

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

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Dear colleagues,

From the war in Ukraine, to the Covid-19 pandemic, to climate change, to economic slowdown, our societies are facing multiple crises today that require urgent responses.

The consequences of those crises are most felt in our villages, municipalities and regions – in our territorial communities whose authorities find themselves on the frontline,

Working to reduce the impact of the crises on citizens, respond to their needs and ensure post-crisis recovery.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, which I represent, stands to make the voice of territorial authorities heard by national governments and in international bodies.

This to make sure that local and regional governments play a greater role in the development and implementation of national policies.

It falls on local and regional politicians to implement policies, measures and recovery plans in response to the crises, so that they can have a tangible impact for our citizens.

Local and regional authorities must therefore be involved in the design of those policies, and their practical experience must be taken into account.

Because if something does not work locally, it will not work nationally either.

Territorial authorities must also have their share of funding and decision-making autonomy to implement those measures.

Giving local decision makers more responsibilities and resources contributes to increased resilience of communities and therefore societies as a whole.

In the face of the challenges posed by the multiple crises, we are compelled to build stronger resilience, the ability to prevent, resist and adapt to crises, as well as to bounce back quickly.

This resilience must be embedded at the level of our communities and built from the bottom up, based on specific experiences, approaches and skills of local and regional authorities who must be regularly consulted and empowered with the necessary competences and resources to do the job.

We are convinced that resilient cities and regions are an essential part of building a peaceful, secure and cohesive future for our world.

They are more sustainable, more inclusive and more participatory.

Thank you for your attention.