

PRESS RELEASE
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“Building Europe from the bottom up”: The Covenant of Mayors inspires the President of the European Commission

On 27th August 2010, in a speech delivered in Rimini -a member of Energy Cities- the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, presented the Covenant of Mayors as an exemplary initiative for Europe. Invited to talk at the 31st Meeting for Friendship Among Peoples, he expressed his desire to extend such innovative partnerships to other policy areas and said this was “*subsidiarity in action*”¹. His message underlined the fact that “*As a result, local governments have become leading actors in implementing sustainable energy policies*”¹.

The 2,000 towns and cities that have signed up to the Covenant of Mayors can be proud of their commitment. “*What you are doing is unprecedented [...]*”², José Manuel Barroso already said on 4th May 2010 in Brussels.

Energy Cities’ strong involvement in the Covenant of Mayors is largely motivated by the mobilisation and enthusiasm shown by thousands of local and regional authorities to achieve and exceed the EU Energy and Climate Package objectives. They are taking responsibilities, at their own level, and have voluntarily committed themselves to the same objectives as the Member States and the EU in terms of preparing their territories for the necessary energy and climate transition and contributing to the common good. In return, they expect the more favourable regulations as well as the best regulatory, fiscal and financial practices already tried and tested across Europe to be put into place. Local authorities are inventing another way of building Europe.

A utopic idea? Maybe not! José Manuel Barroso’s speech entitled “Building Europe from the bottom up” delivered in Rimini, one of the Covenant of Mayors signatories, gives grounds for hope. Mr Barroso believes that “[...] *the contribution of Europe’s regions and cities does not end with the fight against climate change. They have just as important a role to play in realising our targets for jobs, investment, research, education and social inclusion.*”¹ And he expresses his wish “*to see local and regional authorities extend innovative partnerships like the Covenant of Mayors to other policy areas. This would help Europe to translate its ambitions into reality, while taking account of the immense diversity our continent enjoys, and the differing situations on the ground.*”¹

Energy Cities is pleased to see that the Covenant of Mayors is opening new perspectives for Europe beyond energy and climate issues!

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¹ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/403&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

² <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/207>