

Declaration

Finland as a Forerunner in the Clean Transformation

The Finnish Government has set a clear ambition: to strengthen Finland's ability to shape EU policy proactively and to accelerate the transition to a competitive, carbon-neutral economy. One of the Government's priorities is to boost innovation collaboration and raise the national R&D investment share to **4% of GDP by 2030**, exceeding the EU's 3% target. This ambition will enable the faster deployment of solutions that reduce emissions and capture carbon in industry and energy production.

To succeed, Finland must align its national policies and industrial strategies with the EU's agenda and connect **local action to European transformation**. One avenue for such integration is the **Green Deal Going Local (GDGL)** initiative launched by the European Committee of the Regions. GDGL mobilizes local and regional authorities to aim for greater impact. In Finland, these efforts are advancing through **industrial hubs—or "springboards"**—which are a priority area in the new Finnish Industrial Policy Strategy (2024).

Achieving the EU's climate neutrality targets depends on **action on the ground**, driven by public-private collaboration. Industrial investments are decisive. The European Commission's **Competitiveness Compass**, **Clean Industrial Deal**, and forthcoming **New Urban Agenda** emphasize industrial, technological, and competitiveness policies as essential complements to environmental measures.

The **GDGL Forum held in Porvoo and Espoo in October 2025** marked an agenda-setting step forward in the EU's Green Deal Going Local process. The Forum analysed Finland's most promising candidates to serve as **springboards for next-generation clean solutions**. Leading Finnish cities—many of them **EU Mission Cities**—are now advancing this clean transformation through their **Climate City Contracts**, which act as strategic frameworks for innovation, investment, and the co-creation of concepts supporting the achievement of the EU's ambitious climate and energy goals.

Business Finland's Leading Companies Programme accelerates the creation of industrial ecosystems delivering systemic climate solutions with global impact. Experience shows that **municipal and regional collaboration with industry is essential for success**. One notable example, presented at the GDGL Forum, is the **€150 million H₂ Springboard Programme**, led by ABB, which aims to demonstrate the full potential and business viability of the hydrogen economy.

The next step is to **integrate local Finnish springboards** with national and EU-level policies to ensure the multi-level governance needed for maximum impact. Finland can lead by example as a European role model for **systemic transformation** by:

- **Orchestrating city-industry-university ecosystems** around Local Green Deals and industrial hubs with measurable outcomes.
- **Scaling footprint and handprint innovations** that generate economic, environmental, social, and cultural value.
- **Mobilising Finnish initiatives** to contribute to EU Moonshot Missions, European Partnerships, and European Research Area (ERA) Actions.
- **Using GDGL as a framework** to demonstrate how multi-level governance operates effectively in practice.

Through these actions, Finland can reinforce its influence within the EU and demonstrate how industrial innovation and regional collaboration strengthen both **competitiveness and climate neutrality**.

22 October 2025

On behalf of the Green Deal Going Local Forum organisers and participants

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