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Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy: A multi-player community to tackle energy poverty

Cities and regions keep the lead when it comes to climate action. In Europe and beyond, local and regional authorities are building up networks to strengthen cooperation, leverage funds and share best practices. The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is a shining example of this: with more than 7,000 signatories, it shows that **locally-implemented measures matter, inspire, and contribute to the global climate solutions agenda.**

All around Europe, Covenant of Mayors signatories implement local energy and climate actions with the aim to provide their citizens with access to secure, sustainable and affordable energy. With nearly 11% of the EU's population unable to adequately heat their homes at an affordable cost¹, making sure that the energy transition contributes to protecting vulnerable households is a necessity. Because they hold competencies in key areas, from energy efficiency in buildings to delivery of social benefits to citizens, **local and regional authorities play a key role in tackling energy poverty.**

A conference showcasing their prospects and achievements took place yesterday at the European Committee of the Regions in the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities.

A member of the cabinet of the Vice-President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič highlighted that there is no one single model to tackle energy poverty, but that each city should adapt to the local context. Still, reducing households' energy consumption remains the most efficient way to protect vulnerable consumers.

Mayors and elected representatives of regional authorities in Eastern Europe explained how they support owners to renovate buildings and tenants to buy more energy efficient devices. However, for the Vice-Chairman of the Kosice self-governing region in Slovakia Istvan Zacharias, the best way to reach out to the most-deprived households remains to give them direct budget support to pay their energy bills.

Many cities are also tackling energy poverty through local energy generation and district heating, as both facilitate access to energy. **New business models such as local energy cooperatives empower citizens and provide more affordable energy solutions** to their members, as shown by the example of [Energiris](#) in Brussels, or by collaborative windfarms in the county of Cork, Ireland. "It takes a lot of education, but it is worth raising awareness. Getting communities to participate into projects is the best way to make them successful in the long run", said Alan Coleman, Councillor of Cork.

To conclude the conference, local politicians pointed out challenges faced on the ground, and discussed the type of support needed from the EU. Besides the question of access to funding, they expressed the need to get inspired by other fellow cities. **The Covenant of Mayors community was highlighted as a way to spread the word and upscale local solutions developed to fight energy poverty.**

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/news/energy-poverty-may-affect-nearly-11-eu-population>