

Monday, July 12th 2021



Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear President Michel,
Dear President Sassoli,
Dear Executive Vice-President Timmermans,

Make the Fit for 55 package Fit for Cities

The EU's new target of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030 - and the 2050 climate neutrality goal - enshrined in the first European Climate Law, represent a positive and encouraging step towards Europe becoming the first climate neutral continent. Now, it is essential that the Fit for 55 legislation supports a green and just recovery, and helps scale up proven solutions in the delivery of a greener and more equitable future.

As mayors of European cities, we are all on the frontlines of climate change and the past year has also shown how critical our city governments are to managing equally existential threats, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this unprecedented challenge, we have continued to act on our climate goals and on delivering the critical sectoral transformations we need, and which we hope can inspire the Fit for 55 package.

We have come together to champion a **Fit for 55 package** that is **Fit for Cities and enables the development of compact, green and inclusive cities**. A package Fit for Cities needs to be **ambitious**, we propose that the EU matches the level of ambition that cities are pioneering on the ground; **collaborative**, we ask that the EU and all member states make cities key partners in the fight against climate change; and **just** to ensure that the transition to a climate-neutral Europe creates good, green jobs and benefits all citizens equally.

We need legislation that will help deliver on the goals of the European Green Deal. In particular, it should strive to deliver the following outcomes:

1. **Mobility**: raise the CO2 reduction targets for road vehicles to align with EU 2050 net-zero emission compliant pathways and phase-out new petrol and diesel cars as soon as possible and by 2035 at the latest. Ensure that alternative fuels and charging infrastructure is deployed in line with cities' priorities, catering to the needs of all urban roads users. Enable and incentivise cities to lead the way through zero emission areas promoting modal shift and driving the transition to zero emission vehicles.
2. **Buildings**: create the right conditions to enable new buildings to operate at net zero by 2030, and all buildings by 2050 through increased renovation rates. This requires unlocking investments for all types of buildings (public, commercial, residential, heritage, and social infrastructures) and addressing the quality of renovations including deep or staged-deep renovations. The revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

(EPBD) should pave the way for funding that emphasises and supports the whole-life cycle of the construction sector.

3. **Clean energy:** enable the transition to decentralised, digitalised, democratised and fully decarbonised electricity grids with investments directed at massively expanding renewable capacity, phasing out unabated coal and gas assets with clear timelines and transitory measures and put heating and cooling on a pathway to full decarbonisation by 2050, including through electrification.
4. **Just transition:** climate neutrality must be achieved through a just transition and tackling energy poverty. More ambitious targets will require new skills and training, and create quality local jobs. But vulnerable groups and energy poor households should be supported with direct subsidies and alternative measures.
5. **Carbon pricing:** the extension of the Emissions Trading Scheme to the building and transport sectors must be combined with solid measures to protect the most vulnerable groups from any adverse impact related to, for example, the cost of living. Future carbon pricing revenues need to be earmarked to support climate action and a fair transition in all European cities.

Through their commitment to creating a greener, healthier and more inclusive future for their residents, cities are already taking action on the above and delivering better air and food quality, improving recycling rates, reducing waste and tackling inequalities in their cities. These actions are not only putting them on a pathway to climate neutrality but also kickstarting a green and just recovery from COVID-19, including the creation of millions of quality green jobs.

In order to ensure the recovery is green and just, greater cooperation between national and local governments is needed to scale up solutions, especially as part of the national recovery plans and to ensure investments match cities' needs in the 2021-27 spending period. Both policy reforms and investments will be essential to meet the 55% emissions reduction target by 2030. The Fit for 55 package has the potential to make or break the EU's climate ambitions and to boost a green and just recovery. By ensuring cities have a meaningful role to play in this critical time and by utilising their knowledge and expertise, EU climate policy will be made more sustainable, inclusive and resilient.

We stand ready to engage with you to collectively design a green, healthy and climate-safe future for Europe.

Ahmed Aboutaleb, **Mayor of Rotterdam**
Kostas Bakoyannis, **Mayor of Athens**
Philippe Close, **Mayor of the City of Brussels**
Ada Colau, **Mayor of Barcelona**
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