



H.E. Angela Merkel
Chancellor of Germany

Dear Chancellor Merkel,

14 July, 2020

Earlier this year, the capital cities of the Visegrád countries launched an all-European city movement to highlight the need for direct, green urban funds in the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework. We were guided by our unwavering commitment to Europe's green transition, and by our national governments' often inadequate climate policies. As mayors of four European capitals, we are very much aware of both the challenges cities face and the opportunities they offer in our fight for a sustainable future.

Numerous European cities outside of our region have signed on to our letter in February 2020 to the presidents of all three European institutions. Together we argued that cities and metropolitan areas, home to a substantial majority of the European population, are both willing and able to greatly advance our common goal of climate neutrality. Cities and city-residents across Europe are severely impacted by the climate crisis, but they are also uniquely equipped to drive genuine climate change mitigation measures. Improvements to outdated public transport infrastructures and insulation projects on old housing stocks would go a long way in reducing our countries' greenhouse gas emissions.

It is important to note that we do not propose any systemic change of current allocation mechanisms. In May this year, we presented a position paper (attached to this letter) to key European institutions laying out specific and well-targeted amendments to draft regulations for the next programming period, which could create the legal base for such direct urban funding. These include amendments to the articles setting out the rules for the European Urban Initiative, and increased direct involvement of local governments in defining and managing the Sustainable Urban Development programmes and under the Connecting Europe Facility. Furthermore, our proposals also include tailor-made solutions for cities in the European Green Deal and the post-COVID-19 recovery plans (REACT EU, etc.) to make them directly accessible for cities. As of today, 29 cities support these proposals, representing close to 10% of the EU's population (Munich, Stuttgart, Hannover, Düsseldorf and Ingolstadt among them).

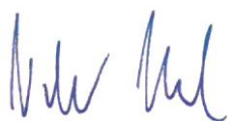
In addition, before the latest European Council meeting, we also urged the President of the Council of the European Union to advocate an increase of the EU's climate target to an emissions reduction of 55% by 2030, and create targeted green and post-COVID-19 funding programmes for cities.

We were greatly encouraged by the German EU Presidency's expressed intention to build the broadest possible coalition behind the European Green Deal, as well as its intention to support a more ambitious climate policy. We, too, believe that Europe's transition to a sustainable future is only possible through the engagement and active participation of all relevant stakeholders, including all levels of governance. If resourced better, cities can become the EU's strategic allies in achieving climate neutrality.

Finally, let us also stress that our proposals are consistent with the statements and position of EURO CITIES, the biggest European city network, as well as of the European Committee of Regions, the EU's key advisory body, to empower sub-national levels of government in the design and implementation of strategic European objectives.

We truly hope that the German EU Presidency will take note of our all-European efforts and support our proposals for creating directly accessible green urban funds. We offer our steadfast commitment and partnership to all European institutions and national governments for the benefit of our continent and our planet.

Yours sincerely,



Matúš Vallo
Mayor of Bratislava



Gergely Karácsony
Mayor of Budapest



Zdeněk Hřib
Mayor of Prague



Rafał Trzaskowski
Mayor of Warsaw