



Low energy cities

Europe must move towards a new energy paradigm and re-establish the link between resources and the territories in which they are used, says **G rard Magnin**

Territorial cohesion and energy are two newcomers in the Lisbon treaty. The first is an addition to the existing notions of social and economic cohesion, while the second is the subject of an entirely new section in the treaty.

They are two essential components of European policymaking, but, all too often, they are considered separately. Since the industrial revolution, the link between energy resources and the territories where they are used has steadily weakened, resulting in the decoupling of energy production from consumption. This disconnection has meant that all categories of energy consumers, including city and regional planners, are largely unaware of the consequences of their behaviour on climate change and resource depletion. In a sense, they have become short-sighted.

Fortunately, local and regional authorities are coming to grips with this issue and progressively taking the lead in reconciling energy with its territorial dimension. This approach is demonstrated by EU-supported initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors, which brings together almost 3000 signatory cities, committed to meeting the EU energy and climate objectives and steadily moving towards an energy “new deal”. Through the development of action plans and public policies, they undertake to bring sustainable energy considerations to the forefront of the urban planning process.

Building upon these encouraging trends, Energy Cities has launched the “Imagine” initiative, which unites a wide range of stakeholders, from the public, private and associative sectors, around a common goal. Imagine a sustainable energy future through the prism of low

empower local communities and provide them with the appropriate financial and policy frameworks to take action. In this context, Energy Cities is organising a workshop on 11 October, from 14:30 to 16:45, as part of the 2011 Open Days.

Entitled, Energy and territory: from multilevel governance to local agreements, the event will seek to offer high profile representatives from the EU and local authorities the opportunity to discuss concrete solutions and contribute to the discussion on the future cohesion policy. Speakers responsible for territorial and energy issues will compare and confront different points of view. Among the confirmed panellists are Marie Donnelly and Rudolph Nielser, directors at DG energy and DG regio, respectively. Also confirmed, are MEPs Kathleen Van Brempt and Lambert Van Nistelrooij, Dunkirk’s mayor Michel Delebarre, who chairs the committee for territorial cohesion policy at the Committee of the Regions, and Jean-Luc Daubaire, deputy mayor of the city of Rennes. The event will be followed by a networking session co-hosted by the Committee of the Regions’ Europe 2020 monitoring platform, during which participating local authorities will be given the opportunity to interact and showcase their own success stories.

In the end, Energy Cities hopes the workshop will present an opportunity to shed some light on the three-part question: What is the territorial dimension of the EU energy policy; what is the energy dimension of the EU territorial policy; and how can the two be linked, politically and practically? ★

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energy cities with a high quality of life for all.

To give substance to this long-term vision and meet the new objective of territorial cohesion, pioneering local authorities across Europe are working closely with public, social and economic actors to rethink their consumption patterns and territorial organisation in a prospective and integrated manner. In support of these efforts, the EU ought to

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