

Climate change mitigation now!

An appeal from the Alpine municipalities and their inhabitants to the participants of COP 21

Climate change is a global phenomenon; action at the local level is essential if we are to face the problem successfully. Municipalities are the crucial link between national and transnational goals and their implementation at the local level. They are therefore at the forefront of the fight against climate change.

Because of their natural physical conditions, the Alps are affected particularly severely by the consequences of climate change. Glacial retreat, extreme weather conditions and winters with little snowfall are just some of the negative consequences. Climate change is occurring at a faster pace in the Alps than elsewhere. At the same time, the Alps are one of the world's developed regions and as such also contribute to climate change. Actors in the Alps have not only the responsibility but also the know-how and the resources to act against climate change and to serve as an example for other mountain regions.

Through various resolutions such as the Climate Action Plan, the parties to the Alpine Convention have entered into an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For years, the towns and municipalities of the Alps have been working in support of the implementation of these resolutions and introduction of the necessary measures. They are aware that a paradigm shift is necessary. They are willing to take action to counteract the causes and consequences of climate change. If their actions are to be effective, the municipalities need the backing of the States, the European Union and the global community.

We, municipalities and towns of the Alps and non-governmental organisations, therefore appeal to the United Nations and its members assembled at the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) to establish a binding climate agreement and set ambitious climate goals for effective local action in the municipalities and towns. We ask the United Nations and its members for a consistent and courageous commitment and a clear and concrete strategy to combat the causes and consequences of climate change which will encourage the municipalities and towns to take action.

In particular, we call on the United Nations and its member states to establish strategies and take measures to reduce climate change including the following: From the decisions taken in Paris we, municipalities and towns of the Alps, expect a support in our commitment to climate change mitigation, particularly in the following fields:

- For a promotion of low carbon infrastructure and technology over conventional and climate-damaging systems, e.g. investment in the railway is to be given priority over infrastructure for motor vehicles.
- For the introduction of strict legal requirements and the development of specific and practicable service packages for municipalities and towns within all fields of action to help combat the causes and consequences of climate change. The fields of action that are of particular relevance for the Alps include the following: climate-friendly local and regional transport taking account of the geography of the Alps, climate-friendly tourism (especially winter tourism, which is seriously affected by climate change), due consideration of natural hazards (heat, avalanches, floods, mudslides, etc.) in urban and municipal development, climate friendly public procurement, energy-efficient construction and refurbishment, and sustainable food and energy production and consumption.
- For the provision of the necessary funding and creation of incentives for municipalities and towns to implement measures in the above fields, and public recognition for their activities.
- For the promotion of a sustainable lifestyle based on the considered consumption of goods and services.
- For the promotion of knowledge transfer and exchange of experience across regional and national borders as well as acknowledgement and support for existing networks of towns and municipalities.
- For the development of participatory approaches and good climate governance in the fields of mitigation and adaptation such as a transparent legislation and implementation, involving all relevant actors.

We, municipalities and towns in the Alps, together with our own people and economy, commit to a sustainable lifestyle to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In particular, by:

- An active contribution to the reduction of energy consumption.
- The responsible consumption of goods and services with an emphasis on regional businesses and low carbon production.
- The further development of public transport in order to facilitate the shift from the motor car to public transport, cycling and walking.
- The renovation of public buildings according to lowest energy standards and the use of carbon neutral materials such as wood, clay or straw – to serve as an example for private investments.

Today, we have no alternative but to achieve an international consensus on the issue of climate change. The climate summit in Paris in December 2015 must show that we are fully aware of what is at stake. Alpine municipalities and towns are already acting by proposing local solutions to tackle climate change. They consider it essential that the global community adopt a low-carbon approach to development as soon as possible and apply it consistently. They expect of the government representatives gathered in Paris and of the United Nations a clear commitment to that effect. Together we need to increase our efforts and make clear and consistent choices for an effective climate policy and a liveable future.

This declaration has been elaborated in advance of the Climate Conference for Municipalities taking place during the German Presidency of the Alpine Convention in Benediktbeuern/Germany in October 2015.

CIPRA International

Alpine Town of the Year Association

Alliance in the Alps Network of Municipalities