

Brussels, 10 February 2009

400 cities commit to go beyond the 20% EU's energy objectives through the Commission's led Covenant of Mayors

In a solemn ceremony that has taken place today on in the Hemicycle of the European Parliament, more that 350 cities across Europe have committed, by signing the Covenant of Mayors, to go beyond the EU's energy objective of reducing 20% CO2 emissions by 2020. With this initiative of the European Commission in partnership with the Committee of Regions, the representatives of over 60 million citizens will work together to achieve the common goal of changing our environment and using energy more wisely.

"Most of the energy produced in Europe is consumed in urban areas. The battle against climate change will have to fought and won in the cities. This is why, the commitment shown by Mayors across Europe by signing the Covenant of Mayors send us a strong message of hope, particularly in the difficult times that we are facing ", said Commissioner Piebalgs.

Committee of the Regions President Luc Van den Brande, speaking at the signing ceremony, said: "The Covenant of Mayors is an excellent initiative which will continue to grow in partnership with the Committee of the Regions. Europe's ambitious targets for cutting greenhouse gases will only be met when European local and regional authorities pull together and become involved as partners. The Covenant is not for big cities alone: smaller cities and towns, as well as regions as a whole, should also be encouraged to sign the Covenant and make the environmental pledge. The Committee of the Regions is also exploring the idea of creating a network for cities and regions signed up to the Covenant, helping them to share best practice ideas and experience."

More than 100 mayors across Europe participated in launching ceremony which was chaired by the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, EU Commissioner for Energy, Andris Piebalgs, the President of the Committee of the Regions, Luc Van den Brande, the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Alejo Vidal Quadras, and the Mayors of Budapest, Gábor Demszky, Hamburg, Ole von Beust and Madrid Alberto Ruiz Gallardón, of Riga, Jānis Birks, and Växjö (Sweden), Bo Frank.

To coincide with the ceremony, the new Covenant of Mayors website has been launched today to act as a network portal and support structure for participating cities and citizens alike. The new website www.eumayors.eu, offers news and pictures of the Covenant in action, as well as information on the cities involved.

For more information see [MEMO/09/59](#)