



## Covenant presents attractive proposition to new members



Coming together to make the commitment:  
Mayors from participating cities sign the Covenant at the First Ceremony in Brussels, 10 February 2009.

### Interest in the Covenant continues to grow, pushing the number of participating cities past 500 by mid-May 2009. But what has driven them to join?

The Covenant of Mayors has enjoyed a level of interest that could not have been expected when the concept was formulated in 2006. Growth had exceeded expectations by the time of the first signature ceremony in early 2009, with 370 cities already participating.

Yet, the most remarkable aspect of the Covenant's meteoric rise has been its continued expansion. In only ten weeks, from the ceremony on 10 February until the First Technical Workshop of the Covenant, a further 100 cities signed up. Now, with 505 cities participating, the Covenant incorporates more than 80 million citizens. As more cities join by the day, it is worth discovering what is attracting them.

Bergen, the second largest city in Norway, signed the Covenant on 25 March 2009 after hearing about the initiative at an event organised by the European networks and associations of local authorities during the COP 14 in Poznan last December.

**Our initiative to reduce energy consumption has led to savings of €2.3 million,**

"We here in Bergen do not need to be convinced of the threat of climate change," says Commissioner Lisbeth Iversen, the deputy chair of the Bergen City Government. "Our city is experiencing the very real results of climate change. We have endured increased flooding; land slides and rising sea levels. We therefore actively sought to change our approach to the environment, and pursued partnerships with other cities to help us achieve our goals."

### In this issue

**2**  
pg  
Fruitful first thematic workshop enables Covenant cities to exchange ideas

**3**  
pg  
Financial support for development of sustainable energy projects in Covenant cities

**3**  
pg  
Supporting Structures make the Covenant a reality for all

**3**  
pg  
Local and Regional Energy Agencies

**4**  
pg  
Alicante's energy day showcases the Covenant

**5**  
pg  
Joint Research Centre to provide further support to Covenant cities

**5**  
pg  
Forthcoming events



Bergen City Council has made real progress. “We have reached 95% of the elementary schools in the city and introduced recycling and energy-efficiency campaigns to young people,” says Iversen. “Equally, our initiative to reduce energy consumption has led to savings of 20 million krone (€2.3 million).”

Yet, despite this progress, Iversen believes in working with other cities through the Covenant of Mayors. “We feel that it is important to enter into partnerships with other cities, as we believe the solutions to these environmental problems are to be found at the local level. Through the common purpose of the Covenant of Mayors, local solutions can lead to global improvements.”

The need to join with other cities to find a solution to climate change is shared by Zoetermeer in the Netherlands. “Despite already making the decision to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, we felt the opportunity to exchange ideas with other cities through the Covenant of Mayors could not be missed,” says Johan Lako of Zoetermeer city council. “The chance to learn from other cities, benefit from the support of the Commission and the Covenant, and engage in healthy competition to reduce emissions prompted us to join.”

**“We expect the energy-saving measures in our SEAP to result in a saving of €1 million straight away.”**

These same attractions are enticing other new members. Cork County Council has yet to sign up formally, but this Irish local authority has already made the political decision to join. “We wanted to wait until we had drafted our Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) before we formally joined,” says Cork County Councillor Alan Coleman. “Now we have done so, we are looking forward to signing and delivering on our target of 40% reductions.”

“The Covenant enables us to create a movement and a marketable product that people can then ‘buy-into’. It allows us to set an example to our citizens and to other cities. And by giving an example, we can then give leadership. The Covenant also offers real savings for participants. We expect the energy-saving measures in our SEAP to result in a saving of €1 million straight away.”

## Fruitful first thematic workshop enables Covenant cities to exchange ideas

**The First Thematic Workshop of the Covenant of Mayors took place on 24 April 2009 in Brussels during the joint annual RendezVous of Climate Alliance and Energie-Cités. The event was opportunity to take stock of the rapidly growing initiative, and gave mayors and members of the consortium the chance to exchange ideas.**

The event featured presentations from representatives of the European Commission, members of the Covenant of Mayors Office (COMO), and a selection of mayors from signatory cities.

Those present heard insightful speeches from Stina Soewarta, Deputy Head of Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs’ Cabinet, on the growth of the Covenant; and Patrick Lambert, from the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI), on exciting energy projects being funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme. They also witnessed the signing of the Polish Network of Energie-Cités as a Supporting Structure to the Covenant.

The morning session gave participating cities the chance to put practical questions to the COMO. The ensuing discussion highlighted the wide selection of activities the COMO oversees, and addressed the next steps for the signatory cities. An important question raised during this Q&A session was in relation to the funding available to the cities. The COMO informed the cities that the European Commission is currently in negotiation with the European Investment Bank, who together will finalise the special funding for Covenant cities.

The second session featured an informal dialogue with a selection of participating cities. It was an excellent opportunity for the cities to share their experiences with those present.



The discussion benefited from the input of a diverse selection of cities, such as Växjö, Cork, Paris, Figueres, Brno-Novy Liskovec and Modena. The key points raised were the importance of long-term planning, getting key players – such as architects – to buy into the concept of the Covenant. Many described how the Covenant provided a vital focus to achieve both long term and short term environmental and energy goals; and underlined the need to work with existing networks.

*Other events will take place in Huelva from 23 to 25 September and Stockholm from 25 to 27 November 2009, respectively focusing on Supporting Structures and financing.*

## Financial support for development of sustainable energy projects in Covenant cities

**A financial framework is being set in place that will provide cities with the support they need to achieve their energy and climate goals.**

The European Commission is laying the foundations of a financial support facility to help signatory cities achieve the targets set-out in their Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

The Commission will provide funding of €15 million to local authorities through the European Investment Bank (EIB), which is setting up a Technical Assistance Facility. The facility is funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme and will finance costs for the development of municipal investment projects or programmes consistent with the Sustainable energy action plans which contribute to the overall EU energy targets.

Eligible sustainable energy projects can focus on a variety of sectors, such as retrofitting of public and private buildings, sustainable building, energy-efficient district heating and cooling networks, and environmentally-friendly transport.

The Facility could be operational in the second half of 2009.

*Those signatories of the Covenant considering a major sustainable energy investment are advised to consult the Covenant of Mayors website regularly, as all relevant information will be published there.*

## Local and Regional Energy Agencies

**Local and Regional Energy Agencies (LAREAs) will play a vital role in ensuring signatory cities and towns meet the commitments of the Covenant of Mayors.**

Local and Regional Energy Agencies represent an indispensable mainstay of the Covenant of Mayors. Through their wealth of knowledge and expertise in local energy actions and policies, they can be both a support to Covenant cities, and a guiding light to the initiative. Conversely, the Covenant also offers LAREAs – and their networks of more than 350 agencies across the EU – the opportunity to benefit from increased recognition of their cause through engagements with signatory cities.

Cities will face a difficult task when it comes to drafting their Sustainable Energy Action Plans. Yet, by harnessing the experience and know-how of LAREAs, this task will be made considerably easier.

Under the framework of the Covenant, LAREAs will fulfil a dual role as promoters of the initiative and providers of technical assistance to signatory cities. In much the same way as Supporting Structures can lend a helping hand to participating cities; LAREAs can also provide the much needed human resources to those smaller cities who may otherwise not achieve their goals.

The Covenant of Mayors Office (COMO) has set up a LAREAs helpdesk to answer your questions related to the Covenant.

For further information please visit: [www.eumayors.eu](http://www.eumayors.eu)

## Supporting Structures make the Covenant a reality for all

**The Covenant of Mayors is not beyond the reach of every town and city. Through the assistance, guidance and funding of Supporting Structures, even the smallest town can join the initiative.**

Supporting Structures play an invaluable role in helping cities join the Covenant. By promoting the Covenant of Mayors and providing much-needed support and coordination to those who wish to sign up, they let every citizen play their part to improve energy efficiency and sustainability. In addition, the financial assistance and expertise they provide helps participants draft and implement their Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

There are two distinct forms of Supporting Structures. The first consists of public bodies and local authorities such as counties, provinces and regions, while the second is made up of associations and networks of local and regional authorities.

As of the beginning of May 2009, nine Supporting Structures have signed up to the Covenant. The Province of Huelva, the Province of Milan, the Province of Barcelona, the Province of Jaén and the Basque Country were the first to join.

This number grew after the Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities came together with the Black Sea Regional Agency for Energy Management to join as a single Supporting Structure. And the Polish Network Energie Cités took the opportunity to sign as a Supporting Structure at the First Thematic Workshop of the Covenant of Mayors on 24 April.

The last week in April saw the signing of the United Nations Development Programme, the City of Zagreb, the City of Rijeka and the Association of Cities in the Republic of Croatia as a Supporting Structure for Croatia.



The Province of Salerno became the ninth Supporting Structure of Covenant, when they joined at the start of May.

They will by no means be the last to join, as dozens of organisations are currently negotiating agreements to join the Covenant as Supporting Structures. These prospective Supporting Structures will increase the number of supported cities from 200 to many more.

# Alicante's energy day showcases the Covenant

**Energy Days are an excellent way for participating cities to engage citizens and encourage them to adopt sustainable and energy-efficient behaviour.**

The success of the Covenant of Mayors depends on the willingness of citizens to be part of the concept. If the targets for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions are to be met by 2020, people must be engaged by the city's Sustainable Energy Action Plan and encouraged to change their energy consumption.

Energy days are an effective way to involve people in the Covenant, and can open their minds to the benefits of living in a more sustainable environment. European Energy Days are currently an important part of the Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign. They provide an opportunity to promote the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, and have already reached thousands of citizens across Europe.

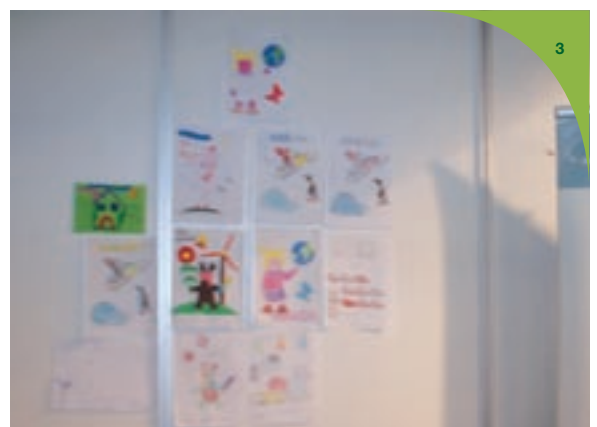
As many of the cities are also involved in the Covenant of Mayors, it is possible to use these past events as examples of best practice. Alicante, Spain recently held an event that brought the ideas of the Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign and the Covenant of Mayors to the attention of thousands of people.

Entitled 'European environmental programmes and initiatives Info Days in Alicante', this event ran from 27 to 29 March 2009, was attended by no less than 17 000 people and attracted significant attention from local and regional media. Organised by the Fundación Comunidad Valenciana-Región Europea, the Info Day used the logos of both the SEE campaign and the Covenant, and introduced visitors to both initiatives.

The event promoted sustainable energy at societal level, energy-saving initiatives and environmental good practices to fight against climate change. An interesting element of the event was the awareness-raising activities for children. These included colouring themes dealing with climate change and energy, as well as films and cartoons such as 'Energy, let's save it'.

More information: <http://www.uegva.info/fundacioncv/index.php>

**Energy days are an effective way to involve people in the Covenant, and can open their minds to the benefits of living in a more sustainable environment.**



- 1 Participants of all ages are introduced to the Covenant.
- 2 Spreading the message: Logos from the Covenant and other European initiatives are displayed at the Alicante Energy Day.
- 3 The vision of a sustainable tomorrow from Europe's next generation.

## Joint Research Centre to provide further support to Covenant cities

The European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) is providing its capacity and expertise to the Covenant of Mayors to help signatory cities meet the requirements of the initiative, and to make it easier for interested cities to access the Covenant.

The Covenant of Mayors is a voluntary firm commitment by the participating cities to develop sound sustainable energy measures to limit their own CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. A lot of vision and technical expertise are required to succeed!

Although it is clear that the pioneer Covenant cities do have the capacity and political willingness to provide solutions to their citizens, the European Commission's JRC is now offering its support to ease the task and to help candidate cities to get in a position to comply with their commitments in case of signature.

The JRC will work alongside the Covenant of Mayors Office (COMO) to operate a technical helpdesk for cities. This will provide guidance, know-how, and examples of best practice.

The JRC, in cooperation with COMO, is currently drafting guidelines for the CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Inventories and Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs), which the cities are about to draft and implement. These guidelines will be tested by a group of experts ("practitioners group"), and then support interested

signatories through each central step of the "Covenant process", including: adapting administrative structures, developing an emissions inventory, mobilising the civil society, preparing and implementing a Sustainable Energy Action Plan, and monitoring of results.

Moreover, the JRC will assist in monitoring and providing feedback on the actions plans to the cities. A template serving as a guide and public monitoring tool to reflect progress of individual Covenant signatories at a glance, will be published soon. Completed by the signatory cities themselves (in English), the template will summarise the key areas of action, the CO<sub>2</sub> emission targets foreseen, the timetable for implementation etc.

However, many cities around Europe have already drafted their respective CO<sub>2</sub> inventories and action plans and are less likely to need such assistance. The aim of this initiative is to provide further support and information to the cities rather than to harmonize approaches.

Around 50 technical experts from cities, energy agencies and research institutes gathered in Ispra, Italy on 18-19 May to analyse existing methodologies and tools for action plan development and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions inventories. The conclusions of the workshop will form the basis of the template and guidelines.

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## Forthcoming events will spread the word of the Covenant

The Covenant of Mayors is participating in a series of events across Europe to ensure its message of energy efficiency and emission reductions reaches a wide audience.

Looking ahead to September 2009, the Province of Huelva Supporting Structure will hold the 'European Conference for the promotion of Local Actions to Combat Climate Change' from 23 to 25 September. The event will address the commitments set out by the Covenant objectives. It will target local authorities, local private actors and citizens who are striving to achieve the aims of the Covenant. It will also welcome a thematic workshop for Supporting Structures.

Following this, the Covenant will be represented at the Hamburg City Climate Conference 2009 from 16 to 18 November. This event will not only bring the Covenant to the attention of a wider audience, but will also be an opportunity for those involved in the initiative to exchange ideas.

Finally, the third Thematic Workshop, to be held in Stockholm, will cap off a busy year for the Covenant. The event will take place during the EUROCITIES Annual Conference 2009 from 25 to 28 November, and will focus on financing for participating cities.

### Forthcoming events

