

PRESS RELEASE

The Covenant of Mayors combines energy and cohesion policies

(Brussels, 26/11/2010) **Energy Cities welcomes the European Commission's initiative to highlight the relevance of the Covenant of Mayors in preparing Europe's territorial and energy future in two strategic documents of paramount importance. For the first time, a strategic document on energy mentions the role of cities, whereas another document on cohesion makes low energy cities a priority. Energy Cities is pleased to see that both documents are new evidence of the political portent of the Covenant of Mayors, an initiative in which our Association is fully engaged.**

In the same week, the Covenant of Mayors has been explicitly referred to in two of the European Commission's major documents. One is a DG ENER Communication on the European Union Energy Strategy for 2020¹. This document states that *"Municipalities represent a major actor of the required change, thus their initiatives like the Covenant of Mayors should be further strengthened. Cities and urban areas, which consume up to 80% of the energy, are at the same time part of the problem and part of the solution to greater energy efficiency"*. This strategy will be discussed by European leaders during the Energy Summit on 4th February 2011.

The second document is from DG REGIO. This 5th Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion² lays the foundations of the future European policy and reads as follows: *"Cities (...) provide opportunities for energy saving measures in, for example transport and heating because of their high population density. From a household perspective, however, cities already offer a more resource efficient way of life and there is an explicit aim in many cases to go further in this direction. January 2008, the Covenant of Mayors initiative was launched to reduce the impact of cities on climate change, with a formal commitment to go beyond the EU objectives for reducing CO₂ emissions and to prepare a Sustainable Energy Action Plan, as well as to report periodically on progress. Over 1,000 towns and cities, with a combined population of over 140 million in 36 countries, have signed up to the Covenant"*.

Energy Cities also notices with satisfaction that district heating and cooling, one pillar of energy efficient cities, has been integrated by the Commission in its recent Communication on energy infrastructure priorities for 2020.

Over 2,100 Mayors have currently signed the Covenant of Mayors³, thus voluntarily committing to exceeding the 3x20%, the EU energy and climate objectives for 2020. Energy Cities is leading, in cooperation with Climate Alliance, CEMR, Fedarene, Eurocities and Pracsis, the Covenant of Mayors Office and is an official Supporting Structure.

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¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0639:FIN:EN:PDF> (page 7)

² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion5/index_en.cfm

³ www.eumayors.eu