

COUNTRY	CITY	POPULATION	LAST REPORTED EMISSIONS	MITIGATION TARGET
GREECE	ATHENS	661,278	4,581,962 TCO ₂ e	-40% BY 2030 (BASE YEAR: 1990)

In the municipality of Athens, a whole department for developing resilience

As the warmest European city, Athens is considered as one of the cities most exposed to climate change-related increase of heat waves. Over the past few years, actions have been taken by the municipality to both mitigate Athens' climate impact and adapt the city to future impacts, especially by greening the city. As a C40 member since 2007, the city signed the [Urban Nature Declaration](#) in 2021, and [is a signatory](#) of the Cities Race to Zero.

A highly impacted city

Athens already finds itself facing a relatively high level of heat stress and related challenges, which is only set to increase with climate change. Between 2000-2012, Athens had [observed](#) a 5.2% increase in mortality for every 1°C increase in daily max temperatures over 31.5°C. A Newcastle University [study](#), assessing future changes in flood, heat-waves and drought impacts for 571 European cities identified Athens as one of the most vulnerable cities to these future climate change impacts. Facing these challenges has made the city a pioneer in terms of resilience policy.

An integrated approach linking mitigation and adaptation

In 2014, Athens joined the 100 Resilient Cities network pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, after a competitive process. This led to the creation in 2016 of a Department of Resilience and Sustainability, headed by a Chief Resilience Officer, who elaborated the [Athens Resilience 2030 Strategy](#), planning 65 actions and 53 supporting actions with a "clear vision of how the city can best cope with the increasing interdependency of shocks and stresses." Each action is linked to the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The city obtained a €55 million loan from the European Investment Bank to implement the strategy. The same year, an integrated [Climate Action Plan](#) for both mitigation and adaptation was published,

supported by C40. It sets the objective of achieving a 40% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 1990, as well as maintaining and increasing green spaces or using sustainable materials for the built environment.

As part of the supporting actions for the Climate Action Plan and the Resilience Strategy, the municipality launched #CoolAthens, a public health protection, public information, and awareness campaign. It [includes](#) actions such as promoting publicly available personalized information linking high temperatures to health risks; preparing guides as well as Near Field Communication (NFC) tags to orient high-risk populations to an enhanced network of municipal "Cool Centers" which protects people during high temperatures; linking all heat-related data sources; establishing information and awareness-raising campaigns and activities, and engaging the private sector in the activities.

Cooling the city through green spaces

Increasing the total surface of green areas is key to the Athens' strategy to reduce its vulnerability to extreme heat. In 2018, Athens already had one of the highest rate of area [covered](#) by green space among European capital cities (15%, after Stockholm (19%)), while overall, cities in the north and west of Europe have more total green space within their area than cities in southern and eastern Europe. With the support of the Greek State, companies and European funds, the

budget for green spaces has [quadrupled](#) in the recent years. Green roofs, parks, trees and water fountains have grown in number in the whole city.

In 2019, Athens was the first city to benefit from the [Natural Capital Financing Facility](#) (NCF), the European Investment Bank's new tool to help cities financing green or blue infrastructure projects. The €5 million NCF loan aims to finance and support the integration of green components into the restoration of public squares and streets, create green corridors between different greened areas and contribute to the natural restoration of Athens' second landmark hill after the Acropolis, Lycabettus hill.

In Summer 2021, the city signed the [Urban Nature Declaration](#), committing to make 30-40% of the total built-up city surface area green or permeable to water, and/or to ensure the access of at least 70% of the population to a blue or green space within a 15-minute radius. In the meantime, the Chief Resilience Officer Elini Myrivili became "Chief Heat Officer", following the [examples](#) of Miami-Dade County (United States) and Freetown (Sierra Leone).