion *Climate finance: an essential tool for the implementation of the Paris Agreement* (CDR 2108/2017); Rapporteur: Marco DUS (IT/PES).

⁵ *Ibidem*.

34. Underlines that the scope of the global stocktake should be broader than a mere assessment of the aggregated actions communicated by the Parties (through NDCs and other national reports), and should include inputs on progress by all relevant stakeholders, notably local and regional authorities, to obtain a comprehensive picture of the overall progress towards achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement as laid down in Articles 2.1, 4.1 and 7.1.
35. Stresses the readiness of the CoR, as part of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency to the UNFCCC and as the institution representing local and regional authorities in the European Union, to enhance its engagement in discussions with the UNFCCC and its Parties with a view to providing input from cities and regions as regards the open, inclusive and transparent assessment of the collective efforts under the global stocktake.
36. Requests that the UNFCCC admitted organisations as well as non-Party stakeholders be able to submit questions to the Parties about their submissions during the different stages of the global stocktake so that the process can benefit from a larger pool of inputs drawn from the field. Calls for methodologies and data to be accessible to the public for full transparency and accountability purposes.
37. Notes with concern that the global stocktake may fall short of the Paris Agreement goals and highlights that additional local and regional contributions could help to increase ambition towards full implementation⁶.

Adaptation

38. Proposes that the EU lead international action on adaptation to climate change, encouraging it at all levels, and that work be done in parallel on international developments in order to accelerate progress at regional and local level. To this end, proposes the establishment of a binding legislative framework for the adoption of adaptation measures and quantifiable commitments making it possible to measure progress on adaptation
39. Requests that, in addition to the funding provided through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and that from developed countries, local and regional governments also be encouraged in their respective national contexts to contribute to the Adaptation Fund with financial resources.
40. Highlights the need for the Fund to simplify the procedures for individual local and regional authorities' financial contributions.
41. Calls for local and regional authorities with particularly strong expertise on adaptation to be granted the right to be associated with the Adaptation Fund Implementing Entities in third countries with a view to contributing to the implementation of programmes and projects as well as to the design of regional/local adaptation policies and strategies.

⁶ See for example, Advancing climate ambition: cities as partners in global climate action, A report to the UN Secretary-General from the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, in partnership with the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group.

42. Calls for a representative of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency to be granted observer status in the Adaptation Fund Board.
43. Proposes that specific instruments be made available aimed at local and regional authorities, giving them easier access to the financial tools available in the EU, and that a portal be established bringing together all the information on the various sources of European climate funding.
44. Urges the European Commission to liaise with other Parties to accelerate financing on risk reduction, resilience and adaptation plans that are geared to the priorities of the local communities and local and regional governments they are meant to serve.

Agricultural sector and land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)

45. Recognises that the intensity and frequency of natural disasters has increased significantly over the past decade and that the issue of natural disasters forms an integral part of activities aimed at dealing with the impact of climate change, and both areas should be examined together⁷. Underlines the need for greater synergies between networks, projects and agreements aimed at addressing climate change and those dealing with disaster resilience, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, in order to help strengthen the capacities of cities and regions to deal with disasters⁸.
46. Calls on the European Commission to recognise and make use of local and regional authorities to meet climate and energy challenges in the agriculture and LULUCF sectors. In some regions and cities, climate and energy strategies are already supporting the decarbonisation of these sectors. The CoR therefore stresses the role of climate and energy strategies at regional and local level in supporting the decarbonisation of the agricultural and land use sectors.

Loss and damage

47. Welcomes the expert dialogue in April 2018 that explored options for mobilising expertise, technology and support for the victims of climate change. Stresses the need to mainstream loss and damage issues into relevant national and UNFCCC processes such as capacity building, technology transfer and financial support.
48. Highlights the need for local and regional authorities from developed and developing countries alike to identify and deploy, in cooperation with national governments and under the UNFCCC framework, alternative means of addressing loss and damage. To this end, the concept of climate risk should be included in territorial and sectoral risk assessments.

⁷ [NAT-VI/015](#)

⁸ [NAT-VI/029](#)

Other issues

49. Encourages local authorities to continue to support one another through peer-to-peer support mechanisms and acknowledges their role in capacity building. Recognises the work of the Covenant of Mayors and the [TAIEX REGIO PEER 2 PEER](#) tool in this regard.
50. Looks forward to the publication of the outcomes of the international [conference on cities and climate change science](#) co-sponsored by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and calls on the UNFCCC to consider these outcomes as part of the ongoing implementation of the Paris Agreement.
51. Highlights the importance of policies to support local production and the activity of small and medium-sized enterprises as part of the efforts to mitigate the detrimental effects of climate change and therefore recommends ensuring that the rural development grant schemes reflect the goals of the strategy to combat climate change.

Brussels, 5 July 2018

The President
of the European Committee of the Regions

Karl-Heinz Lambertz

The Secretary-General
of the European Committee of the Regions

Jiří Buriánek

II. PROCEDURE

Title	Climate governance after 2020: a contribution to the UNFCCC COP24
Reference	Outlook opinion
Legal basis	Article 307(4) TFEU
Procedural basis	Rule 41(b)(ii)
Date of Council/EP referral	–
Date of Commission letter	–
Date of Bureau/President's decision	30 January 2018
Commission responsible	Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE)
Rapporteur	Andrew Varah COOPER (UK/EA)
Analysis	7 March 2018
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Previous Committee opinions	CDR 2108/2017; CDR 2430/2016; CDR 1412/2016; CDR 5368/2015; CDR 1535/2015; CDR 2691/2014; CDR 5810/2013; CDR 3752/2013; CDR 1751/2012; CDR 87/2012.
Date of subsidiarity monitoring consultation	–