INTRODUCTION

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The European Union (EU) is widely considered a global leader in climate action. Yet, until the launch of the European Green Deal (EGD) in December 2019, it had no comprehensive policy framework to tackle climate change and the transition towards more sustainable development. Proclaimed Europe's "man on the moon moment" by the then newly appointed Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, the EGD aspires to provide such a framework, leading the EU to become the first continent to cut its emissions to net zero by 2050.

The EGD has been promoted as the EU's post-2020 growth strategy, which will drive the bloc's transition to a competitive green and circular economy that is decoupled from non-reAnewable resource use. But the initiative's ambitions and the climate and ecological risks at stake make it more than just another growth strategy. As the EGD roadmap states, the goal is to draw up "deeply transformative policies" that mainstream sustainability and climate action in all EU policies and programmes (EC, 2019a). In other words, the EGD aspires to foster long-term systemic change. This will not only require significant macro-level economic, infrastructural and technological innovation, but also micro-adaptations in lifestyles, behaviour and consumption patterns. Such change will also depend on a political and organisational evolution of public administration, away from traditional silo-based working cultures and towards a more cross-cutting and citizen-driven way of operating.

Similar to the integrative approach of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda, the EGD encompasses a broad range of complementary and correlating goals. Among others, these include decarbonising the energy sector, accelerating the shift to clean mobility and a circular economy, reducing pollution, promoting resource-efficient building and renovation, creating a healthier food system and preserving biodiversity without leaving anyone behind (see Figure 1). The assumption is that none of these thematic goals can be achieved in isolation. Over the course of 2020, the Commission has rolled out a raft of legislative proposals and financial and action plans that detail how the EU foresees delivering on its climate ambitions in the EGD's priority areas.[1] The enabling tools for the implementation of these plans and proposals are still evolving, with some being more advanced than others.

[1]. These include the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan and the Just Transition Mechanism and Fund (January), which form the EGD's financial pillar; the European Climate Law (March); the Circular Economy Action Plan (March); the Farm to Fork Strategy (May); the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (May); the Renovation Wave (October); the 2030 Climate Target Plan (December); and the European Climate Pact (December). Other plans, such as the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility currently being developed by the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE), will be presented in 2021.

Figure 1. The priority areas and thematic pillars of the European Green Deal (Source: EC, 2019a: 3).
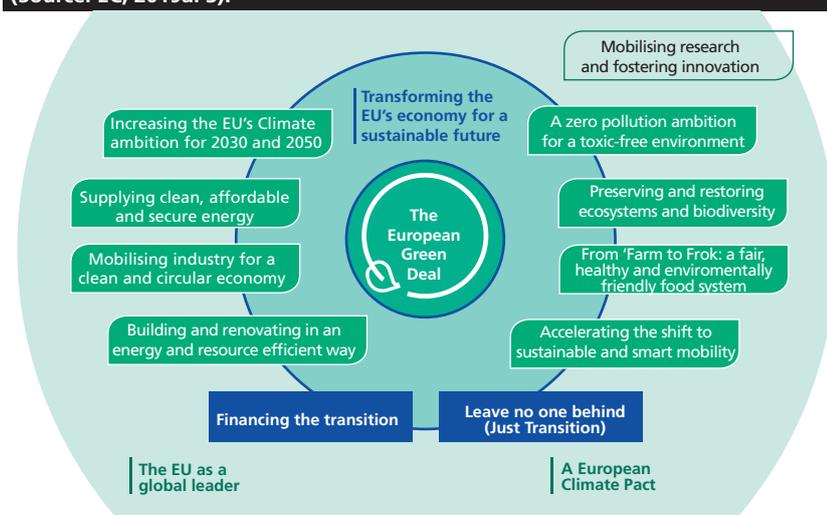
This volume explores the current window of opportunity for systemic change, and how the EU is stepping up urban governance programmes and cooperation with cities to make the most of its Green Deal.

The arrival of the COVID-19 crisis initially set back policymaking and the implementation of the EGD. But over the course of the year, it became clear that the EU's post-pandemic recovery plan and next long-term budget – eventually approved at the European Council summit in December 2020 (EUCO, 2020a) – should have the potential to boost and accelerate the Green Deal agenda for systemic transformation. The health emergency has highlighted our vulnerability to multiplying crises that are increasingly unpredictable, as well as the need to build more sustainable and resilient societies and economies. If, as the Commission has announced, the Next Generation EU (NGEU) stimulus package and 2021–2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) are channelled towards a green and socially just recovery,[2] it would constitute a unique opportunity for an economic and social reset that will better prepare Europe for managing and adapting to future crises – climate and beyond.

1. The role of cities in the European Green Deal

The proposed reset will depend on actively engaging all scales of government – national, regional and local. Stronger partnerships with city governments and urban stakeholders will be of particular importance. Not only because cities are home to around 75% of the EU's population and responsible for a large part of its energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, but also because they are leaders in climate innovation and the place where citizens engage in climate action. As Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the Commission for the EGD, put it, cities "will have a huge role to play in the fundamental transformation that the Green Deal is to drive in our society".[3] This volume explores the current window of opportunity for systemic change, and how the EU is stepping up urban governance programmes and cooperation with cities to make the most of its Green Deal. By unpacking the core premises of the EGD and the most relevant goals for cities, the volume examines how the EGD will support the climate and energy transition already underway in cities; and, in turn, how local climate action can contribute to and accelerate Europe's green transformation.

2. The special meeting of the European Council in July 2020 concluded that climate action will be mainstreamed in policies and programmes financed under the 2021–2027 MFF (€1.074 trillion) and NGEU (of which €390bn will be disbursed in grants and €360bn as loans to member states). Green financing will also be given a boost, with plans to raise 30% of the NGEU budget through green bonds. Further, an "overall climate target of 30% will apply to the total amount of expenditure from the MFF and NGEU and be reflected in appropriate targets in sectoral legislation" (EUCO, 2020b).

3. https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/We-must-act-now-together-.aspx

The contributions and needs of cities

Many European cities are already driving innovation and social engagement for the transition to a carbon-neutral Europe. Together with regional governments, cities are responsible for 70% of climate mitigation actions and 90% of climate adaptation measures (ICLEI, 2020), and their carbon reduction targets are often more ambitious than those of the EU and member states. The pioneering role of cities became clearly manifest in the controversial debate around the EU's 2030 Climate Target Plan, which will determine the bloc's ability to deliver on the Paris Agreement and its own 2050 goal. With Nordic and western member states wanting a more ambitious target than poorer, coal-reliant ones from the east, a compromise was struck at the December 2020 Council summit to increase the 2030 emissions reduction target to at least 55% (up from 40% compared to 1990). By contrast, cities from across the EU managed to rally behind and lobby for an increase to at least 60% (Eurocities, 2020). Going a step further, 58 members of the Eurocities network called on EU institutions "to support leading cities aiming to do their part of [the 2030] goal with an even higher reduction target of 65%".[4]

It came as no surprise, then, that cities from across Europe were among the first to welcome and support the EGD. But they have also stressed that more knowledge, improved capabilities and adequate financial resources are needed at the local scale to develop faster and better territory-based solutions to the climate emergency. Top-down governance approaches alone will not achieve the desired transformation. Many of the risks and impacts of climate change are place-specific and require tailored, bottom-up responses that address the specific vulnerabilities and opportunities of local jurisdictions and their populations. Further, mitigation and adaptation measures cannot function as stand-alone policies, but need to be integrated with other territorial and urban development issues, most of which fall within local governments' competencies, such as energy, transport, construction, water, waste and public space. Local and regional authorities implement 70% of EU legislation, they handle one-third of public spending, manage two-thirds of public investment and provide numerous direct services to their inhabitants (*Mannheim Message*, 2020). Rather than being side-lined to the position of mere rule takers, it is vital that they are given a proactive role in the policy elaboration and implementation of the EU's sustainability strategy.

Throughout 2020, cities, their networks and other platforms that represent local authorities organised information and advocacy campaigns to ensure that there is solid understanding of local needs, interests and opportunities in the policymaking and implementation of the EGD and related recovery programmes. In June, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) created the Green Deal Going Local working group[5] to place cities and regions at the core of the EGD and ensure that both the EGD and recovery plan "translate into tangible projects and direct funding for local and regional authorities" (CoR, 2020). In October, 39 local leaders from across Europe launched the Mannheim Message at the 9th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns, in which they committed to developing "local green deals" with their communities (*Mannheim Message*, 2020). Yet, the Message also stresses that to effectively localise the EGD, cities "cannot remain purely implementation

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4. https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/C40-x-Eurocities-Open-Letter-FINAL.pdf. According to experts, 65% is the minimum to keep the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement within reach (Wilson et al., 2020).
5. https://cor.europa.eu/es/engage/Pages/green-deal.aspx

HANNAH ABDULLAH

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partners, but need to be part of the process of defining regulatory, fiscal and financial frameworks at all levels" (ibid.). The latter issue has also been taken up by major and capital European cities lobbying EU institutions to give local authorities direct access to the 2021–2027 MFF and programmes to be rolled out under the EGD and NGEU, as well as for the EU to mandate member states to better engage cities in the design of national post-COVID-19 recovery plans.[6]

The EU's responses

Over the past two decades, the EU has progressively stepped up its support for urban climate action, signalling its recognition of the importance of cities in this area. However, to take full advantage of cities' potential for the achievement of the EGD, the EU and member states need to create more effective multi-level governance mechanisms that foster horizontal integration and ensure the coordination and alignment of priorities across the EU, national, regional and local governments. Strengthening interlinkages and synergies, as well as identifying barriers to cooperation, will be vital to achieving the EGD and its holistic, cross-cutting ambitions. This will also require the EU's urban governance policy to be strengthened and an integrated approach developed that moves beyond treating urban policy simply as an aspect of cohesion and regional development policy, or as a thematic area of research and innovation programmes.

The von der Leyen Commission has begun to take steps in this direction. The newly created Mission Area for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities,[7] which is fully anchored in the EGD, approaches urban climate action as an integral part of the EU's broader sustainability policy. In particular, the Mission aims to enhance cities' role as accelerators of Europe's green transition by acting as laboratories for experimentation and innovation. The Mission Board has recommended that the Commission should "support, promote and showcase 100 European cities in their systemic transformation towards climate neutrality by 2030 and make these cities into experimentation and innovation hubs for all cities, thus leading on the European Green Deal" (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al., 2020: 7). The proposal, which will be implemented in the framework of the H2020 European Green Deal Call, also recommends formalising multi-level and co-creation processes in a "climate city contract" that would ideally be signed by the city government, the Commission and the respective national or regional authorities.[8] Among other things, the purpose of this contract would be to "coordinate the national/regional and EU authorities to deliver the necessary legal, governance and financial framework conditions to support each city" and to "create a one-stop shop for multi-level negotiations to facilitate city action for the transition" (Gronkiewicz-Waltz et al., 2020: 12). While fostering the co-creation of new knowledge and solutions across different scales of government, the programme will enable cities to increase the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and beyond, a core goal of the EGD (see Figure 1).

The EU is also creating a range of other programmes and updating existing ones to provide better technical and policy support to cities in the EGD framework and foster closer cooperation between cities and

6. In February 2020, the mayors of 34 major and capital cities signed a letter to the EU institutions asking for direct access to the forthcoming EGD funds (https://budapest.hu/sites/english/Lapok/2020/eu-lobby.aspx). In October, nine leading mayors asked for at least 10% of the recovery funds to be opened up directly to local governments (https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/202010-Letter-from-European-Mayors-on-the-EU%E2%80%99s-Recovery-and-Resilience-Facility.pdf).

7. https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/climate-neutral-and-smart-cities_en

8. See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1669. Consortia can apply for up to €53 million. Only one consortium will be selected, which will be tasked with the responsibility of designing the one-stop shop multi-level governance platform and the Climate-Neutral City Contract in close collaboration with the cities and Commission.

European institutions. The proposed European Urban Initiative – Post 2020 (EU, 2019), which is to implement the Urban Agenda for the EU and create a stronger link to EU policies (especially cohesion policy), will support urban action for the EGD through capacity building, support for innovative actions and policy development. In 2021, the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the EU's flagship programme for urban climate action, will be reformed to broaden its expertise beyond the focus on the energy transition by, for example, offering guidance to signatory cities in other priority areas of the EGD. Further, to complement the Covenant's specialisation, the Commission launched the Green City Accord (coordinated by Eurocities, ICLEI Europe and CEMR) in October 2020,[9] which will assist cities in other areas of the EGD, including improving air and water quality, conserving nature and biodiversity, and making progress towards the circular economy.

Finally, the EU is strengthening science-policy collaborations at city scale to respond more effectively to complex global challenges, especially climate-related ones (see Acuto et al., 2018). Until recently this happened mainly through research and innovation programmes like H2020 (now Horizon Europe). In 2019, the creation of the Cities Science Initiative at the Commission's Joint Research Centre[10] further bolstered the capacity of science and research to help address urban challenges in Europe by supporting evidence-informed local policymaking. The knowledge networks established around these city-science interfaces will be vital for developing the cutting-edge technology and social innovations the EGD's goals depend on, as well as for accelerating the uptake of scientific urban information by local policymakers and practitioners.

The urban dimension of the EGD

Urban governance and development issues cut transversally across all priority areas of the EGD (see Figure 1). Some of the sectoral EGD action plans launched over the course of 2020 explicitly address the urban dimension and its opportunities and challenges and formulate how cities will be engaged and supported. So far, the plans with the most promising and advanced opportunities for engaging cities are the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Renovation Wave.

With the circular economy being one of the main building blocks of the EGD objective of decoupling economic growth from non-renewable resource use, cities will receive important support in this area. The Circular Economy Action Plan launched in March 2020 recognises that many cities are already working in this direction and foresees the setup of a Circular Cities and Regions Initiative that will help local governments develop circular economy plans and fund demonstration projects.[11] Jointly launched in May, in the midst of Europe's first COVID-19 crisis, the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork (F2F) strategies are mutually reinforcing and at the centre of the EU's green recovery plan. Aimed at protecting nature and reversing the degradation of ecosystems, the Biodiversity Strategy has made actions for greening cities and reversing the loss of urban green spaces one of its focal areas (EC, 2020a). The importance granted to urban areas is partly a response of the COVID-19 lockdowns and social-distancing measures, which have highlighted the value of green space for citizens' physical and

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9. https://ec.europa.eu/environment/topics/urban-environment/green-city-accord_en

10. https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/en/community/city-science-initiative

11. https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/environment/circular-economy/circular-cities-and-regions-initiative_en

HANNAH ABDULLAH

mental well-being. Similarly, the F2F Strategy underlines how the pandemic demonstrated the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to food sustainability and a more resilient food system (EC, 2020b). It mentions cities as key actors in promoting healthy and sustainable diets in institutional catering (e.g. in schools and hospitals), educating citizens on healthy nutrition, sustainable food production and reducing food waste, as well as in strengthening urban–rural linkages with their surrounding areas to develop sustainable farming and food systems.

In 2021, the EU will revise all of its climate and energy legislation to make it fit for the new 2030 emissions reduction target of 55%. An important step towards the new goal was taken in October 2020, with the launch of the "Renovation Wave for Europe – Greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives" (EC, 2020c). As the title indicates, the programme goes beyond the energy efficient renovation of Europe's building stock.[12] It has also been singled out as a way to kick-start the post-COVID-19 recovery of the construction sector and to reduce energy poverty in the crisis by supporting the poor with more energy-efficient housing. With all three of these issues and developments most affecting cities, the programme represents an important boost to the urban dimension of the EGD and its energy pillar.

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At the same time, the broader EGD roadmap for the energy transition still fails to adequately address the urban scale. The same goes for its vision for the mobility transition. While the roadmap for the "EU Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility" (DG MOVE, 2020) – being drafted by the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) at the time of writing – mentions urban mobility, the theme is underdeveloped. This volume addresses omissions and opportunities in both these areas of the EGD.

2. Structure of the volume

The volume is divided into three parts. The first unpacks the urban aspects of some of the key premises of the EGD. It analyses the role of cities in the developmental paradigm shift underpinning the EGD; the challenge of creating systemic change in urban areas; and the question of how the transition to a climate-neutral, competitive and inclusive economy will be financed at city level. Part two zooms in on two central EGD pillars that are of particular importance to the urban transition: energy and mobility. Part three examines the centrality of cities for achieving an inclusive and just transition. The final section outlines how city diplomacy can (and already is) reinforcing the EU's influence as a global climate leader, and places the EU and European cities' efforts in the context of the global climate governance ecosystem that has emerged since the Paris Agreement.

I. Towards a deal with cities

A primary premise of the EGD is that rethinking climate policy as a comprehensive sustainable growth strategy can bring about the developmental paradigm shift necessary to secure Europe's future. The first part of the volume examines the urban dimension of this planned transformation.

Expanding on the issues raised in this introduction around strengthening multi-level governance mechanisms to improve the support for and engagement of cities in the EGD, **Sonia De Gregorio Hurtado** explores how the integration of city-specific approaches into the programmes of the NGEU and MFF 2021–2027 could help achieve the desired changes. Climate action in European cities is so advanced, she argues, that with the right support it could turn the EU's upgraded ambitions into a reality in the medium term. Further, the chapter examines how cities can promote the "new European humanism" that underpins the EGD's vision of holistic and all-encompassing transformation by delivering change at a human scale in local communities; directly reaching out to citizens; raising awareness; fostering engagement; and providing arenas for consensus building.

At the same time, the EGD's transformative promises do not easily translate into concrete local action. Focusing on the local delivery of the energy transition, **Vanesa Castán Broto** critically analyses the dominant ideas of change embedded in the EGD and their limitations when applied to concrete urban contexts. The EGD is a project in process, with one foot held back by old political and bureaucratic constraints and one stepping towards the still not fully fleshed-out future agenda. As such, it contains several contradictions but also opportunities. Many of its premises and goals lack innovation and merely continue existing policies, such as through the EGD's framing as a "growth strategy". That said, the EGD's transformative language and holistic vision also presents opportunities for negotiating a radically new political project of sustainable socioeconomic reform. Moving forward with this project, Castán Broto emphasises that it is misleading to view local governments as "mediating agents" that can implement the desired change in the short term. Urban change is necessarily long term. Urban interventions have to tackle the heterogeneity of city infrastructures and life, are often incomplete, and are open to contestation and reversal. Viewed from this perspective, Castán Broto sees the unfinished nature of the EGD as a blessing in disguise that will allow policies to adapt to changing conditions.

The final chapter of this section turns to the key question of how the envisaged transition will be financed at city level. EU-level financing is one of the key sources of climate finance for European cities. **Priscilla Negreiros and Angela Falconer** provide an overview of the financial pillar of the EGD – the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan (SEIP) – and how it will affect funding opportunities for urban climate infrastructure and projects. With EGD financing and delivery mechanisms largely based on existing EU funding channels, the chapter provides updated information on the three main sources of climate funding for cities through European Commission funds, the European Investment Bank, and European Structural and Investment Funds. While there is still no full picture of the funding opportunities that will be available to cities, overall funding for urban climate action is bound to increase. More information is needed to understand whether this upgrade will be sufficient to address cities' needs and put them on track for the 2050 target. Looking beyond the numbers, the authors argue that enabling cities to contribute to the EGD is not only about stepping up funding, but crucially also about removing barriers to local government access to EU funds, including regulatory, budgetary, political and practical barriers.

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HANNAH ABDULLAH

II. Key pillars of the urban green transition: energy and mobility

The EGD's goals of delivering a clean energy and sustainable transport transition are two areas where cities can and already are making a real contribution. Europe's urban areas are major contributors to the EU's energy consumption and are responsible for 23% of the EU's GHG emissions from transport (EEA, 2019).[13] However, as mentioned above, the EGD so far fails to fully address and build on these opportunities. The chapters in this section examine these gaps in the EGD's energy and mobility policymaking and explore how they can be tackled.

In a wide-ranging critique of the underlying premises and targets of the EGD, **Peter Droege** argues that the EU has to move more boldly and quickly towards a distributed and renewable energy system that is focused on cities and founded on new technologies and community benefits. While the Renovation Wave's push for energy-efficient retrofitting and smart innovation in buildings is important, it is not enough. For Droege, the EU needs to go "beyond green, beyond the deal". Most vital of all, he argues, is to nurture a negative-carbon society (NCS) – a strategy that is essential to lowering the quantities of GHG emissions in the atmosphere, but that is currently absent from the EGD. The chapter calls for a revised EGD that would do well to adopt a "regenerative European policy protocol" promoting the complete shift towards renewable energy by concentrating on individual and collective innovation across cities, and the creation of an urban-focused NCS. Such a shift would depend on reforming and opening up urban and regional energy markets in ways that make energy and energy technology embedded parts of cities and communities, rather than an external supply system or imported commodity. While this scenario is still far from mainstream, European cities are among the most dynamic agents driving it through transformative energy policy and societal action. This leading role of cities should be reflected in the energy plans and legislation the EU will roll out in 2021.

Emilia Smeds and Clemence Cavoli address the limited consideration of the urban context in the EGD's priorities for future mobility. They emphasise that this omission is surprising, given that emissions from urban road transport make up a substantial share of emissions from the European transport sector, and that in many cities urban mobility transitions are not on track to achieve the 2050 target. A possible reason is that EU policy and actions in the field of urban mobility have always been restricted by the subsidiarity principle. Given these restrictions, the Commission has in fact developed an expanding array of urban "soft" policy instruments such as funding programmes and guidance documents. Building on existing instruments, the authors provide policy recommendations for how the EU could step up support for cities by creating the right framework conditions for the development of local "transition pathways" to sustainable urban mobility. More broadly, they raise the need for the Commission to give greater importance to urban mobility as a policy area, and to rethink the subsidiarity principle in the face of the climate emergency. The diffuse and interconnected nature of climate change requires stronger support for local authorities from the EU and a coherent multi-level governance system for urban mobility.

13. Transport accounts for a quarter of the EU's total GHG emissions (EC, 2019b).

III. Cities for an inclusive and just transition

The broader policy objectives of the EGD for an inclusive and just transition are to be achieved through the EU Climate Pact[14] and Just Transition Mechanism.[15] Part three explores how these instruments will depend on closer cooperation with cities for their effectiveness.

Launched in December 2020, the EU Climate Pact invites people, communities and organisations to participate in building a greener Europe by learning about climate change, sharing knowledge and developing and scaling up solutions. However, getting people to back the EGD will be a challenge, as the European public is deeply divided (Oroschakoff, 2020). At one end are those increasingly concerned about climate change who are pressing for more ambitious climate policies, including the growing number of green voters (Pearce, 2019) and youth movements like Fridays for Future. At the other are workers, companies and regions that fear the reconfiguration or destruction of the carbon-intensive jobs and industries they depend on. To ensure inclusion and societal cohesion throughout Europe's green transition, change and innovation need to be carefully managed in dialogue with citizens and in specific local contexts. In her chapter on the EU Climate Pact, **Irene García** discusses how cities can help mediate these conflicts. As leaders in climate action with extensive experience in deliberative and participatory processes, local governments are well-positioned to launch climate dialogues with a wide range of stakeholders and facilitate the formulation of joint solutions. Written before the launch of the EU Climate Pact, the chapter analyses the EU's political motivations for creating the initiative and the public consultation process that fed into its design. Building on these insights, García argues that giving cities a greater role in the future elaboration of the Pact would enable the EU to better address the concerns and ideas of Europeans expressed in the consultation process and move closer to the goal of engaging a broad range of citizens and stakeholders. Since the launch of the Pact in December 2020, one way for local authorities to become engaged is as "Climate Pact Ambassadors". The CoR, which represents local and regional interests in the Pact, has described this role as a chance "to provide periodical feedback on the effectiveness of EU policies on the ground and promote vertical integration."[16]

The ambition of an inclusive EGD is closely related to the aim of a just transition that leaves no one behind. The EGD follows from a series of similar high-profile agendas to balance economic growth with environmental preservation and social equity. Most of these have had mixed results and their promises of a more just and healthier world pale against the backdrop of continued rising GHG emissions and worsening social inequality. Sceptics have dismissed the EGD as being no different (Varoufakis & Adler, 2020). Providing a more optimistic outlook, **James J. T. Connolly** views the EGD as a potential catalyst for a European welfare state that makes climate justice an essential part of ensuring health and wellbeing. However, he argues that to deliver on its transformative ambitions, the EU needs to learn from the mistakes and misdirection of past agendas and develop an urban climate justice perspective. As it stands, the EGD's Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) offers only a narrow slice of climate justice. Its limited focus on supporting carbon-intensive regions fails to address a whole range of other climate justice issues (from housing to health and economic insecurity), many of which are

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14. https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/pact_en
15. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/just-transition-mechanism_en
16. https://cor.europa.eu/es/engage/Pages/European-Climate-Pact.aspx

HANNAH ABDULLAH

concentrated in cities and exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, and more fundamentally, the problem with the JTM is that a socially just green transition cannot be secured with a single policy instrument, but needs to be a guiding principle in the design and implementation of all policies. For Connolly, an EGD that is socially just would above all build on three climate justice principles: it would establish combined social and ecological goals that avoid unintended negative consequences for vulnerable populations; it would attend first and foremost to the needs and risks of the vulnerable; and it would work with and through cities, which – he argues – is the most effective way to approach the EGD's goals while respecting the preceding two principles.

IV. The EU as global climate leader

The EGD is testimony to the EU's ambitions to be a global climate leader. Its roadmap announces that the Commission aims to "develop a stronger 'green deal diplomacy' focused on convincing and supporting others to take on their share of promoting sustainable development" (EC, 2019a: 20). While member states are mentioned as partners in this endeavour, cities and local governments are left out. This overlooks the fact that European cities are often champions of climate diplomacy. They have collaborated in global networks for over three decades to meet and raise climate targets. The EU would waste much potential if it failed to develop a strategy for engaging cities actively in its Green Deal diplomacy.

In more indirect ways, the EU already builds on the achievements of European cities in transnational climate networks by opening up some of its urban climate programmes to cities in third countries. As **Xira Ruiz Campillo** shows in her chapter, the EU Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate (CoM), which the Commission created in 2008 and which is today one of the most successful networks of transnational climate governance, is exemplary in this regard and can provide lessons on how to better involve cities in the EU's Green Deal diplomacy. The chapter traces how the CoM's evolution has been aligned over the years with the development of regional and global climate negotiations and targets, such as the EU's 2020 climate and energy package and the Paris Agreement.[17] The CoM is an example of how the EU has invested in local climate action to support both EU and international climate agreements. Further, with the CoM's signatories including cities in third countries, it has become a multilevel governance mechanism that functions not only to share good practices across Europe, but also with Europe's partners around the world. The global reach of the CoM was reinforced by its merger with the Compact of Mayors in 2015, which resulted in the creation of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, for which the EU has provided strategic direction. Ruiz Campillo emphasises how, by giving cities room for flexibility and experimentation, the CoM has fostered local-level climate action that enriches and complements established national and regional approaches. Through the CoM, cities have become key advocates for the EU's global climate leadership. To enhance the benefits of the CoM and related urban climate programmes for the EU's Green Deal diplomacy, the EU would do well to give them a more central and formal role in the EGD's strategy for global cooperation.

17. With the EU's new 2030 climate target adopted in December 2020, the programme is bound to undergo another update in 2021 (see above).

The increasing contribution of European cities to the EU's climate leadership has also evolved in the context of a changing global governance ecosystem for climate action. This new ecosystem took shape around the 2015 Paris Agreement. It pushes global efforts to address climate change into new territory that is about much more than intergovernmental negotiations. It is made up of a sprawling array of institutions and governance platforms that are centred on the UNFCCC but involve a wide range of actors, including local and regional governments, businesses and civil society groups. In his chapter, **Charles Roger** explains this new climate governance ecosystem, the place of the EGD within it, and analyses how it will condition the activities of the EU and European cities moving forward. In many ways, the Paris ecosystem emerged in reaction to the perceived governance gap after the failed negotiations at Kyoto, which created room for non-state and sub-state actors to take leadership and experiment with new approaches. The novelty of the new constellation of actors lies not only in the processes and structures that account for their coming together. It has also provoked a paradigm shift from negotiation to "implementation mode" in global climate governance. The EGD forms part of this shift toward action. According to Roger, the new implementation phase presents both challenges and opportunities. Among them, the Paris pledge-and-review system is particularly relevant for the EU and European cities in the EGD framework and beyond. They should ensure that it is effective and provides maximum leverage for non-state actors to put pressure on states and refine the interplay of institutions in the Paris ecosystem in ways that support successful local implementation initiatives and their upscaling. Cities' on-the-ground expertise will also help develop new implementation approaches to improve compliance with the Paris commitments and their upgrading.

The increasing contribution of European cities to the EU's climate leadership has evolved in the context of a changing global governance ecosystem for climate action.

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HANNAH ABDULLAH

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HANNAH ABDULLAH