



Eindhoven, January 26th, 2022
Helmond, January 26th, 2022

TO THE EU MISSION ON CLIMATE NEUTRAL CITIES,

It is with great pleasure that we – the Mayors of Eindhoven and Helmond - offer our Expression of Interest in the EU Mission on Climate Neutral Cities; one that we strongly believe in. Our smart Brainport region endorses the scientific facts that climate neutrality is necessary by 2030. One of our main principles is: **Climate action is no longer a choice.**

With this letter the Brainport-Eindhoven-Helmond climate consortium represented by the Mayors and city councils of the Cities of Eindhoven and Helmond, and supported by our national government and regional knowledge and private partners, wishes to express its strong commitment to engage as a front runner city consortium in the context of the EU Mission on Climate Neutral Cities and work with the European Commission on the development of a Climate City Contract supporting the ambition to achieve a climate neutral city by 2030.

We fully understand the urgency and wish to contribute to the knowledge exchange around climate neutrality in Europe in order to co-create successful solutions. So we strongly welcome the opportunities offered by the EU Mission

We acknowledge that the challenges ahead of us are complex and demand novel approaches as this transition will not be a linear process. It is, therefore, that we have decided on a new and integrated approach, which is characterised by:

1. Citizen participation: Inhabitants future-ready

There is a need for behavioural change towards climate neutrality focusing on the mindsets of citizens. If we re-frame the way citizens look at their own behaviour, at the choices they make, we can, among others, reduce waste and reduce international transportation. This will be a movement both top-down and bottom up and much of it starts with education. In parallel we have to develop new supply chains, closer to home, to make the reframed choices available and create the basis for the new sustainable economy. This offers new job possibilities.

Most important is the reframing of doing this with and for your community. And Eindhoven and Helmond both have exceptional examples of citizen engagement, that we will share with you.

2. Saving and Renewable Energy

We need steep CO₂ reduction. In the Brainport region we programme for housing construction and overall production that contributes to climate neutrality. We focus on 'no-regret' steps for the future and combine circular transition in our energy-goals. We ensure that the urbanization challenge (and the economic growth that comes with it) we face due to the predicted growth of our population is delivered in a sustainable way. Also, the existing housing stock is being transformed.

3. 'Green-proofing' the region and its cities

It is important to implement civil innovations to capture CO₂, reduce heat stress and cold burden on buildings and absorb excess water. Our public environment needs to be redesigned to take account of the health of citizens, users and employees. CO₂ reduction is no longer enough, we need to compensate for emissions, add more green and water buffering; much more than is now defined in rules and regulations. How we do this, we explain in depth in our Expression of Interest documentation.

4. The Brainport effect

The cities of Eindhoven and Helmond have a long history in programming and implementing innovation within the Brainport region. The Brainport region is a vital economic engine of The Netherlands and globally known for its high tech contributions. We have realised early on that we are addressing the same issues with identical stakeholder groups. It is this 'shared problem, shared risk and shared result' thinking that characterises our region. We have applied this methodology on themes like mobility, labour, knowledge clustering and housing, through roadmaps on all the societal challenges we face. We also collaborate strongly around the transition towards climate neutrality.

“The Brainport region (population 750’000) is large enough to judge the effectiveness of solutions scaled up to 10-100M inhabitants. It is also small enough to have easy access to decision makers and opinion leaders enabling fast deployment and effective feedback. Cycles of learning and speed of innovation are significantly accelerated through the concept of ‘Living Labs’.”

Frits van Hout – former Executive Board member ASML

The ultimate goal is a robust climate neutral region through the main cities of Eindhoven and Helmond. Robust in every aspect: social citizen design, economic prosperity, knowledge and application advancement. Innovation is never real if it is not embraced by people and truly applied in their daily lives. We know this is not a linear process, but that we need a paradigm shift. This transition needs time to scale up the innovations that help us accelerate change exponentially.

OUR CAPACITY

In Eindhoven and Helmond we understand the critical, but changing, role that we have in our capacity as public sector with responsibility for the common good. We believe that our regional/city level is very qualified to invite, orchestrate and facilitate innovation hubs around climate neutrality. We are very proud of the proven track record that we have built up.

One of the reasons for the success of Brainport is our adoption of the modus operandi of Open Innovation since almost 20 years. We have successfully transferred this to open innovation hubs that are actively working on elements for climate neutrality.

One of the key success factors within the Brainport region is the ‘shared problem, shared risk and shared result’ collaborative model. This adaptation of the modus operandi of Open Innovation is crucial in the open and collaborative way the ecosystems in Brainport function. The interdependency between all stakeholders creates strong partnerships and a good foundation for creating solutions for climate neutrality. This also fits with the history and culture of our region. We know like none other that to speed up innovation we *have* to work together. We have created the rules and adhere to them to create a fair deal for *all* stakeholders.

“The City supports us in our bottom-up climate initiatives. For instance with Klimaathelden (climate heroes) we make matches in supply and demand to offer knowledge, tools and volunteers. The power of our City: We ‘Eindhovenaren’ help one another, are connected and make each other stronger.”

Bernice Kamphuis - Climate Mayor of Eindhoven

OUR DNA / OUR PARTNERSHIPS

In order to address and adopt solutions around climate neutrality, Brainport has an exceptional tapestry of partners. We need to embrace solutions that are already close enough to market introduction, otherwise 2030 will never be a realistic option. In this we see the EU as a partner through the H2020 programs, where so much knowledge has been generated and proven.

Brainport supports strong ecosystems of organizations that we proudly call our partners. This does not only mean corporates like ASML, Philips and NXP but the list also contains many, many SME-companies and start-ups that contribute to the value chain. We believe that value is added in every step of the chain; not just in research and development, but also in design, user interface and production.

We have a series of public-private partnerships around **Smart Energy Solutions**, like the Solliance Consortium, the EIT InnoEnergy and EIT Digital and the Urban Development Initiative. But also in **Green and Smart Mobility**, like the EIT Urban Mobility. We have sublime ecosystems in place with a large variety of players. The examples are simply too many to list.

The partnership between Eindhoven and Helmond is one of complementarity and brings a true: 1+1>3 effect. Where Eindhoven is the High Tech City, Helmond boasts an Automotive Campus with an impressive value chain addressing the smart mobility solutions for the future. Both cities

work together with private and knowledge partners under the umbrella of the Brainport Foundation and share the principles described in this letter. The cities are close in proximity and can benefit from economies of scale when it comes to implementing solutions.

Furthermore, through our joint Urban Development Initiative (UDI) Eindhoven, Helmond and private and knowledge partners already work jointly to address complex urban challenges, such as the energy transition and climate change.

This means we combine two complementary ecosystems with huge synergy towards creating and embedding solutions around climate neutrality. We have engaged the whole innovation ecosystem to this EU Mission, making it a broadly carried effort. We enclose the Letter of Support for the participation of Eindhoven and Helmond in the 100 Climate Neutral Cities signed by the Managing Director of Brainport Development.

OUR CITIZENS

The positive engagement with our citizens is by and large the most important task that we have as local governments. Although not a simple task, we have found solid ways to involve and engage our inhabitants. The magic lies in the dialogue.

We have many good examples and we share one per city to illustrate our approach. For Eindhoven this is: **Blik op Eindhoven** (A Glance at Eindhoven), where specifically we address 4 themes:

- Home in your own neighborhood: create hotspots to meet and maintain the neighborhood, address issues with the community;
- The City of Together: how can we solve the need for housing growth together?
- The City of Chances: a special student program with the education institutes – the student as the mentor;
- Green and Healthy: how to use the public space in the best possible way.

For the City of Helmond this is “Alle Lichten op Groen” (All Lights to Green); the portal for sustainable living. The portal offers examples of transition projects to inspire others based on storytelling. On many aspects of sustainability the portal offers real and true examples, where organizations, citizens and companies show how active our society is. Examples that are showcased through this portal are:

- Het Energiehuis (The Energy House): a location in the city center, where people find information, get advice and tools;
- NLGreenLabel: projects for and with the city on how to make public spaces green;
- SSH: Smart Synergy Helmond: for energy, water and material recycling
- Brainport Smart District, and all its communities.

There are also many examples of citizen-driven initiatives, that we support in their bottom-up energy activities. And just as important: social care initiatives run by volunteers. This means we can tap into the societal pull that’s needed and not just technology push.

“We do not inherit this city from our ancestors, but we borrow her from her children. To ensure that my generation and generations to come have a liveable future, I wholeheartedly endorse the climate approach of our city.”

Hajar Yagkoubi – former UN Youth Representative for NL – youth participation coach and active citizen of Helmond

OUR MEMBER STATE NL

We have closely lined up our Expression of Interest with our Ministries of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and that of Economic Affairs and Climate. They fully support our mission, because it departs from a different angle than just the technocratic approach. We kindly refer to the enclosed letter signed by the Director General from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to express their support for the mission.

The new coalition agreement has indicated the climate and energy transition as a central task.

OUR EDUCATION INNOVATION

What is also important is that we have adopted the open innovation model to *social* innovation. The 'open education' model is an example. All levels of education are involved, creating a relay around our many campuses: from fundamental research, to industrial R&D, to design and user interface – and last but not least: the manufacturing – involving also vocational education. We connect the jobs of the future to the developments visible in the innovation pipeline and know how to prepare to install, maintain and recycle the systems needed to reach climate neutrality. A factor that is often overlooked: the human factor and talent needed.

“The Eindhoven Brainport region is famous for its unique innovation ecosystem based on a thriving high-tech industry, dynamic university and pro-active local government that work hand in hand for a better and more sustainable world.”

Robert-Jan Smits, President of the Executive Board TU/e (Technical University Eindhoven)

OUR CHALLENGE

The transition requires time, planning and programming. This is not a linear path. However, if we get an opportunity to start with practical pilots in our innovation hubs, we will see a steep curve in scaling up the actual solutions.

We strongly welcome the opportunity offered by the EU Mission on Climate Neutral Cities, to work with the EC and our member state towards a comprehensive Brainport Climate Contract. Because we have such solid experience in open innovation, you can rest assured that we will relay this knowledge to other cities in future.

We look forward to and hope for your positive reaction on our Expression of Interest. Meanwhile, we remain,

With highest regards,

John Jorritsma
Mayor

Elly Blanksma
Mayor

City of Eindhoven

City of Helmond