



## **Building resilient green municipalities and regions of the future**

Municipalities all over Europe are establishing themselves more and more as actors for green change and drivers for implementing the EU Green Deal. More and more of these municipalities (and regions) are connecting across Europe and worldwide to work on radicalizing democracy, fighting authoritarianism, feminising politics, and start transition to an economy that holds up the principle of the wellbeing of people and the environment. Their actions are delivering green innovation and solutions in many areas connected to a better future, such as mobility, biodiversity, energy savings and production, food systems, social cohesion, inclusivity and many more. They often deliver such concrete changes much quicker than national governments.

Likewise, many European regions that have their own autonomy and self-management are promoters of social and climate change policies in their territories, managing to influence their national legislation.

The COVID crisis and post-COVID recovery as well as extreme weather events fueled by the climate emergency have proven that, in such an emergency, there is a need for active municipalities and regions which are able to work continuously on their resilience, by offering strong services of general interest to their citizens, to adapt to new conditions and innovate their approach to their missions.

We Greens are committed to driving such changes. Resilience is key for delivering our priorities. The local level is the platform where Greens are most present all over Europe. Thousands of local councillors and mayors in both large and small municipalities are working hard to solve current problems and improve the resilience of our municipalities towards future challenges.

Regions and municipalities are also at the forefront of citizens' engagement with public decision-making and participation and thus a cornerstone of democracy in the EU.

It is the utmost responsibility of all local politicians to listen to, engage with and enable our citizens to participate in a green project. This will create bottom-up ownership and credibility and counter populist antagonisms. As municipalities and regions are often important in implementing European programmes and projects, this also strengthens their identification with the European Project.

The European Greens must focus on the capacity of the EU and of the national and regional governments to support European citizens and their local communities with



practical measures and public policies aimed at investing in a fairer, greener and more digital future.

The European Green Party:

- Calls for all local and regional decision-makers to acknowledge the importance of a long-term approach to resilience. We need to plan, invest and execute with resilience all projects concerning mobility, urban planning, land use and town planning policies and regulations, environmental and resource management, food autonomy as well as health and safety standards and many more areas. Our cities, towns and villages must become less prone to the impacts of the climate crisis, thereby contributing to a sustainable and healthy environment and improving social cohesion and the fight against poverty as key aspects of resilience.
- Supports all municipalities and regions in their independent access to the necessary resources, be it from tax revenues, the national budget, or European funds. Municipalities and regions need a fair share of both financial and human resources to deliver their policies and should have enough freedom and room to manoeuvre on any independent political decision within the constitutional boundaries framework, human rights, and the rule of law. We call on decision makers on all levels to defend the municipalities' right to regulate in the interest of their citizens and the environment, including their independent use of sufficient financial resources.
- Welcomes all means of strengthening the voice of citizens, their participation in public life and in decision-making processes. We encourage all local actors/councils to adopt a participatory planning approach and initiate participatory budgeting projects. We value participation as a way of strengthening social cohesion in the municipalities and regions, which empower citizens and encourage people to trust in our democratic system once again. We also support all volunteer-based activities, which have proven to be essential during the COVID crisis and are complementing services provided by the state, regions or municipalities where needed. We call upon local administrations to equally support such activities. From this perspective, all initiatives taken in favor of educating citizens who must be at the center of risk prevention systems can be supported.
- Calls on all local councillors and municipalities, to acknowledge and fulfil their important role in climate and biodiversity protection, in order to address challenges before they emerge. Our cities, towns and villages play an important



role in the energy revolution e.g. by providing rooftops on municipal buildings for solar power or thermal insulation of municipal buildings, in adapting the local and regional transportation system as well as urban free spaces in a way that enables citizens to change to sustainable mobility, in regional planning and strengthening lively town centers to safeguard our soils and biodiversity.

- Urges local councillors as well as regional representatives to put a focus on environmental and climate resilience, which helps in events of extreme weather such as floods, droughts or heatwaves. This will help protect people's lives, wellbeing and livelihood.
- Urges local councillors to also put social resilience into focus. Social housing, social services, schools, healthcare, family and elderly care, culture and youth services, organizing shelter for homeless people and refugees – all these need to be strengthened and as services of general interest defended against further pressure of privatizing so that we can withstand future challenges. We will in this regard continue to support European Citizens Initiatives such as the one on the right 2 water giving citizens power over their services of general interest.- Municipalities are key decision makers when it comes to the transition to soft mobility, a key element in health and safety policies for our citizens. We call on all councillors and municipalities to continue prioritising public transport and promoting alternative modes of transport.
- Recognises the importance of municipalities and regions in swiftly delivering innovative policies during the COVID crisis. There are hundreds of positive examples of how municipalities could rapidly change and adapt to the new normal and test new approaches. We should learn from these agile approaches, and learn from the negative cases, so we do not repeat them. We should use them to tackle issues other than COVID and, when needed, we should change our laws to address the limits municipalities are facing in such agile problem-solving. It is also vital to take digital services into account to strengthen these innovative policies in the times of the digital transformation.
- Urges the European institutions to have a stronger focus on regional and local needs and inputs in their decision-making, regarding the policies mentioned above, especially in fields that are vital for their resilience.
- The European Greens invite all green and green-minded local councillors, mayors, and regional representatives, activists to cooperate and to share experiences and lessons learned across Europe. Strengthening international cooperation at the local and regional level is one of the tools required to strengthen resilience. The EGP provides a space for such learning and



exchanges of experience, both online on its platform and offline through various events.

- The European Green Party challenges the pressures for deregulation and central control of local governments and rejects calls to simplify local land use planning in favour of the development sector, or put local services in the hands of external corporations. We call on municipalities to enable local ownership and control of community facilities and services as a way of strengthening local resilience.