Climate Alliance

Declaration of Wels: Climate Alliance Member Charter

A commitment to ambitious climate action adopted 8 September 2021

For background information, please see **Frequently Asked Questions** about the Climate Alliance Member Charter

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INTRODUCTION

After more than 30 years of climate action, the Climate Alliance municipal network discerns a need to review its commitments and thematic focuses as well as to issue recommendations for further discussions within its member municipalities.

More than 1,800 European municipalities and regions in 27 countries have joined Climate Alliance since 1990. In many cases, their commitment far exceeds that of their home country. Beginning with individual and mostly technical climate protection measures, many municipalities have developed their strategy further and now involve private consumers, associations and businesses in their activities. With their experience reports and CO_2 inventories, members can prove that they have made significant progress in many climate-relevant areas: they have further developed energy-efficient construction methods, increased their use of renewable energies, supported citizen energy projects on the local level, expanded their public transport networks and found solutions to extend cycling infrastructure. The framework conditions for energy and transport set in national, European and international climate policies still, however, contain countless hurdles to achieving the necessary CO_2 reductions.

Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced significantly to avoid reaching tipping points that will lead to irreversible changes to the climate system. We must therefore both reaffirm the path taken by Climate Alliance members thus far and support member municipalities in the definition and achievement of even more ambitious climate targets.

At the same time, our climate action must be accompanied by the corresponding national, European and international measures to prevent our planet from overheating and dramatic changes from occurring in our ecosystem. Countless member municipalities have reiterated this in their climate emergency declarations.

A new urgency – Climate emergency declarations

Climate Alliance goals have been an important reference for municipal climate action, serving as a starting point for far-reaching climate action. For a number of years now, though, there has been a veritable influx of ambitious targets, many of which have also been adopted by local authorities. These include the targets set out in the Paris Agreement of 2015 and those of the Covenant of Mayors with its 11,000 signatories as well as national targets. However, a substantial gap still exists between these political statements and the actual implementation of measures.

Yet another CO_2 reduction target will thus not be sufficient to guide our action. It is also why many municipalities and regions are choosing to anchor their climate

strategies in a more comprehensive approach to sustainable development (drawing on the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) so that, besides CO_2 reductions, additional parameters are needed to make the major transition to global sustainable development measurable.

This draft Climate Alliance Charter renews the existing voluntary commitment in the light of these developments to a “continuous reduction of greenhouse gas emissions” (as stated in the Climate Alliance statutes) and expands the individual targets into a target range so as to support Climate Alliance members in their local climate strategies.

Graphic recording of the climate target discussion held during the Climate Alliance Digital Days in October 2020 | Image: Marie-Pascale Gafinen

DECLARATION OF WELS

OUR CURRENT VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

We, the European towns and cities of the Climate Alliance, hereby declare that we remain committed to the core principles laid out in the Manifesto[1] of 1990, Climate Alliance's founding document, and the Bolzano Declaration[2] of 2000. In these, we commit to ambitious emissions reductions targets as well as to protecting the rainforests of Amazonia and supporting the indigenous peoples who call them home.

Since 2006, member municipalities have committed themselves to the following climate targets:

- A continuous reduction in CO_2 emissions by 10% every five years
- A halving of per capita CO_2 emissions by 2030 (base year: 1990)
- A long-term target of 2.5 t CO_2 emissions per inhabitant and year

These targets remain an important strategic framework, however we also recognise that this reduction path is no longer sufficient. The urgent need to achieve substantial reductions worldwide has since intensified significantly due to clear signs that global heating is accelerating.

We are therefore renewing our voluntary commitments, based on the recognition that the current global reduction path is not sufficient to achieve one the central goals of the Paris Agreement, namely to limit human-caused global heating to 1.5°C, maximally 2°C, above pre-industrial levels. It is also for this reason that many municipalities have declared a climate emergency and agreed more ambitious climate mitigation measures.

We moreover recognise that not only great ambition is required to effectively address the climate crisis, but also just action – just for future generations and for those who contribute little or nothing to the climate crisis. The interdependencies are clearly tangible and our actions here in Europe have far-reaching effects in other parts of the world.

It is also for this reason that we have entered into an alliance with the indigenous peoples of the rainforests, sharing their belief that meaningful protection of the

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[1] Climate Alliance's founding document 1990:
www.climatealliance.org/About_us/30_Years/Manifesto_of_European_Cities_on_an_Alliance_with_Amazonian_Indian_Peoples.pdf

[2] Bolzano Declaration 2000:
www.climatealliance.org/About_us/Association_docs/Bolzano_Declaration_EN_2000.pdf

earth's rainforests is only possible with the participation of the rainforests' inhabitants. We have learned through the exchange with our indigenous partners and together with COICA, the umbrella association of indigenous organisations, that we should not merely perceive indigenous peoples as "guardians of the forests", but rather that we must also take all of their concerns into account. From them we must learn how to take a holistic approach to climate action – one that takes the complex interdependencies between aspects such as biodiversity, land use and ecosystem functions into account. It is for this reason that we are particularly committed to climate justice. Considering climate justice in our strategies helps us identify real, long-lasting solutions that are in tune with local conditions and contribute sustainably to a good life for all the world's people.

In addition to CO_2 reduction targets, Climate Alliance members have also committed to:

- Refraining from using tropical timber (especially from illegal logging) in public procurement
- Taking measures to conserve rainforest biodiversity while safeguarding the rights of those whose livelihoods depend on these forests
- Supporting the rights of indigenous peoples as the best possible stewards of the rainforests in national and international strategies and agreements
- Facilitating a dialogue between indigenous peoples, governments, the private sector and international institutions on the ecologically and socially sustainable use of tropical forests

With this declaration, we seek to complement and update our commitment, based on our experience to date and the worrying global increase in greenhouse gas emissions. It represents the hope that future generations are able to live decent lives on all continents on our planet.

The basis for our action includes:

- The binding international climate change mitigation and adaptation targets and mechanisms set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement
- The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), calling for the limitation of global heating to approximately 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial era (IPCC Special Report 20183 and Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of 2021).

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[3] IPCC, 2018: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C.

- Climate justice as a fundamental principle of all climate action. Integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into local strategies

Targets and mechanisms of implementation

We believe it essential to expand on our existing commitments in order to achieve the necessary reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The most efficient way to do this is by **adjusting the emissions reduction path**. **The CO_2 reduction rate[4] must thus be increased from 10 to 30% every five years as of 2020 in order to reduce CO_2 emissions by at least 95% by 2050 as compared to 1990 levels.**[5]

For this purpose, members are to calculate their emissions in CO2 and CO2 equivalents (including the global heating potential of other greenhouse gases such as N_2O und CH_4)[6] on the basis of the Climate Alliance's monitoring approach and, where available, with Climate Alliance's national accounting tools.

The remaining emissions can be offset through local projects and local sinks (agriculture and forestry), for which the soils' ability to bind carbon (humus build-up) must be improved.

This additional 95% emissions reduction target by 2050 is in line with both EU and Paris Agreement climate targets. It is the minimum that we, as a society, must achieve.[7]

The graph below shows the progression of this additional goal as it would apply to municipalities that have been pursuing Climate Alliance's targets since 1990:

Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)].

[4] Climate Alliance's previous target of a 50% reduction in CO_2 emissions by 2030 is included in this new commitment. The long-term target of 2.5 t CO_2 per person is no longer compatible with the new commitment or the IPCC's 1.5°C target. It is thus neither described nor considered in this document.

[5] For more information, see the discussion paper **"On net-zero and carbon neutrality – pathways to a low carbon future"** presented during Climate Alliance's General Assembly held in Rostock in 2019.

6 Many municipalities have also begun using the term greenhouse gases (GHG)

[7] The target of a 95% reduction in CO_2 could even be achieved before 2050 if significantly more ambitious reduction paths were pursued. Given the limited CO_2 budget available, member municipalities should strive for a more ambitious reduction path by fully exploiting their local potentials.

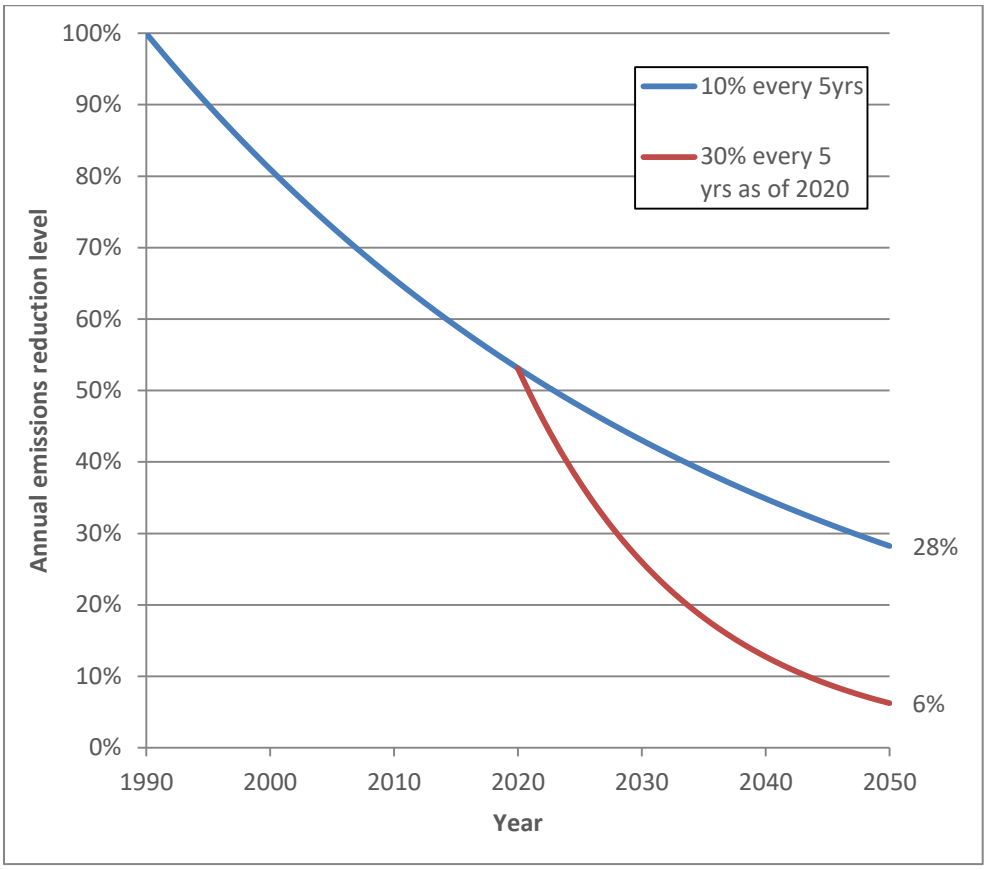

Figure 1: Possible CO_2 reduction paths for Climate Alliance members

We refer to Climate Alliance's monitoring approach[8] for the calculation of this emissions reduction path. This stipulates:

- CO_2 inventories expressed in terms of final energy according to the territorial principle
- The inclusion of upstream emissions (life cycle analysis, LCA)
- A focus on emissions inventories in energy-related sectors that municipalities can more strongly influence, although the scope can be extended to other sectors (e.g. agriculture, consumption, etc.) in which municipalities can implement specific measures
- The consideration that municipal competencies vary greatly from country to country and, as such, that municipal quantitative reduction targets are strongly influenced by national frameworks

[8] See position paper "CO_2 Accounting & Monitoring", 2017:
www.climatealliance.org/Climate_Alliance_CO2_Monioring_Position_Paper-EN.pdf

CLIMATE ALLIANCE PRINCIPLES

Measures taken to combat or adapt to climate change need to take the big picture into account. The hurdles we face are not only environmental, but increasingly also of a social and economic nature. Climate Alliance therefore advocates measures that are guided by certain principles.

Climate Alliance's principles[9] are both a compass and a filter for implementing effective and sustainable climate action:

- **Fair** – An attitude and actions that are characterised by respect and transparency. Living in harmony with nature and others forms the basis.

  The climate justice approach is, for example, a central pillar of Climate Alliance's work. A socially balanced CO2 pricing mechanism can be an important instrument to achieve this.

- **Nature-based** – Nature-based means living and acting in accord with nature as far as possible. Manmade energy and material cycles must be entirely embedded in natural processes and cycles. Natural energy flows should be tapped into by using renewable energies and harnessed for economic processes.

  For example, by maintaining and restoring the function of natural systems such as forests, soils, wetlands and peatlands. The function of ecosystems as ecological sinks must be preserved.

- **Local** – Keeping economic activities in the region. This helps to bring production closer to end consumers and make production processes more transparent.

  100 % regenerative municipalities and regions, for example, stands as an important target for this.

- **Resource-saving** – The sparing use of resources as a precondition for effective climate action. In addition to actual savings, consistently recycling materials, cascading the use of natural resources over several levels and ensuring short transport routes is of the essence.

  For example, the development and implementation of a local sufficiency strategy to reduce the unnecessary consumption of resources and goods.

[9] Climate Alliance Principles: **www.climatealliance.org/about-us/climate-action**

- **Diverse** – Local conditions and starting points shape objectives and approaches. Solutions must be diverse in order to make optimal use of the local capabilities, potential and opportunities for development. Recognition of the diversity of social and cultural experiences, qualities and characteristics forms the basis for participation, acceptance and mutual learning.

REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION MEASURES

The following definitions and framework conditions answer the question of HOW reductions can be achieved. They will be described in greater detail and complemented with background information in the second part of this document.

With the Paris Agreement, the term "climate neutrality" gained prominence in the target discussions, since becoming part not only of international strategies, but also of national and local ones. In the Paris Agreement, it is described as "... a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century". The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) uses the term "net zero emissions". Other terms with different emphases have since emerged, however these are often used **without** a precise explanation of what exactly is meant.

Neutrality from a municipal perspective

A growing number of municipalities are committing to climate neutrality in their political discourse and climate strategies. However, a more detailed analysis carried out by the City of Zurich reveals just how differently the term is applied in practice (especially with regard to which greenhouse gases are taken into account and within which framework the strategy is embedded).

"The content of two net-zero pledges can be dramatically different, aiming for different timelines, covering different kinds of greenhouse gas emissions, and relying on different kinds of offsets to varying extents."[10]

Climate Alliance's perspective:

- Since there is no uniform definition of "net zero", the term can be misleading, as can the terms "carbon neutral" and "climate neutral". A holistic approach is required to formulate sustainable solutions.

- Climate Alliance advises caution in the use of such terms as they can lead to instruments and policies that are based solely on large-scale solutions (technical sinks). These in turn result in investments being directed into

[10] "Exploring Cities, Regions, and Companies' Pledges to Decarbonise" Authors: Data-Driven EnviroLab & NewClimate Institute

other upstream solutions such as carbon capture and storage technologies as opposed to actual reductions at the source.

- In its climate action principles, Climate Alliance favours measures that are fair, nature-based, local, resource-saving and diverse.

- Climate Alliance recommends that terms be defined before they are used in policy papers and strategies. Strategies for climate neutrality must be underpinned with concrete reduction targets and paths.

- As Climate Alliance has historically concerned itself primarily with local CO_2 emissions, we instead recommend using terms such as **zero emissions** (meaning no compensation is necessary via compensation mechanisms and/or local natural sinks), **100% renewable** or **100% potential utilisation** in order to ensure a clear link to local targets.

Depending on the interpretation, "climate neutrality" can include measures that run contrary to climate justice. Climate Alliance has thus developed the following **recommendations** that describe effective local climate action:

1. **Go 100% regenerative and harness local and regional potentials.**[11] Work towards 100% renewables-based electricity, heating and cooling and energy that is generated in cooperation with local stakeholders, especially citizens but also small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and other municipalities (surrounding urban centres) in the region. Extend the regenerative approach to other key sectors by committing to 100% regenerative agriculture and land use.

2. **Focus on real climate action.** Reliance on offsetting certificates, carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies, bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS)[12] or green electricity certificates are measures that only delay effective CO_2 emissions reductions and the shift towards renewable energy. **Conserve and enlarge natural carbon sinks** such as forests and healthy soils to prevent them from becoming additional sources of CO_2 emissions.

[11] See the resolution "A Market Model for the Energy Transition – A New Energy System Design", 2015: **www.climatealliance.org/About_us/Resolutions/CA-Resolution_Marketmodel_EN_201507.pdf**

[12] See the resolution on carbon capture and storage (in German), 2009: **www.climatealliance.org/About_us/Resolutions/CA-Resolution_CCS_DE_200911.pdf**

3. **Develop a sufficiency strategy**. Aim to reduce and ideally avoid the unnecessary consumption of resources and goods locally. A sustainable lifestyle that contributes to the conservation of natural global resources is central for effective climate action. The decarbonisation of the mobility sector to the greatest extent possible will prove important in this sense. A climate-friendly diet as well as excessive meat consumption must also be considered.

4. **Avoid using timber from tropical wood.** In procurement processes for the municipality, abstain from the use of tropical timber and generally any timber derived from destructive logging or primary tropical forests. If tropical timber must be used, ensure that it is at least FSC certified.[13] Likewise, avoiding the use of palm oil and soy from rainforest areas should be considered.

5. **Support the introduction of Europe-wide carbon pricing.** If greenhouse gas emissions do not come at a price, these emissions will continue to be treated as if they do not exist in our economic dealings. This problem can be amended with a carbon pricing model. Assigning a value to CO_2 emissions is an important component of any strategy towards a low-carbon economy.

6. **Combating energy poverty.**[14] Around 10% of Europeans are affected by energy poverty. They are unable to pay their energy bills and adequately heat, cool or light their homes. The eradication of energy poverty, the development of a municipal energy poverty strategy and the implementation of measures are mandatory elements of a local climate action concept.

7. **Involve citizens.** Because the transition that lies ahead also harbours extensive potential for social conflict, it must be implemented jointly and comprehensively. It is essential to involve citizens as early and transparently as possible. Intensive exchange on as well as awareness raising for sustainable development are important to boost acceptance for change and communicate the positive aspects.

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[13] See the Climate Alliance resolution " Tropical timber certification", 1998: **www.climatealliance.org/About_us/Resolutions/CA-Resolution_Tropicaltimber_EN_199806.pdf**

[14] **https://www.covenantofmayors.eu/support/energy-poverty.html**

8. **Assume responsibility for climate justice and a just transition.** The social transformation resulting from the transition from a fossil fuel-based way of life to a more sustainable one must address social inequalities. Climate justice – local, global and generational – must be a priority. This means taking both human rights and the rights of nature into account when formulating and implementing solution strategies. Our consumption and economic decisions here in Europe affect livelihoods in other regions of the world, including those of indigenous rainforest peoples in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

STRONG ALLIANCES AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Municipalities cannot influence all local CO_2-emitting activities directly. Sectors such as agriculture and industry or citizens' consumption patterns typically do not lay within their direct spheres of influence.

Their ability to achieve quantitative CO_2 reduction targets depends on the national framework conditions and can vary widely from country to country. Much of the existing legislation, for example on urban land use planning, energy supply or transport planning, even hinders effective local climate action. Climate action must thus be embedded more firmly in legislation as a mandatory task for municipalities. At the same time, cities and towns cannot be left alone in tackling key climate tasks. They require political frameworks on the national and EU levels that allow them to assume responsibility to fight the climate crisis.

To overcome such limitations, Climate Alliance members emphasise the importance of exchange between the different levels (vertical integration), but also cooperation between municipalities (horizontal integration).

On the European level since 2008, the EU's Covenant of Mayors initiative has been the central instrument both to foster the dialogue between municipalities in Europe and the European institutions and to adapt funding and support instruments to the needs of towns, cities, and regions.

Municipal utility companies are another important instrument, facilitating a conversion to sustainable local energy production and supplies on the basis of renewable energies.

FORMULATING LOCAL CLIMATE MEASURES

The setting of ambitious reduction targets is important, but both the methods and the measures implemented to achieve these targets have a decisive impact on the quality of outcomes. A reliance on offsetting tends to dilute impact. Measures are more significant if they make as little use of offsetting as possible with offsetting making up less than 10% of all planned emissions reductions. Regional projects should be prioritised.

The recommendations listed above offer a selection of ways in which genuine emissions reductions can be achieved. They also point out possible contradictions in the application of certain instruments.

Strong targets – weak instruments?

Due to the official linking of CO_2 reductions to the Kyoto Protocol, countries, regions and some municipalities use 1990 as the reference year for their CO_2 reduction target calculations (see Figure 1). However, municipalities do not always have accurate data available to calculate their 1990 emissions levels, meaning that most municipalities in the EU base the calculation of their CO_2 reduction targets on a reference year of their choice for which they have reliable energy consumption data. Around half of the municipalities that calculate CO_2 reduction targets in the EU use 2005 or 2006 as their chosen reference year.

Climate Alliance municipalities are free to choose the reference year for calculation of their CO_2 reduction targets. Climate Alliance strongly recommends choosing a year for which the municipality has sound data. It is important to note, however, that selecting a more recent year as the reference has a significant impact on the reduction path, requiring greater efforts in the remaining years to achieve a 95% reduction in CO_2 emissions.

This means that Climate Alliance municipalities must recalculate their CO_2 reduction paths (see Figure 1) based on the reference year they have chosen.

Concretisation of successful measures

1. Go 100% regenerative and harness local and regional potentials

Using 100% renewables or harnessing 100% local potential should be understood as instruments to support the achievement of targets.

100% regenerative is a model for a better understanding the term “climate neutrality”. Climate neutrality can only be achieved as a balance of emissions (derived from CO_2 neutrality; see comments on “climate neutrality” in the appendix). It cannot be achieved from a scientific perspective, as all activities within natural systems generate a climate feedback loop. A 100% regenerative orientation of all activities within a municipality should thus focus on the inclusion and consideration of natural cycles. This approach expands the current focus on greenhouse gases alone to achieve climate neutrality. It makes for a broader understanding of

climate change mitigation that includes biodiversity, use of resources, and how we shape of the earth's surface. On the municipal level, 100% regenerative can be broken down into sub-targets that should guide a municipality's actions in each sector. These include:

- A 100% renewable energy supply (including refraining from purchasing green electricity certificates)
- 100% regenerative agriculture, forestry and land use[15]
- 100% regenerative materials and construction

The target of a 100% regenerative municipality is complemented with **100% exploitation of local potential.** Every municipality should exhaust its entire potential for local climate change mitigation to achieve the common goal of being "100% regenerative". Municipalities' different potentials should be taken into account here: while rural areas are better able to generate energy (e.g. from biomass) and meet other basic needs (e.g. food supply), the density of urban areas means shorter journeys and less individual transport if the infrastructure and services are designed accordingly.

That being said, rural municipalities with lower energy consumption are able to achieve self-sufficiency more easily without having to implement strict reduction measures. 100% exploitation of local potential aims to show that the above targets can be achieved through joint efforts. Thus, municipalities with a large surface area and low energy consumption are able to generate more than 100% of the renewable energy they need and can thus support more densely populated areas. At the same time, rural municipalities also need support, for example in terms of funding and expertise, to (over)achieve the targets.

In order to avoid harmful effects, particularly in rural areas, social, ecological and economic criteria must be considered in the use of biomass for energy production. The combustion of wood biomass contradicts the principle of cascade utilisation, whereby timber should first be used as a material for durable products and only be burned for energy generation at the end of its life cycle.

2. Effective climate action instead of symbolic policy

We need to focus on real climate action instead of symbolic politics. The question of HOW a reduction in emissions can be achieved is as important as the ambitious targets themselves. We have thus briefly outlined the main controversial strategies that municipalities may encounter below.

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[15] See the discussion paper "Net-zero and carbon neutrality–pathways to a low carbon future", 2019: **www.climatealliance.org/About_us/Association_docs/2019-08-14_On_Net_Zero_-_Climate_Alliance_Discussion_Paper.pdf**

- **Carbon capture and storage (CCS)**

  According to a resolution of Climate Alliance members from 2009, CCS cannot make a significant contribution to climate change mitigation in the coming years. If this technology is pursued further, it will tie up considerable resources that will no longer be available for a true energy transition. Instead of investing heavily in a technological dead end with considerable risks, greater use should be made of the possibilities for encouraging efficiency strategies, combined heat and power generation, and renewable energies.

  CCS and BECCS are not “bridging technologies”, but rather block and delay the course necessary for the transition to a post-fossil future. Income from EU emissions trading must primarily be used to expand renewable energies, improve energy efficiency and develop sufficiency strategies.

- **Geoengineering**

  Geoengineering brings together various ideas and strategies that aim to influence the climate system on a large scale in order to counteract anthropogenic climate change.

  In 2010, the 193 signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) agreed to a temporary moratorium on large-scale geoengineering measures.

  Article 8 (w) of COP 10 Decision X/33 on biodiversity and climate change calls on the international community to ensure “in the absence of science based, global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanisms for geo-engineering, and in accordance with the precautionary approach and Article 14 of the Convention, that no climate-related geoengineering activities that may affect biodiversity take place, until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify such activities and appropriate consideration of the associated risks for the environment and biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural impacts, with the exception of small scale scientific research studies that would be conducted in a controlled setting in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, and only if they are justified by the need to gather specific scientific data and are subject to a thorough prior assessment of the potential impacts on the environment.”

  The following therefore applies:

  - Increasing energy efficiency and expanding renewable energies must be made a priority in national climate strategies.

- The technological, financial and environmental risks of CCS and other high-risk technologies such as nuclear power must be discussed intensively in public realm.

- Funding to research and test CCS and BECCS should be raised exclusively by the industry.

- The entry into CCS must not be structured in such a way that the energy industry reaps the profits while municipalities and countries are left to shoulder the costs and risks.

- **Taking responsibility for emissions instead of offsetting**

  Offsetting works according to the principle that emissions generated in one place can be cancelled out elsewhere by means of emissions reductions projects.

  When we speak of offsetting today, we mean offsetting CO_2 emissions by financing projects that lead to a reduction in the CO_2 balance. Projects generate certificates, which confirm the offset, and these certificates can, in turn, be traded.

  To date, no proof exists that offsetting instruments are conducive to climate change mitigation. Instead of helping to avoid emissions, they simply shift responsibilities in an accounting balance documented by certificates.

  The question of offsetting CO_2 emissions is primarily about how much responsibility we – as rich countries and the primary emitters of CO_2 emissions – wish to assume for active climate change mitigation. We should not simply rely on others (e.g. green electricity from Norway) or stop doing something as soon as we have "done our homework." Instead, we should show others how it can be done and lead by example. Ultimately we need to also hold decision-makers accountable.

  We therefore recommend taking the costs of climate change into account. Today's energy costs do not include the environmental cost to future generations. According to current estimates by the German Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA), our climate impact costs around €195 per tonne of greenhouse gas, amounting to roughly €2,150 per person annually.

  Offsetting measures should only be used as a complement to effective reduction measures.

- **Conserve and expand natural carbon sinks (e.g. forests and soils) to offset remaining emissions.**

Regenerative agriculture and sustainable land use offer manifold opportunities for nature-based solutions to bind atmospheric carbon dioxide while working in harmony with nature, for example though the build-up of humus, instead of against it. Reduced or no-tillage cultivation, agroforestry, intercropping, integration of useful plants and animals, cover crops, and crop rotations are all methods that store carbon. In fact, many of these methods have been used by our indigenous partners for thousands of years. They not only offer an economical, low-tech methods to achieve net zero emissions, but also yield a variety of other benefits including improved adaptation to climate change, regeneration of the soil, preservation of biodiversity, and strengthening of the local and rural economy.

The report on "Forest carbon in Amazonia: the unrecognised contribution of indigenous territories and protected natural areas"[16] notes that more than half of the carbon in Amazonia is stored in indigenous territories. Supporting our indigenous partners therefore constitutes an important contribution to global climate change mitigation.

3. Develop a sufficiency strategy

A sufficiency strategy can help avoid and reduce the unnecessary consumption of resources and goods. Such a strategy includes:

- Implementing activities to decouple economic activity from the consumption of finite resources (circular economy)
- Promoting the use and consumption of local products and services to avoid CO_2 emissions and energy losses in the supply chain, thereby supporting the transition to renewable energy sources
- Ensuring 100% ecological and social public procurement
- Making sustainable investments in the local and regional economy to avoid or phase out activities with a negative environmental or social impact (e.g. child labour, fossil fuel extraction and supply)
- Reducing emissions associated with food production while at the same time ensuring that inhabitants have secure access to a sustainable, healthy and affordable food supply (agriculture and food systems are responsible for up to one third of the total greenhouse gas emissions)
- Reduce land consumption, especially for transport and housing.

[16] Carbon Management, Volume 12, Issue 1 (2021): **www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17583004.2014.990680?src**

100% green, social public procurement

GPP is an important tool to promote the use of environmentally friendly products and services by the public sector and thereby to achieve environmental policy goals on climate change, the loss of biodiversity, resource efficiency, and sustainable production and consumption. On the path to mandatory Green Public Procurement (GPP), Climate Alliance advises all member municipalities to do everything in their power to make 100% of their tenders ecologically and socially sustainable.[17]

4. Avoid using timber from tropical wood

The founding manifesto of Climate Alliance from 1990 states that "wood from tropical rainforests must [...] be neither imported nor utilised in any way." Seven years later, Climate Alliance passed a resolution recognising the ten principles of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as an acceptable basis for certification. Climate Alliance is committed to abstaining from the use of tropical wood and generally any timber derived from destructive logging or primary tropical forests. When the use of tropical wood proves absolutely necessary for technical reasons, members are committed to only using FSC-certified products.

Recognise the importance of unmanaged forests

Unmanaged forests can play an important role in mitigating climate change. To keep carbon out of the atmosphere and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, remaining primary or old-growth forests must thus be protected and secondary or second-growth forests should be allowed to continue growing. This preserves existing carbon stocks and helps to build up additional ones. Scientific evidence suggests that "unmanaged" forests have a higher total biomass and thus lock in more carbon than secondary forests that are actively managed for raw material production or that have recently been abandoned. Naturally structured forests are also typically more resilient and better able to cope with weather extremes and a changing climate.

5. Support the introduction of a carbon price

If greenhouse gas emissions do not come at a price, these emissions will continue to be treated as if they do not exist in our economic dealings. This problem can be amended with a carbon pricing model. Assigning a value to CO2 emissions is an important component of any strategy towards a low-carbon economy.

CO_2 emissions cannot be reduced to zero all at once. A gradual reduction in emissions means that every municipality and every company will continue to produce CO_2 in the years to come. However, municipalities can calculate the climate-damaging impacts of these emissions based on the current carbon pricing.

[17] General Assembly held in Brussels on 23 April 2009.

Purchasing green certificates (e.g. for green electricity or offsetting in other countries or regions) has no effect on local emissions. Climate Alliance instead recommends using carbon pricing strategies that enable a mapping of the actual costs of CO_2 to products and services commissioned by or in the municipality. Municipalities can add a carbon levy to products and services to create local funds, finance local projects or support other organisations and countries in their climate action.[18]

6. Involve citizens

Participation is a prerequisite for acceptance. Participatory governance structures should be strengthened to create accountability and change consumption patterns. Existing local initiatives such as citizen energy can be an important basis for this.

7. Assume responsibility for climate justice and a just transition.

In order to dampen the social impact of challenges associated with the climate crisis, Climate justice – local, global and generational – must be a priority. This means taking both human rights and the rights of nature into account when formulating and implementing solution strategies Our decisions and ways of life here in Europe affect livelihoods in other regions of the world, including those of indigenous rainforest peoples in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Injustice and exploitation must be prevented in economic activities and fairness and sustainability ensured. Climate justice is an important principle that leads to sustainable local solutions that can contribute to good life for all the world's peoples. Since its establishment in 1990, Climate Alliance and its members have stood for climate justice and holistic local solutions to global challenges.

At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), sustainable development was recognised as a global guiding principle that considers economic development, social equality and the safeguarding of natural resources as a whole. The strategies and processes developed since this time have, among others, led to the adoption in 2015 of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, detailing a total of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many Climate Alliance members refer to this agreement when developing their local sustainability activities.

The application of this guiding principle to the necessary transition when moving from an economic system that is based purely on the extraction of resources to a circular economy (including the renewable production of energy) has led to the term "just transition", which describes the principles and instruments for designing a transition that leaves no one behind.

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[18] For more information, see Climate Alliance's project "CO_2 Pricing for municipalities": **www.climatealliance.org/activities/projects/carbon-pricing-for-municipalities.html**

In its 2002 State of the Environment report, the European Environment Agency (EEA) concluded that “Europe needs to find ways to transform the key societal systems that drive environment and climate pressures and health impacts – re-thinking not just technologies and production processes but also consumption patterns and ways of living”.

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THE CLIMATE ALLIANCE

For over 30 years, Climate Alliance member municipalities have been acting in partnership with indigenous rainforest peoples for the benefit of the global climate. With more than 1,800 members spread across 27 European countries, Climate Alliance is the world’s largest city network dedicated to climate action and the only one to set tangible targets: each member city, town and district has committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by ten percent every five years. Recognising the impact our lifestyles can have on the world's most vulnerable people and places, Climate Alliance pairs local action with global responsibility. **climatealliance.org**