

EMBARGO: 16:00 hrs CEST, 20 April 2022

C40 Mayors Emergency Plan to Tackle the European Energy Crisis and Protect Residents

Europe is amidst an energy crisis. Fossil fuel price rises and volatility, compounded by the war in Ukraine, are threatening millions of vulnerable residents to face the unacceptable decision between eating and heating and plunging many into energy poverty.

We know what the solutions are. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has recently outlined measures for Europe to reduce its reliance on polluting, expensive and volatile fossil fuels such as fossil gas and oil that are at the root of this crisis - while accelerating the transition to a 1.5°C-aligned energy system, improving livelihoods and protecting residents. These measures could reverse decades of underinvestment in deploying renewable energy systems, making our buildings more energy efficient, cleaning up heat supply and moving towards more sustainable mobility solutions, while creating good jobs and drastically reducing energy poverty.

Our cities are committed to playing their part in delivering measures that tackle the energy crisis and protect residents across European cities. This comprehensive ten point plan sets out actions that will help residents and workers through the energy crisis while enabling accelerated action to tackle our greenhouse gas emissions. **Delivering this action plan will need support from all tiers of government and stakeholders in cities.** It needs national governments to step up, it needs collaboration between governments and unions, it needs the right investments and the devolution of appropriate powers.

Our ambition is high - but it is only with increased support from - and collaboration with - national governments that we will be able to fully deliver the actions our residents need. National governments must set the right policy frameworks to allow cities to take bold action and they must step up their financial response to the crisis, ensuring that cities can access the funds needed to implement measures that will provide immediate relief to their residents and reduce costs in the long run. In our cities, each of us will have different powers and therefore will need different types of support, but we are all committed to play our part and we have come together collectively to identify in this plan what Europe needs to do to solve this crisis. National governments must do the same.

We are calling on national governments to step up their emergency response to the crisis, working with us so that we can collectively fully deliver the following actions:

1. **Taking all necessary steps to lift all residents from energy poverty:** Immediate financial support must be provided to the most vulnerable. Cities need additional

support to be able to take locally appropriate measures to support residents, such as boosting incomes of the vulnerable, support to access energy efficiency measures and advice to reduce their energy bills. Examples could include working with municipal or private utilities to reduce the likelihood of disconnection, guarantee a minimum level of affordable or free consumption to all households and provide temporary costs and debt relief.

2. **Accelerate investments into making all municipal buildings and social housing properly insulated and run on renewable energy:** To protect the most vulnerable and stimulate the wider building market, policy mechanisms and funds must be available so that all public buildings and social housing is energy efficient and supplied with renewable energy at a faster rate - it is possible to do this by 2030 if all parts of government and the private sector worked together. Bringing forward energy efficiency programmes for social housing, care facilities, schools, community centres etc., will help the most vulnerable while improving their quality of life. This investment will help to catalyse the retrofit market, saving operational costs, energy and municipal budgets.
3. **Ensure that all residents can access trusted energy advice through services that strengthen community resilience:** Cities - in coordination with community groups and other multi-stakeholder alliances - need to be able to provide education and advice to populations at risk of energy poverty on energy efficiency 'quick wins', thermal comfort and how to access social safety nets. Energy poverty advice must be integrated into other frontline services including health and social care.
4. **Eliminate wasteful energy use through stimulating behaviour change:** The recent IPCC report analysed that the 10% of wealthiest households cause 40% of carbon emissions, and public information campaigns need to encourage these residents to reduce their energy use. Similarly, large commercial building owners need to put in place many of the simple and effective measures to reduce energy use, such as proper maintenance of heating and cooling equipment, installing smart control mechanisms and switching office lights off when they are not needed.
5. **Massively boost energy retrofit rates, prioritising all worst-performing buildings:** With additional funding from governments and the necessary regulatory changes, cities can accelerate their work to turn the worst energy performing buildings into super-efficient ones through money-saving retrofit programmes that ensure no long term financial burdens for vulnerable residents. What is needed in this moment of energy price and climate crisis is to triple retrofit rates to achieve at least 3% of buildings per year. Large commercial users should front-load their investments in retrofit and equipment upgrades now. Innovative funding solutions can be implemented or facilitated by national governments to enable these measures - such as establishing a market for the emissions reductions secured by the retrofitted buildings.
6. **Reverse increasing urban reliance on gas through accelerated deployment of clean, affordable heating and cooling systems and phase out direct fossil fuel use:** The IEA has argued that no new fossil fuel boilers should be installed by 2025

at the latest to keep temperature increase below 1.5°C. It would be preferable to achieve that sooner - and that will require government mandate and support to happen - it will avoid locking in residents into expensive heating systems that will still have to be decarbonised in the future. We need to double the floor area of our cities using heat pumps and connected to district energy within the next five years. At present, very few city governments have the powers or the budgets to do this: we need that to change. Support should be directed towards proven, efficient and clean alternatives such as heat pumps or district energy systems to replace individual oil, coal and gas boilers and inefficient air-conditioners. Cities can build a strong supply chain for clean solutions with skills training programmes or aggregated procurement to reduce their costs.

7. **Unleash the untapped potential for decentralised power systems and demand-side flexibility in our electricity systems:** Cities need to be able to accelerate the deployment of decentralised energy solutions such as solar PV through mandates, incentives and support to community energy programmes - with the goal of deploying 50% of the identified clean, decentralised energy capacity potential as soon as possible in this decade. Increasing demand-side flexibility through smart control systems or storage solutions can also reduce the need to rely on expensive fossil fuel plant to support peak demand.
8. **Reduce oil demand through affordable, sustainable urban mobility options:** Public transport revenues have taken a massive hit through the pandemic and this is the moment that public subsidy needs to be ramped up, so we can protect and expand services while keeping fares affordable and as low as possible. The IEA has even advised making public transport free to encourage more people out of cars. Investment needs to be available so that cities can continue the massive expansion of safe cycling lanes and other facilities that enable residents to cycle and walk. Cities, utilities and national governments can also work together to more rapidly electrify vehicle fleets, with a specific focus on vulnerable populations, further reducing the need for oil imports and protecting residents from rising petrol costs
9. **Ensure social dialogue with unions and secure and advocate for good green jobs:** Renovating homes for energy efficiency represents one of the single biggest job creation opportunities in Europe and protects families from rising bills - creating 3 times the number of jobs as investing in fossil gas. Recent C40 analysis shows that 87% of green recovery jobs in Italy would be from deep energy efficiency of existing and new buildings¹, while the UK construction industry needs [500,000](#) new professionals and trades to deliver retrofits nationally. Good green jobs must be good paying jobs for those who need it the most, training and green jobs programmes for people to access roles. We need to deliver our emergency plans together with workers and their representatives, ensuring social dialogue and inclusive decision making.
10. **Act with a collective voice and pool resources to tackle the emergency:** it is clear what needs to happen now to overcome the energy price crisis and transition to inclusive, equitable and zero carbon energy systems. Cities will work together to

¹ This research looked at the green jobs created and supported by interventions in the sectors of buildings, energy and transport in Italian cities over 50,000 inhabitants (Read full [report](#) and methodology)

ensure clear requests for support from their governments - such as for windfall taxes on energy company 'super profits' to fund support actions for the most vulnerable - and consistent procurement and regulatory signals to markets, so that global supply chains for products like air source heat pumps can quickly grow to meet increased demand, while cutting costs, increasing jobs and strengthening labour standards.