

Basque Declaration plots pathway to implement the New Urban Agenda

Quito, Ecuador, 18 October 2016 - The Basque Declaration was presented on Monday at an official side event of the Habitat III conference, taking place in Quito (Ecuador) from 17 – 20 October. The Basque Declaration provides urban societies with pathways to become productive, sustainable and resilient. By mapping a route to more sustainable societies, it paves the way to implement the expected New Urban Agenda, the primary outcome of the Habitat III conference.

The Basque Declaration is a strong call to involve citizens in co-designing and co-implementing a societal transformation with a focus on boosting local value chains, applying innovative approaches to financing and moving towards a circular economy. It supports social cohesion, and developing a liveable planet for these and future generations. The Basque Declaration builds upon the Aalborg Charter (1994) and the Aalborg Commitments (2004). The declaration was first adopted by over 800 local and regional leaders taking part in the 8th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns, held in Bilbao, Basque Country, from 27-29 April 2016. To date, around 300 local leaders, organisations and citizens have additionally endorsed the document.

The Quito event also saw the launch of the Sustainable Cities Platform (www.sustainablecities.eu), a website that will showcase transformative actions implemented by cities and organisations to move toward more inclusive and productive societies. The platform aims to inspire local authorities around the world to take actions that help national governments to achieve global commitments.

“Regional and local governments are leading the way in the development of transformative actions necessary to implement the new Urban Agenda and the UN Sustainable Development Goals worldwide. The Basque Declaration inspires cities to undertake action in an integrated way, moving from policies solely based on economic results to wider environmental and social engagement and inclusion,” said Ana Oregi, Minister for Environment and Territorial Policy, Basque Government, and President of Udalsarea 21, Basque Network of Municipalities for Sustainability.

Pekka Sauri, Deputy Mayor, Helsinki (Finland) and Chair of the ICLEI European Regional Executive Committee, said: “By acclaiming The Basque Declaration, local governments have indicated their readiness for action and their willingness to help national governments in the implementation of the frameworks that have been adopted, such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, likely soon, the New Urban Agenda. By supporting local governments to deliver on these actions, national governments are helping themselves to meet their commitments”.

“We as cities must take on the responsibility of transforming our societies. The Basque Declaration is an important guide for cities in this process. With the Sustainable Cities Platform we have the opportunity to not only share successful transformative actions, but to learn from successes and together carry the responsibility,” added Thomas Kastrup-Larsen, Mayor of Aalborg Municipality (Denmark).

The declaration will also be presented at a separate session held by the City of Quito on Wednesday 19 October. The session will see cities present their transformative actions to inspire others to do the same.

Background:

Sustainable Cities Platform

The European Sustainable Cities Platform was launched following the [8th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns](#) in the Basque Country. Supported by the City of Aalborg, Denmark, and The Basque Government, it focuses on the uptake of [The Basque Declaration](#), which is the main outcome of the 8th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns. The platform provides inspiring examples of [Transformative Actions](#) in line with The Basque Declaration.

European Conferences on Sustainable Cities & Towns

The 8th European Conference on Sustainable Towns & Cities is co-organised by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the Basque Government, Bizkaia County Council and Bilbao City Council, with the involvement of Udalsarea 21 - Basque Network of Municipalities for Sustainability, and the support of Araba County Council, Gipuzkoa County Council, Donostia/San Sebastián City Council and Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council.

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

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More information:

Sustainable Cities Platform: <http://www.sustainablecities.eu/>

Habitat III side event: <http://habitat3.org/programme/transformative-actions-to-create-productive-sustainable-and-resilient-cities-the-basque-declaration-2/>

ICLEI Europe: <http://www.iclei-europe.org/>

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