

Joint Letter

From Europe's cities, towns and regions and their networks

Dear President of the European Commission von der Leyen,
Dear President of the European Council Costa,
Dear President of the European Parliament Metsola,
EU Heads of Government and State,
Political Group Leaders in the European Parliament,

We write to you as mayors and regional leaders across Europe at a time of unprecedented overlapping challenges. As highlighted by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, "[the status quo is no longer an option](#)." We can afford neither business-as-usual, nor untapped local and regional potential – our towns, cities and regions are engines of job creation, competitiveness, and resilience. In moments of uncertainty and disruption, there can be a tendency to default to more centralised approaches. We believe that such responses are not suited to addressing the complex, fast-evolving, and interconnected nature of today's and tomorrow's challenges. In this combined spirit of urgency and partnership, we call for fundamentally strengthening the European Union's collaboration with its local and regional governments.

Local and regional governments are not just implementers at the end of the chain – we are crucial policymakers, problem solvers, first and last responders, and major investors in Europe's future. We invest billions in sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy, and public services—driving climate adaptation, clean energy, housing, and innovation hubs that shape Europe's future. When floods strike, wildfires rage, or refugees need shelter, we respond first and serve as the last resort when others fall short. **The signatory cities and regions of this letter alone represent over 47 million citizens and over 1,8 million employees.** Today, local governments account for more than 50% of total public investments, and about 60% of climate related public [investments](#) in the EU, doubling climate [earmarking](#) of the current EU budget. Our investment potential in key sectors such as energy, transport, circular economy and buildings are key to create lead markets for European clean industry.

Simply put, cities and regions are where the European project meets people. **If a policy doesn't work in our regions, cities and towns, it will not work at all.** Today, however, local and regional voices are often confined to ad-hoc consultations or after-the-fact feedback; rarely are we truly involved in co-designing the policies that we are ultimately to implement.

We therefore call on you to work with us towards effective **governance rooted in shared responsibility to meet the needs of the European citizens and businesses.** The transformative changes Europe needs – whether decarbonisation, competitiveness,

resilient infrastructure and energy decentralisation, housing, digital innovation, or social inclusion – are possible only if local and regional governments are fully engaged with the mandate, recognition, and resources to act. We stand ready to leverage our investments, share our ground-level experience and work toward a new partnership across all levels of government. No single level – European, national, regional or local – can succeed alone, and the EU must unlock the potential of our towns, cities, and regions. It will make our governance structures more efficient, more democratic and strengthen the [trust](#) between citizens, local, regional, national and EU leaders.

As local and regional leaders, we stand ready to shoulder our share of responsibility in achieving Europe's long-term objectives. Building on the subsidiarity principle of the European Treaties and existing structures, we must give towns, cities and regions a seat at the table - in the planning, implementation and evaluation of EU programmes and policies - to substantially enhance Europe's ability to address needs better and faster.

For this reason, **we call on the European Commission, the Council, and the Parliament to acknowledge local and regional governments as key partners, and establish structured, permanent dialogues with local and regional governments from the start – in agenda setting, policy co-design, financing and implementation.** We urge the Commission to turn its “implementation dialogues” into genuine multilevel partnership that engage all levels of government, and to embed feedback from local and regional level throughout the legislative process to ensure more effective, grounded measures and avoid costly unintended consequences.

In the same spirit, we are calling upon our Member States to establish structured and permanent multilevel dialogues (already foreseen in EU legislation such as in the Governance Regulation) to coordinate policy development, implementation and financing. These dialogues build trust, identify issues early, enable mid-course corrections, and ensure EU initiatives deliver results in every community. **As negotiations on the next EU budget take shape, multilevel governance must become a guiding principle to ensure that funding priorities reflect local and regional needs and that implementation is effective on the ground.**

By untapping the full potential of multilevel governance, towns, cities and regions can accelerate project delivery, improve investment quality, and boost public trust in European efforts. This will also uphold our democratic values by ensuring European decisions are shaped with the people, not just for them.

We are dedicated to creating a Europe that works for all. The challenges before us are significant, but so is our collective capacity to overcome them when all governance levels work side by side.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATORIES

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SUPPORTING NETWORKS

