



Press Release

Brussels, 10 February 2017

A Board of Mayors to steer the largest community of cities committed to the EU climate and energy objectives

*Today, the European Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy entered a new phase of its history with the launch of the **European Covenant of Mayors Board**, reaffirming the initiative as a unique political movement steered by mayors.*

The European Commission's Covenant of Mayors held its first political board meeting this morning, in the presence of European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, former UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres, Member of the European Parliament Claude Turmes and European Committee of the Regions Vice-President Karl-Heinz Lambertz, at the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) in Brussels.

Initially composed of 7 mayors and local elected representatives*, the European Covenant of Mayors Board will give local and regional leaders the opportunity to play a greater role in **shaping and further guiding** the initiative. Board members will also **campaign for enabling frameworks** for local climate and energy action from the national and European level, raising awareness about local needs amongst European and national decision makers.

This Board of Mayors aims to **discuss the strategic orientations** of the initiative, to ensure it **best fits cities' needs** and is further tailored to their expectations and to **foster the dialogue** between the European Covenant Community and the EU institutions, as emphasized by a number of Mayors of the Board.

"If the Covenant of Mayors is to remain a driver for climate and energy action, it needs to be a platform for dialogue between Mayors and the European institutions. [It] should also work as a partnership between local actors and EU decision-makers."

Mayor of Ghent Daniel Termont

"Mayors in Europe have been committing to climate and energy issues for years now. We are achieving great results, on track to deliver our part of the EU 2020 objectives. A number of cities have done even more. We are ready to go further, in line with the Paris Agreement, but for that we have to change investment scales, and the scales of transformation of our cities. This is why the partnership with the European Commission also needs to change scales. We have to enter into a permanent dialogue phase where our daily experience in transforming cities is reflected into the EU legislation and programmes. This is the reason why we created this Political Board of Mayors".

Mayor of Heidelberg Eckart Würzner

“There are no choice to be less ambitious or to be less involved. The only answer is to let cities play a bigger role with the political commitments that has shown up, especially here in Europe. The role of this policy board is to represent this leadership and to be a clear voice for cities and their ambitions.”

Vice-Mayor of Växjö Asa Karlsson Björkmarker

Through the Covenant of Mayors initiative, a new paradigm has emerged into EU policy-making, **based on grassroots democracy**, genuine **political commitment**, ownership and action, and **multi-level cooperation**.

“The cooperation between the Covenant signatories and their provinces and regions in the pursuit of a common goal is one of the success factors of the Covenant. This multilevel governance absolutely needs to be maintained and strengthened in the further development of the initiative.”

President of the Province of Barcelona and Mayor of Sant Cugat del Vallés Mercè Conesa i Pagès

“The success of the Covenant of Mayors initiative relies in great part on the work done by national associations of local and regional governments. They help cities and towns of all sizes meet their climate and energy goals, to ensure that local actions are enabled and sustained by political and regulatory frameworks in their countries.”

Mayor of Udine Furio Honsell

“The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy provides an excellent opportunity to re-emphasise the key role regions and energy agencies should play in planning, developing and implementing sustainable energy projects at all levels across the globe. Within this, the European Covenant Board of Mayors can foster the political courage and determination needed to develop and implement a sustainable energy vision and enable a grassroots-driven campaign. Local communities, regions and energy agencies can work together and understand each other as partners, endeavouring to produce climate and sustainable energy action.”

Director of REGEA (the North-West Croatia Energy Agency) Julije Domac

The European Covenant of Mayors Board is also linked to the board of the [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy](#), the **world’s largest coalition of cities and local governments** leading the fight against climate change. The Global Covenant of Mayors Board is chaired by European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, Michael Bloomberg and former UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres, and steered by 10 mayors from all over the world.

"The EU Covenant of Mayors is definitely one of Europe's major success stories. It shows that when mayors share a vision of a low-carbon future and roll up their sleeves, things get done. Never before have so many cities joined forces, eager to inspire each other and committed to collectively taking the path to a low-carbon future. If Europe is serious about reaching its energy and climate targets, about reducing air pollution and moving towards a modern circular economy, then we need the commitment of our mayors. Setting up a board of mayors will strengthen the EU Covenant's impact even more, in Europe as well as globally, through the Global Covenant of Mayors."

European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič.

"The European Committee of the regions welcomes the globalisation of the Covenant and is ready to support the newly created political board. We are all concerned by the fight against climate change and it's definitely not by building walls that you will protect your citizens from the effect of global warming".

CoR Vice-president Karl-Heinz Lambertz

* *The European Covenant of Mayors Board is initially composed of:*

- *Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris (France), member of the Global Covenant Political Board*
- *Daniel Termont, Mayor of Ghent (Belgium), President of EUROCITIES*
- *Eckart Würzner, Mayor of Heidelberg (Germany), President of Energy Cities*
- *Mercè Conesa i Pagès, President of the Province of Barcelona, Mayor of Sant Cugat del Vallés (Spain), member of Climate Alliance Executive Board*
- *Julije Domac, Director of REGEA, the North-West Croatia Energy Agency, President of FEDARENE*
- *Asa Karlsson Björkmarker, Vice-Mayor of Växjö (Sweden), Board-member of ICLEI Europe*
- *Furio Honsell, Mayor of Udine (Italy), Spokesperson on Climate and Energy Transition for the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)*

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