



## Covenant of Mayors in Western Balkans

### Declaration

15 June 2010, Sofia

1 - The Covenant of Mayors ([www.eumayors.eu](http://www.eumayors.eu)) is an unprecedented movement of local and regional authorities, committed to surpass EU energy and climate objectives. The Covenant is now considered as the most powerful bottom-up initiative undertaken by local and regional authorities, mobilising 120 million citizens and 23 capitals from 38 countries, with an estimated 132 million tons of annual CO2 mitigation potential. Over 1750 local authorities signed the Covenant within the first 18 months.

At the occasion of the second Covenant of Mayors ceremony, held on 4 May 2010 in the European Parliament, a number of Mayors, including Detelina Nikolova, Mayor of Dobrich (BG), showcased the most successful results achieved at the local and regional level in the fight against climate change. These mayors followed prestigious speakers such as Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament; José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the EU; José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission; Günther Oettinger, European Commissioner for Energy<sup>1</sup>.

2 – In 2009, EuropAid appointed experts to investigate the expectations cities have for New Independent States (NIS) with regards to energy and climate issues as well as the relevance of the Covenant of Mayors initiative for these countries. Experts concluded that the Covenant should be extended to these countries, albeit with a certain number of conditions. In the meantime, dozens of local authorities from these countries have already committed to reducing their CO2 emissions in their territories. As a result, DG AIDCO is to launch a call for tender in 2010 so as to establish a Covenant of Mayors Office dedicated to these countries.

3 – Taking into account the lack of such investigations or actions having been undertaken thus far in the Western Balkans, we call for DG Enlargement to consider the following:

- the importance of the Covenant of Mayors in the EU and its strong leverage effect at the local, national and European level;
- the need to prepare IPA countries<sup>2</sup> – at all levels, including the local and regional level – to meet EU requirements;
- the fact that about 50 local authorities from Western Balkans have already committed to the Covenant of Mayors, from the EU and from non-member countries; (see: [http://www.eumayors.eu/covenant\\_cities/towns\\_cities\\_en.htm](http://www.eumayors.eu/covenant_cities/towns_cities_en.htm)); the foreseen extension of the Covenant of Mayors to some Eastern countries, such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Belarus, etc.) with the support of the European Commission

The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS<sup>3</sup>), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR<sup>4</sup>), Energy Cities<sup>5</sup>, FEDRE<sup>6</sup>, supported by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe call for the extension of the Covenant of Mayors to IPA countries. Related technical assistance and appropriate financial mechanisms are essential for this part of Europe to be able to cope with commitments made by municipalities and regions.

This call is addressed to

- NALAS members and more specifically to cities and towns wishing to join the Covenant of Mayors;
- The European Commission (DG Enlargement + DG Energy) for concretely supporting such a development in IPA countries;
- And any other relevant body or institution for supporting this declaration.

<sup>1</sup> [www.eumayors.eu/articles/show\\_en.htm?id=129](http://www.eumayors.eu/articles/show_en.htm?id=129)

<sup>2</sup> IPA concerns countries with candidate status (currently Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey) and potential candidate status (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia including Kosovo according to UNSCR 1244).

<sup>3</sup> [www.nalas.eu](http://www.nalas.eu)

<sup>4</sup> [www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)

<sup>5</sup> [www.energy-cities.eu](http://www.energy-cities.eu)

<sup>6</sup> [www.fedre.org/en](http://www.fedre.org/en)