



## Press Release

Riga, 6 February 2015

### Cities' role in Energy Union comes into focus with EU Energy Policy deemed « local success but systemic failure »

At the [Energy Union Conference](#) last week in Riga, the IEA chief Maria van der Hoeven described the EU energy policy as “local success but systemic failure”, a conclusion echoed by Latvia’s Economics Minister and host of the event Ms Dana Reizniece-Ozola. One key EU policy instrument where this “local success” stands out is the Covenant of Mayors, where some 6,000 cities have committed to an average 28% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, exceeding the EU ambition.

In his opening address, the Climate and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete announced the European Commission’s plan to use the Covenant of Mayors “to its full potential” as part of upcoming priorities and actions.

The Covenant of Mayors was also mentioned by two of the invited keynote speakers: MEP Claude Turmes and Deputy Mayor of Delft Stephan Brandligt. According to Mr Turmes, this initiative, which was launched by the European Commission in 2008, should be reinforced with human and financial resources to help cities “become leaders in the energy transition debates”.

During the afternoon panel, Mr Brandligt, whose city is a Covenant of Mayors signatory, added that “to reinforce European cohesion and solidarity, the Energy Union should be based on multi-level governance, drawing on the Covenant of Mayors which demonstrates cooperation between all government levels”.

Speaking a few weeks earlier during a hearing at the [European Parliament ITRE committee](#), European Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič also highlighted the importance of the local dimension in the Energy Union: “Based on exchanges I recently had with some local mayors and local energy companies, I am deeply convinced that we can only build an Energy Union with the active contribution of citizens, local actors and cities,” he said.

#### Covenant of Mayors in Figures

Out of the 6,000+ cities that have signed the Covenant of Mayors, almost 70% have adopted their Sustainable Energy Action Plan, representing about one fourth of the entire EU population. In those cities, the most consuming and emitting sector is buildings, which represents 48% of overall energy use while transport accounts for 17%. In light of this, Covenant of Mayors cities plan to reduce 44% of their emissions through measures targeting the building sector, while the remaining actions will mostly focus on transport and local energy production.

The Covenant of Mayors also contributes to a great extent to the continent’s energy security: according to an analysis by the EU Joint Research Centre, a staggering 58% of gas consumption in 6 of the EU’s most energy-dependent countries<sup>1</sup> is expected to be saved through the implementation of the cities’ Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

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