

Covenant of Mayors: local and regional authorities lead drive towards EU2020 CO2 objectives

The Covenant of Mayors is a European initiative bringing together local and regional authorities committed to building an energy efficient and sustainable future for their citizens. Through the Covenant, signatories voluntarily commit to go beyond the European Union's objective of a 20% CO2 reduction by 2020.

Launched in 2008, the Covenant of Mayors is recognised as a leading example of successful multi-level governance, and as an important step towards achieving the EU's 2020 objectives.

Growth

Since the first Covenant of Mayors ceremony in February 2009, the number of Covenant signatories has risen from less than 400 to over 2,800 in July 2011. Today, the initiative comprises local authorities from 44 countries – representing all of the EU27. Furthermore, through the commitment of their local authorities, a staggering 130 million citizens are now involved in the Covenant of Mayors.

As part of the initiative, local authorities agree to compile a baseline emissions inventory and to formulate a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) – a comprehensive overview of key sustainable energy actions – within the year following their signature of the Covenant.

As of July 2011, more than 700 SEAPs have been formally submitted. They are publicly available in the Covenant online SEAP catalogue.

Support

A comprehensive support framework has been put in place to help signatories develop their action plans. In addition to the Covenant of Mayors Office (CoMO) – which provides administrative, promotional and technical assistance – regions, provinces and networks of local authorities also lend invaluable support to signatories as Covenant Coordinators and as Supporters. At present, 140 of these regional and local actors are working together with signatories, strengthening the multi-level governance process of the Covenant of Mayors.

A range of methodologies and tools has been developed to assist signatories in the development of their action plans. Moreover, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre provides its expertise to address any technical questions signatories may have.

Different forms of financial assistance have also been set up. They are listed in the [thematic leaflet on 'finance'](#). One of them, the European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA) facility, launched in December 2009, has helped signatories to mobilise €1.6 billion in local investments. This amount is still increasing!

Impact

The success of the Covenant stems from the concrete measures taken by its signatories, who suit their actions to their words.

Those local authorities who fail to deliver on their commitments are suspended from the initiative until the necessary progress has been made. To date, 72 signatories have been suspended from the Covenant.

The Covenant of Mayors represents more than reducing energy consumption and CO2 emissions while increasing the use of renewable energy. It also supports environmental protection, stimulates job creation, drives economic competitiveness and helps to deliver greater quality of life for citizens.

