



Climate Alliance

Response to consultation

Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy

Brussels 30 June 2015

Empowering local authorities and building a decentralized sustainable energy system should become central pillars of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Experience, notably with the Covenant of Mayors East and the CES-MED, has shown that this approach is suited to tackle central challenges of the ENP identified in the consultation document.

The Covenant of Mayors (CoM) East initiative was launched in 2011 to support these goals, and is currently financed by DG NEAR. Building on the tremendous success of the Covenant of Mayors in the EU, it now gathers 152 local authorities in 11 countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood countries and central Asia. The CoM East has already greatly enhanced the capacities of local administrations to tackle energy challenges. By increasing decentralised energy production from renewable sources and decreasing energy consumption, it has greatly contributed to enhancing energy security, which is a clear common interest of the EU and its partner countries.

This approach helps reducing dependences on one or a few energy suppliers and also yields multiple benefits in terms of climate action, creation of local jobs and empowering local communities.

Working with the local authorities in the neighborhood countries is a prerequisite for achieving concrete results and actual change, as the 64 Sustainable Energy Action Plans developed so far under the CoM East framework confirm. The unique governance model of the Covenant has also enabled the empowerment of local authorities in the neighbourhood and needs to continue to do so, as a bottom-up initiative based on the voluntary commitment of local authorities. Involving a large range of stakeholders and civil society, it has increased ownership of the ENP. It incentivizes public authorities in partner countries to practice a new way of collaborating and to get involved in the ENP: national ministries, regions or energy agencies act as Covenant Coordinators and support local authorities to develop and implement their action plans.

Based on these experiences, Climate Alliance puts forward the following recommendations for the new European Neighbourhood Policy:

The ENP should

- put a further focus on cities / local authorities and their role in increasing energy security and other policy priorities identified by the background paper;
- enhance its focus on local climate and energy action and strengthen the Covenant of Mayors as a tool in this context;

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- consider the developments of the Covenant of Mayors becoming a worldwide initiative and linking it to the continuation of the Covenant of Mayors initiatives in the European neighbourhood;
- consider completing the initiative with elements such as adaptation and further focus on peer to peer learning and city to city cooperation between European and Eastern neighborhood countries;
- consider local authorities when drafting the ENP Action Plans and use the governance model put forward by the Covenant of Mayors as a model to implement these Action Plans

Further details on the Climate Alliance's Key Recommendations for the future of the Covenant of Mayors can be found [here](#).

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ABOUT Climate Alliance

"Climate Alliance of European Cities with the Indigenous Rainforest Peoples" is the largest city network committed to climate protection and preservation of the tropical rainforests. Since 1990, Climate Alliance has supported a total of now almost 1,700 members from 25 European countries in attainment of their voluntary commitments to reduce CO₂ emissions by ten percent every five years and to halve per capita emissions by 2030 at the latest (base year 1990). Climate Alliance is active in the coordination of both the Covenant of Mayors and the Mayors Adapt initiatives for the European Commission.