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CLEANER ENERGY SAVING - MEDITERRANEAN CITIES

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PRESS RELEASE

Cities from Morocco to Kazakhstan provide inspiring answers to local sustainability challenges

Istanbul, 19 November 2013

The challenges of the 21st century, closely related to a changing economic, demographic, food, energy and climate context can only be addressed with the sincere commitment of foresighted cities.

During the High-level Covenant of Mayors Forum held on 14-15 November in Istanbul, Mayors from a vast geographical area covering Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, Central Asia, Maghreb and Mashrek, demonstrated their commitment to providing local answers to the current global sustainability challenges. On this occasion, 200 local leaders as well as high level ministerial staff, associations of cities and international financing institutions shared their visions of what a sustainable and resilient urban environment and community look like. Cities like Astana (Kazakhstan), Lutsk (Ukraine) or Oujda (Morocco) have been deploying great efforts to improve the energy performances of their buildings. In Agadir (Morocco), Lviv (Ukraine) and Greater Amman (Jordan), the city councils rethink street lighting and transport patterns to meet the increasing travel demand and improve road safety.

Mayor of the Moldovan capital of Chisinau Dorin Chirtoaca showed that post-soviet cities can and should tackle the issues of energy supply and affordability by creating and enhancing municipal energy management systems. He encouraged his peers by stating: *“As a mayor you don't only do what you want, you must also do what needs to be done.”*

As Covenant of Mayors signatories, all these cities voluntarily committed to increasing energy-efficiency and the use of renewable energy, and to reducing CO₂ emissions on their territories, starting with developing Sustainable Energy Action Plans. Their aim is to provide high quality of life in cities which are competitive and attractive for citizens, businesses and any other stakeholder. As evidenced by the High-level Forum in Istanbul, the success of the Covenant initiative is spreading beyond European borders, where the Covenant team is strengthening local authorities' capacities to prepare sustainable energy action plans and implement local sustainable policies.

EIB representative Marion Hoenicke reassured those sustainable energy pioneers who are facing a lack of financial and human resources saying that *“There is no lack of financing but a lack of good and bankable project proposals.”*

Finally, the conference was an opportunity to launch and present the ENPI financed projects in support of the Covenant of Mayors and sustainable energy policies at local level: CIUDAD (€14

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million), SUDEP (€ 29 million for the East and € 10,5 million for the South) and CESMED (€ 4,9 million).

Background information

Since 2009, the “Covenant family” has been developing up to over 5,100 mayors representing more than 180 million inhabitants. The Covenant of Mayors, steered by the European Commission, is now widely recognised as an outstanding vector of change which encourages sustainable economic growth, job creation and improves citizens’ quality of life.

Success is spreading as the initiative has been extended to Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia in the last two years. The signatory cities in 11 COMO-East countries benefit from the support of the Covenant of Mayors offices in Brussels, Lviv and Tbilisi, as well as of Covenant Coordinators and Supporters.

More than 70 cities have signed up to the Covenant of Mayors in the Eastern Partnership and interest is growing in the Mediterranean region representing 15M citizens and 58 M tons of CO₂ emissions (South more than 200 million citizens and 1.76% of the global GHG emissions (2010 data), predicted to increase to 2.01% by 2030).

www.eumayors.eu

Since January 2013, the EU has also been supporting local authorities in the Southern European Neighbourhood area to join the initiative and to respond more actively to sustainable development challenges, through the regional project ‘Cleaner Energy-Saving Mediterranean Cities’.

www.ces-med.eu

The EU-funded CIUDAD programme (Cooperation In Urban Development And Dialogue) which came to an end last year, also supported the cities of Salé (Morocco), Ukrainka and Cherkasy (Ukraine), Chisinau, Drochia and Ungheni (Moldova) and Polotsk (Belarus) in joining the Covenant community.

www.ciudad-programme.eu

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