



MAYORS ADAPT

THE COVENANT OF MAYORS INITIATIVE
ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Press Release

European Commission honours commitment of 100 European cities to take action on climate change adaptation

Brussels, Thursday, October 16, 2014 – **On October 16, 2014, European Commissioner for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard honoured the leadership being shown by more than 100 Mayors across Europe in adapting to climate change at the Mayors Adapt Signature Ceremony in Brussels.**

Today's signature ceremony celebrated European cities which have signed up to Mayors Adapt – the Covenant of Mayors Initiative on Adaptation to Climate Change. It also marked a major milestone for the initiative with more than 100 cities having joined Mayors Adapt, signalling their commitment to take action on climate change adaptation.

"When we launched Mayors Adapt in March, we aimed to build a network of at least 50 cities by the end of the year. We already have 100 and more are queuing up to join. Our cities are building up their resilience against climate change and this is great news for citizens and businesses. Good preparation will be much cheaper than cleaning up afterwards - and it can save lives" said Commissioner Hedegaard.

The Mayors Adapt Signature Ceremony brought together the initiative's signatory cities, celebrating their early leadership, and showcased local action. It also offered a forum for the exchange of ideas and good practice. Additionally, the new Urban Adaptation Support Tool was launched. The tool has been developed by the Mayors Adapt initiative together with the European Environment Agency (EEA). It provides practical guidance and knowledge support to signatory cities as well as to any other interested cities, towns or stakeholders.

From Local Action to International Cooperation – Discussions on Adaptation

The morning of the event placed local action by cities into the context of international climate change cooperation. A dedicated video message of support from Michael Bloomberg, former

Mayor of New York City and now UN Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change helped shed light on international action. Christiane Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC joined mayors from Copenhagen, Lisbon and Munich, and the Commissioner, to discuss challenges and opportunities of action on adaptation. “We are considering actions on climate change as a major part of planning for the future – for a number of years now, we are engaged in action on adaptation to climate change. Mayors Adapt offers us a great opportunity to tackle the issue head-on.” said Josef Schmid, Deputy Mayor of Munich, during the debate.

The afternoon’s thematic sessions offered a unique opportunity for participants to engage with each other on common challenges and opportunities in adapting to climate change, and its synergies with climate change mitigation. In one of the sessions, Mayors from signatory cities exchanged their experiences in the coordination of climate change policy. “Climate change is already happening. We have to meet the challenge of how to cope with its impacts. The exchange with other cities in a similar situation to us helps us to better tackle these challenges. We benefit from each other’s best practices to make our cities more resilient”, emphasised Nabilla Ait Daoud, Deputy Mayor of Antwerp, after the session.

Jiří Buriánek, Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions, and Vittorio Prodi, Former Member of the European Parliament, wrapped up the Mayors Adapt Signatory Event with concluding remarks on how the EU contributes to climate-resilient urban development.

About Mayors Adapt

The impacts and knock-on effects of climate-related events are most acutely felt in cities, where critical infrastructure, valuable networks and the majority of populations are to be found. Therefore, cities and local authorities are crucial to successfully addressing climate change adaptation. It is at the local level that the effects of climate change will be most directly felt, given the unique vulnerabilities each city faces.

Mayors Adapt – the Covenant of Mayors Initiative on Adaptation to Climate Change has been set up to engage cities on climate change adaptation and to support them in taking action.

It is the first pan-European initiative to support cities in leading the way on adaptation to climate change. The initiative inspires cities, regions and local governments to show leadership on climate change adaptation, showcases their activities, and supports them in developing strategies for concrete action. It provides cities with a platform for exchange and best-practice-sharing.

Mayors Adapt is being implemented on behalf of the European Commission by a consortium led by Ecofys, comprised of Climate Alliance, Fresh Thoughts and IFOK GmbH.

<http://mayors-adapt.eu/>

For more information about the Urban Adaptation Support tool, please see here: <http://mayors-adapt.eu/materials/technical-support/>

Contact

For more information about the Mayors Adapt initiative, including how to sign up and upcoming events, please contact the helpdesk:

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Pictures and impressions from the event can be found on www.mayors-adapt.eu