



Press release
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The Covenant of Mayors launched European cities commit to deliver on the energy and climate package

Commissioner Andris Piebalgs placed unprecedentedly in the spotlight European local authorities and their citizens in the fight against climate change, when launching the Covenant of Mayors on 29th January 2008 during the European Sustainable Energy Week.

Almost 100 European cities, representing networks of Energie-Cités, Climate Alliance, Eurocities and the CEMR, have expressed their interest in joining forces and commit themselves to achieve and even surpass the [EU's 20% CO2 reduction goal set by 2020](#). The [draft declaration](#) calls for local authorities committing themselves to these goals to design and implement their sustainable energy action plans within the following year of the signature.

"We have to mobilize our whole society to prevent further climate change and to handle the energy vulnerability of our territories!" stated moderator [Gérard Magnin](#), executive director of Energie-Cités. By means of Matryoshka dolls, he depicted how the different levels: from global, European and national levels down to local authorities, their citizens and future generations can contribute to the achievement of the European objectives.

Michel Delebarre, outgoing president of the Committee of the Regions and Mayor of Dunkerque has endorsed the Covenant – just before heading to Dunkirk to host the [9^{eme} Assises Nationales de l'Energie](#), the largest prestigious event of local authorities on energy in France.

10 of the front-running and large cities: London, [Helsinki](#), [Munich](#), Berlin, Riga, [Dunkerque](#), Bonn, and Milan, [Nantes](#) and [Heidelberg](#), half of them members of Energie-Cités, have joined Mr. Piebalgs on the roundtable and reported on their best-of-breed local actions.

'Small cities have the capacity to innovate, while large cities can embrace these innovations and can make a higher impact' stressed Nicky Gavron, deputy Mayor of London (also leading the [C40 initiative](#)) by referring to the congestion charge system, London adopted based on the example of a smaller Norwegian municipality.

Lord-Mayor of [Heidelberg](#) and President of Energie-Cités, Eckart Würzner acknowledged the support of the European Commission, underlining the multiplier effect of local authorities by setting the rules and motivating their citizens and local stakeholders to take further action. Indeed, Heidelberg itself looks back to a 16 years engagement in sustainable energy. The municipality, among others, have implemented a broad awareness raising and energy-retrofit support programme, reducing by fast 40% of their buildings' energy consumption and recently inaugurated Europe's largest largest passive fire-brigade building.

'We could be easily discouraged by seeing today's challenges: the soaring fuel prices reaching up to \$100 a barrel or the threat of climate change, with all its social, economic and environmental consequences' – concluded Gérard Magnin. 'However, we should take them as an opportunity and question our way we are doing business and IMAGINE, reinvent a new, more sustainable and desirable future for our cities!'

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More information:

<http://www.energie-cites.eu/Covenant-of-Mayors>