

PRESS RELEASE

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The Intelligent Energy Europe Programme must be maintained!

On 29 June 2011, the European Commission published its proposal for the EU Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2014-2020. According to this document, the Commission abandons the only centrally-managed programme focused entirely and exclusively on the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources – the Intelligent Energy Europe programme (IEE) worth € 730 million for the period 2007-2013. This decision is not understandable and it is unacceptable for Energy Cities.

The IEE Programme contribution to the European energy and climate goals over the past years is undisputed:

- Support to the creation of hundreds of local and regional energy agencies,
- Co-financing of hundreds of innovative projects, often focused on local issues,
- Support to different relevant EU initiatives like ManagEnergy, European Sustainable Energy Week and more recently the **Covenant of Mayors** gathering more than 2,800 local authorities thus proving an exceptional model of multi-level governance,
- Creation of innovative financial instruments such as ELENA-EIB technical assistance which leveraged on €21.8 million EU contribution to trigger €1.6 billion in investments and which is now being replicated (ELENA-KfW, ELENA-CEB).

This programme contributes to increased energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy by supporting innovative solutions, market replication tools, pilot and demonstration projects, networking and exchange of experiences among local, regional and national stakeholders. It also fosters behavioural change, education, technical assistance and creation of new jobs. These **'soft measures' with a huge leverage effect have proved to be as important as 'technological solutions'**.

Energy Cities is well aware that the **"LIFE+ Climate Sub-programme"** is proposed to support exchange of best practices, capacity building and pilot projects focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation and governance.

However, Energy Cities warns that **sustainable energy** should not be considered only as a **sub-part of climate issues**. It should be considered as a self-contained issue of utmost importance, especially in a time when the energy debate is re-launched in Europe and will require very innovative solutions.

If it is up to Member States to finance IEE-like programmes at national level, there is no guarantee that this will to be their priority. Even if they decide to implement such programmes, an added value of networking and exchange of experiences at European level and a significant leverage effect of soft actions would disappear. No more inspiration coming from another country, no more exchange of ideas – the Member States would start again 'reinventing the wheel'!

Therefore, **Energy Cities strongly requests to maintain – and refresh - the Intelligent Energy Europe programme that clearly supports 'soft measures' in the field of energy efficiency and renewables. It should focus on innovative and new solutions** which would facilitate the achievement of the EU energy and climate goals while feeding sectoral policies, such as the regional policy.

Energy Cities will publish a comprehensive paper on the EU Multi-annual Financial Framework in a few weeks.

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