

## Press release

For immediate release

### **Local governments must be equipped with tools to effectively implement Europe 2020 Strategy**

*Brussels, Belgium, 14 September 2011* - A number of top political leaders from cities and towns across Europe have united to release the ICLEI European Convention Declaration, responding to the Europe 2020 Strategy and calling for greater support and recognition of their contribution to creating an economically smart, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable Europe.

Today the host of the ICLEI European Convention, Evelyne Huytebroeck, Minister for the Environment, Energy, Urban Regeneration, Brussels-Capital Region handed over the Declaration to Joanna Mackowiak-Pandera, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of the Environment, Poland, Presidency of the EU and Michel Delebarre, Chair, Commission for Territorial Cohesion, Committee of the Regions.

The Declaration reiterates that European cities and towns are fundamental to progressive governance at regional, national and European level, pointing out that 85 percent of the EU's GDP is generated in cities and the fact that they have a long track record in developing and implementing sustainable, innovative local policies. Therefore, the gathered local political leaders are disappointed that local governments have had little involvement in the development of the National Reform Programmes, the first step in the national implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Alexandra van Huffelen, Deputy Mayor of Rotterdam, host of the event's Mayors Session said, "the EU should put more emphasis on the local dimension in its visions and plans. I call for more stringent policies in limiting emission levels at source. If these limits are not met, financial support for specific measures at city level must be made available to cope with the consequences."

The Declaration states that in order to meet the Europe 2020 objectives on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy, Member States and European Institutions must enhance the role of local governments in various ways. These include regulatory, financial and monitoring structures for the local implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

They are also called on to, "assist cities and urban areas in speeding up the transition to sustainable development and to take the lead in CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, improving energy efficiency, using locally generated sustainable forms of energy and transport and encouraging the development of innovative and sustainable products and services".

The Declaration also aims to deliver this message on the global platform, building on the results of COP16 and, "ensuring that local and regional governments can act as the key governmental stakeholders during COP17 climate negotiations in Durban and in the framework of the sustainable development agenda of the Rio+20 conference in 2012". It is clear that local leaders believe it is time to enhance sustainability now.

**Word count: 416**

For the full text of the Declaration, visit: <http://convention2011.iclei-europe.org>

## Background:

**ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability** is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations. ICLEI currently has 1,100 members worldwide and 200 in Europe. Founded in 1990, ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level.

The **ICLEI European Convention** took place from 12 - 14 September and was supported by the Brussels Capital Region, the Metropolitan Council of Dunkerque and Hamburg European Green Capital 2011 and in cooperation with ICLEI member representation offices in Brussels.

**Europe 2020** is the EU's growth strategy, made up of three pillars – smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. The EU has set five ambitious targets based on these pillars, relating to employment, innovation, education, social/inclusion and climate/energy, all to be reached by the year 2020.

## More information:

Website: [www.convention2011.iclei-europe.org](http://www.convention2011.iclei-europe.org)

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