

The Modena Declarations

Presented on 19 October at the Climate Alliance and Energy Cities joint Grafting Cities conference, representing over 400 stakeholders from nearly 40 countries

Municipalities are on the frontline of a climate battle dictated by extreme weather events. Wildfires and summer temperatures of unprecedented scale have ravaged the EU in 2023 and severe flooding has again wreaked havoc on lives and livelihoods. Across Europe, cities are finding their resiliency tested to the limits with ever-increasing calamities that harm our citizens, our security and hit our local economies hard. Swift action is needed.

Europe's cities and towns are doing their part. In municipalities across Europe, a climate and energy transition that is both just and ambitious is already

taking root. Be it via energy communities, nature-based solutions, decentralised renewables, climate-friendly procurement, deep renovation or sustainable mobility infrastructure – the examples of fair climate action at the local level abound.

To truly cultivate our common future, we must harness the power of cities, making them places where democracy can flourish, where we can live in harmony with nature, and where we act in solidarity with one another and with future generations. The following statements, supported by the participants of Grafting Cities, underpin this vision.

The Declarations

1. **Cities and towns implement needed change.** We must not only hold fast to and build upon international processes such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, but clearly empower cities as key players with their implementation contributions if we are to safeguard the welfare of current and future generations and remain within safe Earth system boundaries
2. **Cities and towns are key to shaping policy.** They must be given the opportunity to actively shape global, EU and national climate and energy policies. Now is the time for implementation and implementation requires adequate support to local actors.
3. **The climate crisis is a social issue.** The most vulnerable are the most heavily impacted. The solution does not lie in watering down environmental and climate protection, as this only exacerbates negative social impacts. Equity and solidarity must underpin the energy transition as well as all efforts to cut emissions, address climate hazards and protect both nature and biodiversity.
4. **Resource use and production should prioritise local participation.** Participatory, locally-based structures for energy, food and other goods bolster local economies, promote wise resource use and increase resilience.
5. **Our energy system must be democratic, decentralised and sustainable.** Legal hurdles to this goal and bureaucratic red-tape must be removed so that we may swiftly boost energy efficiency in our building stock and better support energy communities for a citizen-centric renewable energy supply while increasing the share of renewables to power our cities.

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