

## **Message from the POLIS Network to the Parties of the COP 27**

POLIS is the leading network of European cities and regions committed to innovation in Transport – specifically, to innovations that can make urban mobility become more sustainable, safe and equitable. We have more than one hundred members, from within and beyond the European Union, all of them engaged in this challenging mission.

**In many cities and regions, political commitment has been driving intense work, and brave steps forward. But we want to do more, and for that we need support.**

All public decision makers, at all levels of governance, in all countries, have the moral duty, to their current and future citizens, of doing all they can to stop the Climate Crisis, to prepare for its now inevitable impacts, and to find solutions for life in urban areas.

Cities face an unprecedented situation, with profoundly menacing consequences, which requires swift and decisive actions. The next decade is critical, and we must rise to this challenge together.

To achieve at least a 55% emissions reduction by 2030, we must accelerate the shift to Sustainable Urban Mobility. This requires substantive changes to policies, methods, services, fleets, and infrastructure. Local and regional governments hold the keys for most of these changes – but these changes raise big and complex challenges, and local and regional governments cannot stand alone.

We – small, medium, and large cities, provinces and regions – are the first responders to health and social crises, and the early adopters of transport innovations. We must manage complexity and develop multimodal and integrated solutions, every day.

We are at the front line – and we need the active cooperation and support from all scales of government, in order to do more, and to act better, and faster.

**The COP 27 is a fundamental moment to highlight the importance of accelerating the shift to Sustainable Urban Mobility, to acknowledge the key role of local and regional governments, and to address their needs and support their work.**

For that purpose, the POLIS Network of European cities and regions shared with the Parties of the COP 27 the following:

## **I. A Pledge**

The Cities and Regions of the POLIS Network have pledged to:

### **1. *Become* frontrunners for the European Climate Goals.**

We know that, if everyone is waiting for someone else to take the first step forward, no one will move. We also know that those who step forward must often overcome political backlash, fear of change, and behavioural inertia. This is where leadership comes in. We will lead by example.

### **2. *Commit* through planning for Sustainable and Safe Mobility.**

We know that fast, coherent, and sustained progress requires a strategic approach, developed with public input. We also know that clear targets and guidelines are indispensable to empower citizens, stakeholders, and staff, and mobilise the private sector. We will craft and update our planning tools (be they SUMP, SULP, Vision Zero Plans, local Green Deals) to deliver on ambitious commitments.

### **3. *Create* an Open and Fair Multimodal System.**

We believe urban mobility must ensure a sustainable and healthy freedom of choice, so that people are neither locked in car dependence, nor captive clients of public transport. We will adapt our infrastructure and the combined offer of the public and private operators using it, to become truly multimodal and intermodal, and systematically nudge users towards sustainable choices.

#### **4. *Prioritise Affordable, Safe and Sustainable Modes of Transport.***

We know the economic recession and rising unemployment are reducing the disposable income of many families, who need affordable transport options. We also know that these options, including walking and cycling, are the most sustainable, inclusive, and resilient. We will work for a fair transition, ensuring that those who wish or need to use sustainable modes of transport can do so with safety and convenience.

#### **5. *Grow sustainable alternatives, with Public Transport and private services.***

We know that for mass behaviour change to happen, the mobility sector must provide a convenient alternative for millions of daily car trips. We also know that investment in public transport is critical, but alone it is not enough. We will work with the private sector to make the sustainable offer grow in capacity and convenience in areas where mass public transport is not the most efficient solution.

#### **6. *Join forces and unlock our full potential.***

We know that private sector innovation can help deliver on public policy goals, and drive economic recovery. We will develop adequate and agile regulatory frameworks that maximise the potential of new solutions and mitigate negative externalities. We also know that a car-centric urban environment blocks and delays the emergence of new mobility services. We will enable innovation, unlocking the potential of our streets by lower speeds, space reallocation for active mobility, and multimodal management.

#### **7. *Promote Inclusion as a driver for quality and innovation.***

We know that in past decades the transport sector often focused on the needs of adult middle-class men commuting to and from their offices in peak hours, underserving several types of users. We strongly believe that urban mobility must understand and respond to the rights and needs of all users, including women and people of all ages and abilities. We will ensure our mobility systems drive social inclusion, through universal solutions based on usability, safety, comfort, and efficiency.

#### **8. *Clean our fleets and Green our streets.***

We know traffic-generated air pollution has profoundly negative effects on the health of our citizens. We also know the electrification of vehicles holds an important

promise, if industry and all governance levels work towards zero emissions, using power generated by clean sources, and if we avoid, shift, and improve mobility. We will adopt clean energy in our fleets, encourage vehicle owners and operators to go electric or become less fuel-dependent, and clean the air we breathe, including planting trees in our streets.

### 9. **Share, learn, and build capacity for Change.**

We know that ambitious goals require ambitious improvements in our policies, methods, and capabilities. We also know the potential of networks to explore future strategies and to share smart solutions. We will implement capacity-building programmes, to empower and enable our staff to pursue these goals, and actively contribute to knowledge exchange, through POLIS and European and global projects.

## II. An Agenda

Furthermore,

Advancing the necessary changes poses serious challenges at several levels. First of all, for these changes to be socially and politically viable, we have to ensure a Just Transition, making urban mobility more affordable, safe, and inclusive. **The fairness of the measures will be crucial for their acceptance, and for their positive impact.**

The challenges we face in view of a just transition in urban mobility are **multi-faceted**. Policies targeting urban mobility must address affordability, and the overall cost of mobility; physical accessibility of streets, interchanges, vehicles and buildings; availability of services, in view of time and location; gender-related mobility patterns, differences and needs; age and (dis)ability; labour aspects linked to the mobility system and new mobility services; and car dependency.

To effectively address these challenges, and enable a close cooperation and concerted effort between POLIS cities and regions and many public and private stakeholders in the urban mobility innovation, research organizations and European and international

institutions, the POLIS **Just Transition Agenda for Urban Mobility** set out the following guidance:

1. Recognise and better understand the **current imbalances and unfairness** in the urban mobility system in terms of accessibility, safety, affordability and opportunity. We must make sure that the urban mobility transition doesn't aggravate existing disadvantages and inequities.
2. Establish **inclusive governance approaches** that involve hard-to-reach stakeholders and are built on new forms of dialogue throughout planning, implementation and evaluation.
3. **Map and understand specific needs** and sensitivities of stakeholders, in order to address these by taking concrete and tailored actions.
4. When developing climate actions in urban mobility, build on a **combination of collective solutions and individual behaviour**. These climate actions should not overwrite existing initiatives that currently address unfairness, but strengthen and capacitate them.
5. Address a just transition in local mobility across **different geographies**: rural, urban, regional, metropolitan regional level.
6. Establish a toolkit of just transition actions and best practices that relate to **modal shift** (including shared use), **motor shift** (clean and right-sized vehicles), **space shift** (reallocation of public space in favour of sustainable modes), **cost shift** (changes in the price for access and mobility, internalizing the external costs of unsustainable modes), **risk shift** (in view of safety, security and environmental harm), **budget and investment shifts**, creating opportunities for and access to jobs, education, food, cultural, social and economic activity.
7. Install mechanisms for **public oversight** of private mobility service provision, to ensure their inclusivity, fairness, sustainability, and contribution to a just transition.

8. Build **skills and capacity** that enable a just transition for those currently working in transport and mobility-related jobs, and ensure high-quality and safe transport jobs in the future.
9. Take a just transition into account when transport infrastructures and services are part of **climate adaptation strategies**, and when planning for extreme weather events that impact on mobility and access to services.
10. Use **new and appropriate indicators** to measure success and fairness of the changes in urban mobility we want to achieve.
11. Engage in **global policy and capacity-building** activities to bring forward the just transition in the urban mobility agenda.

### III. Local Leadership

We have taken this Pledge and outlined this Agenda because we know they are right and indispensable. Our citizens have the right to a decent, safe, and healthy future. We are fully committed to doing the most we can with the resources we have. **The more support we receive, the more we will be able to achieve.**

Making Urban Mobility more sustainable, safe and fair is everybody's business, and must be a priority at **all scales of government**. The prominence given to cutting transport emissions at COP26 demonstrated governments recognise the significance of urban mobility in our climate transition. We must follow up.

The pledge and the agenda shared above laid the foundation for the **POLIS Leadership Summit** in Glasgow (June 2022), convened to shape a message for COP 27.

This Summit gathered representatives from several local and regional governments and transport authorities, leading researchers and key stakeholders from across the transport sector in Europe, to discuss sustainable, safe, innovative and inclusive mobility.

The discussions at the Summit covered the whole spectrum of urban mobility challenges and innovation, from electrification to Low-Emission Zones, and from bike lanes to innovative last-mile delivery, making two things clear: first, that a growing number of local and regional governments are **outpacing** international promises; second, that local and regional governments are cooperating beyond national borders, often without the mediation of national governments, and much is being gained from such **cooperation**.

POLIS will continue the dialogue on local leadership also in 2023, regularly convening local leaders who shape and implement policies that put urban mobility on the path to climate neutrality.

#### IV. Call to Action

Fulfilling global decarbonisation pledges requires translating international policy agendas into action on the ground, at the local level. This cannot be achieved without **listening more closely to local leaders**, and actively supporting those willing to lead the way.

Subsidiarity has been a bridge for global governance, but it must not become an obstacle to **more direct, stronger and deeper cooperation among local, national, and global decision-makers**.

**COP27 has the power to cultivate this cross-fertilisation further**, and to push in the right direction for sustainable urban mobility policies at the global level.

Accordingly, POLIS called upon the Parties of the COP 27 to:

1. Assume commitments, at the global and national levels, to empower local and regional governments to **accelerate the shift** to sustainable urban mobility, through **supportive and enabling national governance frameworks**.
2. Acknowledge that, in Democracies, different scales of territorial governance have **their own political legitimacy**, and vertical integration of mobility policies does not imply hierarchical subordination of policy-makers. Key decarbonization goals being

set for mobility at global and national levels will have to be reached by local and regional governments, which **must be actively involved in future COPs**.

3. Approach transport decarbonisation in a way that prioritises **modal shift before electrification**, reflecting this in substantial investments in active travel and Public Transport.
4. Unlock **funding** for locally and regionally designed and led measures to boost sustainable urban mobility, decarbonise transport, grow alternatives, and build infrastructure, to help cities reach climate neutrality.
5. Integrate Sustainable Urban Mobility in the **capacity building and skills** development activities related to climate transition, to prepare professionals for the challenges to come.
6. Recognise the need for **integrated action** at the ground level, helping cities and regions tackle multiple transport-related crises in one go, i.e. safety, air and noise pollution, congestion, quality of life and urban space.

**All POLIS members stand ready to cooperate.**

*Brussels, 25<sup>th</sup> of October, 2022*

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