

COVENANT OF MAYORS

WHEREAS the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change has confirmed that climate change is a reality and that the use of energy for human activities is largely responsible for it;

WHEREAS on 9 March 2007 the EU adopted the Energy for a Changing World package, committing unilaterally to reduce its CO₂ emissions by 20% by 2020, as a result of a 20% increase in energy efficiency and a 20% share of renewable energy sources in the energy mix;

WHEREAS the “European Union Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: Realising the Potential” includes the creation of a «Covenant of Mayors», as a priority;

WHEREAS the EU Committee of the Regions stresses the need to join local and regional forces, as multilevel governance is an effective tool to enhance the efficacy of actions to be taken against climate change, and therefore promotes the involvement of regions in the Covenant of Mayors;

WHEREAS we are willing to follow the recommendations of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, concerning the need to improve energy efficiency;

WHEREAS we are aware of the existence of the Aalborg Commitments, at the basis of many ongoing urban sustainability efforts and Local Agenda 21 processes;

WHEREAS we recognise that local and regional governments share the responsibility of fighting global warming with national governments and must be committed thereto independently of the commitments of other parties;

WHEREAS towns and cities account directly and indirectly (through the products and services used by citizens) for more than half of the greenhouse gas emissions derived from energy use related to human activity;

WHEREAS the EU commitment to reduce emissions will be achievable only if local stakeholders, citizens and their groupings share it;

WHEREAS local and regional governments, representing the closest administration to the citizen, need to lead action and to show example;

WHEREAS many of the actions, on energy demand and renewable energy sources, necessary to tackle climate disruption fall within the scope of competence of local governments, or would not be attainable without their political support;

WHEREAS the EU Member States can benefit from effective decentralised action at local level in order to meet their commitment to greenhouse gas emission abatement;

WHEREAS local and regional governments throughout Europe are reducing global warming pollutants through energy efficiency programs, including sustainable urban mobility, and the promotion of renewable energy sources;

WE, THE MAYORS, COMMIT TO:

Go beyond the objectives set by the EU for 2020, reducing the CO₂ emissions in our respective territories by at least 20%, through the implementation of a Sustainable Energy Action Plan for those areas of activity relevant to our mandates. The commitment and the Action Plan will be ratified through our respective procedures;

Prepare a baseline emission inventory as a basis for the Sustainable Energy Action Plan;

Submit the Sustainable Energy Action Plan within the year following each of us formally signing up to the Covenant of Mayors;

Adapt city structures, including allocation of sufficient human resources, in order to undertake the necessary actions;

Mobilise the civil society in our geographical areas to take part in developing the Action Plan, outlining the policies and measures needed to implement and achieve the objectives of the Plan. An Action Plan will be produced in each territory and shall be submitted to the Covenant of Mayors Office within the year following signing up;

Submit an implementation report at least every second year after submission of the Action Plan for evaluation, monitoring and verification purposes;

Share our experience and know-how with other territorial units;

Organise Energy Days or City Covenant Days, in co-operation with the European Commission and with other stakeholders, allowing citizens to benefit directly from the opportunities and advantages offered by a more intelligent use of energy, and to regularly inform the local media on developments concerning the action plan;

Attend and contribute to the annual EU Conference of Mayors for a Sustainable Energy Europe;

Spread the message of the Covenant in the appropriate fora and, in particular, encourage other Mayors to join the Covenant;

Accept termination of our membership of the Covenant, subject to prior notice in writing by the Secretariat, in case of either:

- i) failing to submit the Sustainable Energy Action Plan within the year following formally signing up to the Covenant;
- ii) non-compliance with the overall CO₂ reduction objective as set in the Action Plan, due to failure to implement or insufficient implementation of the Action Plan;
- iii) failing to submit a report in two successive periods.

WE, THE MAYORS, ENDORSE

The European Commission's decision to implement and fund a structure of technical and promotional support, including implementation of evaluation and monitoring tools, mechanisms to facilitate sharing of know-how between territories and tools to facilitate replication and multiplication of successful measures, within their budget;

The European Commission's role to assume co-ordination of the EU Conference of Mayors for a Sustainable Energy Europe;

The European Commission's declared intention to facilitate the exchange of experience among the participating territorial units, the provision of guidelines and benchmark examples for possible implementation, and linking to existing activities and networks that support the role of local governments in the field of climate protection. These benchmark examples should become an integral part of this Covenant, to be stipulated in its annexes;

The European Commission's support providing for recognition and public visibility of the cities and towns taking part in the Covenant through the use of a dedicated Sustainable Energy Europe logo and promotion through the Commission's communication facilities;

The Committee of the Regions' strong support for the Covenant and its objectives, in representation of local and regional authorities in the EU;

The assistance which those Member States, regions, provinces, mentor cities and other **institutional structures** supporting the Covenant provide to smaller municipalities in order that the latter may comply with the conditions set out in this Covenant;

WE, THE MAYORS, INVITE

The European Commission and the national administrations to set up co-operation schemes and coherent support structures which help the signatories to implement our Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

The European Commission and the national administrations to consider the activities in the Covenant as priorities in their respective support programmes, and inform and involve the cities in the preparation of policies and funding schemes concerning the local level in the scope of its objectives.

The European Commission to negotiate with the financial actors to set up financial facilities aimed at aiding accomplishment of the tasks within the Action Plans.

The national administrations to involve local and regional governments in the preparation and implementation of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plans and of the National Action Plans for Renewable Energy Sources.

The European Commission and the national administrations to support implementation of our Sustainable Energy Action Plans consistent with the principles, rules, and modalities already agreed upon, and those which may be agreed upon by the Parties for the future at the global level, in particular within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Our active involvement in the CO₂ emissions' reduction could also result in a more ambitious global target.

WE, THE MAYORS, ENCOURAGE OTHER LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS TO JOIN THE INITIATIVE OF THE COVENANT OF MAYORS, AND OTHER MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS TO FORMALISE THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE COVENANT.

APPENDIX

1. Roles of local governments in implementing work

Energy efficiency measures, renewable energy projects and other energy-related action can be introduced in various activity areas of local and regional governments.

- consumer and service provider

Local governments occupy many buildings which use substantial amounts of energy, such as for heating and lighting. Introducing energy saving programmes and actions in public buildings is an area where considerable savings can be achieved.

Local and regional governments also provide energy-intensive services such as public transport and street lighting where improvements can be made. And even where the authority has contracted these services to other providers, measures to reduce energy use can be implemented through procurement and service contracts.

- planner, developer and regulator

Land use planning and organisation of the transport system are responsibilities of most local and regional governments. Strategic decisions concerning urban development such as avoiding urban sprawl can reduce the energy use of transport.

Local and regional governments can often have a regulator role for example by setting energy performance standards, or stipulating incorporation of renewable energy equipment in new buildings.

- advisor, motivator and role model

Local and regional governments can help to inform and motivate residents, businesses and other local stakeholders on how they can use energy more efficiently. Awareness-raising activities are important to engage the whole community to support sustainable energy policies. Children are an important audience for energy saving and renewable projects: they will pass on the lessons learnt also outside the school. It is equally important that the authority should lead by example, and play an exemplary role in sustainable energy activities.

- producer and supplier

Local and regional governments can promote local energy production and the use of renewable energy sources. Combined Heat and Power (CHP) district heating systems using biomass are a good example. Local and regional governments can also encourage citizens to implement renewable energy projects by giving financial support for local initiatives.

2. Benchmarks of Excellence (BoE)

'Benchmarks of Excellence' are defined as those initiatives and programmes which represent a worldwide model of successful implementation of sustainable energy development concepts in urban settings. Representatives of the Benchmarks of Excellence through the Covenant state their willingness to share their experience and to help cities to implement similar approaches when applicable and convenient, and commit to facilitate know-how transfer through the distribution of information, including guidelines, participation in events of the Covenant signatories and, in general, day-to-day co-operation with the Covenant.

3. Supporting structures

The Covenant of Mayors is open to cities of all sizes in Europe. Those cities and towns which due to their size do not have the resources to prepare an inventory, or work on and draft an action plan should be supported by administrations with such capacities. These supporting structures can be regions, counties, provinces, agglomerations, NUTS III areas, or mentor cities. Each supporting structure will be explicitly recognised by the Commission as a key actor in the Covenant. The degree of involvement in the Covenant, as well as the specific conditions of such involvement, including decision making powers, will be detailed in a specific written agreement.