



## “Urban Transitions Alliance” Launched at COP23, Previews Global Shift Towards Clean, Sustainable Energy Systems

Cities with an industrial legacy from USA, Europe, China, are coming to the UNFCCC climate talks in Bonn, to share best practices on how to re-invent local economies and societies for a low-carbon world. Hear their stories at the Cities & Regions Pavilion on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November at 3 pm.

**[Bonn, 9 November 2017]** The global climate transition requires all - nations, businesses and cities- to redefine “how they do business”. Pushed by forces beyond climate, many industrial cities around the world are currently doing just that.

They set out to turn the challenge posed by traditional industrial activity gradually fading away into an unprecedented opportunity to become hubs of clean energy, innovation and sustainability.

The **Urban Transitions Alliance**, an initiative managed by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability and funded by Stiftung Mercator, presents an **opportunity for such industrial and former industrial cities to become global leaders in sustainable urban development**.

The Alliance provides the infrastructure and support cities need to identify common challenges, share knowledge, co-create solutions and forge strong working relationships with local government peers, experts from the research community and private sector solution providers. It is designed to **help the cities develop new or improve existing action plans for their own sustainable urban transitions**.

«To stop climate change, a planet-wide low-carbon transition needs to happen. Cities like Pittsburgh, the former Steel City of the USA, or Essen, a major coal mining hub, have been experiencing first-hand what such a transition entails» explained Roman Mendle, Smart Cities Program Manager at ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. «These cities had to create new visions for their future and, ultimately, to define their own paths towards more vibrant, sustainable economies. It’s a challenging and lengthy process, but **the cities joining the Urban Transitions Alliance might have a lesson or two to share with the world on how to make that planet-wide transition happen** without leaving anyone behind»

The first cities to join the Urban Transition Alliance are:

- Pittsburgh, PA, USA
- Cincinnati, OH, USA
- Buffalo, NY, USA
- Essen, Germany
- Bottrop, Germany
- Beijing, Economic-Technological Development Areas (E-Town), China
- Beijing, Huairou District, China



- Shijiazhuang, Yuhua District, China

Some of these cities have been in transition for decades: Essen, formerly a coal mining and heavy industry center, is now the European Green Capital 2017. Others are just taking the first few steps now. It's the case of Beijing's Economic-Technological Development Area, which is currently undergoing a rapid industrialization while managing difficult environmental and social challenges. In all cases, **exchanging good practice and jointly identifying key opportunities for sustainable urban development** provides powerful support to industrial and former industrial cities around the globe.

ICLEI will work closely with the Alliance cities to identify their needs and their goals. The necessary infrastructure will then be put in place to help the Alliance cities devise and implement new transition projects, exchange lessons learned and find experts, researchers and partners to help them with their local action.

Among other tools envisaged to support the process, ICLEI will provide access to an online platform for interaction, where cities' projects and goals will be shared and discussed, drawing on the collective knowledge of expert city staff in each of the participating cities.

A series of physical meetings and an annual Urban Transitions Forum will further deepen ties between the cities and allow for direct exchange of ideas and best practices and opportunities for collaboration.

The Urban Transitions Alliance will be officially presented **at COP23 on Thursday 9 November** in two separate events:

- 11:30 AM – Official side event - **[“Cities in Transition: Industrial Legacy for a Low Carbon Future”](#)** – Venue: Meeting Room 6 – Bonn Zone  
Highlighted speakers: William Peduto, Mayor of Pittsburgh, PA, USA;
- 3 PM – Story-telling and media event - **[“Transition Stories: Industrial Legacy. Sustainable Future”](#)** – Venue: Cities & Regions Pavilion – Bonn Zone

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*Note to editors:*

ICLEI is the leading global network of over 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future. By helping the ICLEI Network to become sustainable, low-carbon, ecomobile, resilient, biodiverse, resource-efficient, healthy and happy, with a green economy and smart infrastructure, we impact over 25% of the global urban population. Find more information on [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)

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