EmPowering Regions in the energy transition
Approved by the CPMR Political Bureau by written procedure

Key messages

The CPMR calls for an increase of the 2030 EU greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to 60%. This target should be coupled with an increase of the renewable energy and energy efficiency targets to at least 40%. Increased ambition centred on a territorial approach that promotes social and economic cohesion will lead to an environment conducive to innovation, investment and growth.

The CPMR stresses that the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement objectives can only be achieved if in partnership with local and regional authorities, supported by a multi-level governance framework that empowers them.

The CPMR underlines the key role that CPMR Member Regions have in the energy transition and the need for a territorial approach that builds on the strengths, expertise and experience of the territories.

The CPMR calls for an energy transition encompassing all the dimensions of a fair and just transition and that ensures access to secure, clean and efficient energy to all citizens in all regions.
1. The CPMR calls on the European Union to aim for higher ambition to achieve climate neutrality by raising its greenhouse gas reduction target to 60% by 2030 and urges EU leaders to take action at the December European Council.

2. The CPMR restates its position that the EU 2030 renewable energy and energy efficiency targets should be increased to at least 40%. A higher ambition would not only deliver a secure, clean, and efficient energy Europe, but would send a clear message to investors and innovators on the political intent of the EU, paving the way for a conducive environment for investments, innovation and job creation for a swift recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

3. The CPMR strongly believes that the effort of EU Member States must be combined with a partnership with third countries located in Europe, whose contribution to achieve the objective of a climate neutral European continent is crucial.

4. The CPMR calls on the EU to ensure that all regions can benefit from and contribute to the energy transition. We reiterate that specific support accompanied by appropriate funding must be provided to the most vulnerable territories in the transition. The CPMR regrets, therefore, that the Just Transition Fund budget has been reduced from EUR 40 bn to 17.5 bn in the July Council agreement on the EU budget and Recovery Plan. It not only undermines the territorial dimension of the transition and reduces the number of recipients, but also the capacity of the territories to benefit from and be part of the transition and to reach the European Green Deal goals.

5. The CPMR advises the European Commission to put in place incentives and to ensure a conducive environment for regions that have the potential to achieve higher targets than the EU. Several CPMR Members are developing and implementing innovative solutions, industrial ecosystems providing best practices that could have a strong EU and world-wide added value boosting regions’ competitiveness and contributing innovation for a climate neutral future. Smart Specialisation Strategies that regions have been implementing since almost ten years provide a great example to capitalise on and to develop solutions to the unprecedented changes that the European Green Deal demands.

For a multi-level dialogue that empowers regions

6. The CPMR calls for a strong territorial dimension that leaves no region behind in the transition to a climate neutral, digital and resilient Europe by 2050 at the latest while preserving and boosting competitiveness.

7. The CPMR reiterates that the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement objectives can only be achieved in partnership with local and regional authorities. Local and regional authorities are legitimate actors in climate and energy policymaking and provide a bridge between national and local levels.

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1 Final Declaration 2020 ‘CPMR Regions at the forefront of sustainable economic recovery’ adopted at its 48th General Assembly
8. The CPMR stresses the crucial role of regions in the energy transition as a key governance level between national government and local territories, as they can foster coordination and cooperation. Furthermore, if given the right governance tools and funding, regions could act as a catalyst and facilitate the uptake of strategies at local level, which would not only cover the major urban areas, but also peri-urban and rural areas, and therefore ensure that all territories can benefit from and contribute to the energy transition.

9. The CPMR regrets that regions were not more closely involved in the development of the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs). Local and regional authorities not only ensure a territorial dimension to climate and energy policies but can contribute to a stronger ambition and more effective implementation. All of which are key to a fair transition to a climate neutral Europe and a green recovery.

10. The CPMR, therefore, asks the European Commission to ensure a stronger and more effective multi-level dialogue in the revision of the NECPs in 2023.

11. The CPMR hopes the European Climate Pact will not just be a forum where pledges are discussed, but an effective initiative bringing together regional and local authorities, businesses, civil society and citizens to jointly build a climate neutral Europe for all.

**For an energy transition with the territories at its heart**

12. The CPMR emphasises that the energy transition should build on the endogenous strengths of each territory, to find tailored-made solutions and to draw benefit from the know-how, expertise, and natural renewable resources of each territory, while ensuring a technologically neutral approach. The energy transition should also have at its core the social and economic cohesion of the territories.

13. The CPMR, therefore, expects that the EU Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy will unleash the potential of all sea basins, by adopting a place-based approach coupled with technological neutrality, as well as promoting a clear regulatory and financial framework for the development and deployment of offshore renewables and strong synergies with the blue economy sector. The offshore renewable energy sector is key to ensuring that coastal areas can be part of the energy transition and to supporting their economic recovery.

14. The CPMR calls on the EU and national decision-makers to better recognise the role that regions can play in the energy transition, and in particular in the upcoming revisions of the EU Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Directives. CPMR Members and especially islands, peripheral and outermost regions, can be innovation laboratories for the development of clean energy. The CPMR, therefore, welcomes the Memorandum of Split that recognises the leadership role that island communities have and is ready to contribute to the activities of the high-level group and Working Group.

15. The CPMR reiterates that islands and outermost regions, which are dependent on fossil fuels, if given the appropriate funding, tools and connection to the grid infrastructure, can become net exporters of energy to the mainland, as well as pioneers in the energy transition while contributing to creating jobs and becoming energy-self-sufficient. Similarly, peripheral regions, given their natural resources and physical space, if properly enabled, can harness clean energy to be exported to major urban agglomerations or to resource-scarce areas.
16. The CPMR calls for the ‘energy insularity’ concept to be extended to island regions rather than stopping short at island states, as market failures, poor grid and transport connectivity, high energy production costs and energy isolation are challenges that impact all islands, especially the outermost regions.

17. The CPMR emphasises the important role that regions have in delivering a more energy efficient future. Their role is key not only to ensuring more energy efficient transport or housing, for example, but regions are also pivotal in fostering higher energy efficiency in major urban centres and in peri-urban and rural areas.

18. The CPMR welcomes the approach of the European Commission Communication on the Renovation Wave, as it couples the decarbonisation of building stocks with recovery and because of the attention given to regulatory measures, technical and financial support and funding. It also welcomes the mention of Cohesion Policy as a main source of direct investment in improving buildings’ energy efficiency, which, combined with the Recovery and Resiliency Facility, could deliver tailor-made renovation programmes at regional level. The CPMR, in addition, welcomes the recognition of regional authorities and hopes that these words will translate into the concrete involvement of regions since giving ownership to regions is key to the delivery of the ‘renovation wave’.

**An energetic and competitive recovery for all**

19. The CPMR emphasises that a fair and just transition to climate neutrality must go hand in hand with the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and not be limited to the challenges identified in the Just Transition Fund Regulation. Today, even more than before, there is the need to ensure that no one is left behind. The EU and global decision-makers need to address all the aspects of the transition, such as reskilling and upskilling, transition to low-carbon transport that does not hamper connectivity, access to clean energy, energy storage and development of smart grids, ensuring a circular economy, delivering more energy efficient buildings, or addressing the vulnerabilities of the coastal areas.

20. The CPMR underlines the need to better address individual and collective behavioural changes in the energy transition as well as potential conflicts between EU objectives and policies to ensure a transition that is fair and effective for all and respectful of health.

21. The CPMR stresses that all regions should be able to have access to clean energy. A priority at EU and national level should be to ensure clean energy self-sufficiency and counter energy isolation and energy peripheralisation. National and EU decision-makers must ensure that regions can be part of, benefit from, and contribute to the energy transition and that territorial cohesion is ensured.

22. The CPMR, therefore, insists that all regions must be connected to the energy market and to its infrastructure. Investments in smart grids, energy storage, clean infrastructure, connection and interconnection to and between grids are key to delivering a territorially balanced energy transition.

23. The CPMR also asks for the Trans-European Network for Energy (TEN-E) to focus more on the territorial dimension and to finance a higher number of small to medium scale projects to boost innovation and territorial cohesion. Furthermore, it calls for a stronger synergy between the TEN-E and the Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T). This is in order to boost a wide-spread, accessible and clean energy and transport infrastructure that promotes interoperability, connectivity, and cross-border continuity, reduces energy isolation and fosters the transition to a sustainable and fossil free transport sector.
The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) represents more than 150 regional authorities from 24 countries across Europe and beyond. Organised in Geographical Commissions, the CPMR works to ensure that a balanced territorial development is at the heart of the European Union and its policies.

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