

European Council
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
B-1048 Bruxelles/Brussel
Belgique/België

Brussels, on 17th February 2014

OPEN LETTER

to the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy

Re: the European Council must be ambitious to have a solid 2030 framework for climate and energy policies in order to re-boost economy.

Dear Mr. President of the European Council,

The European Union is debating on the post-2020 framework for climate and energy policies. Seen as the world leader via its "3x20 by 2020" package, Europe must keep ambitions high. It is necessary for meeting the European Council commitment to reducing GHG emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050. It is an opportunity to translate EU climate and energy objectives into a multitude of actions at local level which would improve the quality of life of citizens and boost EU competitiveness.

Energy Cities, the European network of local authorities in energy transition, is concerned by the European Commission's proposal on the future of climate and energy policies in the EU. We consider that the Commission's communication:

- Lacks the necessary ambition to meet Europe's climate and energy commitments for 2050;
- Fails to seize the opportunity to shift to a new energy paradigm based on decentralised low-carbon production and lower energy use;
- Omits to fully embark local stakeholders that are committed, under the direction of their political leaders, to the Covenant of Mayors.

By contrast, Energy Cities very much welcomes the European Parliament resolution on the dossier which:

- Asks for three ambitious and legally binding targets for GHG, renewable energy and energy savings;
- Recognizes the essential role played by local and regional authorities in promoting and implementing the measures needed to move towards a low-carbon economy;
- Encourages the Commission and the Member States to remove any obstacles that hamper local and regional authorities in delivering on the EU's climate and energy objectives;
- Promotes greater use of the EU financial instruments for smart investments in sustainable technologies.

It is now in the hands of the European Council to send an encouraging signal to investors and among them citizens, communities and local authorities, and confirm the EU's ambition to take a leading role in international Climate talks and programmes.

Leveraging the outstanding success of the Covenant of Mayors initiative, which gathers more than 5,000 local authorities helping the EU meet its climate and energy objectives, Energy Cities prepared the possible content for a Communication it would like the European Commission to publish on *"Empowering local and regional stakeholders to deliver the EU climate and energy objectives"*, that you will find enclosed hereby. This document emphasizes how local authorities enable the European Union to fulfill its climate and energy agenda and proposes a framework to optimize the actions of the local level. It also presents a win-win situation: the EU needs a strong involvement of local and regional authorities to attain its objectives and local and regional authorities need ambitious EU policy environment to scale up their initiatives. Stakeholders, from civil society to private companies as well as representatives of the European Parliament or Committee of the Regions, reached via a public consultation, agreed on the crucial role played by local and regional authorities which are seen as key drivers of the much-needed energy transition.

The European Council will soon discuss the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies and must seize this unique opportunity to place the Covenant of Mayors as a key instrument, alongside the Smart Cities and Communities initiative to support cities translating long-term strategy into actions at local level, hence rebuilding citizens' faith in the Institutions. Energy Cities is willing to accompany this process and hopes, Mr. President, that you will support our vision.

Best regards,



Eckart Würzner

Mayor of Heidelberg

President of Energy Cities