

Declaration of Climate Neutrality

“Kozani 2030 – A Green and Smart City”

Climate change is a serious concern that has profound implications for all humans in global, national and local level. The climate crisis remains the defining challenge of our time.

As climate change alters the ability of ecosystems to provide jobs, recreational opportunities, and restorative experiences, communities will experience declines in mental and physical health and potential loss of well-being.

The impact of global warming is transforming our environment, increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. As it alters temperature and weather patterns, it will also impact plant and animal life.

To reduce the chance of runaway global warming and limit the effects of climate breakdown, it is imperative that we take immediate and decisive climate action. The coming decade is pivotal if we are to meet the challenge of the climate emergency.

In this regard, cities have a crucial role to play; as stated by the European Union: “cities are the place where decarbonisation strategies for energy, transport, buildings and even industry and agriculture coexist and intersect. The climate emergency must be tackled within cities and by engaging citizens who are not only political actors in a governance structure, but also users, producers, consumers and owners”.

In this framework, Kozani undertakes a leading role in the energy transition in the region: for decades, the area has been in the heart of electricity production in Greece from fossil fuels and namely lignite, producing more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the country’s total electricity. Government’s decision for decarbonisation through the decommissioning of the lignite mines and power plants and a simultaneous transition to a greener energy and economy aligns with Kozani’s vision for climate neutrality and joins the rapidly growing global community that has recognised this climate emergency.

Kozani aims to be climate-neutral by 2030 – a city with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. This objective is at the heart of the European Green Deal and in line with the EU and Hellenic Republic’s commitments to global climate action under the Paris Agreement.

The transition to a climate-neutral community is both an urgent challenge and an opportunity to build a better future for all.

All parts of our local community and economic sectors will play a vital role – from the power sector to industry, mobility, buildings, education, ICT, agriculture, and forestry.

Today, we announce our goal for climate neutrality and our commitment to develop short-term low-greenhouse gases emission climate-resilient development strategies, in line with the agreed long-term temperature increase limit; and we will do so by the end of 2030.

The aim of this short-term strategy of Kozani is to confirm its Mayor's initiative to lead climate action and to present a vision that will eventually lead to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 through a socially-fair transition in a cost-efficient manner.

The achievement of climate neutrality by Kozani, the traditional centre of lignite energy production in Greece, will signal an important symbolic and substantial accomplishment in the effort of the coal dependent regions of the EU not to fall behind in the pursuit of Europe's overall climate goals.

Any climate-related action in the City of Kozani will always relate to the regional, national and EU context the city operates within.

Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;

Individuals can support the ongoing effort but cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm.

The Municipality of Kozani can lead the way by investing into innovative technological solutions, empowering its citizens and aligning action in key areas such as smart energy consumption, energy production, green mobility, circular economy and bioeconomy, as well digital transformation in all aspects of public and private sectors, while ensuring social fairness for a socially just transition. Kozani will engage and work with its citizens for the behavioral change that is ultimately necessary to address these demanding challenges.

It is only by developing these strategies, through open dialogue and consultation with citizens and stakeholders, that we will achieve a triple win: reaping the socio-economic benefits of the transition to net-zero greenhouse gases; building a climate-resilient local community; and accelerating global climate action at the necessary speed and scale.

Taking into account:

- The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹

¹ UNGA Res. A/70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available from: <https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E>

- The European Parliament Resolution of 14 March 2019 on climate change – a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy, in accordance with the Paris Agreement.²
- The European Parliament Resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal.³
- The Commission Proposal of 4 March 2020 for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law).⁴
- The Commission Communication of 11 March 2020 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A new Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe.⁵
- The Commission Communication of 17 September 2020 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition; Investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people.⁶
- The Regulation (EU) 2021/694 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the Digital Europe Programme and repealing Decision (EU) 2015/2240.⁷

² European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2019 on climate change - a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy in accordance with the Paris Agreement (2919/2852(RSP)). OJ C 23, 21.1.2021, p.116-125. Available from: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019IP0217&from=EN>>

³ European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal (2019/2956(RSP)). OJ C 270, 7.7.2021, p. 2-20. Available from: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020IP0005&from=EN>>

⁴ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law). (COM/2020/80 final). Available from: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0080&from=EN>>

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A new Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe. (COM/2020/98 final). Available from: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1583933814386&uri=COM%3A2020%3A98%3AFIN>>

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition. Investing in a climate- neutral future for the benefit of our people (COM/2020/562 final). Available from: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0562&from=EN>>

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2021/694 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the Digital Europe Programme and repealing Decision (EU) 2015. PE/13/2021/INIT. OJ L 166, 11.5.2021, p. 1-34. Available from: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0694&from=EN>>

- The National Energy and Climate Plan of 31 December 2019 (Government Gazette 4893/B/31.12.2019).⁸
- The Revised Just Transition Development Plan of the Region of Western Macedonia in the post-lignite era of 11 December 2020.⁹
- The new National Circular Economy Action Plan of March 2021.¹⁰
- The National Recovery and Resilience Plan “Greece 2.0” of 2 April 2021.¹¹
- The National Programme for Just Transition 2021-2027 of 16 June 2021.¹²
- The National Digital Transformation Strategy of Just Transition of 16 June 2021.¹³
- The Greek Digital Transformation “Bible” 2020-2025 of 23 June 2021.¹⁴
- The Just Transition Development Proposal of July 2020 of the Municipality of Kozani.¹⁵

The City Council of Kozani:

Declares a climate action for climate neutrality by 2030 for the purpose of naming, framing, and deepening our commitment to protecting our local economy, our local ecosystems, and our local community from climate change.

Believes that bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities, as well as improved well-being for people.

⁸ Hellenic Republic. Ministry of the Environment and Energy. National Energy and Climate Plan. Athens, December 2019. Available from:

<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/el_final_necp_main_en.pdf>

⁹ Just Transition Development Plan of lignite areas, September 2020. Available from:

<https://www.sdam.gr/sites/default/files/consultation/Master_Plan_Public_Consultation_ENG.pdf>

¹⁰ Hellenic Republic. Ministry of the Environment and Energy. New Circular Economy Action Plan of March 2021. Available from: <https://ypen.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NEO_SXEDIO_DRASIS_KUKLIKH_OIKONOMIA.pdf>

¹¹ Hellenic Republic. “Next Generation EU” Greece 2.0. National Recovery and Resilience Plan. May 2021. Available from: <https://primeminister.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Greece-2_0-April-2021.pdf>

¹² National Programme for Just Transition 2021-2027 of 16 June 2021. Available from:

<<https://www.sdam.gr/sites/default/files/2021-06/1o%20Σχέδιο%20ΠΔΑΜ.pdf>>

¹³ National Digital Transformation Strategy of Just Transition of 16 June 2021. Available from:

<<https://www.sdam.gr/sites/default/files/2021-06/Παρουσίαση%20Στρω%20ΔΑΜ%2016062021.pdf>>

¹⁴ Hellenic Republic. Ministry of Digital Governance. Digital Transformation “Bible” 2020-2025 of 23 June 2021. Available from: <https://digitalstrategy.gov.gr/vivlos_pdf>

¹⁵ Municipality of Kozani. Proposal for Just Transition Development of July 2020. Available from:

<<https://diavgeia.gov.gr/doc/ΩΧΘΚΩΛΠ-M6H?inline=true>>

Acknowledges that the emergence of COVID-19 is a stark reminder of how we are all a part of nature and the environment. Just as humanity does not exist in isolation, neither does our local community. Everything we do affects the world around us. We are all part of the global climate crisis, and our efforts to achieve environmental sustainability are essential to tackling it. We must work harder and faster to bequeath a liveable planet for this and future generations.

Reaffirms that transitioning to a net-zero greenhouse gases and climate-resilient future, and delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals, is one of the biggest, but also one of the most exciting challenges the world has ever faced. Today's action proves our determination to address this challenge.

Notes the Mayor's climate change mitigation and adaptation responsibilities and recognises that he aims to make the City of Kozani a net-zero greenhouse gases city by 2030 and would welcome further ambitious steps.

Decides the establishment of a wide pool of experts and supporting organisations and companies to assist Kozani in achieving this ambitious vision.

Calls on the Mayor to declare a Climate Emergency, supported by specific plans with the actions needed to make Kozani climate neutral by 2030, call on government to give him the powers and funding to make this possible and, to be a leader on this initiative.

Calls on the Mayor to report to full Council within six months with the actions the Mayor will take to address this goal.