RePowerEU: Local and regional authorities must be taken into account to ensure a rapid transition towards secured, affordable and sustainable energy

PUBLISHED MAY 1, 2022
BY [EUROPA](#)

Empowering cities and regions and engaging citizens in climate action is key for the success of the EU's strategy to leave Russian fossil-fuels behind

While the EU is focusing on reducing its energy dependence from Russian fossil fuels through REPowerEU,cities and regions remain crucial to speed up the deployment of renewable energies and improve energy efficiency while ensuring citizens' engagement and support through open participatory processes. In an event organised by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Commission (EC), local and regional leaders have shared their experiences in delivering the European Green Deal locally – including through EU flagship initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors and the European Climate Pact . The meeting also included a presentation of Green Deal Going Local , the CoR campaign to place cities and regions at the heart of the EU's transition towards climate-neutrality.

The war in Ukraine is changing energy geopolitics worldwide, with rising energy prices greatly affecting local and regional authorities' capacity to deliver the clean transition on the ground. In this context, The European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions have joined forces on 2 May 2022 to update local and regional leaders on key EU initiatives designed to support their efforts on climate and energy - such as the Covenant of Mayors and the European Climate Pact.

Opening the event, Kata Tüttő (HU/PES), Deputy Mayor of Budapest, CoR Climate Pact Ambassador , Chairwoman of the CoR's ENVE commission and of the Green Deal Going Local working group said:

"Energy security is not an excuse to step back from our EU Green Deal objectives. The REPowerEU plan is our pathway to secure affordable and sustainable energy. Both climate and the energy crises are global problems that need local solutions. All European regions, from the largest to the smallest, from cities to rural areas, need to be involved in this energy and climate transition to protect all people, including the most vulnerable."

"We need to develop more financial instruments for cities and municipalities to speed up green finance and innovation" said Andries Piebalgs, former Commissioner for Energy, who also stressed the need to involve the citizens in the energy transition and the key role the CoR plays in that endeavour. The Professor at the European University Institute mentioned the EU Energy Purchase Platform , the new EC initiative for the common purchase of gas, LNG and hydrogen, which first meeting took place on 8 April.

During his intervention, Rafal Trzaskowski (PL/EPP), Mayor of Warsaw and CoR rapporteur on the amending the Energy Efficiency Directive, called for "more ambition" and " to prioritise actions to strengthen independence from Russian fossil fuels while protecting vulnerable citizens from high energy prices" . Warsaw is one of the 100 cities selected last week to take part in the initiative '100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030' under the EU Missions program , a novelty of the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for 2021-2027.

Bart Somers, Vice-Minister-President of the Government of Flanders and former CoR member, underlined that: "The climate crisis is the biggest challenge of our time. But one thing is certain: the solutions for this global challenge will take shape locally. It is in our cities and municipalities that this challenge becomes tangible. That is where we renovate our houses, plant trees and build cycle paths. That is where we can mobilize citizens and organisations. And that is why in Flanders we launched the « local energy and climate pact »: a pact that brings together citizens, companies and local governments around concrete targets. Hopefully it can be an inspiration for other regions in Europe."

Also representing the Flemish region, Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA), member of the Flemish Parliament and rapporteur on the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive, stressed the active involvement of Flemish municipalities in delivering climate action, with almost all 300

having already joined the Covenant of Mayors and the Climate Pact.

Luca Menesini (IT/PES), President of the Province of Lucca, Mayor of Capannori and CoR Climate Pact Ambassador, highlighted: "The Tuscany region committed in 2020 to climate neutrality by 2050 through the adoption of a regional strategy to massively reduce emissions in various sectors and absorb them with the help of green solutions. Tuscan cities, such as Capannori, are contributing with best practices and innovative projects to achieve this goal at the local level. To reach a synchronised transition, all regional and local authorities need to be involved and considered in this process to take advantage of all opportunities available."

Several local and regional leaders, members of the European Committee of the Regions, shared their climate commitments and climate-neutral strategies.

The Mayor of Coulaines, Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES), recalled that the French municipality was the first from the Hexagon to join the Covenant of Mayors, in 2007, having already reached 30% of GHG emission reduction.

Kieran McCarthy (IE/EA) stressed Ireland's 80% of fossil fuel imports and the need to deploy additional means to deliver a just transition for the most vulnerable. Emil Boc (RO/EPP), Mayor of Cluj-Napoca Municipality, highlighted the pressure high-energy prices have on local administration's budgets as well as on public procurement contractors and suppliers. The city of Cluj-Napoca is one of the cities selected to take part in the initiative '100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030'.

Roberto Ciambetti (ECR/IT), President of the Veneto Regional Council, shared his concerns on the impact energy prices are having on public procurement contracts and stressed the need to diversity energy sources and to tackle increased energy poverty as around 15% of additional households in the Veneto region cannot afford paying energy bills.

The Mayor of Braga, Ricardo Rio (PT/EPP), echoed the challenge of integrating higher energy costs into the city's budget. The Portuguese Covenant of Mayor Ambassador listed some priority actions the city is implementing such as installing solar panels in public buildings, implementing a programme to decrease energy bills in vulnerable

households and increasing the existing 40% of the city's electric buses.

Other local and regional leaders intervening today included Hanna Zdanowska (PL/EPP), Mayor of Łódź, Mindaugas Sinkevičius (LT/PES), Mayor of Jonava District Municipality, Markku Markkula (FI/EPP), President of the Helsinki region, Gregor Macedoni (SI/EPP), Mayor of the Municipality of Novo Mesto, Stavros Stavrinides (CY/PES), Councilor of Strovolos Municipality, Gunars Ansins (LV/Renew Europe), Liepāja City Mayor, Andres Jaadla (ET/Renew Europe), member of the Rakvere city council, and Adrian Teban (RO/EPP), Mayor of Cugir City.

In the afternoon session, participants discussed and shared best practices to accelerate the green transition. Clara de la Torre , Deputy-Director General of DG CLIMA of the European Commission, said: "As much as three quarters of Europeans live in cities and towns. Cities are living labs for innovation and inspiration and remain crucial for the success of the energy transition. The war in Ukraine reminds us that the green transition needs to happen even more quickly."

Reinforcing the links and cooperation between climate action and the European Year of Youth 2022 , several members of the CoR's Young Elected Politicians (YEPs) programme also took part in this event.

The CoR is supporting the further rollout of the Covenant of Mayors through the network of National Covenant Ambassadors . The EU's assembly of cities and regions has also launched a network of CoR Climate Pact Ambassadors to support the EU's efforts to deploy participatory processes engaging citizens in the clean energy transition.

During its 27-28 April plenary session, the European Committee of the Regions adopted a resolution on REPowerEU together with a set of opinions contributing to the ongoing revision of the EU's ' Fit for 55 energy package ' and the implementation of the European Green Deal at the local and regional level.

RePowerEU : on 8 March 2022, the European Commission proposed a plan to make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030, seeking to diversify gas supplies, speed up the rollout of renewable gases and replace gas in heating and power generation,

which could reduce demand for Russian gas by two thirds before the end of the year.

Through Green Deal Going Local, the European Committee of the Regions is committed to support cities' and regions in the EU's transition towards climate neutrality. Green Deal Going Local is a flagship initiative of the European Committee of the Regions that aims at placing cities and regions at the heart of the EU's climate-neutral transition. It includes several calls to action such as Trees for Life , a survey to collect the views of cities and regions on the challenges and opportunities of implementing the European Green Deal locally and a call for all local and regional authorities to share their climate commitments .

Press release distributed by Wire Association on behalf of Europa, on May 1, 2022. For more information subscribe and [follow](#) us.

Media Assets

Embedded Media

Visit the [online press release](#) to interact with the embedded media.

https://wireassociation.eu/newsroom/europa/releases/en/repowereu-local-and-regional-authorities-must-be-taken-into-account-to-ensure-a-rapid-transition-towards-secured-affordable-and-sustainable-energy-219

Europa

Newsroom: https://wireassociation.eu/newsroom/europa
Website: https://europa.eu/
Primary Email: press@europa.eu

Social Media

Twitter - https://twitter.com/EU_commission
Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanCommission
Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/europeancommission/
Linkedin - https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-commission