European Week of Regions and Cities
Brussels
8 – 11 October 2007

‘Local authorities volunteer to achieve EU energy and climate goals’

organized by Energie-Cités and the Committee of the Regions within the Open Days 2007 event, with the participation of the European Commission and the European Parliament representatives

Representatives of 7 European cities answer the question:

“Why have you made energy and climate one of the priorities on your city’s agenda?”

HEIDELBERG (DE) - Mr. Eckart Würzner, Lord Mayor, President of Energie-Cités

From the early ninetieth of the last century Heidelberg has a very active energy programme. In 1992 and again in 2004 the city drafted a climate protection concept and an energy plan that focussed on municipal buildings, on private households, energy utility and trade and industry and showed the environmental and the economic benefit of these projects.

Energy and Climate Protection is a priority in the city because of it´s environmental necessity, the decision of the City Council to reduce CO_2 emissions and the benefit for local craftsmen, architects, technicians and companies. For example, in 1993 a programme to promote the efficient use of energy was set up by the City to subsidise heat insulation measures and the installation of low-energy houses and passive houses. Every year the City of Heidelberg provides around 450,000 euro for the subsidy programme. These subsidies initiated investments of more than 2.5 million euro by trade and craft businesses. More than 1,800 energy projects were subsidised. Insulation and energy efficiency brings benefit for the houses and increases the wealth of real estates.

Climate Protection Projects creates jobs in the city and increases the income of taxes for the city. Reducing energy consumption and energy costs of municipal buildings also brings a benefit for the budget of the city. For instance: The energy costs of the city could be reduced through renovations, technical measures, changing behaviour of users of the buildings, energy saving contracting and an energy controlling system by 1,7 Million € per year.

KÖTSCHACH-MAUTHEN (AT) – Mr. Walter Hartlieb, Mayor

The small market town, Kötschach-Mauthen has proved through the actions, it has implemented, that we are able to struggle against climate change that is already all over perceptible and obvious.

Nature resources such as water, sun, wind and biomass are at our disposal. With a sustainable work and respect of the population, these renewable energy sources are used with enough of care, so that their exploitation on long term has no impacts on the environment. Dams and small power stations are expertly installed, so that they are not altering the landscapes: in contrary, they look like “God’s creations”. On strategic places, wind power plants are established in alpine pastures to use wind power. The sun, a regional reliable partner in the past will partially produce electricity and warm water in private as well as in public buildings. With the production of biogas, the agriculture found new ways, so that the exploitation of

fields is still in the future possible. We mix skilfully all these renewable energy sources together in a network. As a municipality we also have to be exemplary. That's why heating and electricity of all public buildings are provided by renewable energy sources, exclusively locally produced. With such objectives and measures, we already, in the past and today, have given a clear impulse to be able to struggle against climate change.

PRAGUE (CZ) - Mr. Petr Štěpánek, Councillor

The City of Prague has, especially in recent years, been dealing with a number of areas that are in need of regeneration. Among them are transit, water management, building issues on its properties, civic amenities, and last but not least energy. In this respect energy supplies are an important aspect of the city's health, and the city makes a priority of dealing with energy use at its approximately ten thousand properties.

The City of Prague has a territorial energy concept with an outlook extending to the year 2025. Every year roughly 60 PJ of energy are used in Prague. Of that about 25 % is used in the form of centrally provided heat, a large part of which is supplied from outside the city. The technical potential for using renewable resources within Prague is 8.1 PJ a year. The potential for using secondary energy sources, including biogas, amounts to 2.5 PJ per year, and the total potential energy savings could reach 10 PJ per year. To take advantage of this potential we approved a Plan of Action this year based on the city's Territorial Energy Concept, and containing steps we are prepared to implement in the period 2007 – 2010.

The Plan of Action contains proposed individual sets of measures that the city has adopted as its contribution to the reduction of negative effects on the environment. Among them are, for example, the following areas:

- the implementation of energy-saving projects in the form of providing energy services (Energy Performance Contracting method),
- supporting the construction of low-energy houses,
- energy saving and ecologisation in transit,
- support for secondary energy sources.

DELFT (NL) - Ms. Lian Merkx, Deputy Mayor

A strong commitment to sustainable development reflects Delft's care for the future. Implementing climate projects is an important part of this commitment, and to comply to the Kyoto agreement. Climate policy is an opportunity to combine innovative techniques with environmental care.

Delft is also known as the Centre of Technology, which means that sustainable design and engineering are important issues. Delft is very specifically related to climate policy. Knowledge institutions like Delft University of Technology, the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, Deltares and several research institutes and environmental consultancy firms create an innovative environment for economic activities. Local politics should therefore reflect this situation and stimulate climate solutions by means of ambitious climate policy. The next four years we will be taking extra measures to adjust the climate goals for Delft to the stricter European and Dutch national standards.

On the **social side**, Delft wants its inhabitants to live both comfortably and environmentally friendly, by reducing energy use, costs for electricity and heating decrease at household level. Especially for so-called "socially weak citizens" this is of mayor importance because globally costs for energy are rising. This is one of the reasons Delft participates in a European CONCERTO project, SESAC (Sustainable Energy Systems in

Advanced Cities). It implies the use of residual heat of a waste water treatment plant for heating houses and buildings. Besides, in two neighbourhoods extra insulation and energy saving measures are implemented in renovation and new constructions. Also renewable energy will be generated.

VÄXJÖ (SE) - Mr. Bo Frank, Mayor

Climate change is something that concerns everyone, one way or another. In Växjö, we want to take our responsibilities and reduce our impact on the greenhouse effect.

In 1996 politicians unanimously decided that Växjö shall become free from fossil fuels. It was also decided that Emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels shall decrease by 50% per capita between 1993 and 2010.

So far the reduction is 30% and more than half of the energy supply comes from renewables. This is due to a massive increase in the use of biomass in the district heating system as well as an extension of the district heating grid. Biomass is locally produced and generates local jobs, besides making us less vulnerable and prepared to leave the fossil based society for the bio based.

Politics is an obvious route to find solutions to the environmental problems, adopting policies that united political control with market mechanisms. In the same way that I have always seen economy and ecology as two sides of the same coin. No sustainable economic development without a functioning ecology!

PREŠOV (SK) - Mr. Pavel Hagyari, Mayor

At the present time, the City of Prešov makes efforts to belong to these fast growing cities that will be able to respond to solving such a big challenge as the climate changes and global warming are.

We would like to become a good example for other cities in the region and the country upon the concrete steps. The citizens of Prešov do understand the need to cut down energy usage and the importance of combat against climate changes. Municipality of Prešov has clear priorities to achieve concrete results.

Energy efficiency and the combat against climate changes became one of the priorities of our city´s agenda because we are aware of the possibilities we do have in Prešov and the Prešov region. Especially the utilization of geothermal energy has become our main goal. The unique sources of the geothermal energy in Prešov ´s surrounding are opening big opportunities for our citizens how to cut down energy costs and for its further usage for the economic development of the region.

Clean, healthy environment belongs to the main priorities when we are talking about city of Prešov too. We have already started with projects improving city´s environment by using renewable energies / biomass, solar energy, etc./ Together with the city´s public enterprise which provides local public transport we plan to work on projects replacing traditional transport means from the centre and its surrounding/ pedestrian zones, using oil fuel, etc./

These few examples are just parts of the activities we have already initiated. The City of Prešov has an ambitious aim to be a leader in the Eastern Slovakia region and Slovakia too. Our city is ready to participate at the projects that will help us to win this challenge.

LEICESTER (GB) – Mr. Michael Cooke, Councillor

Leicester has been at the forefront of the sustainable energy agenda since 1990 when our first strategic energy action plan was developed. This agenda has grown over the years and is now embodied in the Leicester Climate Change Strategy (2003) and Action Plan (agreed in March 2007).

Leicester City Council's corporate aim is " to make Leicester more attractive for our diverse communities to live, work and invest in". To achieve this aim we recognise the need to improve our environment. We are ambitious about the future and will respond dynamically to the new realities that face cities and regions across Europe.

This is a long-term view and we recognise that these goals cannot be achieved in isolation. Leicester's Climate Change Strategy is owned by the Local Strategic Partnership (a partnership between public, private and "not for profit" sectors) and climate change actions are driven forward through the Partnership. Furthermore Leicester has forged partnerships at both regional and national levels, and across European networks, seeking to use working methodologies that can be adopted and replicated by other local authorities.

Leicester has demonstrated commitment to tackling climate change by setting a challenging local target "to reduce citywide CO_2 emissions to 50% of 1990 levels by 2025" which is more ambitious than the target set by the UK Government.

Energy Management is a key element in achieving this target and Leicester has invested in Intelligent Metering systems, installed in over 300 administrative buildings throughout the city, to provide half-hourly monitoring of gas, electricity, water and heat consumption data. This real data is used to engage building users to make savings through changes in their behaviour.

In addition, Leicester is now seeking to improve the sustainability of the local energy supply by moving towards a citywide system of combined heat and power incorporating renewable energy sources.