



## **MOTION: MISSION VALÈNCIA NEUTRAL CITY**

### **At least 3 districts in València become climate neutral by 2030 by and for the citizens**

#### **RATIONALE**

##### **Climate Emergency context and the key role of cities**

There is a worldwide consensus on the fact that mitigating the global effects of climate change is a huge challenge for mankind. At the same time, it is also generally acknowledged that there is not much time until it is too late to achieve the necessary social transformation.

The Paris Agreement, the second largest international agreement after the Kyoto Protocol, was signed in 2015. In the Paris Agreement (COP 21), 195 countries accepted the challenge to limit the rise in temperature in the planet by the end of this century to between 1.5°C and 2°C degrees in comparison with pre-industrial levels. In order to do so, signatory countries committed themselves to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions (GGE). Each country had to establish their own reduction goal in a mitigation plan. To this end, and following the commitments made in the Paris Agreement, the Government of Spain introduced the draft of the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) in 2019.

At a regional level, the Department of Agriculture, Environment Climate Change, and Rural Development, as well as the Department of Sustainable Economy, Productive Sectors, Trade, and Labour, with jurisdiction in the areas of climate change and energy, have worked on the same line. In October 2018, the “Valencian Strategy on Climate Change and Energy” was passed in coordination with all the departments in the Regional Government with jurisdiction affecting the current strategy in a participatory process with the Environmental Advisory and Participatory Council. The principles in this new strategy are based on the reduction of energy consumption, the promotion of renewable energies, energy self-consumption, cleaner transportation and the promotion of a territorial balance, without neglecting the key role of carbon sinks as an instrument to reduce the concentration of greenhouse gas emissions.

Cities cover around 3% of the land. However, they cause 72% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, over half of the world population currently lives in urban areas. Cities are experimenting a rapid growth leading to a worsening of this trend. All forecasts state that 80% of the world population and 85% of all Europeans will be living in cities by 2050.

At a local level, on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 the Action Plan for the Climate and Sustainable Energy (PACES) in the City of València was passed in a City Council Plenary. Its aim is to comply with the commitments of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy and thus reinforce a set of actions and commitments carried out in València since 2009. Among the goals and commitments ratified in the PACES, we can point out the goal of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in



València by at least 40% by 2030, with 2007 as the benchmark. In September 2019, the València City Council declared the Climate Emergency within the framework of the adherence to the initiative promoted by the Alliance for the Climate Emergency.

In January 2021, at the behest of Ana Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, the Mayor of València signed the declaration on the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement. This declaration reinstated the ambition to limit the increase of global warming within the goal of 1.5°C and stated a set of commitments to place climate action at the heart of all urban decisions in order to achieve climate neutrality and to create equitable communities.

Therefore, within this international, European, national and local context of urgency and call to action, we state that there is no alternative: the climate emergency must be addressed from cities and by citizens.

## Context of innovation missions in Europe and Spain

European research and innovation missions pursue a better connectivity European research and innovation efforts and the needs of society and citizens, providing a better visibility and maximizing the impact of investments in research and innovation. Therefore, the European Union defines a mission as follows:

“A mission is a portfolio of research and innovation actions based on excellence and impact-oriented in all disciplines and sectors, intended to:

- achieve, within a given timeline, **a measurable goal that could not be achieved through individual actions.**
- **Have impact on society and policy making** through science and technology;
- **and be relevant for a significant part of the European population** and a wide range of European citizens”.

Missions address the most important challenges mankind is facing. The R&D&I project portfolio associated to a mission try to boost its impact to ensure success.

After 2 years of hard work and consensus, in September 2020 the European Commission announced 5 areas to formulate science and innovation missions for the next decade within the Horizon Europe 2021-2027 framework programme.

- Mission 1: Conquering Cancer by 2030.
- Mission 2: A Climate Resilient Europe by 2030.
- Mission 3: Mission Starfish 2030: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030.
- **Mission 4: 100 Climate-Neutral Cities by 2030 by and for the citizens as the prelude to a climate-neutral Europe before 2050.**
- Mission 5: At least 75% of all land in the European Union will be healthy for food, people, nature and climate by 2030.

Many European countries have started to align their efforts in the field of research and innovation on this European mission-oriented line in order to draft European public policies. On December 9th 2020, the Government of Spain presented the “Country Missions for Innovation”, the aim of which is to support sector strategic initiatives of entrepreneurial innovation that respond to strategic challenges for our country through the collaboration of



R&D&I companies and institutions which align with a European perspective based on missions-oriented research.

The City of València, having initiated its Missions València 2030 innovation governance model at the beginning of 2019 and enacted it with a vast majority of the City Council Plenary in May 2020, finds itself today at the European forefront of science-based urban transformation strategies, research and innovation missions. Due to this momentum, València was chosen in 2020 by the European Commission among the 6 most innovative cities in Europe.

## **100 Climate-Neutral Cities by 2030 - by and for the citizens**

### **The goal of the Climate-Neutral Cities European Mission**

The Mission Board, a panel of European experts on this mission, has proposed the following European mission: **100 Climate-Neutral Cities by 2030 by and for the citizens**. Its goal is no other than to support, promote and showcase how 100 European cities approach a system transformation towards climate neutrality by 2030, being aware that the global European goal is set for 2050.

For large cities such as València, the European Union considers the city not as a whole, but rather at the scale of neighbourhoods, districts or areas of special interest in the city that comply with a series of conditions and requirements.

The European Commission recently presented its long-term strategy to achieve a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy by 2050. It is known as the *European Green Deal* and it includes a clear orientation to implement this climate mission.

Ultimately, the European objective of this mission is for cities to comply with the goals and targets set in international frameworks such as the Paris Agreement (COP21), the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (specifically SDG 11), the Urban Agenda for the EU and the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III). Cities play an essential role in all international strategic frameworks.

### **A new model of governance**

Europe acknowledges that the main hurdle for a climate transition is not the lack of intelligent climate-neutral technologies, but rather the lack of capability to implement them. There is a consensus among European experts on the main constraint: the current silo-based governance cannot lead us towards the so needed climate transition.

Therefore, Europe proposes a new, more holistic approach supported by a long-term climate investment to create the means and conditions for a system transformation based on 3 principles:

- (a) A holistic approach to promote innovation and development,
- (b) A matrix as a model for an integrated multi-level governance, and
- (c) A profound and continuous collaboration among the whole ecosystem.

This new governance model for a climate transition requires a huge commitment from cities and their political leaders, not only to innovate at an administrative level, but also to shape



spaces that attract and bring on board all agents in the ecosystem: the private sector, the Academia, the public sector, civil society, the media, and citizens.

### **A climate contract for the city**

For the 100 cities to be chosen in this first decade, the European Commission proposes the introduction of a **Climate City Contract** as a new mechanism to deploy the support from the European Union in the form of more innovation, better regulation and larger integrated financing mechanisms. The Climate City Contract constitutes a multi-level governance tool that will be signed by the City Mayor on behalf of the City Council and the local ecosystem, as well as by the European Commission and by the relevant regional and national governments.

### **A new role for citizens**

Citizens are granted an essential role to play in the climate mission, since the mission success will depend mainly on people in their different relations and roles: political, creative, civic, users, producers, consumers, tenants of housing and means of transportation, etc.

For the European Commission there is only one precondition to be included in the contract, i.e. citizens must be granted an active main role with new platforms to act and better resources to do so. At least 1% of European funds allocated to cities through the Climate City Contract must be targeted at supporting citizens and their platforms for the development and implementation of climate actions.

In the interaction and consultation with European citizens led by the Mission Board, citizens have given a clear priority to the transformation needed for the mission success in such relevant fields and sectors as mobility, energy, urban infrastructure, buildings and construction, circular economy, and changes in social behaviours.

### **A new role for innovation, experimentation and learning**

The 100 signatory cities of the Climate City Contract will develop and implement a new innovation concept: system innovation in the fields of governance, transportation, energy, building, and recycling, supported by powerful digital technologies, by the involvement of citizens and other multi-level public policies with an impact on the mission (i.e., system innovation along the whole value chain of urban investment). These cities will lead the use of synergies out of the twin green and digital transformations all over Europe. They will also work together to face common challenges and to create economies of scale.

Along the process, these 100 cities will work as **Innovation Hubs** for other cities, meaning that hundreds of European cities will be inspired, learn and replicate ideas and solutions resulting from the mission.

### **A new way of European financing**

In order to make the most of the European Green Deal, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility, all investments must have a multiplier effect on the economy, as well as a transformational effect in the direction of climate sustainability. The investment in climate transition made by the city complies with these two conditions. The Mission Board suggests a new integrated way of financing for the climate investment plans:



- A combined loan facility for climate-friendly cities as a financial umbrella: in cooperation between the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, and national regular and climate financing mechanisms, as well as resources having research and innovation at their core;
- The European Commission and Member States consider the financing of Climate City Contracts as a general priority of the investment strategy in the new Recovery and Resilience Facility.
- Up to 10% of the resources for climate actions in the next MFF of the EU will be allocated to climate actions focusing on the goals of the Climate-neutral Cities Mission.
- The 2021-2027 operational programmes of the European Structural and Investment Funds should assign projects to finance the Mission;
- A one-stop shop as a decentralized negotiation platform managed by the offices of the European Investment Bank in Member States;
- A “mission label” granted to each city in the mission to allow preferential access to technical support and financial instruments.
- The drafting of climate-friendly budgets as a tool to compare climate investments with their goals and to align public financing with environmental targets.

### **Climate-friendly cities as new drivers of sustainable growth**

Europe, as a leader in the field of urban transition towards climate neutrality, will strengthen its role as a global driver of sustainable growth by creating new investment opportunities and new and better jobs. The Mission Board proposes the creation of a Global Knowledge Hub on Cities and Climate that could facilitate and create synergies among European and international climate initiatives and other stakeholders.

### **The selection of 100 European cities**

The main criteria for the selection of 100 European cities will be **their ambition, commitment, capability and involvement of citizens**. Besides, inclusion and cohesion will be the general principles and, therefore, a geographical balance and the differences in the preparedness levels of cities will be considered.

The application process will have three stages:

- (a) the co-creation of the candidacy presentation,
- (b) of the Climate City Contract, and
- (c) the implementation of said Contract.

Reporting, follow-up and assessments will be based on the methodology of the Covenant of Mayors, already in use by many European cities.

### **Mission València Neutral City**

València is moving forward towards the Agenda 2030 as a prelude of the desired city model for 2050. There are several strategic instruments pointing towards a large consensus between city and citizens in order to approve a relevant de-carbonisation mission for Valencia: **Mission València Neutral City**.



These urban strategy instruments are explained below, with a specific mention in its tenets to the suitability of this climate mission:

- The General Framework of the València Urban Strategy was ratified on September 24th 2020 by the City Council Plenary, with the support of a vast majority of local political groups. This agreement bolstered the political and ethical commitment of València with the SDG in the 2030 Agenda and the Urban Agenda in order to include these benchmarks in the cross-cutting strategic framework of local public policies. Its aim is to move forward towards a fairer, more sustainable, free and equitable society. Within this strategic transformation process, climate transition is one of the most relevant goals by means of a planning-action-learning approach based on innovation and experimentation. There is no doubt that a de-carbonisation mission is key for the climate transition.
- Missions València 2030 has set a missions-oriented innovation governance model that unifies the whole innovative ecosystem in the city through the four helixes model: private sector, public sector, Academia and civil society. In this approach of València as a sustainable city and with the involvement of society, one of the areas identified as relevant to choose mission as a 50% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in València, in line with one of the five priorities of the European Commission: climate-neutral cities. With a broad consensus among the local government and the opposition, on May 28th 2020 the City Council Plenary passed the Missions València 2030 Strategic Framework for missions-oriented research within the next decade, including relevant European mission areas. Among the innovation strategies, goals and actions included in said framework we can find the approval of Missions for the City of València.
- The València Strategic Framework combines urban strategy and innovation in a relation of multiple influences and two-way support. Challenges and goals in the 2030 Agenda and innovation missions proposed by Europe for the next decade are two sides of the same coin with mutual feedback through public policies. On the one hand, strategic planning must nourish from key elements provided by innovation, such as experimentation, learning and scaling-up projects. This is a way to strengthen institutions, governments, public policies and normative frameworks generated and provides practical demonstrators that showcase how to address the most relevant challenges in the city. On the other hand, the success of innovation missions in cities, in the countries and in Europe will not only be the result of science, research and innovation itself, but it will also be indispensable, given its complexity, to support them with public policies and instruments focused on the 2030 Agenda and the Urban Agenda to reinforce, drive and promote them. With no policy and no strategy, our missions as a society will fail.
- In July 2020, València created the Energy Transition Working Group with relevant actors from all the helixes in the city. It has already defined six showcase projects to move forward in the energy transition of the city. These are all fully aligned with the València Neutral City Mission. However, there is one that stands out particularly: the project to develop climate-neutral districts that provide an example and that can be scaled-up to the city as a whole.

In this European, national and local context, the València City Council reinstates its commitment to stay at the European forefront of actions to mitigate the climate emergency and to promote missions-oriented innovation in order to improve the quality of life of our



citizens. Therefore, the València City Council proposes the **Mission València Neutral City** to be approved. The aim of this mission is for **at least 3 neighbourhoods in the City of València to become climate-neutral by 2030 by and for the citizens**. This milestone constitutes a great opportunity for València given its impact on health, sustainability, climate transition, adaptation to climate change, attractiveness for investments, the promotion of carbon-neutral economic initiative, the creation of jobs and the promotion of research and innovation by its innovative ecosystem as a whole.

## THE CITY COUNCIL PLENARY AGREES:

FIRST. To approve the **Mission València Neutral City: at least 3 districts in València become climate neutral by 2030 by and for the citizens**, within the urban strategy Missions València 2030 and, as an example of the ambition, commitment and political involvement of València.

SECOND. To launch an institutional call to all actors from the civil society, to the world of academia and research, to economic sectors with activity in the city and surroundings and other public institutions in the Valencian Region, the Government of Spain and the European Union so that they join this climate mission in València and redirect their R&D&I efforts and processes in order to contribute to the success of the mission València Neutral City.

THIRD. To request all delegations and municipal services, given its high impact and indispensable value for the de-carbonisation of València and its surroundings, to carry out the necessary cross-cutting coordination and contribution from each public policy in València for the success of the mission València Neutral City by providing evidence and impacts on indicators defined for this purpose.

FOURTH. To entrust the promotion of the necessary cross-cutting coordination to the Mayor's Office as a mission within the Urban Strategy of València, as well as the deployment of the support efforts from all the different municipal delegations and public sector in València and the creation of alliances and networks needed with the innovative ecosystem in order to attract system innovations and transformations needed for the success of the mission València Neutral City.

FIFTH. To approve the promotion and deployment of all the necessary initiatives for the Valencia's candidacy as one of the 100 European cities chosen for the European Mission: 100 Climate-Neutral Cities by 2030 by and for the citizens.

SIXTH. To convey the commitment made by the City of València with the approval of this mission to the Valencian Regional Government, the Government of Spain and the European



**AJUNTAMENT  
DE VALÈNCIA**

Missions  
València 2030

Commission and to articulate the required governance spaces to provide a multi-level institutional support to the initiative of the City of València.