



DECLARATION ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION FOR THE GREEN CITIES

MILAN, JULY THE 16TH 2019

2^ GREEN CITY NATIONAL CONFERENCE



THE 10 POINTS OF “THE DECLARATION ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION FOR THE GREEN CITIES”

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DEFINE AND UPDATE PLANS AND MEASURES FOR CITIES CLIMATE ADAPTATION

2

INTEGRATE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION POLICIES AND MEASURES

3

RISKS ASSESSMENT NEED TO BE UPDATED, ALONG WITH EMERGENCY, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM MEASURES

4

EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF ADAPTATION MEASURES AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE COSTS OF DOING NOTHING

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MORE FOCUS ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

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REDUCE VULNERABILITY AND RISKS FROM INTENSE PRECIPITATIONS

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STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE

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INTRODUCTION

For the implementation of the Green City Guidelines, presented last year in Bologna during the 1st Green City National Conference, it is urgent to increase the effectiveness of measures for climate adaptation, notably for those Italian cities still lacking the proper approach or the needed attention to the level of priority already reached.

Thanks to the analysis of the most suitable experiences and knowledge in the subject both on national and international levels, and with the widest consultation of experts and cities, the Green City Network has realized a "Declaration", articulated in 10 points, to quicken a better and updated approach of the Italian cities commitment for climate change adaptation.

This "Declaration" provides guidelines and criteria to update plans and measures for climate adaptation and how to integrate them with mitigation plans; to update risk assessment and emergency measures. Furthermore, the Declaration provides the criteria to exploit the advantages of these measures and to take into account of their absence; to develop adaptive skills, focusing more on nature-based solutions, reducing vulnerability and the risks of very intense rainfall and deal with heat waves and islands; to promote investment and improve the governance of these measures.

The Declaration on climate adaptation for the green cities, core of the 2nd National Conference of Milan, will be proposed by the Green City Network to the Italian cities, asking them to share it and to undertake its implementation.

1

DEFINE AND UPDATE PLANS AND MEASURES FOR CITIES CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Southern Europe, especially Mediterranean countries such as Italy, are heavily affected by the impacts of extreme weather events, generated by climate change, already tending to worsen: heat waves and prolonged periods of drought; very intense rainfall concentrated in short periods, with increasing risks of floods and landslides; strong winds, cyclones, air horns and violent storms.

Cities are particularly exposed to the risks of climate change and must be leading actors in promoting policies and adaptation measures for which local action is essential. More effort is required: the measures that cities have begun to implement need to be improved, reinforced and made more extensive and incisive.

2

INTEGRATE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION POLICIES AND MEASURES

Cities first prevention goal must be to avert further worsening of the climate crisis. To contain the average global temperature increase below 2 degrees, as envisaged by the Paris Agreement, it will be necessary to reach greenhouse gas emissions net close to zero by 2050, meaning demanding reductions involving cities by 2030. It is therefore necessary to update plans and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in cities and integrate them with those for climate change adaptation, enhancing positive synergies between them. There is urgent need for greater and more incisive initiatives, in particular to increase the production and use of renewable energy sources, for electricity, thermal uses and fuels, for energy savings in public and private buildings, along with sustainable mobility and circular economy.

3

RISKS ASSESSMENT NEED TO BE UPDATED, ALONG WITH EMERGENCY, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM MEASURES

It is necessary to keep up to date the knowledge of the urban impacts of climate change, to have early warning systems and contingency plans for risk management and to reduce the population exposure, especially the most vulnerable one.

Based on the local microclimatic profiles and variables of the different urban systems, the effectiveness of the measures adopted to reduce vulnerability and exposure, and increase the resilience to short and long-term risks, must be verified with suitable sets of indicators. Particular attention should be paid to the integration of adaptation measures into medium and long-term plans and programs for urban transformations and planning.

4

EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF ADAPTATION MEASURES AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE COSTS OF DOING NOTHING

Plans and projects for climate adaptation, according to the Green City model must not only achieve their specific purposes, but also contribute to achieving improvements in the environmental quality of the city, urban districts, building complexes and individual buildings. Adaptation measures, in addition to increasing the resilience of cities and territories by reducing impacts and risks, can also generate different benefits for citizens: from better air quality to healthier living, from better water resource management to increased biodiversity. Adaptation measures can promote regeneration and revitalization of marginal urban districts, often peripheral and degraded. Climate adaptation, if well implemented, contributes to the improvement of safety, and to economic and social stability. On the other hand, failing climate adaptation involves significant costs, which must be accounted for and evaluated, both for citizens and economic activities. Moreover, the connection between health protection and climate adaptation must be strengthened and information on the risks and costs of the climate crisis, also as regards to health, must be improved, together with information on the benefits coming from adaptation measures.

5

DEVELOP ADAPTIVE SKILLS

The adaptation of a city is a changing process that requires flexibility, periodic updates, the ability to let resilience to climate change become part of plans, policies and measures, investments in urban development, land management and use, water resources, buildings and infrastructure.

The purpose of this change is to ensure adequate safety standards and to protect citizen's health, the functioning of services and infrastructures and the regular conduct of economic activities; this change needs to be set and managed as a real process of continuous learning.

In this process it is essential that local administrations make good use of research, knowledge, good practices and the best available techniques to increase the capacity for local adaptive response. This should apply to existing buildings and infrastructures and to new designs and projects, involving land management, land recovery and use.

6

MORE FOCUS ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Road trees, public and private gardens, parks, green roofs and walls, vegetable gardens and peri-urban agricultural areas, natural expansion crates integrated into the urban fabric. Nature-based solutions, as well as providing different ecosystem services, significantly contribute to climate adaptation, the reduction of heat waves and the improvement of surface runoff and water absorption. Adaptation, when based on green infrastructure and urban and peri-urban natural capital, is multifunctional and offers several advantages: in terms of biodiversity, mitigation, air and soil quality and social well-being. This multi-functionality should be better integrated in the assessment of adaptation options.

Adaptation based on natural solutions (Nature-based Solutions) must be kept in mind in urban planning but also when planning to increase, manage and finance urban green spaces. Promoting ecological corridors and green belts along with the redevelopment of urban and peri-urban open spaces is important for climate risk mitigation and hydrogeological instability.

7

REDUCE VULNERABILITY AND RISKS FROM INTENSE PRECIPITATIONS

It is necessary to stop the soil sealing and land consumption and increase the interventions of de-sealing. Green infrastructures are of outstanding importance both as a microclimatic moderator and to absorb and retain more rainwater. Squares or green areas that are lower than the street level, for example, can contribute to the accumulation of rainwater in the case of extreme events. The particularly intense rainwater runoff can be conveyed to expressly prepared wetlands in peri-urban areas that can also be used for the expansion of river floods. Existing urban drainage systems should be better monitored and efforts should be made to ensure separation between the sewer networks, the relative flood spillways, and the hydrographic network of canals and rivers, even in the case of intense meteorological phenomena.

8

FACE HEATWAVES AND HEAT ISLANDS

Advanced analysis and assessment tools must be used to adapt to the increasingly frequent heat waves and increasingly consolidated heat islands in cities. On the basis of these analysis and evaluations, adaptive design, technical and managerial solutions must be implemented in urban regeneration, in the redevelopment of buildings. It is necessary to promote measures for the bioclimatic control of buildings, for shading and control of solar radiation, to increase natural ventilation and cooling, to improve thermal insulation even with innovative materials. It is also useful to use and upgrade green infrastructures and improve cooling by using ground water and surface water bodies.

9

PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN ADAPTATION MEASURES

Urban adaptation policies and measures require more public and private investments. It is necessary to promote public-private partnerships, greater use of financial and insurance instruments, direct with technical standards and favor, with cost and benefit analysis, private investments in adaptation projects. Adaptation measures can help create positive effects for the local economy and attract investments, including international ones, improving the safety and attractiveness of the city. Linking adaptation, mitigation and green economy can transform a risk into an opportunity by creating synergies between public interest and the private sector. Finally, it is also useful to check the availability of different forms of financing such as donations and crowdfunding.

10

STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE

To develop and implement a climate adaptation strategy in the city, it is necessary to increase the political commitment of local administrations and establish a precise responsibility as well as a coordination between the different competences and the offices involved. The measures of climate adaptation, prevention and risk monitoring require active citizen participation, effective information, as well as constant dialogue with the various stakeholder groups. Adaptation is a process that requires awareness and knowledge, adequate skills and technologies, defined economic resources, training of administration staff and interested parties. Fundamental to the development of policies and measures for urban adaptation is the circulation, the exchange, the knowledge of the best interventions, of the most innovative, realized and ongoing projects. Finally, the coordination of policies and adaptation measures between the different levels of government needs to be improved at local, regional and national levels.



Green City Network

The Green City Network is an initiative promoted by the Sustainable Development Foundation to enhance activities and initiatives for the greening of the Italian cities in accordance with the best European and international experiences.

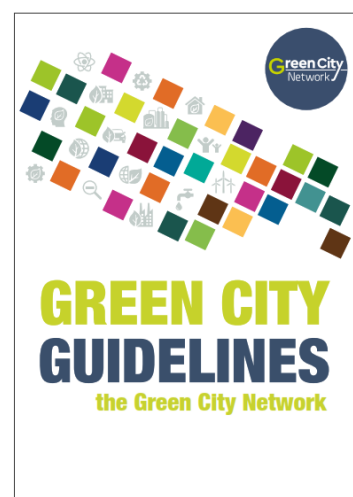
The Network promotes a Green City Approach: a multi-sectorial, integrated approach to the well-being, social inclusion and long-term development of cities, based on aspects that are now essential, such as the environmental quality, efficiency and circularity of resources and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Green City Network's main documents and publications:

The city of the future. Manifesto of green economy for architecture and urban planning



Green City Guidelines



To join the Declaration or for any further information about the Green City Network please contact:
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