

An energy transition for our citizens

Empowering local actors

“Back in 1996, **Växjö**’s politicians unanimously decided to free the city from fossil fuels. From the beginning, everyone was asked to contribute to this vision, including residents, NGOs, industry and the University. Among other things, this has notably meant cheaper energy for citizens, now connected to the biomass district heating network.”

Bo Frank, Mayor of Växjö (Sweden)

Rethinking finance

“Together with the city of Brest, **Dijon** has been able to save some 24% on tendering costs thanks to a joint tram order, while improving local public services by bringing tram stops closer to jobs and residents. In total, this allowed both cities to generate some €33 million of cost saving.”

Jean-Patrick Masson, Deputy-Mayor of Dijon (France)

Knowing our territories’ resources and flows

“Instead of letting it go to waste, we strive to make the most efficient use of **Delft**’s heat sources. We use a heating network fed with waste heat and we plan to expand it with a one fed with geothermal energy. So we generate more and more of our own energy locally, both for existing and new buildings.”

Stephan Brandligt, Deputy-Mayor of Delft (the Netherlands)

Inventing a new local governance

“In **Bisritra**, we set up a Local Energy Forum to open a debate process between the local authority, stakeholders and residents. We also organise contests to reward sustainable behaviours. For the rational use of tap water, we offered the winning community with an exemption from the 2013 housing tax and the set-up of “green lungs” around the housing block.”

Ovidiu Cretu, Mayor of Bistrita (Romania)

Urban planning as a way of reducing energy use

“The Bahnstadt district in Heidelberg targets to become the world’s largest 100% passive house neighbourhood. It will provide office space, residential buildings, a university campus, a school, a kindergarten, shops etc. for over 12,000 people, perfectly linked with cycle paths and public transport. In addition, a woodchip CHP plant will supply heat and electricity from 100% renewables.”

Eckart Würzner, Mayor of Heidelberg (Germany)

25 April 2013

Hear our call for action

We are facing an unprecedented social, economic and financial crisis. In such a challenging context, the EU must reinforce its commitments towards ambitious long term energy and climate objectives, as a way to boost competitiveness and sustainable development.

Stringent objectives have already been set for 2020, and the European Commission is now looking increasingly towards 2030 with the release of its related [Green Paper](#)¹. Very surprisingly, this document **does not** mention the key role to be played by local authorities. We are thus seizing this opportunity to highlight how much EU's low-carbon future – and related economic prosperity – depends on cities' contribution, and inviting others to join us in our actions towards the much-needed energy transition².

Citizens have placed their trust in us through the ballot box, and we are now working hard, from all corners of Europe, to deliver the quality of life they are hoping for: providing affordable housing, and green spaces, convenient commuting, easy access to services and leisure activities, clean air, growth and jobs. Whatever our position on the world map, whatever our size, demographic or socio-economic situation, we all share this vision as members of Energy Cities, the **European Association of local authorities in energy transition**. Likewise, we are involved in the [Covenant of Mayors](#), backing words with action. Not only are we inventing new ways of saving, using or producing energy – by exploiting the [untapped resource potential of our cities](#) - we are also developing new funding approaches, cooperation schemes and governance models, some of which are outlined in [Energy Cities' "30 Proposals for the Energy Transition of Cities and Towns"](#).

In light of this, we would like to:

- Invite other forward-thinkers, mayors from across Europe to bring hope to their citizens and join Energy Cities' members in building the local energy transition. Because small streams make big rivers, we trust that it is all these local actions that will cumulatively bring the global change the myriad of international intergovernmental climate agreements have unfortunately failed to achieve so far;
- Welcome European, national and local stakeholders and NGOs, to join us in this collaborative effort and be part of a multi-stakeholder Alliance for local energy transition;
- Call on the EU Member States to "let us help them"! This means keeping faith in the EU energy and climate objectives and, above all, **maintain – and increase - the support they have provided up to now to local actions for sustainable development**. Because the crisis we are facing does not call for budget cuts, it calls for a new vision of society, a new energy paradigm.

With determination,

Energy Cities committed mayors and elected officials

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52013DC0169:EN:NOT>

² See related Open Letter sent to the relevant EU policy-makers: http://www.energycities.eu/IMG/pdf/130412_OpenLetter_Barroso_Public.pdf