



## Press release, Brussels, 11 October 2012

### **Sustainable Energy: European cities call for greater involvement in European funding management**

**Cities want to have greater room for manoeuvre in their energy management and a stronger control over European funds available for local energy projects. The message was passed yesterday to the European Institutions during an Open Days' workshop about innovative financing schemes for Covenant of Mayors signatories.**

The event, co-organized by the Covenant of Mayors Office and the Committee of the Regions, brought together Albert Bore, Council Leader of Birmingham, Evelyne Huytebroeck, Regional Minister for Environment, Energy and Urban Renewal at the Brussels Capital Region, Giorgio Orsoni, Mayor of Venice, Detelina Nikolova, Mayor of Dobrich and Gil Nadais, Mayor of Águeda. The President of the Committee of the Regions, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, opened the session emphasizing that *to reinforce the effectiveness of the Covenant of Mayors, it is essential that the political mobilisation on the ground in the regions and cities is supported by specific responses in terms of European policies and funding.*

The statement was endorsed by all the city leaders who claimed for an increased autonomy in the management of European funds at the local level. Albert Bore, Leader of Birmingham, stated that *the financial crisis and the climate challenges are two very good reasons to reinforce cohesion policy in European cities, where some 70% of the European population lives.* Evelyne Huytebroeck highlighted the importance of structural funds for the Brussels Capital Region, explaining that *the dynamics of using European instruments at the regional level has brought very positive results in some green projects in the Belgian capital city.* Giorgio Orsoni, Mayor of Venice, made clear that *the management of European funding at the local level has been more effective than the administration of regional funds,* claiming for an increased delegation of funding to local authorities.

The upcoming EU multiannual financial framework (2014-2020) is expected to provide some answers to the needs of city leaders willing to enhance energy-efficiency in their territories. Indeed, cohesion funds allocated to energy efficiency and renewable energy will be doubled to €17 billion, of which 5% are to be earmarked for sustainable urban development. Under Horizon 2020, €6.5 billion would be allocated to research and innovation for clean and efficient energy. Priority would also be given to energy performance contracting schemes for building renovation, district heating and cooling, innovative renewable energy technologies and marine-based renewable energy. The next EU multiannual framework is currently under negotiation within the Members States and should be approved by the end of 2012.

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The Covenant of Mayors is a voluntary commitment taken by over 4,300 local and regional authorities to improve the quality of life of their citizens through the implementation of sustainable energy policies. More information: [http://www.eumayors.eu/index\\_en.html](http://www.eumayors.eu/index_en.html)

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